

OPINION 8
RETURN OF
THALAIVA**WORLD 11**
US SC REJECTS TRUMP ELECTION
APPEAL ON PENNSYLVANIA**SPORT 14**
MAN UTD CRASH OUT OF
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY DECEMBER 10, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com


**DEEPIKA'S SMILE
FEATURED AT
ATHENS AIRPORT
12 VIVACITY**

Farmers reject Centre's draft, call it 'insult'

Govt offers changes on MSP, civil courts for contract farming disputes among 7 amendments; unions threaten to cut off Delhi, boycott Reliance, Adani; nationwide stir on Dec 14

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Within hours of receiving the Government's draft proposal to amend at least eight clauses of the new farm laws, farmers' unions on Wednesday rejected the proposal calling it "vague" and an insult to farmers. Claiming that there was nothing new in the Government proposal, they threatened to intensify their agitation by blocking all entry points to the national Capital.

Farmers' unions insisted on their demand to repeal the three farm laws. They also threatened to block the Jaipur-Delhi highway on December 12 and hold protest demonstrations in many parts of the country on December 14.

Terming the proposal as "vague" and an insult to farmers, Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal said, "We will block the Delhi-Jaipur highway and sit on dharna at all the toll plazas of the country on December 12... No tax to be paid on that day at any toll plaza... We will also gherao all district headquarters during our nationwide protest on December 14. We have asked the people to protest against every MP and MLA of the BJP."

Farmers said that there will be sit-ins across the country and will boycott Reliance/Adani/Ambani establishments/products across the country.

Soon after farmers rejected the Government's proposal, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence. The

meeting went on for two-and-a-half hours.

At a meeting held at the Singhu border before the Government's written proposals came in, the farmers decided that they would continue their protest till the Government removes the farm laws. "We do not accept any amendment in the laws, we want total removal," the farmers' representatives said.

A day after Shah's talks with farm leaders ended in a deadlock, the Government on Wednesday sent a draft proposal to farmers unions to allay their concerns about the three farm laws. The Government has proposed to make the necessary amendments on at least seven issues, including one to allay fears about the weakening of the mandi system.

The Government proposed to include registration provision of private traders for trading outside regulated mandi, bring in equal taxes for APMC mandis and private markets to provide a level playing field and allow higher courts of appeal in contract farming disputes.

In its draft proposal, the Government also said it is ready to provide a written assurance that the existing Minimum Support Price (MSP) system will continue.

In the proposal, sent by Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal to 13 farmers' unions, the Government said it is ready to consider with an open heart the objections which farmers have on the new farm laws.

On farmers' fear that mandis would weaken after the new laws, the Government said an

amendment can be made wherein State Governments can register the traders operating outside mandis. States can also impose tax and cess as they used in APMC mandis on them. On concerns that farmers may be duped as anyone having just a pan card is allowed to trade outside APMC mandis, the Government said to rule out such apprehensions, the State Governments can be given the power to register such traders and make rules keeping in mind the local situation of farmers.

Continued on Page 6



Farmers shout slogans during their Delhi Chalo protest march against the new farm laws, at Singhu border in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Opp leaders meet Prez, seek repeal of farm laws

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A five-member delegation of Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Sharad Pawar, on Wednesday, met President Ram Nath Kovind and sought repeal of three "controversial" farm laws. "We sought repeal of farm laws during the meeting with the President. The laws were passed without any discussion in the House," Congress leader Rahul said.

The Opposition parties, including Congress, NCP, DMK, CPI(M) and CPI, urged the President to persuade the Government "not to be obdurate" and accept the demand of

Say farm Bills were passed 'without proper discussion and consultation'

protesting farmers for the repeal of three farm laws.

Talking to the media after submitting a memorandum to the President, the leaders said the farm Bills were passed "without proper discussions and consultations".

Apart from Rahul and Pawar, CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury, DMK's TKS Elangovan and CPI's D Raja met the President.

The memorandum said more than 20 different political parties, including many parties running State

Governments, have extended their solidarity "with the ongoing historic struggle of the Indian peasantry" and had extended wholehearted support to their call for a Bharat Bandh demanding the repeal of the "retrograde agri-laws".

Pawar, a former Union Agriculture Minister, said they informed the President that there was a request from all Opposition parties for an in-depth discussion on farm Bills and that it should be sent to select committee, "but unfortunately, no suggestion was



A delegation of Opposition leaders, comprising Sharad Pawar, Rahul Gandhi, D Raja, Sitaram Yechury, and TKS Elangovan, calls on President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan to present a memorandum on Wednesday

PTI

accepted and bills were passed in hurry". "In this cold, the farmers are on the streets protesting peacefully, express-

ing their unhappiness. It is the duty of the Government to resolve this issue," he said.

Continued on Page 6

Delhi Police suggest alternative routes to enter or exit Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the farmers' unions on Wednesday rejected the Government's proposal to resolve their issues and threaten to cut off the national Capital, the Delhi Police have suggested alternative routes to commuters entering or exiting Delhi.

The Delhi Traffic Police alerted commuters that the Tikri, Jharoda, Dhansa Borders are closed for any traffic movement. "Jhatikara Borders is open only for two wheelers and pedestrian movement," they tweeted.

The police also said those travelling to Haryana can take Daurala, Kapashera, Badusara,

Rajokri NH 8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundahera Borders.

"Singhu, Auchandi, Piao Maniyari, Mangesh borders are closed. NH-44 is closed on both sides. Take alternate routes via Lampur, Safiabad, Saboli, NH8/Bhopra/Apsara borders/peripheral expressway," the Traffic Police tweeted.

Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba and GTK road and commuters should avoid Outer Ring Road, GTK road, NH-44, they said.

"Chilla Border one carriageway from Delhi to Noida has been opened for traffic however other carriageway from Noida to Delhi is still closed," they tweeted.

Ties with China in most difficult phase: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the stand-off continued at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said ties with China are "significantly damaged." He also said the relations between the two neighbours are in the "most difficult phase in the last 30-40 years".

Striking a strident note, Jaishankar said the ties were "very significantly damaged" because of Beijing's violation of agreements on maintaining peace and tranquility on the LAC.

Armies of both the countries are locked in face-off at the 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh. The Minister also admitted that the talks between the two countries at various levels had



so far failed to address the basic issue that "agreements are not being observed."

The Chinese have given five "differing explanations" for violating the agreements by bringing tens of thousands of soldiers to the LAC in Ladakh sector, a development that has "profoundly disturbed" the relationship, he said in an

online conversation with the Australian think tank Lowy Institute.

"We are today probably at the most difficult phase of our relationship with China, certainly in the last 30 to 40 years...or even more," he said, noting that the 20 Indian soldiers killed in the clash at the Galwan Valley in June were the

'Beijing violated agreements on maintaining peace, tranquility on LAC'

first military casualties on the LAC since 1975.

The relationship has been "very significantly damaged" because all positive developments in bilateral ties over the past 30 years, including China becoming India's second largest trade partner and engagements in tourism and travel, were based on the fact that the two sides had agreed to maintain peace and tranquility in border areas while trying to solve the boundary question, he said.

Underlining the multiple agreements since 1993 that committed both parties not to bring large forces to the LAC, he said, "Now for some reason, for which the Chinese have to date given us five differing explanations, the Chinese have violated it."

Continued on Page 6

Oxford shot has 70% efficacy, show trials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The interim results from the clinical trials of the Covid-19 vaccine, jointly developed by Oxford University and British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, reveal that it protects against symptomatic disease in 70 per cent cases.

In India, the vaccine is

Only three out of 23,745 participants experienced serious adverse events

being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

The results, published on Tuesday in *The Lancet* journal, are the first full peer-reviewed efficacy results to be published for a Covid-19 vaccine.

The trials found the vaccine efficacy is 62 per cent for those given two full doses, and 90 per cent in those given a half dose, followed by a full one.

Only three out of 23,745 participants, over an average of

3.4 months, experienced serious adverse events, the study reveals. Of these, one had received the vaccine arm while the other was in the placebo group.

"The results presented in this report provide the key findings from our first interim analysis. In future analyses, with more data included as it becomes available, we will investigate differences in key subgroups such as older adults, various ethnicities, doses, timing of booster vaccines, and we will determine which immune responses equate to protection from infection or disease," Merryn Voysey, from the Oxford University and one of the study authors, said in a statement.

The Oxford vaccine uses ChAdOx1 — a weakened and non-replicating version of a common cold virus (adenovirus) — which infects chimpanzees, not humans.

Continued on Page 6

CAPSULE

BUDDHADEB'S HEALTH CONDITION 'VERY CRITICAL'
Kolkata: The health condition of former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, who was admitted to a hospital in south Kolkata, deteriorated to "very critical" on Wednesday evening, officials said.

CABINET OK'S ₹23K CR FOR ROJGAR YOJANA
New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved ₹22,810 crore outlay for the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) that aims at encouraging businesses to do fresh hiring amid the pandemic.

CJI'S MOTHER DUPED BY PROPERTY CARETAKER
Nagpur: Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde's mother was duped to the tune of ₹2.5 crore allegedly by the caretaker of a family property here, a police official said.

Yogi inaugurates two sulphur-free sugar plants

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the state government had paid cane prices which were more than the annual budgets of several states.

Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday inaugurated plants for manufacturing sulphur-free sugar at Munderwa and Pipraich sugar mills located in Basti and Gorakhpur districts respectively.

The chief minister inaugurated the new sulphur-free plant of Munderwa Sugar Mill online from the Pipraich Sugar Mill complex as his helicopter could not land in Munderwa due to poor visibility and inclement weather conditions. Both the mills belong to UP State Sugar Mills Corporation. **Details on Page 2**

Cong receives drubbing in Raj panchayat polls at BJP's hands

BJP claims it is farmers' mandate

PTI ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

The ruling Congress in Rajasthan suffered a jolt with the BJP beating it in panchayat elections, an outcome which the winning party on Wednesday called a "farmers' mandate" amid protests against the Centre's new agri-marketing laws.

The BJP bagged 1,989 of the 4,371 panchayat samiti seats while the Congress won 1852 with almost all results of the four-phase local Government polls being declared.

The CPI(M) bagged 26 seats, the RLP six and the

Bahujan Samaj Party five. Independent candidates won 439 panchayat samiti seats.

At the zila parishad level, the Congress won 353 of the 635 seats for which results were declared and the Congress got 252.

Only one zila parishad seat result is yet to be announced in the election held across 21 of the State's 33 districts.

The BJP candidates are now in majority in 13 of these district boards and the party is set to head one more with the help of ally Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP). The Congress has won five of the remaining zila parishads.

The results come as a boost for the Bharatiya Janata Party when its Government at the Centre is facing protests —

mainly from farmers in Punjab and Haryana — over the three new laws to deregulate the sale of crops.

On Twitter, BJP president JP Nadda called the Rajasthan success a symbol of trust farmers, labourers and the poor have in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

In Delhi, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said the results indicate that crores of rural people are in favour of agriculture reforms. "This is a farmers' mandate and a vote for farm reforms," he said.

He said the results bucked a trend in Rajasthan where in the panchayat elections in 2010 and 2015, the party in power had won the rural government elections as well.

Continued on Page 6

Panel seeks more data from Bharat Biotech, SII for vaccine approval

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The requests for emergency use of vaccines being manufactured by the Serum Institute (SII) and the Bharat Biotech were not cleared on Wednesday by a panel of health experts, sources in the Union Health Ministry said, adding that both companies have been asked to submit more data at the next meeting, the date of which has not yet been decided.

The final call on the suitability of the vaccine will be taken by the Drug Controller of India or DCGI.

Continued on Page 6

States don't need to affix posters outside Covid +ve homes: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

States and Union Territories are not required "as of now" to affix posters outside the residence of those who test positive for Covid-19 and such an exercise can be done only when direction is issued by a competent authority under the Disaster Management Act, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

The SC, while taking note of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, observed that it does not contain any requirement of

pastings of posters outside the homes of Covid patients.

"The Union of India has already issued DO letter dated November 19, 2020 extracted above (in the verdict) to guide the States and UTs, we only observe that no State or Union Territory is required to paste posters outside the residence of Covid-19 positive persons, as of now," a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said.

The SC delivered its judgement on a plea seeking directions to do away with the practice of pasting posters.

Continued on Page 6

CM inaugurates two sulphur-free sugar plants

Asks youth to take to other sugarcane products

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the state government had paid cane prices which were more than the annual budgets of several states.

Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday inaugurated two plants for manufacturing sulphur-free sugar at Munderwa and Pipraich sugar mills located in Basti and Gorakhpur districts respectively.

The chief minister inaugurated the new sulphur-free plant of Munderwa Sugar Mill online from the Pipraich Sugar Mill complex as his helicopter could not land in Munderwa due to poor visibility and inclement weather conditions. Both the mills belong to UP State Sugar Mills Corporation.

The chief minister said that his government operated 119 sugar mills of the state in times of novel coronavirus pandemic during the last cane crushing season (2019-20).

The sugar mills have so far paid a record Rs 1.12 lakh crore to the cane farmers.

He said this had never happened before. The chief minister pointed out that many states did not even have an annual budget of this size.

Yogi Adityanath said sulphur-free sugar had a huge market in hospitals and other institutions which in turn would give a new identity to sugarcane farmers of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

He said the previous governments had plundered the sugar industry by selling 21 sugar mills to the private sector under a conspiracy.

He said the Bharatiya Janata Party government, after taking charge of the state in 2017, revived the defunct sugar mills, including the sugar mills of Pipraich and Munderwa.

The chief minister said that a private sector sugar mill was set up in Pipraich in 1932

Appointment letters given to 3,209 tubewell operators

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Carrying forward its commitment Towards Mission Rozgar, the Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday handed over appointment letters to 3,209 tubewell operators, including 516 women.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while handing over the appointment letters, said that it was for the first time that youth were getting government jobs in UP without recommendations and favouritism.

“Merit is the only criterion on which the successful candidates have got appointment. The recruitment process (of the government) has remained transparent since its formation and over four lakh youth have got employment in the past three-and-half years,” he said.

Over 15 lakh youth got employed in the private sector during the same period and more than 1.5 crore youth were now self-employed with financial assistance from banks, he added.

“With our continuous efforts, the farmers of the state are now getting seeds and irrigation facilities on time. Besides, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM Fasal Beema Yojana, Per Drop More Drop and other schemes are making agriculture more profitable for the farmers,” the chief minister said.

and it was acquired in 1974 but the mill closed in 1999. Similarly, he said, the private sector sugar mill in Munderwa (Basti) was started in 1932, it was acquired by the government in 1984 but it too closed down in 1999.

Yogi Adityanath pointed out that when the state government decided to revive the closed sugar mills, the opposition parties spread rumours.

The old mills used to crush 12 lakh quintals of sugarcane in a year and after revival and modernisation their capacity has been increased to 45 lakh



He said farmers were the foundation of a prosperous state and keeping this in mind, the UP government was continuously working towards doubling their income.

“We are making all efforts for the prosperity of the farmers,” he added.

“Tubewell operators play an important role in farming and for the first time that women have been appointed to this post. Besides this, water conservation also forms an important

part of their duties,” the chief minister said.

While the chief minister handed over appointment letters to Shobhit Shukla, Sujit Narayan, Arun Kumar, Khyati Sharma and Kanchan Nishad at a programme held in Lucknow, the others were given the appointment letters by people’s representatives in programmes held at the district level.

Speaking on the occasion, UP’s Jal Shakti Minister Dr Mahendra

Singh said that the past three-and-half years had been historic for the department.

“It is after 2011 that tubewell operators have been appointed. In addition, the area of irrigated land in the state has increased to 23 lakh hectares. For the first time, the selected youth have been given a month’s training and in addition, they have been given appointments in districts opted by them,” he said.

at the Samajwadi Party and the Congress. He said that the leaders of SP used to make snide remarks on PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana by dubbing it as an election stunt, saying it would stop after the polls. Yogi said, “It is not the laptop of SP which will be withdrawn.”

The chief minister said that PM Kisan Samman Nidhi was launched by PM Narendra Modi from the fertiliser ground in Gorakhpur and this year, 2.20 crore farmers of UP had received an instalment of Rs 4,443 crore.

He said during the height of the pandemic, the government ensured that food was delivered to each and every person across the country.

Yogi Adityanath lashed out

GAIL keen to set up unit in plastic city

Lucknow (PNS): The central public sector undertaking Gas Authority of India Limited will soon sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UP State Industrial Development Authority for setting up a unit in the plastic city being developed at Dibiyaapur in Auraiya district.

Five big industrial houses have also evinced interest for setting up their unit there and have sought eight acres of land.

The plastic city, spread over 359 acres, is being developed 8 km from Kanchausi railway station in Auraiya and 274 acres of its land is earmarked for industrial use and

84 acres for residential purpose. UP Chief Secretary RK Tiwari on Wednesday reviewed the progress of the plastic city project.

He was informed by the project authority that so far 77 industrial and 109 residential plots and one each for commercial and institutional purpose had been allotted.

Besides reserving a part of the Dibiyaapur plastic city project for all categories of the industries, a proposal is being sent to the Union government for setting up a plastic city at Kanpur on the land available with UPSIDA.

The government has also issued a directive for setting up a police outpost there. The maintenance of the outpost will be done by the UPSIDA.

Yogi’s Mission Shakti empowering women

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a token gesture towards Empowering women, the Uttar Pradesh Cooperative department appointed LLB girl students as assistant commissioners and assistant registrars of cooperative in Kanpur Nagar district for one day recently.

Sonal not only inspected a paddy purchase centre but also instructed the staff there to make timely payment and warned against any laxity failing which they could face stern action.

Similarly, Renu, an accountant, was given charge as assistant commissioner and registrar of cooperatives for one day in Amroha.

The department took several measures to empower women under the Mission Shakti campaign in November. The department held meetings

in which stress was laid on making more women join the Cooperative department. In a seminar held jointly by UP State Warehousing Corporation and UP Cooperative Union, stress was laid on women empowerment through skill development.

Discussions were also held on the steps to be taken for supporting women and also weaker sections of society with the help of cooperative organisations.

Besides, several other events were held in other districts under the Mission Shakti campaign. In Sant Kabir Nagar, the Minority Welfare department carried out awareness programmes in madrasas in which 125 women and girls participated.

In Banki development block of Barabanki, the Basic Education department and

Women Welfare department organised meetings of parents at all the primary schools and upper primary schools in which discussions were held on education, health and nutrition and they were also given tips to save themselves and their family from COVID-19.

They were also given information about the utility of helpline numbers.

Meanwhile, the Social Welfare department carried out a campaign on Swachhta hi Sewa during which Meena Manch, Bal Sansad and seminars were held in Agra, Aligarh, Firozabad and Farrukhabad.

Women were told about preventive measures to be taken against diseases such as Japanese encephalitis, filaria, diarrhoea and others.

In Basti, Bahraich and Shravasti, women were made aware about adopting hygiene

practices to keep themselves safe from diseases. Nukkad natak, puppet shows and rallies were organised for the women in several parts of the rural areas.

In Ayodhya, Barabanki, Amethi and Sultanpur, women came to know about the waste management system.

In Pratapgarh, Kaushambi and Prayagraj, a seminar on Swachhata ka Manavadhikar was held. Accessibility to a clean and hygienic environment, its quality, and acceptability was discussed.

Highlighting the problems of women scavengers, discussions were held on the availability of Sulabh Shauchalaya at Varanasi, Jaunpur, Ghazipur and Azamgarh and it was concluded that toilets have given these women some relief. Among the seven lakh scavengers, 70 percent are women.

Violence over Sapna’s song leaves one dead

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Clashes over dancing on their favourite songs during marriage functions left two persons dead in Bulandshahr and Ghazipur respectively.

In Bulandshahr, a young man was allegedly beaten to death at a wedding function after the DJ turned down a request to play a Sapna Chaudhary song.

The incident took place at a marriage hall in Bulandshahr in Kotwali police circle late Monday night. The man was admitted to a medical facility where he died during treatment on Tuesday.

According to reports, some youth were dancing at a wedding when they demanded that the DJ play a song of Sapna Chaudhary. When the DJ refused, they became violent and this led to a clash between two groups at the function.

The police registered a case against four persons and sent the body of the deceased for post-mortem.

The alleged accused were detained for questioning and eyewitnesses were being examined.

Senior Superintendent of Police of Bulandshahr, Santosh Kumar Singh, claimed that the deceased had tried to intervene during the clash and suffered a heart attack.

“Prima facie, it appears that he died due to cardiac arrest. The matter is under investigation and action will be taken accordingly,” he said.

An eyewitness at the wedding claimed that a group of youths, in an inebriated condition, demanded that a Sapna Chaudhary song be played but the DJ expressed his inability to do so.

“As soon as the DJ said that he did not have the song, the youths got violent and began beating up the DJ and his support group. The victim was also beaten and he fell to the ground,” the eyewitness said.

In Ghazipur district, the members of a marriage party clashed with the bride’s relatives over the playing of DJ and it also claimed the life of the groom’s kin.

On Tuesday night, the

marriage procession of Rajendra Yadav, a resident of Kasimbabad, left for Rasoolpur. Soon after the procession reached the bride’s place, some members of the groom’s side jumped on the stage and forced the DJ to change the song. This irked the youths from the bride’s side and the clash took place between the two groups.

The situation took an ugly turn when some kin from the bride’s side opened fire in which the groom’s cousin, identified as Roshan, was injured.

He was rushed to the district hospital where the doctors pronounced him dead.

The police also reached the spot and with the help of footage of video recording of the marriage function, the shooters were identified as Golu Yadav and Bholu Yadav.

A case was registered against them and efforts were on to arrest them.

Meanwhile in Bulandshahr, a young man was arrested minutes before his marriage on charges of sexually exploiting a woman and forcing her to take pregnancy termination pills when she became pregnant.

The woman died at a hospital in Meerut on Tuesday after she was given the pills by the accused.

Senior Superintendent of Police of Bulandshahr, Santosh Kumar Singh, said, “The woman was in a relationship with the man, who was sexually exploiting her on the pretext of marriage. Her condition deteriorated after she was given abortion pills. She was referred to a Meerut hospital where she died during treatment. She was five months’ pregnant.”

The SSP said that on the complaint of the woman’s family, the accused, Rahul, was arrested just before his wedding procession started.

Rahul has been booked under IPC sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) at the Khanpur police station of Bulandshahr.

INDIAN BANK

CORRIGENDUM

This is to note that Indian Bank advertisement published in The Pioneer (English) dated 9.12.2020 had mistakenly mentioned date of E-auction for Property of Shri Abhishek Dutta, Hussainganj Branch as 24.11.2020 instead of 24.12.2020 & Date of submission of EMD as 23.11.2020 instead of 23.12.2020. **Inconvenience is Regretted.**

Authorised Officer: Indian Bank

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

Corrigendum No. 50204288A Dated: 08.12.2020

First Corrigendum

On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj is issued a following corrigendum for **Change in Quantity, Change in EMD in EPS-Advt. Tender No. 50204288A due on 02.12.2020 published against EPS Tender Notice No. 20/57 dated 13.11.2020 and RO No. 1222/2020 V.**

Tender No.	Sr. No.	Particulars	From	To
50204288A	01	Quantity	663 SET	100 SET
	02	EMD	156470	23600

Other Terms & Conditions of Tender remain unchanged. 1222/2020 V

North Central Railways @CPRONCR

RESERVED SPECIAL TRAIN-2020

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Reserved Special Train as per details given below:-

TRAIN NO. 02333/02334 HOWRAH - PRAYAGRAJ RAMBAG - HOWRAH SPECIAL TRAIN (DAILY)

Train No.: 02333		STATIONS	Train No.: 02334	
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.
----	20:00	HOWRAH	07:40	----
21:07	21:12	BARDDHAMAN	05:56	06:00
22:01	22:03	DURGAPUR	04:51	04:53
22:34	22:39	ASANSOL JN	04:18	04:23
23:00	23:02	CHITTARANJAN	03:42	03:44
23:41	23:43	MADHUPUR JN	03:02	03:04
00:10	00:15	JASIDIH JN	02:32	02:37
01:17	01:22	JHAJHA	01:55	02:00
01:58	02:00	KIUL JN	00:45	00:47
02:29	02:31	MOKAMA JN	00:14	00:16
02:48	02:50	BARH	23:51	23:53
03:05	03:07	BAKHTIYARPUR JN	23:37	23:39
03:22	03:24	FATUHA	23:15	23:17
04:00	04:10	PATNA JN	22:45	22:55
04:25	04:27	DANAPUR	22:25	22:27
04:39	04:41	BIHTA	21:48	21:50
05:00	05:02	ARA	21:32	21:34
05:16	05:18	BIHIYA	21:07	21:09
05:30	05:32	RAGHUNATHPUR	20:53	20:55
05:45	05:47	DUMRAON	20:38	20:40
06:04	06:06	BUXAR	20:25	20:27
06:38	06:40	DILDARNAGAR JN	19:54	19:56
06:50	06:52	ZAMANIA	19:39	19:41
08:25	08:35	PT DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA JN	18:50	19:00
09:15	09:16	KASHI	18:19	18:20
09:30	09:40	VARANASI JN	18:00	18:08
09:46	09:48	MANDUADIH	17:41	17:43
10:37	10:39	GYANPUR ROAD	16:50	16:52
12:00	----	PRAYAGRAJ RAMBAG	----	15:40

DAYS OF RUN: 02333 from Howrah from 18.12.2020 till further advice and **02334 from Prayagraj Rambag** from 19.12.2020 till further advice. **ACCOMMODATION:** AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Security Helpline No. 182 Integrated Helpline No. 139

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Your Convenience - Our Concern

Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Dhanveen Kaur Chawla to Dhanveen Kaur. Dhanveen Kaur D/o Manjinder Singh, R/o 29/24, Block No. 3, Govind Nagar, Kanpur.

NOTICE

My daughter's name recorded Payal in my service records. After correction, it becomes Payal Singh for all future purposes. Upendra Kumar Singh, 149, Yamuna Vihar, New Cantt., Prayagraj.

NOTICE

Notify that I have changed my name from Raag Shanker Sharma to Raag Shanker for all purposes. Raag Shanker S/o Pramod Shanker Sharma 288/229 Arya Nagar, Naka Hindola, Lucknow

NOTICE

I, Charanpal Singh Bhatia changed my daughter's name from Jagpreet Kaur Bhatia to Jagpreet Kaur. In future She will be known by the name of Jagpreet Kaur. Charanpal Singh Bhatia F/o Jagpreet Kaur, R/o 122/113, Kabadi Market, Sarojni Nagar, Kanpur.

CITYBRIEFS

SANITISERS, FACE SHIELDS DISTRIBUTED



Institute of Plastics Technology (IPT), Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers, in association with German Development Cooperation (New Delhi), has designed and developed face shields and sanitiser at economical rates for corona warriors. These products were distributed to officials at CMO, KGMU, Commissioner of Police office and various other hospitals on Wednesday.

GOLD MEDAL

Akshita Pandey, a class I student of City Montessori School, Rajendra Nagar Campus I, has won gold medal in national-level inter-school online competition named 'Brainobrain Wonderkid-2020'. The competition was organised under the aegis of educational institution Brainobrain. Students of over 1,500 noted schools participated in this competition, wherein Akshita showcased her talent in mental maths, logical ability, general knowledge and speed typing, and walked away with the gold medal.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
(Under the Ministry of HRD Govt. of India)
URUKSHETRA-136119 (Haryana)

E-Tender Notice

Advt. No. 17/2020

E-Tenders are invited for the procurement of goods/services as mentioned below:-

E-Tender ID No.	Description of Goods/Services	Last Selling Date and Time	Opening Date and time
NITK/11/EM/01/2020	Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 243 number of 1.5 ton wall mounted split air - conditioners along with Stabilizers.	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 10:00 AM
NITK/12/CED/01/2020	Supply of Wireless IRI Meter Road Roughness Measurement System on SITC basis	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 10:15 AM
NITK/13/MED/01/2020	Supply of Sound Level Meter on SITC Basis	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 10:30 AM
NITK/14/MED/02/2020	Supply of Potentiostat -Galvanostat with Impedance Analyzer on SITC Basis	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 10:45 AM
NITK/15/CWB/01/2020	Supply of Kitchen Equipment for 300 Seater Multipurpose Boys Hostel on SITC Basis	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 11:00 AM
NITK/16/MED/03/2020	Up-gradation of VCR Engine to operate upon Alcohol, H2, LPG, CNG, CBG & Producer Gas	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 11:15 AM
NITK/17/GA/01/2020	Providing Outsourcing Services of Skilled Manpower for technical assistance on contract basis at NIT URUKSHETRA	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 11:30 AM
NITK/18/GA/02/2020	Providing Outsourcing services of Un - Skilled/Semi Skilled/Skilled/ Highly Skilled Manpower for estate and office attendant works on contract basis at NIT URUKSHETRA	31.12.2020; 02:45 PM	01.01.2021 11:30 AM

The details and conditions of E-tender are available on Institute website www.nitkr.ac.in and <https://mhrd.euniwizarde.com>.

Sd/-
Registrar /c

Slight increase in Covid death rate

195 more test positive, 306 patients recover

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Covid death rate in Lucknow this month has slightly increased to 1.6 percent from 1.4 percent in November, according to a senior health official.

“The actual reason could be heart attack, brain stroke etc, and not necessarily Covid-19. In winters, heart attacks and strokes increase, especially in case of those aged above 60 years,” he said. He added that in the death audits, they try to determine lapses which may have occurred.

“In most of deaths, the reason was late arrival of patients to hospitals. If they reach hospitals early, the number of deaths would come down,” he said, adding that it was the reason why the death rate was on the rise despite dip in the number of coronavirus cases.

The daily coronavirus count went below 200 as 195 cases were detected on Wednesday while 306 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 69,903. Lucknow’s death toll stands at 1,038 while there are 3,128 active cases.

The fresh cases included 19 from from Gomtinagar, 18

from Indiranagar, 16 from Alambagh, 13 from Mahanagar, 12 each from Rae Bareli road & Ashiyana, and 10 each from Chowk, Vikasnagar, Hasanganj & Cantt.

Across the state, 1,381 persons tested positive, including 53 in Kanpur, 102 in Ghaziabad, 75 in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 113 in Varanasi and 96 in Meerut. There were 21 deaths in the state, including five in Lucknow, two each in Kanpur, Prayagraj & Barabanki, and one each in Meerut, Agra, Ayodhya, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Bijnor, Hapur, Pilibhit, Firozabad & Fatehpur. Besides, 2,022 persons recovered, taking the state’s recovery figures to 5,30,854 while there are 20,658 active cases.

Meanwhile, member of Covid Task Force (KGMU) Dr Surya Kant Tripathi said people should realise that getting vaccinated would not change the picture much and they would have to continue wearing masks and practising social distancing.

“Vaccination will also not provide the protection in one day as one has to wait for at least 8-12 weeks for the devel-

opment of immunity and protection rate is also not 100 percent. It is not a guarantee that one cannot contract coronavirus infection after vaccination. The purpose of the vaccine is that number of deaths should come down, people should not be infected by the virus and their conditions does not turn serious even if they contract the infection,” he elaborated. He said it is apparent that people are not concerned, as they are not taking any precautions.

Dr Tripathi said the number of the coronavirus cases has decreased despite Diwali and Chhath festivities, and herd immunity could well be the reason for that. “The sero-surveillance across the country showed 25-26 percent positivity rate, which means every fourth person has developed immunity and this is a good figure. To begin with, India had a strain which was less virulent in comparison to the strains across the globe, but it is also a fact that as time goes by, the virulence of any virus goes down,” he said. He added that the cases are expected to go further down in Lucknow for the next two months.

AKTU to provide employment to 40,000 students

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under Mission Rozgar, an initiative launched by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to provide employment opportunities to the youth of the state, the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University has set a major target of providing jobs in more than 750 management and technical institutes of the state in the new academic session.

The AKTU will conduct interviews for students for 40,000 positions in various companies. A big online employment fair will be organised by the AKTU in the coming week in which many well-known companies will participate to give jobs to the students.

AKTU spokesperson Ashish Mishra said that it was the dream of every student to get a good job after completing the degree and AKTU was aiming to fulfil the dream of the students under the Mission Rozgar of the Yogi government.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University Vice-Chancellor Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak said, “Companies were not coming to the campus due to COVID-19 pandemic but the efforts of the government have slowed the pace of the spread of the deadly coronavirus. Once the cases were controlled in the state, many companies have started coming to the campus to select students.”

Currently, companies are conducting online interviews. But a target has been set to recruit over 40,000 students in the new session for which companies would offer 40,000 jobs for Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University students, he added.

It is to be mentioned that earlier this week, many well-known companies, including NTT Data, Cadila, Amazon, Infosys, GentSight, conducted online interviews and hired students for over 9,000 vacant posts.

Admission to state colleges for BTech through JEE

Lucknow (PNS): The entrance to BTech courses in state engineering colleges for the session 2021-22 will be through JEE, and not UPSEE, as per directions of the Central government. Media spokesperson Ashesh Mishra said BTech aspirants would now have to appear for JEE for entrance to colleges.

“This is being done under the directions of the Central government. Instructions have been given for following the one-exam policy at national level and abolishing state entrance examinations. The instructions had come last year but it was decided at the same would be implemented in the next session because of some problems related to syllabus. We had also informed the Central government about this,” Mishra said.

However, he said they have written to CBSE that they are also holding tests for admission to BPharma, BArch and many other courses through UPSEE. “However, we have not received any response and a meeting is likely to be held over the issue,” he said. He said any further decision would be taken after they get a response from CBSE. “There are certain courses such as BArch & MBA which can be conducted at central level, but there is no test at national level for BPharma. As of now, the clarity is only for BTech, entrance for which will be through JEE,” he added.

Death of live-in partner: S-I to face departmental action

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A departmental action will be taken against sub-inspector Rahul Rathor, whose live-in partner Mamta Singh had succumbed to gunshot injuries at their flat in Chinhat a couple of days back.

Commissioner of Police DK Thakur has sent a missive to Lalitpur SP in this regard. The move has come after SDCP (East) Qasim Abdi submitted a report to the commissioner on Tuesday.

Sources said Rathor, in all probability, would be terminated from services as his act dented the image of UP Police. Rathor was not on duty for a long time and was present in the flat when the incident took place. The sources said that forensic scientists are examin-

ing the handwriting in the suicide note which was recovered from the flat on the fateful day. “If the handwriting does not match with that of Rathor’s live-in partner, the needle of probe will turn towards him,” they said.

One source said the probe into the incident had not been concluded and the report submitted was related to primary findings. Mamta, along with Rathor, was staying in a flat at Omega Apartment in Chinhat. On the fateful day, Rathor’s domestic helpers were also present in the flat and the police recorded their statement. Mamta, who was a divorcee, shot to limelight a few months back when Rathor’s wife had created a scene at Hazratganj Kotwali where he was posted.

MAN DIES AFTER BEING HIT ON HEAD BY WIFE

A man died after his wife hit him on his head with a heavy stick during a fight over his drinking habit in Banthra. Police booked the woman for culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The deceased was identified as Sonu of Unnao. He, along with his wife Sushila, had been living at his in-laws’ house in Rahimnagar (Banthra) for the last ten years. Sonu fought with his wife Sushila after he returned home in a drunken state on the December 7 night. Sonu attacked Sushila and she attacked him with a stick. “She ended up hitting Sonu on the back of his head. He was taken to hospital and was discharged the next day. However, Sonu died on Tuesday night,” his brother Gokul told police.

BJP leader sprayed with bullets

Lucknow (PNS): A Bharatiya Janata Party leader preparing to contest the gram pradhan election was sprayed with bullets in broad daylight in Azamgarh on Wednesday. The assailants later fired several rounds in the air to terrorise the locals and managed to escape.

Reports said that 40-year-old Dilip Giri, a resident of Sothauli Gopalpur in Devgao, was sitting in a salon for a haircut at Chandrabadan Katra market under the Gosaiganj police station area

on Wednesday noon. His friend was also accompanying him. Suddenly half-a-dozen youths arrived on motorcycles and opened indiscriminate fire at Giri. After confirming that he was dead, the assailants fired a few more rounds in the air and escaped. The victim was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Circle Officer of Lalganj, Manoj Raghuvanshi, who reached the spot, claimed that it appeared that some old dispute led to killing.

A case was registered and

investigations were on.

In Sultanpur, in a dispute over razing down a structure, said to be religious, in Mangur hamlet, a man and his nephew were critically injured after their opponents opened indiscriminate fire at them in their house late Tuesday night.

They man and his son were attacked as they were pursuing a case for removing the imambara. Both the injured were referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre here where they are battling for their lives.

Republic Day programmes to be organised with Covid protocols



Lucknow (PNS): District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash presided over a meeting regarding Republic Day celebrations, at collectorate on Wednesday. He said the celebrations would be held in the district following Covid-19 protocols. The DM said the programmes would be interesting, attractive, educative and inspiring. “The tableaux will showcase prevention and precautions for Covid-19, cleanliness, water conservation, environment and various government schemes. The governor and chief minister will also be present during the celebrations in front of Vidhan Bhawan,” he said.

The DM said the Republic Day

parade would be led by Army Commander. He directed the officials to coordinate for all the programmes. The district administration will also take out a tableau and the incharge will be ADM, trans-Gomti. All the cinema halls will showcase patriotic films from January 1 to 31 and before the start of every film, patriotic songs will be played for one minute and for 30 seconds during the interval. Covid-19 precautions will be highlighted. Kavi sammelan and mushaira will be held on January 25 and *prabhat pheris* will be organised on January 26. Special prayer services and cultural programmes will also be organised.

LU’s Political Science dept numero uno in terms of admission

Lucknow (PNS): The Political Science department of Lucknow University has been number one in terms of admissions to UG and PG programmes in Arts faculty for the session 2020-2021. There were 60 seats in BA (Hons), which is a self-financed course at the department, but the same have been increased to 75 four years after its introduction because of the huge demand. For PhD admissions, there have been 18 applicants for seven seats available at the department.

Head of the department Shashi Shukla said the students are being attracted by the updated syllabus. “The syllabus has been revised several times to include all the latest developments. In these times when it is so difficult to hold offline classes, we have been managing successfully. We were the first to conduct the mid-term tests and also the first to give assignments to students, and hence students are attracted as the department has been functioning smoothly,” she said.

She said that the syllabus is suited for competitive examinations and students find it easier after having a background of this syllabus. Shukla said students are connecting to UGC lectures and e-content has also been uploaded on the government portal, and hence there is a wider reach and a lot more exposure unlike earlier when everything was confined to classroom teaching,” she said. However, she added that nothing could substitute classroom teaching. Shukla said the department has uploaded the highest number of e-contents on the UP government portal. “Out of 122 uploads, the highest in the Arts faculty, I have uploaded 61 myself,” she pointed out. She said that over 25 students of the department cracked NET this year.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

ROSARB, KANPUR

Branch Address : 3rd Floor, 118/330, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur-208 012 • Ph. : 0512-2215173
e-mail : sarkan@bankofbaroda.co.in

Sale Notice For Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A" [See Proviso to rule 6(2) & 8 (6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 6(2) & Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of **Bank of Baroda** as Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is"** basis for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured assets/dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date and time. EMD and Bid increase are mentioned below.

Date of e-Auction : 30-12-2020				Last Date of EMD Submission : 29-12-2020 upto 4.00 PM			
Sl. No.	Name & Address of th Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of e-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	Borrower : M/s Le Mart International, Proprietor : Shri Riyaz Akhtar S/o Ahmad Ali Ansari, R/o : 36/1, Pragati Vihar, Gajipurwa, Kanpur. Guarantor : Smt. Anna Khatoun W/o Ahmad Ali Ansari, R/o : 4/6, Ganga Vihar, KDA Colony Jajmau, Kanpur.	House No. 36/1, Gajipurwa, Kanpur in the name of Smt. Anna Khatoun. Area : 272.53 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: Plot No. 35 of Rashid Ahmad & Anwar Iqbal, South: Open Arazi Land, East: Property of M/s Prakash Pen Co., West : 30 Ft. Road.	Rs.25,46,410.67 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 47,80,000/- (RP) ₹ 4,78,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
2.	Borrower : M/s Mahadev Enterprises, Address : (1)1526/77, Daheli Sujanpur, Kanpur Nagar. (2) J-115, EWS Gujaini Kanpur Nagar. Proprietor & Guarantor : Shri Nand Kishore Gupta S/o Shri Kunwar Shah, R/o : J-115, EWS Gujaini Kanpur Nagar.	Land and Building Builtover House No. J-115, EWS, Gujaini, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Nand Kishore. Area : 36.75 Sq. Mtr. Bounded-North : Open Space, South : Plot No. 114, East : Plot No. 100, West : 4.5 Mtr. Road.	Rs. 15,63,405.17 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 15,04,000/- (RP) ₹ 1,51,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
3.	Borrower: M/s Radha Kishan Foods, Address : House No. 48/273, Sarai Lathi Mohal, Generalganj, Kanpur. Proprietor: Shri Sanjay Agarwal S/o Late Jagdish Prasad Agarwal R/o H.No. 75/104 & 105, Ranjithpurwa, Haisi Road, Kanpur.	House No. 48/273, Sarai Lathi Mohal, Chak No. 48, Generalganj, Distt. Kanpur in the name of Shri Sanjay Agarwal, Area: 73.74 sq.mtr. Bounded-North : House No. 48/272, Geeta Arora, South : House No. 48/274, Ramesh, East: 8 Ft. Street, West: 5 Ft. Street.	Rs. 30,19,986.00 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 33,18,000/- (RP) ₹ 3,32,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
4.	Borrower : M/s Vishal Traders, Address : 75/104, 105, Ranjeet Purwa, Haisi Road, Kanpur Nagar. Proprietor : Sri Vishal Agarwal, S/o Late Jagdish Prasad Agarwal R/o: 48/237, Sarai Lathi Mohal, Kanpur Nagar.	Equitable mortgage of Land & Building Situated at 48/273, Chak No. 48, General Ganj, Kanpur in the name of Sri Vishal Agarwal. Area : (1) Undivided Area 73.74 Sq. Mtr. (1/2 of Total 147.48 Sq.Mtr.), (2) Covered Area : Ground Floor-123.09 Sq.Mtr., First Floor-123.09 Sq.Mtr., Second Floor-123.09 Sq.Mtr., Total : 369.27 Sq.Mtr., Bounded- North : House No. 48/272 of Mrs. Geeta Arora, South:House No. 48/274 of Mr. Ramesh, East : 8 Ft. Street, West : 5 Ft. Street.	Rs. 34,45,854.00 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 38,81,000/- (RP) ₹ 3,89,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
5.	Borrower : Maa Sharda Cold Storage & ICE Factory Regd. Office at Kishunpur Bhatauli, Derapur Road, Rura, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. Partner's : (1) Shri Anand Kumar Bajpai S/o Shri Umakant Bajpai (2) Shri Sharad Kumar Bajai S/o Shri Umakant Bajpai (3) Shri Prabhakant Bajpai S/o Shri Raj Narayan Bajpai (4) Smt. Mamta Bajpai W/o Shri Prabha Kant Bajpai, All R/o : Village Bhatauli, Rura Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. Guarantor : Shri Umakant S/o Shri Raj Narayan & Smt. Kushuma Devi W/o Shri Umakant, Both R/o : Village Bhatauli, Rura Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat.	Property (1) : Land & Building Constructed Over Industrial Plot bearing Arazi No. 145 & 146 Situated at Village Kishunpur Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat in the name of Shri Anand Kumar, Shri Sharad Kumar, Shri Prabhakant & Smt. Mamta. Area : 2384 Sq. Mtr. + 7480 Sq. Mtr. = 9864 Sq. Mtr., Bounded Gata No. 145- North: Land of Anand Kumar, South: Land of Shashi, East : Derapur Rura Road, West : Land of Anand Kumar. Bounded Gata No. 146- North: Land of Anand Kumar, South: Land of Vill Chilauli, East : Land of Muni Mahesh Pandey, West : Land of Anand Kumar. Property (2) : Arazi No. 484 Village Bhatauli Tehsil & Pargana Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat in the name of Smt. Mamta. Area : 112 Sq. Mtr., Bounded North: Land of Krishna Gopal, South: House of Malkhan Singh Bhadauriya, East : Land of Krishna Gopal, West : Road.	Rs. 1,46,58,063.73 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 3,38,00,000/- (RP) ₹ 33,80,000/- (EMD) ₹ 1,00,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
6.	Borrower : M/s XPO Services, Regd. Officer : Flat No. 2C, Navsheel Niketan, 395-D, Shyam Nagar, Kanpur. Proprietor : Shri Deepak Kapoor S/o Shri R.D.P. Kapoor. R/o : 11-12, Triveni Nagar, Kanpur. Guarantor : Smt. Satinder Kapoor W/o Shri Deepak Kapoor R/o : 11-12, Triveni Nagar, Kanpur & Also at Flat No. 2C, Navsheel Niketan, 395-D, Shyam Nagar, Kanpur.	Flat No. 2C, Navsheel Niketan, 1st Floor of Plot No. 395-D, Scheme No. 2, Sujatganj, Shyam Nagar, Kanpur in the name of Shri Deepak Kapoor S/o Shri R.D.P. Kapoor and Smt. Satinder Kapoor W/o Shri Deepak Kapoor. Area : Builtup Area 51.58 Sq. Mtr. & Undivided Share in Land 38.64 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: Open to Sky, South: Corridor thereafter Privately Marked Portion 2-D, East : Privately Marked Portion 2-B, West : Open to Sky.	Rs.32,91,400.64 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	30-12-2020 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 22,30,000/- (RP) ₹ 2,23,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	28-12-2020 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. **www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm**, & e-bikray, **https://ibapi.in**. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 8601875614

Date : 10-12-2020 **Place: Kanpur / Kanpur Dehat** **Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda**

34 tubewell operators get appointment letters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In response to the statewide recruitments of tubewell operators, as many as 34 including many women got their appointment letters at a brief function held at Commissioner's auditorium here on Wednesday. It is for the first time, the state government has set the example of women empowerment by appointing them as tubewell operators. The main function was held at the state capital where the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath gave appointment letters through video conferencing to 3,209 selected and trained newly-appointed tubewell operators under its Mission Employment. In Varanasi, UP Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar, along with MLAs Saurabh Srivastava and Dr Awadesh Singh gave letters to 34 operators. District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma and many other senior and departmental officers were also present.

In his address, the CM congratulated the newly-appointed operators for their talents. He also greeted their parents and praised the efforts of public representatives for ensuring the selection process of candidates in a transparent and fair manner. According to him, there is 23 lakh hectares



UP Minister Anil Rajbhar presenting appointment letter to a woman tubewell operator in Varanasi on Wednesday

Pioneer

of agricultural land in the state which is irrigated by tubewells including 34,000 operated by the government but as due to shortage of trained operators many could not run properly so these appointments have been made, increasing the number from around 9,000 to over 12,000. Yogi said that in the direction of the Prime Minister's efforts to double the income of farmers by 2022, the state government is ensuring soil testing or irrigation. He

added that when as the production increases, the income of the farmers will also be doubled.

During his address, he talked to many operators including Rahul Pal of Varanasi and inspired them to discharge their duties with honesty and hard work. Stressing on water conservation, the CM said that every drop of water should be saved and spread of dark zones be stopped. Besides, he also high-

lighted the appointment policies of the state government, he said that so far 1,37,000 appointments of different posts have been made.

According to him, more than one lakh teachers were appointed, which has enhanced the quality of education. During the last three and a half years, his government gave more than four lakh jobs apart from 15 lakh jobs to the youths in private sector, he added.

CRPF launches cleanliness drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 95th Battalion Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in association with Nagar Nigam and Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas launched a massive cleanliness drive here on Wednesday covering as many as 27 Ganga ghats including Chet Singh, Maha Niranjani, Shivala, Dandi, Hanuman, Karnataka, Harishchandra, Kali, Vizianagaram, Kedar, Chowki, Sameshwar, Mansarovar, Narad, Raja, Babua, Pandey, Darbhanga, Munshi, Ahilyabai, Sheetal, Prayag and Dashhashwamedh ghats.

During their drive, they also mobilised the people to save themselves from coronavirus by following COVID-19 guidelines and sanitised the ghats with sodium hypochlorite solution. The chief guest of the programme was MLA from Varanasi Cantonment Saurabh Srivastava while the guest of



CRPF personnel launching cleanliness drive at Ganga ghats in Varanasi on Wednesday

Pioneer

honour was CRPF Commandant Narendra Pal Singh. The programme was chaired by Anil Kumar Singh, chief of Srijan Nyas and brand ambassador of Environment department in the state.

Addressing the people, Narendra Pal Singh highlighted the importance of cleanli-

ness and appealed to all to keep the river Ganga clean and pollution-free. He said that the river would remain clean and pollution-free when the people should understand its importance in their life. According to him, the Ganga ghats of Kashi are internationally famous for their unique structures and it is

duty of all of us to maintain its identity by keeping them clean and avoiding making them dirty by throwing plastic and other wastes there. He also appealed to all to ask others also not to make the ghats dirty highlighting the importance of cleanliness for good health.

Later, the blankets were distributed among the poor and helpless people at Assi Ghat by the Commandant and the programme was organised by the 95 Battalion CRPF in association with Swagatam Kashi Foundation. Among those who were also present were Second Command Officer of CRPF Nitindra Nath, Health officer of Municipal Corporation Ramaskal Yadav, sanitation and food inspector Pradeep Verma, Aparna Bajpai, social worker Sunil Dhanuka, Tushar Dhanuka, Abhishek Sharma, Babul Dubey, Indrajit Singh, Kanhaiyalal Seth, Satyam Pandey and Manish Pandey.

SP continues protest against farm laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

For the third consecutive day, Samajwadi Party (SP) workers continued their protest against the three farm laws here on Wednesday. While they were taking out procession, they had some altercation with the police personnel and later on, about 20 party workers were arrested. Leaving no stone unturned to regain its lost political grounds in the state,

SP workers extending their full support to the ongoing agitation of the farmers near Delhi tried their best to corner the limelight telling the people that they are with the farmers. As the party has a strong base in rural areas, it does not want to miss any opportunity to encash the opportunity.

A day after Bharat Bandh, the party workers demanding withdrawal of farm laws took out a procession from

Bhainsasur Ghat near Rajghat under the leadership of city chief Vishnu Sharma.

Later, when the police tried to stop them they had an altercation and later on, the police arrested 20 workers.

It was the third day in succession when the party workers were detained. Though heavy police force was deployed there after getting information that the SP workers had planned to take out

procession, some party workers led by Yuvjan Sabha activist Kishan Dixit reached there through narrow lanes. Later, when the procession reached near Machaudhari Park, the police stopped the SP workers and then Kotwali and Adampur police stations arrested party workers. Puja Yadav, Shanu Sinha, Ishan Srivastava and many others had shown resistance when the cops tried to stop them.

Covid: Varanasi close to 20k-mark

VARANASI (PNS): The district has inched close to the 20k-mark as with the finding of 78 new COVID-19 patients the total number of cases has increased to 19,977 on Wednesday. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 326. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 82 and 81 of them have been recovered from home isolation, while one from a hospital, increasing the number to 15,972 and 2,870 respectively. The total number of

patients who have been recovered so far is 18,852, leaving 799 active cases. The recovery rate is 94.36 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.63 per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 39 positive patients were found out of 3,144 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 4,54,168 and the results of 2,764 are awaited. Out of them, 4,34,230 were negative, while 19,938 positive. The total number of

samples collected was 4,74,984. Earlier, two males aged 58 and 44 from Manduadih and Assi respectively succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of nine new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,546 including 224 red zones. There are 2,322 green zones.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of the District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, mass/group antigen tests con-

tinued to be conducted at Varanasi Junction (Cantt.) and Manduadih railway stations but all the 55 and 40 tests done there respectively were found negative. Besides, one out of 62 at Swami Vivekanand Hospital, Bhelupur has been found positive while all the 295 tests at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura, 191 at Government Women's Hospital, 37 at CHC Shivpur, 175 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar and 75 at SSH BHU have been found negative.

‘Bharo Tel Jeeto Car’ campaign launched

VARANASI (PNS): Indian Oil, the largest retailer of petroleum fuels in the country, launched the ‘Bharo Tel Jeeto Car’ campaign in the district. The campaign will last till December 31. It also launched ‘Indane Xtra-Tel 19 kg & Indane Jumbo 425 kg cylinder’ in order to make Indane 19 kg commercial cylinders more efficient.

Launching the campaign

formally at an Indian Oil Retail Outlet in Bhojuveer here Dr Uttiya Bhattacharyya, Executive Director and State Head, UP informed that the customers making fuel purchase worth Rs 400 or more on a single bill from an Indian Oil outlet will stand a chance to win a bumper prize of a brand-new SUV at the end of the final draw. Samresh Kumar, General

Manager (Engineering), UP and Deepak Kumar Sinha, Chief Divisional Manager, Varanasi DO were also present on the occasion.

About 100 daily winners will receive Rs 100 each as Xtra Rewards points, while 25 weekly winners will pocket Rs 5,000 each as Xtra Rewards points. In addition to this, there will be 16 bike winners and 4 lucky car

winners decided at the end of the final draw. To participate, the customers will have to send a simple SMS in a pre-defined format (Dealer code<space>Bill no. <space>Bill amount) on Mo-9052155555.

Only two SMSes per mobile number will be accepted per day towards the lucky draw entry, he added.

49 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A total of 49 people, including two doctors tested positive for COVID-19, while two people, including the office superintendent of CBSE, died within the last 24 hours on Tuesday. This brings the total number of corona patients to 27,079. Dr Rishi Sahai, the Nodal Officer of Corona confirmed this.

Dr Sahai said that a total of 5,785 people have been examined on Tuesday. In addition, 67 people have become infection free. Five people have been discharged from SRN Hospital, while home isolation of 63 people has been completed.

A total of 26,031 people have become infection free so far. Out of these, home isolation of 19,515 people has been

completed. The total number of active cases is 696 in the district. Of them, 58 patients are admitted in SRN, 22 in Beli and 14 in private hospitals. The remaining 602 people are in home isolation.

On Tuesday, CRPF Radiologist, Assistant Professor of the Department of Medicine in Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, ARTO, NTPC engineer, Standing Council of

High Court, steno of National Skill Training Institute, Trade Tax Officer etc. have been infected. Apart from this, two people died in Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital.

One is a resident of Kaushambi, while the other is a 54-year-old man from Bara. He was admitted to the SRN Hospital on December 5 and was breathless for a long time.

Two bike riders killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Two bike riders died on the spot when a speeding truck hit them hard near Shehnai Guest House in Kareli area of the city in late night hours on Tuesday.

Some local residents and the police chased the truck and intercepted it. The driver has been arrested and the truck is under police custody. The truck had been engaged to transport Magh Mela goods, and was going towards Karelalbagh to load mela related goods. CCTV cameras on the road have captured the accident.

According to the police the CCTV footage suggests that the bike riders were coming from the Pahalwan trijunc-

tion. As soon as they reached Shehnai Guest House a speeding truck hit them hard and the helmet of the bike rider fell on the road. Both sustained head injuries and bled profusely.

The police recovered a driving license from the pocket of one of the bike riders which suggests that his name was Balram Singh of Kaushambi. The second youth had possessed a mobile phone. When the police dialed the number, they were told that Arjun, son of peetambar had left Prayagraj on Tuesday night. The police have also recovered a liquor bottle from his possession. The number of the bike was UP 73 H 1142.

CLASH: After the uproar between a group of Baratis and

a group of youths on Monday night near Sadiyapur under the Kareli police station, the police scrutinised the CCTV footage and it was found that the scooty-borne youths had started the dispute. They had forcibly entered Barat with the scooty. Scooty riders also pushed a barati when he resisted. They are also seen in CCTV footage while threatening him. Apart from this, those people had called their colleagues from Daryabad, after which a ruckus was created.

In the case of assault and stone pelting, police have identified six youths from CCTV footage, while others are still unidentified. Three of them were nabbed late Tuesday night, while the search for oth-

ers is on. Police said that strict action will be taken against the identified youths.

It may be pointed out here that a barat from Daraganj was to go to a guest house in Wasihabad on Monday night. Barat had reached Sadiyapur locality when two youths from Daryabad reached the middle of Barat on scooty. As a result of which a barati was pushed away by their scooty. Scooty-borne youths started hurling abuse and indulged in fighting when some youths in Barat protested.

Not only this, they had called their colleagues also. After this there was fierce fighting and stone pelting on both sides. In this, a young man named Aibad was injured.

NCR shows improvement in loading of foodgrains, fert & farm related items

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

North Central Railway has shown a significant improvement in loading of foodgrains, fertiliser and other agriculture related items.

As on December 8, 2020 North Central Railway in the current financial year has loaded 10.54 million tonnes freight which is 1.9 lakh tonnes more as compared to freight loaded in the same period of last financial year. Despite COVID-19 situation, this improvement could be achieved due to substantial increase of 40 per cent in

foodgrains loading and 5 per

cent improvement in fertiliser loading over last year.

Transportation of goods through railway is safer, faster, eco-friendly and cost-effective over other modes of transport and increased transport of foodgrains and other agriculture-related items through railway is an important indicator of growth in agriculture and affiliated sectors and connects farmers to new and emerging markets.

North Central Railway has taken many steps for improving loading of foodgrains and other commodities which include improvement in 17 goods sheds over the three

divisions; finalisation of station to station rates allowing rebate upto 30 per cent for additional and new traffic stream of foodgrains from Etah, Kherali, Datia, Dabra, Rayaru, Lalitpur, Mathura etc; capturing new traffic of tractor loading at ICD Dadri; capturing new traffic through loading of foodgrain etc. in mini and half rakes; capturing foodgrain export traffic to Bangladesh.

Some of the recent achievement in loading foodgrains and other agriculture related items on the Prayagraj Division are opening of Iradatganj for foodgrain load-

ing after gap of approximately six years, loading of 20 foodgrain rakes from in last 1.5 months from Naini, loading of tractors in 100 NMG wagons from ICD Dadri, capturing new traffic and loading of foodgrains in 121 wagons at Pankidham.

On Agra division marketing efforts by BDUs resulted in first ever foodgrain loading in two mini rakes from Mathura. Similarly, Jhansi Division has loaded 1.5 Lakh tonnes foodgrains in November-2020 which is best ever performance of the division in agriculture produce transportation.

AU student leader dies in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Nitesh Singh Rajput (26), a prominent student leader of Allahabad University, died tragically in a road accident in Bhadohi. This incident caused an irreparable loss to the agreed family. A large number of students reached his home to express their condolences.

Sita Devi wife of late Sanjay Singh's son Nitesh Singh was a resident of Arai Katra village, under the Koiruna police station in Bhadohi was a student of BA LLB at Allahabad University. On Tuesday, he had gone to Varanasi with some of his friends to attend an acquaintance's wedding by car.

While returning from the inverted lane, his high speed car collided with the truck coming from the opposite

direction near the Sinks Lane near Nalanagar toll plaza late evening.

The accident was so powerful the car was blown into pieces. The driver escaped leaving the truck on the commotion. Police reached the spot after receiving the information, separated the car with the help of a crane and immediately sent the injured to the hospital where Nitesh was declared dead. In the car, Himanshu (15) and Sudhanshu (18) son of Rahul Singh were seriously injured, who were referred to the SRN Hospital for treatment.

The incident triggered panic in the village. When the news reached Prayagraj, a large number of students left for their home. Nitesh Singh was the only son. He has two sisters, one of whom is married. Nitesh along with his mother and sis-

ter lived in a house in Darbhanga Colony in Prayagraj. Nitesh contested the election of the vice-president from the University of Allahabad in 2018 and lost the election in a tough fight.

Nitesh Singh Rajput, a student leader at Allahabad University (AU), died in a road accident. As soon as the news of his demise came, a wave of mourning went in the students of university. Tributes were paid to Nitesh Singh Rajput at the condolence meeting held in the students' union building on Tuesday evening. Nitesh also contested the students' union for the post of vice-president in 2018-19.

Nitesh studied at Boys High School up to class XII and after that he enrolled in BA LLB at AU. In the Students' Union election, he contested against

Akhilesh Yadav of NSUI and bagged the second spot. NSUI Eastern UP President Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday paid tributes to his former contestant at the Students Union Hall.

Many students were present during this period. At the same time, including Karan Singh Parihar, former vice-president of CMP Students Council, Dr Mrityunjay Rao Omar, Dr Dharendra Pratap Singh, Neeraj Pandey also paid tribute. Nitesh, who is very friendly by nature, gave a shock to the teacher along with the students by his death.

Originally, the accident took place with Nitesh Singh Rajput of Arai village of Katra post in Sitagadhi in Bhadohi district. As soon as the information was received, many student leaders from Allahabad University left for Bhadohi.

Akshayvat in Alld Fort to be opened for pilgrims

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The centuries-old mythological tree Akshayvat in Allahabad Fort will be opened for pilgrims during the upcoming Magh Mela from January 14. Inspector General of Police (Prayagraj range) KP Singh said that Akshayvat will be opened for darshan between 6 am and 5 pm.

He, however, clarified that darshan will be allowed during main snan days, including Makar Sankranti, Mauni Amavasya, Paush Purnima, Maghi Purnima and Basant Panchami.

On other days, devotees will be able to get a glimpse of the holy tree between 6 am and 5 pm.

Singh said, adequate security bandobast will be made in view of heavy rush of devotees during the annual religious fair and duties of additional policemen equipped with latest safety gadgets will be assigned.

Akshayvat tree was opened

for the first time for devotees during Kumbh 2019. With the fort under Army control and inaccessible to pilgrims, prayers are offered at the replica outside the fort.

Apart from Akshayvat, devotees will also get access to Patalpuri and Saraswati Koop (well) after negotiating through a passage. A glass and steel wall is being erected to facilitate darshan of the holy tree. Currently, Akshayvat is open for darshan between 7 am and 5 pm.

DEMOLITION: Family members of the dreaded mafia don and MLA Vijay Mishra have started demolishing the unauthorised portions of a shopping complex situated in front of the Allahpur police outpost.

The Prayagraj Development Authority team had visited the spot with JCB machines last month, but the daughter of Vijay Mishra succeeded in procuring a stay order from the High Court, thus the demolition was postponed.

The court had directed Vijay Mishra's advocate to demolish the unauthorised portion of that building on their own, otherwise the PDA will be allowed to do the work.

Besides labourers some machines have also been deployed by the family members, fearing that if they did not do the work within stipulated time, the PDA will pull down the whole building.

ONLINE FDP PROGRAMME: The departments of Botany, Zoology and Chemistry, CMP PG College, have jointly organised an interdisciplinary online FDP under the DBT star college scheme to be held from December 9 to 15.

The major objective and aim of the FDP programme are to give exposure to the faculties of different institutions to provide hands on training on various bioinformatics approaches through various tools and software. The first day session started with inaugural session which was compared by Dr Prateek Srivastava, who

also focused on DBT star scheme. In the Inaugural session Principal, Dr Brijesh Kumar, and patron of the programme welcomed the participants and guest. Thereafter Dr Sarita Srivastava, coordinator-DBT Star College Project introduced the guest of the programme. The keynote address was delivered by Dr Mehar Hasan Asif, Principal Scientist, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Division, CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow on the topic 'Deciphering the Plant Genome using Computational Biology Approaches'. She explained the basics of Bioinformatics and told that Bioinformatics is a field of study that use to extract knowledge from biological data. Prof UC Lavanija FNA, FNASc. Prof Emeritus, Department of Botany, University of Lucknow (Former Chief Scientist, CIMAP- CSIR Lucknow) was the chairperson of the FDP. He focused on historical background of bioinformatics. Vote of thanks was given by Dr Amita Pandey.



Sakhi Kendra members form a human chain to protest domestic violence against women on Wednesday

Pioneer

Remain prepared for Covid resurgence: Dube to docs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Additional Chief Secretary (Medical Education) Dr Rajneesh Dube directed the hospitals to remain prepared for any resurgence of COVID-19.

Holding a video conference with the GSVM Medical College doctors on Wednesday, he said although the nationwide indications were that the novel coronavirus infections were declining rapidly, yet all the Covid hospitals, especially the Level 3 ones, should remain well prepared with testing kits, drugs, oxygen and ventilators, for any fresh wave of the virus.

He said to prevention was the best way to keep the novel coronavirus infection at bay and for this the focus should be on wearing masks and maintaining social distancing to break the virus chain.

GSVM Medical College Principal Prof RB Kamal said the medical college was well prepared with man and material. He said recently, on account of cold and smog, cases of pulmonary infections were being reported in a big way.

He said all the patients admitted to the hospital should be tested for COVID-19 infection on priority.

Prof Kamal said LLR, Kanshiram, Narayana and Rama hospitals had once again girded their loins to successfully tackle COVID-19.

He said the chief medical officer had been directed that COVID-19 patients in any private hospital or nursing home should immediately report to the CMO office and get them tested. He said if any hospital was found treating COVID-19 patients without informing the CMO office or without any infrastructure, its licence would be cancelled.

Associate Prof at the medicine department of LLR Hospital, Dr SK Gautam, said

some patients who had earlier been treated for COVID-19 had approached the hospital with flu-like symptoms and they had developed pulmonary infection and their lungs were affected.

He said it appeared as it they were coronavirus positive once again and their samples had been sent to the laboratory and only after confirmation anything could be said.

He advised patients who had been affected by COVID-19 to take to anulom-vilom pranayam yoga exercises to strengthen their lungs.

DC orders action against absent KDA employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar directed the Kanpur Development Authority vice chairman to stop the salaries of the absent supervisory staff issue them show cause notices to them.

He also sought the copies of the replies given by the employees to the notice and the action taken on them.

The divisional commissioner expressed annoyance at the gross negligence of KDA officials and said the working of the development authority needs to be streamlined in a stipulated time frame.

It may be mentioned that during the earlier surprise inspection by the divisional commissioner a few months ago, the situation was exactly the same and nothing has changed so far.

Shekhar said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had issued strict directives to all divisional commissioners to ensure that the government offices focused on punctuality and the grievances of the people were redressed on priority.

During his surprise visit to KDA on Wednesday, the divisional commissioner found over 50 per cent of the supervisory officials absent till 10:45 am although they must report in office by 10 am.

He said the working of the



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Mr Raj Shekhar checking the attendance register at KDA on Wednesday.

Pioneer

supervisory staff showed gross negligence and apathy of the officials and majority of the attendance registers were not seen or verified by the incharges of that particular section. He directed the vice chairman to ensure that the staff was present on the premises at 10 am without fail and all the attendance registers were checked and verified on a daily basis. On summoning details of the absent employees it was found that several of them were absent without any sanction of leave though the register showed them to be on leave.

Shekhar interacted with the people who had come to KDA for various pending issues and works. He talked to the members of a family who were visiting the KDA for the past over four months and were running to pillar to post but their grievance had not been redressed and they were being harassed by the staff concerned. He directed the vice chairman to get the issue resolved and report to the commissionerate.

He expressed concern over the chaos among the people who were unable to find the department and the official

concerned and said proper displays at appropriate places in the section with name designation and mobile number of the supervisory staff of every section be displayed without any further delay so that people were aware and could reach out the senior officers to get their issues resolved in time.

He also asked the vice chairman to put up a display board at the entry point of the KDA building showing the sections, departments and , names, designation and the room numbers of the officers and their mobile phone numbers.

Cow milk protein allergy on the rise in India: Doc

KANPUR (PNS): Allergic diseases are on the rise in infants in India and the recent statistics show that globally over 8 percent of infants suffered from the cow milk protein allergy (CMPA). It causes injury to the stomach and intestines. This protein intolerance is not lactose intolerance. However in India, the CMPA prevalence rate is over 30 percent which is certainly a cause of concern.

This was stated by Dr Naraina Modi while addressing the PED-CON 2020 on the topic ‘Allergy and Applied Immunology’. He said it was

believed that CMPA was the disease of the developed world but its sharp rise in India was a cause of concern and was the cause of chronic diarrhoea in Indian children.

He said this engendered the need to make paediatricians and primary health care physicians more capable in diagnosing and managing cow’s milk protein allergy in infants. He said the recommendations emphasised upon the importance of comprehensive history taking and careful physical examination and added that elimination of cow’s milk protein

from the infant’s or mother’s diet was the gold standard for diagnosis.

He said CMPA was easily missed in primary care settings and needed to be considered as a cause of infant distress and diverse clinical symptoms. He added that CMPA could develop in exclusively and partially breast-fed infants, and when cow milk protein was introduced in the feeding regimen.

He mooted early diagnosis and adequate treatment which could decrease the risk of impaired growth. He said CMPA resulted from an

immunological reaction to one or more milk proteins and this immunological basis distinguished CMPA from other adverse reactions to cow milk protein such as lactose intolerance.

Dr Modi said WHO had focused on initiative called Diet4Life, to sponsor awareness programmes for paediatricians, dieticians and parents, ostensibly to educate them about management of inborn errors of metabolism and allergic conditions in children. He said the Indian Academy of Paediatrics had resolved “not to

91 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 91 more coronavirus positive cases on Wednesday evening. Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 91 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Tuesday evening and Wednesday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 31,292 cases. He said that 43 patients were discharged from hospital. He said one COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Wednesday evening keeping the death toll to 797. The CMO said at present 828 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 4835 samples were sent for testing in the city.

Akhilesh meets slain Sanjit’s family members

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav visited the house of slain lab technician Sanjit Yadav on Wednesday and met the family members.

Yadav stayed there for 15 minutes and returned without talking to media.

His visit to Sanjit Yadav’s house is being seen as a step to strengthen the Samajwadi Party base in Govind Nagar assembly constituency.

Prior to Yadav’s arrival, police had barricaded all the three lanes going towards Sanjit Yadav’s house. His convoy reached the destination from Barra-5 Sabzi Mandi side.

Earlier, on hearing about Akhilesh Yadav’s visit, Superintendent of Police (South) Dipak Bhuker met Sanjit Yadav’s father Chaman Yadav around 12.30 pm and informed him about the efforts being made by the police to punish the assailants.

He said investigations were still on and police teams were already deputed to collect evidence.

Yadav assured the parents of Sanjit Yadav of a CBI probe into the incident when the SP formed government in the state.

Missing gram pradhan’s body found

KANPUR (PNS): Mystery shrouds the killing of a former gram pradhan whose body was recovered from the bush near Fakkad Chauraha of Bhitargaon village under Ghatampur Kotwali police station on Wednesday morning.

The former gram pradhan had left his house for morning walk on December 6 and was missing since then.

According to reports, former gram pradhan Ramarey Chak (60) of Lalpur village in Patara development block was living with wife Sushila and son Vikas in Majra Kumbaupur of Bhitargaon for the past several years.

Eldest among his six brothers, Ramarey was gram pradhan of Lalpur village from 1995 to 2000 and thereafter his wife Sushila was pradhan from 2000 to 2005. He used to go on morning walk daily up to Hanuman temple in Bhelsa village.

On December 6 also, he had proceeded on morning walk but went missing. On failing to trace him, the family members informed the police about his disappearance.

On Wednesday morning, some villagers informed the family about the recovery of his body from the bush.

Timings of special trains revised

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration has revised the timing of special trains being run for the convenience of passenger public as per the new timetable. As a result, the following special trains are being run at the revised time. Therefore, people are requested to get information about the revised timetable at the time of reservation or before travelling in order to avoid inconvenience to passengers. All coaches in these trains will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said. According to the revised time table, 08311 Sambalpur-Manduadih biweekly special will from December 13 to 30 from Sambalpur every Wednesday and Sunday leave at 13.05 hrs, Rengali at 13.23 hrs, Jharsuguda at 14.05 hrs, Rajgangapur at 14.58 hrs, Rourkela at 15.40 hrs, Nuagaon at 16.15 hrs, Bano at 17.05 hrs, Pokla at 17.40 hrs, Hatia at 19.25 hrs, Ranchi at 19.55 hrs, Muri at 21.10 hrs, Ramgarh Cantt at 22.10 hrs, Barkakana at 23.00 hrs, the second day Tori at 00.12 hrs, Daltonganj at 01.37 hrs, Garhwa Road at 03.40 hrs, Untari Road at 03.54 hrs, Mohammadganj at 04.06 hrs, Haidarnagar at 04.19 hrs, Japla at 04.30 hrs, Nabinagar Road at 04.42 hrs, Dehri On Sone at 05.22 hrs, Sasaram at 05.35 hrs, Kudra at 05.55 hrs, Bhabua Road at 06.13 hrs, Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Jn at 08.05 hrs, Kashi at 08.47 hrs, Varanasi at 09.10 hrs and reach Manduadih at 09.25 hrs. During the return journey the 08312 Manduadih-Sambalpur bi-weekly special from December 14 to 31 will leave Manduwadih every Thursday and Monday at 15.00 hrs, Varanasi at 15.30 hrs, Kashi at 15.45 hrs, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Jn to 16.38 hrs, Bhubua Road at 17.20 hrs, Kudra at 17.38 hrs, Sasaram at 17.59 hrs, Dehri On Sone at 18.19 hrs, Nabinagar Road at 18.48 hrs, Japla at 19.03 hrs, Haidarnagar at 19.14 hrs, Mohammadganj at 19.28 hrs, Untari Road at 19.42 hrs, Garhwa Road at 21.20 hrs, Daltonganj at 21.52 hrs, Tori at 23.03 hrs, on the second day Barkakana at 01.45 hrs, Ramgarh Cantt at 02.00 hrs, Muri at 02.50 hrs, Ranchi at 04.10 hrs, Hatia at 04.30 hrs, Pokla at 05.20 hrs, Bano at 05.50 hrs, Nuagaon at 06.55 hrs, Rourkela at 09.37 hrs, Rajgangpur at 08.05 hrs, Jharsuguda at 09.30 hrs, Rengali at 09.52 hrs and reach Sambhalpur at 10.30 hrs. A total of 18 coaches, including seven of sleeper, six of general class, two of AC IIIrd, one of AC IIInd and two of SLR/D.

TINSUKIA-AMRITSAR SPL: As a result of

Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani spl timing revised

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration is revising the timings of special trains being run for keeping the convenience of people as per the new timetable. As a result the 02503 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani weekly special will from December 17 leave Dibrugarh every Thursday, and 02504 New Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani weekly special from December 15 every Tuesday and 02505 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani biweekly special from December 11 from Dibrugarh every Monday and Friday and 02506 New Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani biweekly special from December 13 every Sunday and Thursday from New Delhi. CPRO PK Singh said. The 02503 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani weekly special train will from December 17 every Thursday from Dibrugarh leave at 19.55 hrs, Moranhat at 21.30 hrs, Simaluguri at 21.22 hrs, Mariani at 22.15 hrs, the second day Dimapur at 00.27 hrs, Lumding at 02.00 hrs, Guwahati at 05.36 hrs, New Bongaigaon at 08.11 hrs, Kokrajhar at 08.40 hrs, New Alipurduar at 09.33 hrs, New Coochbehar at 10.02 hrs, New Jalpaiguri at 12.20 hrs, Kishanganj at 13.37 hrs, Katihar at 15.25 hrs, Samastipur at 18.45 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 19.40 hrs, Hajipur at 20.35 hrs, Chhapra at 21.54 hrs, Ballia at 23.00 hrs, the third day Varanasi at 01.40 hrs, Lucknow at 05.55 hrs, Bareilly at 09.15 hrs, Moradabad at 10.55 hrs and reach New Delhi at 13.38 hrs. During the return journey the 02504 New Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani weekly special will from December 15 every Tuesday depart from New Delhi at 11.25 hrs, from Moradabad at 14.10 hrs, from Bareilly at 15.24 hrs, from Lucknow at 18.50 hours, from Varanasi at 23.00 hrs, on the second day Ballia at 00.46 hrs, from Chhapra at 02.11 hrs, from Hajipur 03.23 hrs, from Muzaffarpur at 04.20 hrs, from Samastipur 05.15 hrs, from Katihar at 09.00 hrs, from Kishanganj at 10.20 hrs, from New Jalpaiguri at 12.10 hrs, from New Coochbehar at 14.22 hrs, from New Alipurduar at 14.49 hrs, from Kokrajhar at 15.44 hrs, from New Bongaigaon at 18.35 hrs, from Guwahati at 19.30 hrs, from Lumding at 22.30 hrs, from Dimapur the third day at 00.15 hrs, from Mariani at 03.00 hrs, from Simalguri at 03.53 hrs, from Moranhat at 04.40 hrs and reach Dibrugarh at 05.30 hrs. A total of 20 coaches, including one air-conditioned first, four AC second class, 12 of air-conditioned third

class, one pantrycar and two of generator-cum-luggage van, will be attached in the train. On the other hand, the 02505 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani biweekly special train will from December 11 depart from Dibrugarh every Monday and Friday at 22.00 hrs, the second day from North Lakhimpur at 00.25 hrs, from Harmuti at 01.07 hrs, from Rangapara North at 03.45 hrs, from New Missamari at 04.06 hrs, from Udalguri at 04.52 hrs, from Tanga at 05.14 hrs, from Rangia at 06.05 hrs, from New Bongaigaon at 08.11 hrs, from Kokrajhar at 08.40 hrs, from New Alipurduar at 09.33 hrs, from New Cooch Behar at 10.02 hrs, from New Jalpaiguri at 12.20 hrs, from Kishanganj at 13.37 hrs, from Katihar at 15.35 hrs, from Begusarai at 17.37 hrs, from Barauni at 19.00 hrs, from Hajipur at 20.35 hrs, from Chhapra at 21.58 hrs, from Ballia at 23.00 hrs, from Varanasi on third day at 01.40 hrs, from Lucknow at 05.55 hrs, from Bareilly at 09.15 hrs, from Moradabad at 10.55 hrs and reach New Delhi at 13.38 hrs. During the return journey, the 02506 New Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani bi-weekly special train will from December 13 depart from New Delhi every Thursday and Sunday at 11.25 hrs, from Moradabad at 14.10 hrs, from Bareilly at 15.24 hrs, from Lucknow at 18.50 hrs, from Varanasi at 23.00 hrs, the second day from Ballia at 00.51 hrs, from Chhapra at 02.10 hrs, from Hajipur at 03.23 hrs, from Barauni at 05.00 hrs, from Begusarai at 05.18 hrs, from Katihar at 09.00 hrs, from Kishanganj at 10.20 hrs, from New Jalpaiguri at 12.10 hrs, from New Cooch Behar at 14.22 hrs, from New Alipurduar at 14.49 hrs, from Kokrajhar at 15.44 hrs, from New Bongaigaon at 16.35 hrs, from Rangiya at 18.15 hrs, from Tanga at 18.49 hrs, from Udalguri at 19.12 hrs, from New Missamari at 20.00 hrs, from Rangapara North at 20.45 hrs, from Harmuti at 23.25 hrs and the third day from North Lakhimpur at 00.15 hrs and will reach Dibrugarh at 03.45 hrs. A total of 20 coaches, will be installed in the structure of this train, including one AC first class, four air-conditioned second, 12 air-conditioned third, one pantry car and two generator-cum-luggage vans.

STOPPAGE PROVIDED: Keeping the convenience of passengers in mind the railway administration has decided to provide stoppage to 05008 Lucknow Jn-Varanasi City special train at Maghar, Sihapur and Sahajanva stations with immediate effect, CPRO PK Singh said.

NCL’s Jayant Project distributbes compensation

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

The Jayant Project of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) distributed a compensation of about ₹95 lakh to 21 landowners of Medhauli village. On the occasion Jayant Area General Manager (Electrical & Mechanical) BN Chaudhary, Project Officer, Jayant, RK Singh, Staff Officer (Personnel), Jayant, Safdar Khan, Staff Officer (Civil) PK Rai, Nodal Officer (R&R), Jayant Mukesh Senwar, Deputy



Manager (Personnel) Bhagirath and representatives of the labour union of Jayant area were present. During the distribution of compensation, the problems of local people of Medhauli village

were heard and an assurance was given to them that every effort would be made for their speedy redressal. It may be pointed out here that in NCL on the list received from the Singrauli district administration after inspecting the eligibility of the displaced the process of providing employment is also going on. Along with it NCL management is making efforts to complete the pending work of distribution of compensation to the displaced persons of Medhauli village soon.

VMM extends helping hand

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC Rihand’s women’s Voluntary organisation, Vartika Mahila Mandal (VMM) while on one hand is distributing clothes, blankets, glasses and medicines etc among the villagers from time to time, on the other hand, it went a step ahead by providing a smartphone to a

needy student and helped her in continuing her online studies. A student of class VIII did not have a smartphone for online studies. As soon as Vartika Mahila Mandal came to know about it they called the student to its auditorium recently and provided her a smartphone. Not only this, Vartika Mahila Mandal also deposited the

annual fees of four other students in their school. Prominent among those present on the occasion were chairperson of VMM Padma I chaiyengar, vice-chairpersons, Krishna and Madhavi Ramesh, general secretary Rupa Singharai etc besides other office-bearers and members.

Three Al-Badr terrorists killed, 5 civilias injured

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Three terrorists belonging to Al-Badr terror outfit were killed and five civilians received injuries in two different incidents of terrorist violence in Pulwama and Baramulla districts of Kashmir on Wednesday.

In the first incident, three Al-Badr terrorists were neutralised by the joint team of security forces in Tiken area of Pulwama while one civilian, in whose house terrorists were reportedly hiding, received gunshot injuries during the gunfight.

The killed terrorists were part of groups involved in many terror crime cases including planning & executing several major terror attacks on securi-

ty forces. Meanwhile, four civilians received injuries in a grenade attack in Singhpora area of Pattan in Baramulla.

So far, 214 terrorists have been neutralised by the security forces in J&K. Out of this 164 were local terrorists and 50 were foreign terrorists.

According to a police spokesman, after receiving a specific input about the presence of terrorists in Tiken area of Pulwama a joint cordon and search operation was launched by the Pulwama police, 55RR and 182, 183 BNs CRPF in the area.

"During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists got ascertained they were given opportunity to surrender, however, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter", police spokesman said.

In the ensuing encounter, three terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. They have been identified as

Mehraj-ud-Din Lone resident of Arigam Pulwama, Umer Ali resident of Dadsara Tral and Umar Farooq resident of Sughan Shopian. All the killed terrorists were affiliated with proscribed terror outfit Al-Badr. Zamir Sadiq Lone in whose house the terrorists were hiding also received gunshot injuries and was evacuated to hospital for the treatment of his injuries where his condition is stated to be stable.

In the second incident, at least four civilians received splinter injuries in a grenade attack in Singhpora area of Pattan in Baramulla district. Police Spokesman said, at about 9:55 a.m terrorists hurled a grenade upon SSB vehicle at Singhpora Pattan area of Baramulla. According to a police spokesman, the grenade missed the intended target and exploded on road.

In this incident, four civilians received splinter injuries and were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FARMERS REJECT...

On the issue of farmers not getting the right to appeal in civil courts for dispute resolution, the Government said it is open to making an amendment to provide for an appeal in civil courts. Currently, the dispute resolution is at SDM level. On fears that big corporates will take over farmlands, the Government said it has already been made clear in the laws, but still, for clarity's sake, it can be written that no buyer can take loans against farmland nor any such condition will be made to farmers. On attaching farmland under contract farming, the Government said the existing provision is clear but still it can be clarified further if required. On fear about the scrapping of the MSP regime and shifting of trade to private players, the Government said it is ready to give a written assurance that the existing MSP will continue. On demands to scrap the proposed Electricity Amendment bill 2020, the Government said there won't be any change in the existing system of electricity bill payment for farmers. On farmers' demand to scrap the Air Quality Management of NCR Ordinance 2020, under which there is the provision of penalty for stubble burning, the Government said it is ready to find an appropriate solution.

OPP LEADERS MEET...

Rahul said they informed the President that it is "absolutely critical that these anti-farmer laws are taken back".

"Couple of points we mentioned to the President. The first was the manner in which these Bills were passed without any discussion, without a conversation with the opposition parties and certainly without a discussion with the farmers of this country who have built this country," he said.

"So, the way the Bills were imposed, we see it as an insult to the farmers of this country. The kisan has lost faith in the Government. The kisan does not believe that the Government is acting in their interest and that is why lakhs of them are on the streets, non-violently, compassionately on the streets. They are struggling in cold weather with complete respect," he said. Yechury said they are asking to repeal agriculture laws and electricity amendment bill that "were passed in an anti-democratic manner without proper discussions and consultations".

The memorandum said the new agri-laws, passed in Parliament "in an anti-democratic manner preventing a structured discussion and voting, threaten India's food security, destroy Indian agriculture and our farmers, lay the basis for the abolishment of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and mortgage Indian agriculture and our markets to the caprices of multinational agri-business corporates and domestic corporates".

"We urge upon you, as the custodian of the Indian Constitution, to persuade 'your Government' not to be obdurate and accept the demands raised by India's annadatas," it said.

"We have given a memorandum to the President. We are asking to repeal agriculture laws and electricity amendment bills that were passed in an anti-democratic manner without proper discussions and consultations," Yechury said after meeting the President.

CONG RECEIVES...

Polling for the panchayat elections was held on November 23 and 27, and December 1 and 5. The results came just days before the Ashok Gehlot government completes two years in Rajasthan, and only months after it tackled a revolt among the Congress MLAs led by sacked deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot. The Congress lost even in the home districts of ministers Govind Singh Dotasra, who is also the head of the party's state unit, Cooperative Minister Udai Lal Anjana and Sports Minister Ashok Chandra. In Sikar's Laxmangarh panchayat samiti, which comes under Dotasra's constituency, the BJP won 13 of the 25 seats while Congress got 11. An independent candidate also won. In Chittorgarh's Nimbahera panchayat samiti, the BJP won 14 out of 17 seats, an embarrassment for minister Udai Lal Anjana.

In Tonk panchayat samiti, where no party got a majority, three independent winners have pledged support to Tonk MLA Sachin Pilot, according to the husband of one of them. If this happens, the samiti will go to the Congress. Rajasthan Congress president Dotasra said his party will perform better in the next election. "Many thanks to all the candidates for increasing the base of the party in the panchayat elections held in 21 districts of the state," the Congress leader tweeted.

"These results motivate us to do better in future; Congress will do better in the upcoming elections by keeping good synergy between the government and the organisation," he added. But BJP state president Satish Poonia said the results signaled "farewell" to the "corrupt government" in the state. The polls were held in the districts of Ajmer, Banswara, Barmer, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Churu, Dungarpur, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Jhalawar, Jhunjhunu, Nagaur, Pali, Pratappgarh, Rajsamand, Sikar, Tonk and Udaipur. **PTI**

STATES DON'T NEED...

"The State Governments and Union Territories can resort to the above exercise only when any direction is issued by the competent authority

under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The writ petition is disposed of accordingly," said the bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah.

In its 11-page verdict, the bench noted that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta has "categorically cleared" the Centre's stand on the issue and has stated that neither any such direction has been issued by the Government of India nor it is obligatory to any state or UTs to paste such posters.

It noted that July 2 guidelines issued by the Centre — "Revised guidelines for home isolation of very mild/pre-symptomatic/asymptomatic Covid-19 cases" — does not contain any such direction regarding pasting of posters outside the residences of Covid positive patients. The bench further noted that the ministry had issued a letter dated November 19 to all the states and UTs reiterating that the guidelines do not contain any such instruction or guidance. "Although, various submissions have been made by the petitioner in support of the writ petition but in view of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which are referable to exercise of power by the authority under Disaster Management Act, 2005 which does not contain any requirement of pasting of posters against the houses of Covid-19 patients, the above detailed submissions need no consideration in the present writ petition," the bench said.

Petitioner Kush Kalra had questioned the decision taken by various States and UTs to affix posters outside the residences of those who have tested Covid-19 positive and are required to stay in home isolation.

Claiming violation of the right to privacy and right to live with dignity, the plea had said that directions be issued to the authorities by the apex court to stop the practice of publishing names of Covid-19 positive patients by the health department in states and UTs and also to stop circulation of their names in welfare associations of colony and apartment complex.

The plea had also said that Punjab and Delhi, which had earlier issued directions for affixing posters outside the residence of Covid patients, had already withdrawn the orders.

The Centre had earlier told the top court that its guidelines do not contain any instructions regarding affixing posters and signages outside homes of Covid-19 patients, and there cannot be any stigma attached to it.

The petitioner's counsel had told the apex court that there are no such instructions in the guidelines to affix posters outside the home of those found COVID positive but the "reality is very different". While hearing the matter on December 1, the top court had observed that once posters or signages are pasted outside the homes of Covid patients, the people affected are treated as "untouchables", reflecting a different "ground reality".

TIES WITH CHINA...

"The Chinese have literally brought tens of thousands of soldiers in full military preparation mode right to the LAC in Ladakh. Naturally the relationship would be profoundly disturbed by this." While there were arguments and face-offs between troops in the past, there had never been a major breach of understanding, he said. With the soldiers of the two sides very close to each other this year, it was "not entirely surprising that something went horribly wrong", he added in a reference to the Galwan Valley clash. This incident "completely changed national sentiment," the Minister said.

Getting the relationship back on track is now a "very big issue", though communications between the two sides were not an issue, Jaishankar said.

The Minister referred to his personal talk on the phone with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and their meeting on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Moscow. He also informed about meetings and contacts between the Defence Ministers, military commanders and diplomats. "Communication is not the issue, the issue is the fact that we have agreements and those agreements are not being observed," he added.

PANEL SEEKS MORE...

The Subject Expert Committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) met to review the applications of Pfizer, Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech. Pfizer was on the agenda but was not considered as their experts were not available. Approvals are a long process and today's review is only the start, sources said. Reuters quoted a "source with direct knowledge of the matter" as saying that a decision on the vaccines would be taken "in toto" and it was too early to say whether they would be rejected or accepted.

"It is standard practice for the Government to hold several meetings. The process is expected to go on for one or two weeks," sources in Serum Institute said on the development.

On December 6, the Pune-based Serum Institute, the world's largest vaccine-maker, requested approval for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate, Covishield while pharma giant Pfizer sought Indian approval after securing clearances in the UK and Bahrain. On Monday, Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech became the third vaccine-maker to apply to the DCGI for emergency use authorisation for its indigenously-developed Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin.

Intolerant Didi Govt will be routed in 2021: Nadda

Kolkata: BJP president JP Nadda on Wednesday charged the Mamata Banerjee Government with "intolerance" and said that the ruling Trinamool Congress would face a stunning defeat at the hands of the saffron outfit in 2021 Assembly elections.

Nadda who was on Wednesday black-flagged by a section of people in Kolkata protesting against the farm laws, said that the Government of Bengal was so intolerant that even the media cannot escape its wrath.

He was referring to TMC MP Mahua Moitra's earlier comment in which she attacked the Press calling it a community worth 2 paisa only. Though she apologized later she would not withdraw her statement.

Nadda who arrived in Kolkata in a two-day visit during which he would conduct organizational meeting with party men at Diamond Harbour said the people would throw Mamata Banerjee Government out because of its intolerance saying the "BJP would win 200 seats" in a 294-strong House.

Nadda's visit to Kolkata coincides with the State police slapping two FIRs against Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh and party general secretary

Kailash Vijabargiya for fanning disturbance and inciting people to kill.

Accusing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of "minority appeasement" he said, "I want to remember what Shyama Prasad Mookherjee had said about discipline and tolerance ... it has become all the more relevant in present situation in Bengal," adding how a professor of Jadavpur University was sent to jail for forwarding a caricature and how an editor of a newspaper was removed from his post for being critical of her.

For Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee...this name is intolerance," Nadda who inaugurated nine party offices in Bengal said.

"There will be no appeasement of any particular community when the BJP will come to power," he said adding his party would win 200-plus seats ousting the TMC "lock, stock and barrel".

Attacking the Chief Minister for playing to the minority gallery he reminded how "Bengal Government imposed lockdown when the entire country was watching the Bhoomi Pujan at Ram Temple in Ayodhya," and said the Chief Minister withdrew lockdown for celebration of Bakr-Eid a few days earlier. **PNS**

Will never let CAA, NRC happen in Bengal, says Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ BONGAON

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has once again vowed to thwart the implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act and National Citizenship Register.

Addressing a meeting of the Matua community at Bongaon in North 24 Parganas bordering Bangladesh the Chief Minister on Wednesday said that the BJP was trying to befool the people with fake assurance of providing citizenship through the CAA "but truth to be told there is no need to provide any citizenship to the Matuas as they are already Indian citizens," as they have been living in this part of the border for generations and taking part in elections. "Refugees come and settle at a place which subsequently becomes a refugee colony. In Bengal there are 94 such state government refugee colonies ... apart

from this there were 250 central government colonies of the refugees. We declared all of the residents of these colonies as Indian citizens.

"The BJP is trying to enforce CAA and NRC because they want to demolish the Bengali community ... They want to throw out the Bengalis and then turn Bengal into Gujarat which will not be allowed." The Matuas comprised a traditional vote bank of the Left Front before switching en masse to the Trinamool Congress. Today the community account for about 90 lakh voters and can throw a good impact on 70 Assembly seats in three districts of North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Nadia. The BJP which has made an inroad into the TMC's Matua vote bank have promised citizenship to the SC community --- a large part of which came from Bangladesh post Partition and post 1972 war.

Oxford shot has 70%...

From Page 1

The virus was engineered to express the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, which means the vaccine delivers the spike protein genetic code into vaccinated people's cells. The code then produces the protein and teaches the immune system to recognise and attack the virus.

The trial was originally designed to assess a single dose of the vaccine. However, a review of the immune response data in initial trials found that a second dose boosted immune responses. It was then modified and another dose was added to the trial protocol. Most trial participants were aged 18-55 years. People aged 56 years and older were recruited later and will be studied in the future analysis of the trial. The authors note that they have not been able to assess the duration of protection yet, as the first trials were initiated in April 2020 and all disease episodes occurred within six months of the first dose being administered.

Further evidence will be required to determine the duration of protection and the need for additional booster doses of the vaccine.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CD-1 (Indo Nepal Border) P.W.D BALRAMPUR
Short Term Notice Inviting E-Tenders (Ilird Invitation)
No. 184/tender Notice/20-21
Dated 04.12.2020
The Executive Engineer, CD-1 (I.N.B.) PWD, Balrampur on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD, Class A, B, C, & D the bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in clause 4 of the instructions to bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Online Tender submitted date and Time	Tender Open Date and Time
1	Details survey of approved alignment subsoil investigation, design, drawing and cost estimation for preparation of detailed project report for wild life sanctuary / forest of (Appr. Length 110.000 km.) under Indo Nepal Border Road project in dist. Balrampur.	Date 14.12.2020 on time 12.00 noon to 26.12.2020 on 12.00 noon	Date 28.12.2020 Time 12.30 pm

Bid must be submitted online on or before 12:00 Noon on dated 14.12.2020 and the bids will be opened online on dated 28.12.2020 at 12:30 PM. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened online on the next working day, respectively, at the same time and validity of bid will be considered from the original date.

A set of Bidding documents will be available online from 14.12.2020 at 12.00 noon on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>

Executive Engineer
CD-1 (I.N.B.) PWD
Balrampur

U.P.: 157655, Date : 08.12.2020
विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION-1, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, BARABANKI
E-Tender Notice
No. 2234 / 10A/E-Tendering / 2020
Dated: 4 -12-2020
1. The Executive Engineer Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Barabanki on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved contractors having experience in Transportation (For Cartage of Bitumen). The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

Sl. No.	Distt.	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs. in lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of bid Documents	Time of completion	Address of Executive Engineer Executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	BARA-BANKI	Transportation of Bulk Bitumen from Mathura Refinery to central store of CD-1, P.W.D. BARABANKI. (Group-A)	24.00	2.40	854.00	1 year	Executive Engineer Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Barabanki.	Superintending Engineer Ayodhya Ambekar Nagar Circle P.W.D. Ayodhya	Chief Engineer Ayodhya Zone P.W.D. Ayodhya
2	BARA-BANKI	Transportation of Bulk Bitumen from Mathura Refinery to central store of CD-1, P.W.D. BARABANKI. (Group-B)	24.00	2.40	854.00	1 year	Executive Engineer Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Barabanki.	Superintending Engineer Ayodhya Ambekar Nagar Circle P.W.D. Ayodhya	Chief Engineer Ayodhya Zone P.W.D. Ayodhya

3. Time allowed for completion is including Rainy Season. 4. Validity of bid will be 90 days. 5. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. 6. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of <http://etender.up.nic.in> from 16-12-2020 to 21-12-2020 upto 12.00 hours. Bidders have to upload/download all documents according to the provisions of G.O. No. 1/2018/307078-2-2018/42/IT2017(22) Dated 03-01-2018. Technical bids received online will be opened on 22-12-2020 at 12:30 hours. 7. Technical evaluation of tenders is to be done by Prathi Software, the details of which are available in NIT enclosed with Bid Document.

(Ajai Kumar) Executive Engineer, Construction Division-1, P.W.D, Barabanki

UP 157625 Date 8.12.20 विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: 20/61
Date: 09.12.2020
E-Procurement Tender Notice
On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-Procurement Tenders.

S.N.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1	50205201	Digital Forensic Incidence Response Kit	01 Set	29.12.2020
2	50205177	24 FIBRE ARMoured OPTIC FIBRE CABLE	145Km.	07.01.2021
3	60185009-B	Universal Hydraulic Test Bench	01 Nos.	04.01.2021
4	60195016-D	SPARK OPTICAL EMISSION SPECTROMETER WITH ACCESSORIES	01 Nos.	29.12.2020
5	40203201	110v, 1100AH VRLASMF BATTERIES	03 Set	29.12.2020
6	40201321	LED TYPE EMERGENCY LIGHT UNIT	1395 Nos.	04.01.2021

Note: (1) The complete information of above E-Procurement tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in> (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III, digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered.

North central railways

www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

@CPRO NCR

1362/20 (A)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR
O-691

e-Procurement No. 2362
/ Dated: 07.12.2020

Superintending Engineer Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur on behalf of Odisha State Rural Roads Agency invites Tendering (1) bids through e-Procurement from eligible class of experienced bidders for construction of roads and CD works including maintenance for 5 years of rural roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana PMGSY-III, Batch-I (2020-21).

1	Name of work.	1	Construction of road and CD works including five year maintenance under PMGSY-III, Batch-I (2020-21) Package no. As per Annexure (Information in DTGN will be Final)
2 <th>Class of Contractor.</th> <td>2<td>Varies from Rs.114.08 Lakh to Rs. 848.37 Lakh (Information in DTGN will be Final)</td></td>	Class of Contractor.	2 <td>Varies from Rs.114.08 Lakh to Rs. 848.37 Lakh (Information in DTGN will be Final)</td>	Varies from Rs.114.08 Lakh to Rs. 848.37 Lakh (Information in DTGN will be Final)
3 <th>No of packages.</th> <td>3<td>RS.10,000/- (Non-Refundable) per set of package</td></td>	No of packages.	3 <td>RS.10,000/- (Non-Refundable) per set of package</td>	RS.10,000/- (Non-Refundable) per set of package
4 <th>Estimated cost</th> <td>4<td>Only through online in website. www.pmgstenders.gov.in</td></td>	Estimated cost	4 <td>Only through online in website. www.pmgstenders.gov.in</td>	Only through online in website. www.pmgstenders.gov.in
5 <th>Bid submission fee.</th> <td>5<td></td></td>	Bid submission fee.	5 <td></td>	
6 <th>Mode of submission of tender.</th> <td>6<td></td></td>	Mode of submission of tender.	6 <td></td>	

Summary of key dates are provided below:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	From	To	Last date & time for seeking clarification	Last Date and time of submission of Original documents	Date & Time of opening of tender	Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur	PMGSY-III, Batch-I, RWCSP/09/2020	11/12/2020	From 11.00 A.M.	31/12/2020 Up to 05.00 P.M.	30/12/2020 Up to 4.00 P.M.	02/01/2021 By 5.00 PM	01.01.2021 At 11.00 A.M.	Will	be initiated later

*Special conditions : 1-EMD-2% of the amount put to tender as per DTGN-2. EPF registration is mandatory before draw of agreement-3. Rate quoted by the contractor shall be excluding GST+4. Original EMD, Bid submission fee and original documents should be submitted at the C/O Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur. Or C/O Executive Engineer of Concern Rural Works Division.

*Details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.pmgstenders.gov.in

*Subsequent modification/corrigendum/Addendum if required shall be appeared in the website only.

OTPR- 25093/31/0012/2021

Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur

ED files chargesheet in Embraer defence deal graft case

Initiates investigation under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet in police parlance) against Embraer SA, Brazil and others in a graft case.

Besides Embraer, others named in the chargesheet are Embraer subsidiary Interdev Aviation Services Pte Ltd., Anoop Kumar Gupta (director of KRBL Limited), KRBL Limited, Anurag Potdar (nephew of Anoop Kumar Gupta) and others before Special Judge (PMLA) here.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had regis-

tered an FIR on the basis of a reference received from Chief Controller, R&D (R&M) and DS, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of Defence Research and Development, Defence Ministry with regard to the allegations that Embraer was being investigated by authorities of US and Brazil for alleged employment of an agent in facilitating the contract for AEW&C Project with CABS/DRDO for procurement of three fully modified EMB-145 aircraft.

Based on the FIR of the CBI, the ED had initiated investigation under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

"Investigation under PMLA has revealed that Embraer SA Brazil obtained the contract for supply of aircraft to Indian Air Force for USD 210 million and paid commis-

sion of USD 5.76 Million to a middleman named Vipin Khanna for influencing the said contract in its favour. The said kickbacks of USD 5.76 Million were routed by Embraer SA, Brazil through its subsidiaries to Interdev Aviation Services Pte Ltd, Singapore in lieu of sham agreement," the ED said in a statement.

The kickbacks to the tune of around USD 3.275 million were further routed from Interdev Aviation Services Pte. Ltd. to KRBL DMCC, Dubai (a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of KRBL Ltd.) in lieu of sham agreement to finally reach India through KRBL Ltd. projecting the same as untainted money, it further said.

Further, investigation under PMLA revealed that Anoop Kumar Gupta, Director of KRBL Limited signed the sham agreement between Interdev Aviation Services Pte.

Ltd. and KRBL DMCC to receive Proceeds of Crime (PoC) which were finally received in the bank account of KRBL Ltd in which he is one of the Directors, it further said.

Investigation conducted by the ED so far resulted in issuance of provisional attachment order of proceeds of crime in the form of immovable properties worth Rs 16.29 crore belonging to KRBL Ltd.

The provisional attachment order has been confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority under PMLA.

Possession of the confirmed attached properties have also been taken by ED.

Now Prosecution Complaint has been filed before the designated court here seeking confiscation of attached assets to the tune of Rs 16.29 crore apart from awarding punishment to the accused persons.

16 foreign-based Khalistanis chargesheeted

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against 16 foreign-based Khalistanis in Referendum 2020 (Sikhs for Justice) Case.

The chargesheet was filed before the NIA Special Court here under various Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and sedition among others besides provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The case relates to organized conspiracy by the accused for launching a concerted secessionist campaign under the banner of 'Referendum 2020' for creation of so called 'Khalistan'.

The chargesheeted accused are Gurpatwant Singh Pannun (resident of New York, USA),

Avtar Singh Pannun (New York, USA) Gurpreet Singh Baagi (UK) Harpreet Singh alias Rana Singh (New York, USA) Paramjit Singh alias Pamma (UK), Sarabjit Singh Bannur (UK), Amardeep Singh Purewal (California, USA), JS Dhaliwal (Canada), Kulwant Singh Mothada (UK) Dupinderjit Singh (UK), Hardeep Singh Nijjar (Canada), Kulwant Singh alias Kanta (UK), Harjaap Singh alias Japhi Singh (California, USA), Sarabjit Singh alias Sabi Singh (California, USA), Jatinder Singh Grewal, (Canada) and S Himmat Singh (New York, USA).

The chargesheeted accused are members of Sikh for Justice, an organization declared as 'Unlawful Association' under UA (P) Act.

"Investigation in the case has revealed that Sikhs for

Justice, a secessionist outfit floated in the garb of 'Human Rights advocacy group' with its offices in various foreign countries like the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia etc, is a frontal organization of Khalistan terrorist outfits operating from foreign soils including Pakistan," the NIA said in a statement.

It further said, "Under this campaign, numerous social media accounts on FaceBook, Twitter, Whatsapp, YouTube Channels and a number of websites have been launched, which are being used to propagate sedition as well as enmity on the grounds of region and religion, to radicalise impressionable youth, to cause disturbance to peace and harmony and to raise funds for terrorist activities."

SFJ has been attempting to undermine the security of the

Indian State by instigating Sikh personnel in the Indian army to rise up in mutiny against India.

SFJ is also trying to radicalize youth of Kashmir and openly extending support for secession of Kashmir from India, the agency alleged.

Based on the dossiers provided by NIA and other agencies, the chief patrons of SFJ namely Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Paramjit Singh alias Pamma have already been designated as 'Terrorist' under UA (P) Act.

During the course of investigation, the NIA identified immovable properties belonging to terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in Amritsar, Punjab and terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Jalandhar, Punjab.

Cabinet OK's ₹22,810 cr for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana

Framework for Public Wi-Fi network through PM WANI scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹22,810-crore outlay for a new employment scheme — Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana — that aims at encouraging businesses to do fresh hiring.

The Cabinet also approved a framework for the proliferation of public Wi-Fi networks through the PM WANI scheme.

Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana, the Government will for two years provide employee and employer contribution to the retirement fund for new hires by businesses and entities, Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said.

The scheme would till 2023 entail an outgo of Rs 22,810 crore and would benefit around 58.5 lakh employees.

"The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana to boost employment in formal sector and incentivize creation of new employment opportunities during the COVID recovery phase under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0," an official statement said.

The Cabinet has approved an expenditure of Rs 1,584 crore for the current financial year and Rs 22,810 crore for the entire Scheme period - 2020-2023, it added.

Under the scheme, the government will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after October 1, 2020, and up to June 30, 2021, Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said in a briefing on the Cabinet decision.

The Government will pay both 12 per cent employees' contribution and 12 per cent employers' contribution i.e. 24 per cent of basic wages towards EPF (employees provident fund) in respect of new

employees in establishments employing up to 1,000 employees for two years.

PM Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM WANI) would unleash a massive Wi-Fi revolution in the country, Prasad said. This would entail a complete framework involving multiple elements -- Public Data Office (PDO), Public Data Office Aggregators and app providers. "No licence, no registration, and no fee would be applicable for the PDOs, which could be small shops or even Common Service Centres," Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters after the meeting of the Cabinet.

The Cabinet has also approved the laying of under-

sea submarine optical fibre cable to provide high-speed broadband to Lakshadweep, he said. The project, approved by the Union Cabinet, entails provision of a direct communication link through a dedicated submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) between Kochi and 11 islands of Lakshadweep -- Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agati, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmat.

The estimated cost of implementation is about Rs 1,072 crore including operational expenses for 5 years. The project would be funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund," an official release said. The project is expected to be completed by May 2023.

Party's win in Raj local polls is farmers' nod to farm laws: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the ongoing negotiations between the Government and the farmers on the new farm laws passed by the Centre, the BJP on Wednesday asserted that the party's win in Rajasthan's 'panchayat samiti' and 'zila parishad' elections was a 'vote of approval for agriculture reforms' by the farmers. The party claimed that the poll results also confirm people's support to the "dynamic leadership" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"About 2.5 crore voters- all kisan- from rural Rajasthan- voted in favour of farm reforms. Rajasthan local body elections changed the past trend of ruling party also winning local body polls," said Union Information and Broadcasting and Environment Minister and senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar.

Elections were held in 21 districts of Rajasthan for the 'Panchayat Samiti' and 'Zila parishad' with the BJP cornering a lion's share of the seats. On the ongoing talks on the demand of farmers, Javadekar said, "Government is talking with an open mind...samadhan hoga".

The BJP leader, however, hastened to say (while answering a question) that farmers want to "come out of the trap of the APMC system".

Addressing a press conference here along with the party General Secretary Bhopendra Yadav, the union Minister said the margin of victory of BJP candidates in Rajasthan has been big.

He said the State Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's Tonk 'zila parishad' seat has been won by the BJP.

Pilot had recently made overtures to the BJP following his differences with the state CM Ashok Gehlot.

"Besides Pilot, four state ministers also lost saw the loss of 'Zila Parishad' seats in their respective constituencies", said Javadekar.

He listed BJP's success in Hyderabad local body elections where he said the party won 49 seats and collected more votes than the ruling 'Telangana Rashtriya Samiti' which won 55 seats.

Javadekar said after Bihar assembly victory, the BJP has won Hyderabad and Rajasthan local body polls and is also scoring victory in Arunachal Pradesh local polls.

"Despite Covid 19, economic problems and disinformation created by the opposition on the farm laws, BJP is favourite of people.. they are standing behind the party as they know Modi is leading from the front..", claimed the BJP leader .

On the possible outcome of the government-farmers talk, Javadekar said the question should be addressed to agriculture Minister Narendra SinghTomar, leading the negotiations.

As the BJP scored over the Congress in the Rajasthan local body polls, BJP president J P Nadda also said that this victory symbolises the trust the poor, farmers and labourers have in Modi's leadership.

In a tweet, Nadda expressed his thanks to women, farmers and other rural voters in the Congress-ruled state for putting "faith" in the BJP.

The electoral success has come as a shot in the arm for the BJP at a time when its government at the Centre is locked in a tough bargaining with the protesting farmers, demanding rollback of three central laws wch, among others, allow contract farming.

Foreign heads laud progress of vaccine making in Indian facilities

Hyderabad: Many of the 60 foreign heads of missions who visited the biotech companies in Hyderabad— Bharat Biotech and Biological E — lauded the work being done at the Indian facilities for the development of Covid-19 vaccines.

F Svane, Ambassador of Denmark to India, said that India is not working for commercial or national interest but is also working for countries around the world.

"I was really impressed to see how far you have come, how dedicated you're to combat COVID, how focused you're on helping humanity. It is not just commercial or nation first interest. You're really connecting with

the world and helping all of us," F Svane told ANI.

Besides the Danish envoy, Australian Ambassador Barry O'Farrell also praised India, saying that it has the manufacturing capacity to produce sufficient quantities to satisfy the demands of citizens in every country.

"There are many vaccines being produced in countries around the world but there's only one country that has the manufacturing capacity to produce sufficient quantities to satisfy the demands of citizens in every country and that's India," said Barry O'Farrell.

Later in the day, the Australian envoy also tweeted while putting up a picture.

"#Hyderabad - the vaccine hub of Flag of India - produces a third of all vaccines manufactured globally.

Witnessed first-hand the impressive research and manufacturing facilities at Bharat Biotech and Biological E. Limited and the progress India is making in its COVID vaccine efforts. Thanks to MEA India."

"It's a testament to PM's vision who's not only showcasing collaboration but is keen to ensure that it's not just India that receives vaccine but Indian companies play a vital role in delivering vaccine to the world," said Mahima Datla, Managing Director of the Biological E Ltd. ANI

Ayuraksha kit has saved Delhi cops from the grip of Covid-19, says AIIA

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ayurvedic immunity boosting measures through the 'Ayuraksha kit' have saved frontline warriors, Delhi cops, from the grip of Covid-19, with just .48 per cent of the force getting infected despite being vulnerable to the virus, a study by the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) has claimed.

Dr Tanuja Nesari, director from the apex institute under the Union Ayush Ministry, said that for boosting immunity and increasing quality of life against Coronavirus, the Delhi cops were given the Ayuraksha kit containing 'Kadha' concoction (herbal tea), 'Sanshmani' tablet (made from Giloy), Anu taila ie oil to be used as nasal drops and four pack of Chyawanprash since May.

All 80,000 Delhi police personnel across the 15 districts of Delhi have been covered, she added.

"Till date over 2 lakh Ayuraksha kits have been distributed in two phases with an overall compliance of more than 90 per cent.

"To find out its impact, we took the feedback of the Delhi police personnel with the help of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and the results have been very encouraging," Dr Nesari said, indicating that there is a wide scope to explore the variety of pertinent medicines present in Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia which can be used more rationally to suit every stage of the disease.

As per Dr Nesari, an immune status questionnaire

(ISQ) was collected before the distribution of kits to collect the baseline data, consequently at 30, 60 and 90th day of the study to capture the various parameters at different stages of the study.

The ayurveda experts pointed out that the herbal intervention has helped in enhancing immunity of police personnel, as infection has been as low as .48 per cent of the total staff.

The study also analysed infection level among the cops from Karnataka, Mumbai and Delhi. Delhi cops who had been given Ayuraksha kits reported least infection, as per the study. The kits are being procured from Indian Medicine Pharmaceutical Corporation limited (IMPCL).

Dr Nesari also talked about 400 patients who were successfully recovered from Covid-19 in their institute through ayurveda and only 4 per cent needed integration with oxygen and urged the modern allopathic doctors to work in integrated manner to save the people from the virus.

In fact, pointed out Dr Nesari, none of the healthcare staff at the AIIA till date has fallen ill to the virus as they had been taking the specified ayurvedic products. She said the herbal concoction and tablets were formulation of time tested immunity booster herbal plants like giloy while medications like anu taila are antimicrobial and act as a protective filter inside the nose and throat—the primary entry point for the viruses.

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday came to the rescue of an 18-year-old student by directing the IIT Bombay to grant interim admission to him in an engineering course after he inadvertently lost his seat by clicking on a wrong link in the online admission process.

Siddhant Batra, who hails from Agra, had lost his seat for the four-year electrical engineering course in the prestigious IIT Bombay after he "inadvertently" clicked on a "wrong" link which was meant to withdraw from the process.

A bench headed by Justice S K Kaul took note of the submissions of lawyer Pralhad Paranjape on behalf of the student and asked the IIT Bombay to grant provisional admission to him. The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy, issued notice to the prestigious institution and fixed the plea of Siddhant for hearing after winter break.

Paranjape said the admission would be subject to final decision of the apex court on the plea of the student.

The plea was filed in the apex court after the Bombay High Court dismissed the petition by noting the submissions of the IIT that it cannot

intervene at this stage as all the seats for the course were full and moreover, the admission rules had to be followed.

It had said Siddhant could apply again next year for JEE (Advanced).

The High Court had initially directed the IIT to consider Siddhant's petition, after he approached it, as a representation and pass appropriate orders. Siddhant, who had secured All India Rank (AIR) of 270 in JEE Advanced exams and secured admission, claimed in his plea that he had clicked the wrong link which was meant to withdraw his seat.

He intended to freeze the seat, the plea said. On November 23, a division bench of the high court dismissed his petition noting that IIT had considered his representation and passed its order.

In his petition to the top court, the student has sought a direction to the IIT to consider his case on humanitarian grounds, and requested creation of an additional seat to undo his loss.

Siddhant, who lives with his grandparents following the death of his parents, in the plea said he had worked hard against all odds to crack IIT JEE exams.

PTI

Sore eyes most common sign of Covid-19 infection: Researchers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sore eyes are the most significant vision-based indicator of Covid-19, researchers at the Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) have said as they found that sore eyes were most common when the participants were infected with the virus.

The study is published in the journal BMJ Open Ophthalmology. For the study, the researchers asked people who had a confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis to answer a questionnaire about their symptoms, and how those compared with before they tested positive.

The study revealed that 16 per cent of the participants reported the issue as one of their symptoms. Just 5 per cent reported having had the condition



beforehand.

Eighteen per cent of the people reported suffering from photophobia (light sensitivity) as one of their symptoms. This was only a 5 per cent increase from their pre-Covid-19 state.

Of the 83 respondents, 81 per cent reported ocular issues within two weeks of other Covid-19 symptoms. Of those, 80 per cent reported their eye problems lasted less than two weeks. The most common reported symptoms overall were

fatigue (suffered by 90 per cent of respondents), fever (76 per cent) and dry cough (66 per cent). Lead author Professor Shahina Pardhan, Director of the Vision and Eye Research Institute at ARU, said: "This is the first study to investigate the various eye symptoms indicative of conjunctivitis in relation to Covid-19, their time frame in relation to other well-known Covid-19 symptoms and their duration."

While it is important that ocular symptoms are included in the list of possible Covid-19 symptoms, we argue that sore eyes should replace 'conjunctivitis' as it is important to differentiate from symptoms of other types of infections, such as bacterial infections, which manifest as mucous discharge or gritty eyes, she added.

BJP upstages Cong

As the party wins big in Rajasthan local body polls, the Gehlot-Pilot war has clearly hurt Congress



Now even local body elections have become significant, each verdict a litmus test of the ruling BJP's consolidation of power, each victory in an Opposition-ruled State a vote of no-confidence in the alternative, each mandate in its favour dissolving the boundaries between a local and national issue. So just as the BJP made a statement by making deep inroads in the Hyderabad municipal elections, challenging the myth that it could not pry open that city's predominantly Islamic culture, it has seized the political discourse in Rajasthan. Upstaging the ruling Congress, the BJP seemed all set to muscle its way back into the panchayat samiti and zila parishad elections held in the State's 21 districts. At last count, in the panchayat samitis, the BJP won 1,836 seats against the Congress' 1,718. In the zila parishad, the BJP got 323 seats while Congress won 246. Besieged as it is by the farmers' protests, the victory was more than sweet for the BJP which claimed that it was an endorsement of the Modi Government's grassroots governance, including the farm laws, and that the Congress had failed to address local issues, too busy as it was with leadership rows. Though this heightened rhetoric is for popular consumption, the fact of the matter is the BJP has been working hard to rebuild its support in a State that it had lost. And considering its attempts at using Operation Lotus to topple the Ashok Gehlot Government and encash the Chief Minister's rift with his one-time deputy Sachin Pilot somewhat misfired, it got back to working the grassroots. Having marginalised the outgoing Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, the State BJP chief Satish Poonia and Leader of Opposition, Gulab Chand Kataria, the last a provocative proponent of Hindutva and schooled in RSS' style of constituency management, have ensured the party's recovery. But the bigger political takeaway is that they could not do so earlier, simply because Pilot had held on to the Congress organisational matrix during the bypolls to some local bodies in 2019, soon after the mammoth Lok Sabha verdict in favour of Modi. Clearly, the erosion of Pilot's power and his ongoing rift with Gehlot have finally cost the Congress its primacy in Rajasthan.

If anything, the results will once again foreground the conflict that never really went away but was just papered over by the Congress high command. Part of the reason why the Central leadership, while respectful of Pilot's commitment, was worried about Gehlot was because the latter had convinced it of his overarching hold on the State unit and connect with the grassroots. These current results have definitely dented that aura of invincibility and shown that under-using Pilot has hurt the party badly. Gehlot had probably sensed the tide in BJP's favour given his latest remarks that the saffron party was trying another topple game and had, therefore, argued for his indispensability in a crucial heartland State. The fact of the matter is he didn't want to give up his fiefdom amid murmurs that he would be given a Central role in the Congress following the death of senior leader Ahmed Patel, a move that would even help the high command argue for a transition of power to Pilot. That he is reluctant about giving up is further obvious from his supporters' comments that local body polls weren't indicative of a larger sentiment and that Pilot had not cooperated. The Pilot camp, on the other hand, argued that the BJP gained at the expense of Gehlot's stubbornness and refusal to change templates. The larger question is how long will Pilot hold on, roaming in the wilderness? Ever since he revolted openly, and the high command pacified him by setting up a coordination committee to settle differences, nothing has been done to his satisfaction, except deploying him as a campaigner for the Madhya Pradesh bypolls. The committee, too, has not got down to deciding the specifics of reconciliation or demarcation of powers between the two. If anything the anxieties continue to fester. There was some talk of a Cabinet reshuffle to accommodate Pilot's supporters but an egoistic Gehlot has been delaying it. With this on the backburner, any hope of the Pradesh Congress Committee being overhauled to ensure equal representation of both camps has also diminished. Gehlot may have had the majority of the party legislators on his side to hold off the predatory instincts of the BJP, which guaranteed him continuity as a Chief Minister. But what if he loses the numbers that matter, the seats in an election? Pilot did gift the Congress the 2018 Assembly results, despite Gehlot's stock being at an all-time low, by crafting the right moves. He has lived down his entitlements and education, moved to Rajasthan, picked up dialects and worked the ground assiduously. He is conscious of his caste endowments, the Gujjar votebank. But while that is a traditional strength, he has played it down and focussed instead on strengthening administration and the organisation. Although not allowed to operate autonomously in governance, Pilot strengthened the party base while ignoring the Lok Sabha elections which Gehlot wanted to use to shore up his strengths. We know how that turned out to be, a complete blank. If the Congress doesn't want Rajasthan to slip out of its grasp, then it better solve its internecine wars. Given the BJP's rhetoric and its swift conversion rate, it would be in a commanding position by the time of the next Assembly elections. In fact, the local body polls are just a test run for that. Pretence won't help the Congress any longer, action will.

Can we rely on 5G?

Mukesh Ambani promises rollout by 2021 but India lacks the infrastructure even if spectrum is allocated



Reliance Industries Limited chairman Mukesh Ambani has consistently defied the slump of the pandemic-induced economy to make rich gains. First, he got a host of investors on to his Jio telecommunications platform. Then he bought out India's largest home-grown retail chain, Future Group. And now he has promised the rollout of 5G technology in India by the second half of 2021, with indigenous technology. While this sounded futuristic and bright at the Indian Mobile Congress, which he was addressing, the question is even with policy enablers in place, this is a tough ask. Most experts and even Jio's rivals, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, argue that even if the spectrum is allocated, India

lacks the infrastructure to implement 5G efficaciously. Besides, the economics would not sit easy as the services would be high priced. How will Reliance resolve affordability, which is its hallmark, with a premium service, is still not clear. Which is why most operators are planning a phased rollout, testing the response and their own serviceable efficiencies. A seamless ecosystem requires a uniform depth of connectivity across the country. Jio apparently has a home-grown, end-to-end 5G solution ready for deployment. But questions arise on whether it has done extensive field trials considering that most companies have had to content themselves with lab trials. This technology needs a massive network infrastructure that is not patchy and is fool-proof. While Reliance may be ready to deploy, does it have the guaranteed network to run its services on? We must remember that our technology will be measured against some of the most competitive names in the business, some of whom have exclusive patents on 5G. Reliance, of course, is working with American chipmaker Qualcomm and is fairly confident of its edge in the high stakes game, claiming that Jio users will be able to browse the internet at up to 1Gbps speeds. For India, 5G, with faster data speeds and enhanced digital experiences across a host of connected devices, like smartphones, laptops, augmented and virtual reality products and internet of things (IoT) solutions, would revolutionise fields like telemedicine and health-care, of utmost significance in a post-pandemic world. And while we may want to join the select club of the US, South Korea, Australia, Switzerland and Germany sooner, we cannot shortchange viability.

opinion08

Return of Thalaiva

Rajinikanth is a refreshing entrant and if he uses the BJP's matrix to convince people that spirituality and religiosity can be an easy fit, then the TN battle just got interesting



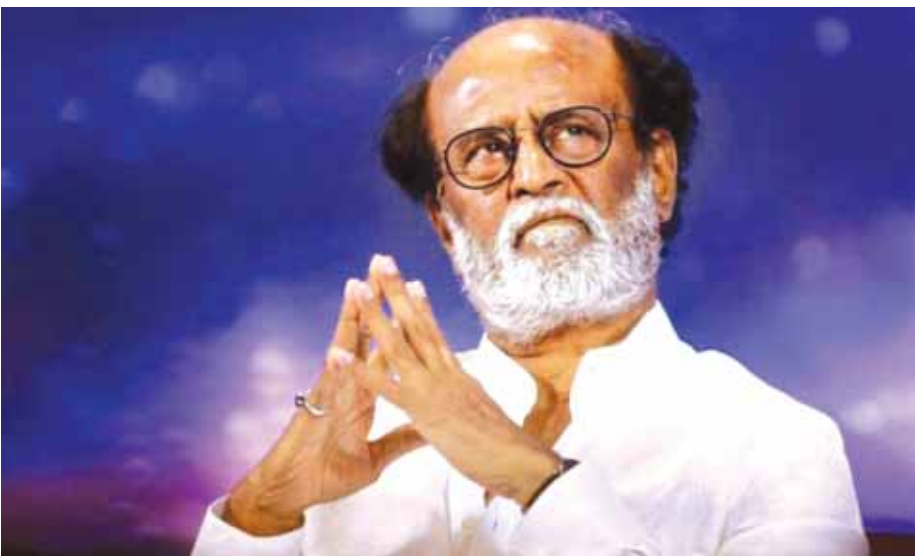
KUMAR CHELLAPAN

Thursday, December 3, 2020, will remain etched in Tamil Nadu's political history for decades to come. Around noon that day, reigning superstar of Tamil films, Rajinikanth, declared that he would contest all the 234 seats in the forthcoming Assembly election with his "spiritual" political party to be launched in early 2021. Significant because it took Rajinikanth three years to finalise and announce his political debut since the day he announced his intention to join the political bandwagon on December 31, 2017. And just when everybody had given up on him, he set the cat among the pigeons.

The film star was accompanied by his Man Friday Tamilaruvi Manian, a former chief of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, who is also a well-known Gandhian, and Arjunamurthy, a hitherto unknown entity in Tamil Nadu politics.

This unsettled the binary between the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) as also the fringe groups that gravitate towards one or the other. And as Thalaiva said confidently, "It is now or never. We are going to change everything associated with Tamil Nadu and change them for good. If I win, it will be the victory of the people. If I lose, it will be their loss," the polls certainly won't be a predictable run anymore. The announcement by Rajinikanth had the same impact as that of October 1972 when the then matinee idol, M G Ramachandran, who was expelled from the DMK by the then Chief Minister, M Karunanidhi, declared the formation of the AIADMK. The political outfit launched by MGR was a refreshing experience for the voters, who were caught between the devil (DMK) and the deep sea (Congress). Politics was not the same in Tamil Nadu since then.

Rajinikanth has no political experience to speak about but he has a good image as a human being. Though many film personalities had launched political parties in the State after MGR, (Sarath Kumar, Sivaji Ganeshan, Vijayakanth, Kamal Haasan, to name a few) none of them could make any kind of impact among the voters till date. But there are reasons to believe that Rajinikanth is here to stay, provid-



ed his health remains stable.

The first reason is Tamilians are spiritual people and could, therefore, resonate with Rajinikanth's humanism. Dravidian political parties, to be specific the DMK, had assured the voters of a casteless, rationalist and atheist Tamil society. Instead Tamil Nadu has become a caste-ridden society, where everything runs on the identity tags of caste, community, even sub-castes. The ground realities associated with the DMK and its offshoots are none too pleasant either. M Karunanidhi, who remained the DMK's supreme leader for almost five decades, had been described by the Justice Ranjit Singh Sarkaria Commission (appointed by the Indira Gandhi-led Government) as the "father of scientific corruption." And he made the DMK a family-run enterprise. The rationalist DMK may be the only political outfit in the country, which has an in-house bishop to spit venom against Hindus (Bishop Sargunam, the DMK's official spiritual guide).

The DMK's proposed casteless society never took off. Karunanidhi opted for the easy way out by designating all caste-based Hindu groups into Backward, Most Backward and Other Backward Communities. Disgusted with this degeneration, C Subramaniam, who was honoured with Bharat Ratna for making India self-sufficient in agricultural production through the Green Revolution, wrote: "I belong to the dominant community, Kongu Vellalar, with the caste appellation of Gounder. Kongu represents the region historically known as Kongunadu, consisting of the districts of Coimbatore and Salem and a part of Tiruchirappalli. The Kongu Vellalars own the real wealth, land and cattle and thus dominate the rest of the community.

“THE SUPERSTAR'S MESSAGE TO GIVE IMPORTANCE TO WHO SHOULD NOT WIN THE ELECTION INSTEAD OF PREDICTING A WINNER IS SIGNIFICANT. HE WANTS TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO”

In independent India, our community is classified as a backward community?

This is not an isolated case. The DMK ensured its dominant position among all castes by designating/classifying them as either backward, OBC or MBC. The paradox is that dominant communities like Thevar (to which late AIADMK chief Jayalalithaa's aide Sasikala belongs), Vanniyar (Ramadoss), Mukkulathur, Mudaliyaar, Naicker, Maravar (the ruling clan of Ramanathapuram) enjoy the status of backward communities and are beneficiaries of reservation in educational institutions and Government service. This is a big fraud perpetrated on the population of Tamil Nadu by the Dravidian outfits, according to Prof R Vaidyanathan, retired professor of finance at IIM Bangalore, whose work, *Caste As Social Capital*, is proof of how the rationalist Dravidian entity turned Tamil Nadu into a caste-ridden society.

Rajinikanth is entering this

wild and unknown turf with his spiritual politics, which the DMK and its associates are wary about. To understand what spiritual politics is, one should listen to Tamilaruvi Manian, who speaks about the role played by the legendary Kamaraj in making Tamil Nadu a transparent, humane and humble State. "Tamil Nadu was allocated 10 sugar factories during the tenure of Kamaraj as Chief Minister. It was the Japanese government which offered technical and financial aid to set up these factories. When the deal was finalised, the then industries minister, R Venkitaraman, went to Kamaraj and said that the Japanese consortium had given ₹1 crore as commission for setting up the plants. Each plant was set up at a cost of ₹1 crore and what was offered to the Chief Minister as commission was 10 per cent of the total investment. Kamaraj asked Venkitaraman how much it would cost to set up one sugar factory to which the latter replied, '₹1 crore'. The Chief Minister asked Venkitaraman to tell the Japanese to set up one more factory so that Tamil Nadu could get 11 sugar factories. This was recounted by N Kalyanasundaram, a close aide of Kamaraj for decades," Kolahala Srenivasan, political commentator, describes this as embodying the spiritual politics of Rajinikanth.

Even before the star's announcement, leaders of fringe parties claimed that he would not be able to make an impact. "He will not be able to act independently. The BJP wants to enter the State through him. He will be another face of the BJP and will act that way," said Thol Thirumavalavan, VCK leader. Questions are being asked about his prospective alliance partners. "But these things can wait and let Rajinikanth himself take a call

on this. The issue is that Tamil Nadu politics has undergone a major shift with his decision," said S Gurumurthy, editor *Tughlaq*, and long time friend of the actor.

The truth is that both the DMK and the Congress are upset over the development and it is reflected in the words of state Congress president K S Alagiri: "There is no point in commenting on his decision since it is not going to benefit the people." The Congress leader's words were echoed by CPI(M)'s K Balakrishnan. "The kind of politics he is advocating will not cut ice with people," he said.

Till December 3, 2020, there was a perception that the DMK would have a cakewalk over its rivals. But experts feel that what Rajinikanth has told the electorate, that instead of focussing on who the winner of the 2021 Assembly election will be, they should give importance to who should not win the election, is significant. The message is clearly to change the status quo and make a moral choice.

The Vetrivel yatra undertaken by the BJP, which concluded at the Thiruchendur Lord Muruga Temple on Monday, went unnoticed by the media. But it showed that Hindutva has found some takers. DMK chief M K Stalin worsened matters tactically when he said "*Sanatana Dharma*" was more dangerous to India than the threats from China and Pakistan. The BJP would, therefore, find Rajinikanth's "spiritual" tag attractive to latch on to.

Interestingly, Tamil Nadu's fortunes were decided not by chaste Tamils but by the Kerala-born Mysore-born Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi whose mother tongue was Telugu. Even the self-styled protector of Tamil culture, Vayyapuri Gopalasamy, popularly known as Vaiko, is a Telugu Naidu. So there is nothing surprising in the Maharashtra-born Rajinikanth claiming legitimacy.

There is enough space in Tamil Nadu politics for a charismatic leader after the deaths of Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa. The 2014 Lok Sabha poll saw the NDA poll more than 19 per cent votes in the State, dominated till then by the DMK and the AIADMK, though it failed to consolidate in 2019 as the DMK swept the results. But Rajinikanth is a refreshing experience and if he uses that and the BJP's organisational matrix, or can convince people that spirituality and religiosity would be an easy fit, then the Tamil Nadu battle just got interesting.

(The author is a senior journalist, *The Pioneer*)

SOUNDBITE

The public health and other departmental staff should probe the Eluru issue deeply and find out the reasons for the illness.

Andhra Chief Minister
—Jagan Mohan Reddy



I've asked Dr Vivek Murthy to serve again as Surgeon-General. He will be a key voice on our COVID response.

US President-elect
—Joe Biden



It finally feels like this is my time and may it never pass. I want to give the audience one memorable film and role after another.

Actor
—Pankaj Tripathi



Today, I retire from all forms of cricket and as I bring down the curtains on this 18-year journey, I feel heavier with gratitude towards many.

Wicketkeeper-batsman
—Parthiv Patel



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Repeal the farm laws

Sir — The meeting between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the farmers' leaders failed to break the logjam. The Government will send fresh proposals to the growers over the three agriculture laws that are at the heart of the agitation. Though the farmers' representatives will wait for the Government's new proposals, for now they have rejected all the recommendations on amendments and want all the laws to be withdrawn immediately.

On his part, Shah did climb down on certain clauses, include their concerns but he did not agree to withdraw them. Today is the 14th day of the stir. If the sixth round of talks today (December 10) fails, the farmers' agitation will get escalated. It may create serious unrest, which will be a disaster for the whole country and the Central Government will be held responsible for food shortages and violence that might follow. The Government must reconsider the laws if those whom the reforms are supposedly meant to help are rejecting them outright.

It will be a democratic move and a show of grace from a Government that has time and again been accused of being auto-

Free Father Stan Swamy

It is such a tragedy that a man who dedicated his life for the uplift of the nation's poor is today being treated in such an inhuman manner. The frail, old and ailing Father Stan Swamy is today being punished and humiliated because he had the courage to empower the Adivasis and others excluded from the mainstream. He has selflessly been accompanying them in their quest for justice and dignity. His arrest is a violation of human rights. Since the 1990s, Swamy has been a major voice in defence of the Adivasi and low-caste groups in remote Jharkhand. He spearheaded the local Pothaigadi movement to empower village communities to protect their land from private mining companies. He learnt the indigenous languages, cultures and mores (although he hails from a village in the southern part of India), and the locals looked to him for psychological and spiritual support as they resisted land grabs, abuse of sedition and anti-terror laws and displacement of Adivasis in the name of development.

The priest suffers from Parkinson's disease and wears hearing aids in both ears. He has applied twice for basic amenities such as warm clothes and a straw and sipper so he can drink water. Father Stan Swamy should be freed even though his request for a sipper was granted days later. Is this how a country that prides itself in respecting its elder-

cratic and unbending in nature.
Bhagwan Thadani
—Mumbai

Heightened ties

Sir — The joint statement made by Nepal and China regarding the new height of the world's tallest



ly treat an 83-year-old man suffering from Parkinson's disease? The priest is among 16 people, who were arrested by the Government for allegedly inciting caste-based violence in the Bhima Koregaon village. Those arrested with him include prominent intellectuals, writers, poets and cultural activists, who have repeatedly been denied bail under the anti-terror law. Father Stan Swamy has repeatedly denied the allegations against him. Now he is being made to suffer for being a social activist in a nation where a majority of the population lives a hand to mouth existence. It is a crying shame.

Jubel D'Cruz
—Mumbai

peak, Mount Everest, being 8,848.86 metres, about 86 centimetres more than the previous survey done by India in 1954, has to be interpreted as not just the renewed measurement of the peak but something more. It shows the new-found love that the tiny Himalayan nation has for its giant

neighbour. The extent of Chinese influence on Nepal has now been exposed through this joint declaration. Nepal had hitherto adhered to the measurement made by India, which was 8,848 metres, all these years. In fact, Nepal and China have always had a conflict over the height of the peak.

Expeditions were carried out from both sides to get the exact measurements as geographical experts and scientists wondered whether any changes had occurred in Mount Everest's altitude after the great Himalayan earthquake a few years ago. Now, surveyors from both the nations have agreed that the new height is 8,848.86 metres (29,031.69 feet), a bit more than their previous calculations. It remains to be seen whether this joint official confirmation will take their relationship to greater heights or if like an Himalayan avalanche it will come crashing down.

M Pradyu
—Kannur

Give IIMs autonomy

Sir — Dangling the threat of an inquiry over IIM boards leaves little doubts about the Ministry of Education's intentions. It is precisely this attitude that, over the decades, has cramped the creativity of institutes of higher learning. The PMO must step in and convince the Ministry to trust the IIMs and give them autonomy.

Ronit Raj
—Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A tiger reserve in need of help

The NTCA must oversee the way the Bandhavgarh National Park is being managed and check how the tourism revenue is being distributed in the State



VK **BAHUGUNA**

The Bandhavgarh National Park and Tiger Reserve, known for the highest striped cat density per sq km in the country, is one terrain where the chances of sighting the tiger are quite high. Situated in the Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh, the reserve with around 124 tigers is spread over 1,536 sq km. The core area is 716 sq km. It consists of 32 sandstone hillocks, marshy land, water bodies, rocky areas and grasslands, making it an excellent habitat for the diverse plants and animals that can be found here. Bandhavgarh was declared a National Park in 1968 and brought under Project Tiger in 1994. It has three tourist zones in Tala, Maghati and Khitauli where most of the sighting of the tigers and other wildlife occurs. Apart from the tigers, the park has 36 species of mammals, 250 species of birds and 70 species of butterflies. The tiger population in Bandhavgarh started growing only after the Baghel rulers, along with several villages, shifted their capital in 1617 from here to Rewa. The Bandhavgarh forests, however, remained the favourite hunting grounds of Baghel rulers, who, out of superstition and a false sense of pride, used to set the target of killing at least 109 tigers in a year. As a result, Maharaja Gulab Singh shot 83 tigers in 1923 while Maharaja Martand Singh shot 100. Thankfully, despite the extensive hunting, the area continued to support a large tiger population. This speaks volumes about the carrying capacity of the forests which are rich in both prey and predators.

The reserve is important from an archaeological, historical, cultural and religious perspective, too. It is said that Lord Rama made this fort for Laxman while returning to Ayodhya from Sri Lanka. The ancient scriptures *Shiv Puran* and *Narad Panch* make references to this fort. There is a temple at the top of a hillock, which the people flock to during Ram Navami and Janmashtami. There are a few caves here where ancient saints are said to have done penance and there are other archaeological monuments, too. There is a Shesh Shaiya near the fort depicting Lord Vishnu on the seven-headed Shesh Nag.

Sadly, the wildlife map of the park is changing. Earlier it was home to gaurs but all of them died after contracting contagious diseases from cattle. In 2012, as many as 50 gaurs were relocated here from the Kanha National Park. Then, due to food shortage, a herd of 38 elephants entered the park from Chhattisgarh and are breeding here. They are a major management headache for the park as well as the neighbouring villages in the buffer zone. They have been destroying the solar panels and damaging buildings, staff quarters and eating rations, too.

Bandhavgarh needs immediate management intervention at the highest level in terms of infrastructure, manpower and efficiency. The fund position is awful, too, and the staff is facing severe housing, water supply and electricity issues. Six of their vehicles have been junked but the park authorities are not able to replace them. The souvenir shops being managed by private businesses are in a poor shape and the forest rest house is being run as a commercial venture by the staff. There is a shortage of funds released for grassland management by the State Government, even though grasslands are an essential requirement for herbivores. Thankfully some money was released by a few panchayats for the areas falling under their jurisdictions.

Though the Project Tiger authorities have released funds, the State Government has not given its share. Not maintaining the grasslands and negligence in releasing State's funding is a serious matter and the Chief Wildlife Warden needs to act fast. Otherwise the condition of this park will deteriorate. It is said that the annual revenue from the park is around ₹8 crore but most of it is not ploughed back into the reserve and is distributed across the State. The Government must stop political interference in allocation and at least 70 per cent of the revenue collected from the park must be returned to the reserve and spent in a structured manner. The State wildlife wing must have a separate management scheme for the tuskers who are now part of this park and take advantage of the Project Elephant. The museum and the interpretation centre are in a pathetic state, too, and need total revamping. The Director is in dual charge and the Ranger and the Sub-Divisional Officer in Tala are under probation. This is not an acceptable situation for any well-managed reserve. The chinks in the park's management are now visible as two tigers were killed by poachers and villagers. The Wildlife Crime Bureau of the Government of India recently apprehended the killers. This must serve as a wake-up call for the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). It must step in and put things back on the right track. It needs to monitor the manpower here and address their issues. The NTCA must oversee the way the Bandhavgarh National Park is being run, check how the tourism revenue is being distributed in the State and fix a limit for use outside the reserve. The NTCA needs to act before the wildlife here runs out of time.

(The writer is a retired civil servant)

TOUGH REFORMS ARE VERY DIFFICULT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT. WE ARE TOO MUCH OF A DEMOCRACY.
—NITI AAYOG CEO
AMITABH KANT

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



WELL, LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT (DESPITE EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN REPORTED) WE ARE PROUD OF OUR DEMOCRACY.
—UNION MINISTER
RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

A sentinel of human rights

As India celebrates the International Human Rights Day today, it must ask the judiciary a few important questions



ANURAG **TIWARY**

On L. Fuller, in a rivetting piece written for the *Harvard Law Review* back in 1978, titled *Forms and Limits of Adjudication*, makes a compelling argument. He says that adjudication is a form of "social ordering" that manifests itself in two forms: Organisation by common aims and organisation by reciprocity. Institutions working on the principle of common aims share the same understanding and objectives whereas those working on reciprocity engage in a rational calculation of the advantages of an association. He explains this with an example. Imagine that a roadway connects two farms with a highway, which is now blocked by a boulder. There are two farmers. Neither of them is strong enough to remove the boulder by himself. However, when the two join hands, it is obviously an organisation by common aims. Now, imagine both the growers are engaged in subsistence farming and one has a large crop of onions whereas the other has an abundance of potatoes. A deal to trade a portion of their respective crops with each other will make both the agriculturists richer and that is the most obvious form of organisation by reciprocity.

Now imagine the judiciary as an institution working on the principles of reciprocity by engaging itself in a mathematical calculation and drawing out the benefits of its association with different branches of the Government. What if this happens in a democracy where the judiciary is supposed to remain independent and function as a sentinel of individual liberty, human rights and basic freedoms of the citizens?

This criticism of the judiciary in the recent past, that it is an executive court, is by far not just the most important but also a sensitive one. If the court's moral and political positioning is in alignment with the Government, it is problematic for the citizens. This is so, because then the court would fail in its most important job, enforcing the fundamental rights of citizens against the State's arbitrary, unfair, unjust and unreasonable actions. The court is supposed to act and function as a counter-narrative to the executive. This duty becomes even more important in a democracy because democracies can tend to slip into a majoritarian rule, given that there is a very thin line between the two.

Senior advocates, retired judges, civil society organisations, political parties and even citizens have gone on to criticise the courts for their alleged role in selectively protecting human rights of citizens and social activists. The criticism extends to the selective listing of cases, delay in hearing on important issues and the highly controversial issue of post-retirement jobs for judges. The judiciary has not responded to these criticisms.

Many citizens believe that such a trend in the judiciary will see its rise and fall with the rise and fall of populist governments in the country. The last time we saw the judiciary working the way that it is today was during the era of Emergency. And that is a part of its history that India is not particularly proud of. Justifiably, the nation does not want to see history repeat itself in that sense. As we celebrate Human Rights Day today, it is important to look into other troubling issues that plague the judiciary, which have existed and have been continuously raised for quite some time now.

Attorney-General KK Venugopal, while speaking recently on the ways to gender sensi-

“HAS THE JUDICIARY, IN THE RECENT PAST, DONE ENOUGH TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THOSE WHO ARE STANDING AT THE END OF THE LINE, THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE, WEAK, FRAGILE, HISTORICALLY SIDELINED AND COME FROM THE LOWEST STRATA OF THE SOCIETY?”



tise the courts and judges, said that one of the ways in which this could be done was by increasing the representation of women on the Bench. Article 15 of the Constitution of India guarantees to every citizen that s/he shall not be discriminated on the basis of their gender. Despite the presence of Article 15 in the Constitution as a fundamental right, only eight women judges have been appointed to the Supreme Court out of a total of 245 appointments post-Independence.

Even more crucially, till date, no woman has ever served as the Chief Justice of India. This in a country that worships goddesses and reveres women as an incarnation of *shakti* (power). For Constitutional courts that are responsible to continuously challenge, transform and redefine stereotypical notions of gender, identity and race within the society, it is important to have wider and larger representation on the Bench from those who have had such experiences of their own.

The criticism that the judiciary works like a hollow chamber, devoid of any human emotions, often falling into the trap of "abstract notions of justice", flowing from complex and incomprehensible legal jargon, can only be answered by increasing diversity within the judiciary and making it more and more representative.

Another issue that needs to be focussed on is the huge pendency of cases. There are more than three crore cases pending before several courts in India. Litigants are often disillusioned when they approach the courts. Even the smallest of cases, involving little to no questions of law, take years if not decades to be decided. This huge pendency of cases and the continuous delay in deciding them has had three major consequences. First, it has led to the

criminalisation of politics. More than 4,500 cases against sitting and former Members of Parliament and MLAs are still pending before several courts across the nation.

Worryingly, many of these cases have been pending before the courts for decades. They range from serious and heinous offences like crimes against women, corruption and so on, to offences that have long-term impacts on the democratic fabric of our country. These include complaints registered against crimes like damaging public property, instigating riots, religious offences, and so on.

What this has done is that it has only inspired a future generation of politicians to commit more of such crimes and get away with it easily. This has resultantly weakened the strength of our democracy as someone who at one time used to commit crimes is now sitting in the temple of democracy, i.e. the Parliament.

Second, it has motivated criminals to commit excesses across the country almost professionally and third, this has pushed the victims to a position where they now prefer not approaching the court at all even after a crime. Cases, therefore, don't get reported in our police stations and instead end with an out of court compromise. Access to justice is a fundamental right of the citizens in this country and yet we see that a majority of our population doesn't even understand what it means to have been justly adjudicated. Even cases where the police commit violation of human rights don't get heard speedily, eroding the faith of the people in the justice system.

The common perception that judges are extremely powerful adjudicators and that the parties before the court will in no case be given biased

treatment needs to be actualised. The courts can no longer work as unaccountable isolated chambers of delivering justice.

So, when India celebrates Human Rights Day today and Minorities Rights day on December 18, the questions that need to be asked to the most important institution responsible for enforcing these rights, is this: Has the judiciary, in the recent past, done enough to protect the rights of those who are standing at the end of the line, those who are vulnerable, weak, fragile, historically sidelined and come from the lowest strata of the society?

If it hasn't then it needs to. Because the judiciary as an institution survives only on the symbolic value of the image that it has created for itself. Its extraordinarily rich history of the most landmark judgments in the past has forced foreign courts to cite them and set them as a precedent in their respective jurisdictions. If this rich history of the court was to be attacked, it will have long-term impacts which will be irreversible.

The apex court needs to counter the narrative that it is an executive court by listing matters of urgent public interest before Benches without delay and impartially. It needs to add more judges to the Bar by making the process of appointments to the higher judiciary more transparent, accountable and representative.

The judiciary needs to fix the narrative that offence will not be taken personally, and dissent will be appreciated as a form of deliberative democracy. Unless the judiciary adopts these as its guiding principles, it will fail in its most important duty and thereafter lose its credibility. Both of which are a nightmare for the country today.

(The writer is with the National Law University, Visakhapatnam)

Goa needs to be made *atmanirbhar* too

The resumption of mining in the State will bring great relief. Remember it always had a history of environment-friendly processes and notable best practices



ARUNA **SHARMA**

The clarion call for making India *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) has a major component of sustainable income and quality employment. The tiny State of Goa, with a population of 15 lakh, was one with the highest per capita income in the country at one time. The two major pillars of its economy were tourism and mining. With almost 100 per cent export, the State had a turnover of nearly ₹6,000 crore from mining itself. Nearly one-fifth of the population of Goa got sustainable, quality employment in mining and its related activities. It is sad to talk about this in the past tense as the State has

been reduced to penury ever since the Supreme Court ordered a complete stop of all mining operations on February 7, 2018 by quashing the second renewal of 88 mining leases. The judgment, by a Bench led by Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta, slammed the "rapacious and rampant exploitation" of Goa's fragile ecology by private mining lease holders and said that their "sole motive is to make profits, for years."

Since then, the State has seen adversely-affected income levels due to the decision. This, coupled with the fall in income from the tourists because of the COVID-19 outbreak, has come as a double whammy for Goa. Sadly, the social and financial impact of the apex court's decision on the population and the State's prosperity is never an issue in court arguments and goes unnoticed, time and again. This is despite the fact that the halt of mining operations has slowed down the entire economy of the State and the lives of its people, too. The iron ore of Goa, which has a lower Fe content (around

55 per cent), had a booming market across Indian shores and was exported to various countries like Japan, South Korea and China. It contributed to 30 per cent of the State's GDP. Now, the closure of mines has resulted in Goa's lost presence in the international iron ore market and the Goan variant has been replaced by Brazilian and Australian ones.

And it is not just the miners who are suffering in the State. The related loss of business to those providing logistical support to the mining industry, in terms of trucks, barges and machinery, adds to the problem. The immediate challenge and need is to restart this major economic operation for the State. Despite the apex court's concerns over the ecology of the State, Goa always had a history of environment-friendly mining and its notable best practices were demonstrated at all international fora as well. The ISO 14001 Standards and the independent Mineral Foundation of Goa (the precursor to the present District Mineral Fund concept) were



early moves towards an environmentally sustainable industry. Mining in Goa is not an issue of spoiling the environment as modern technology and methodology were already used in all operations. So the issue in Goa is of understanding and harmonising the two Acts, namely the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 2015 (MMDR Act) with its amendments and the Goa, Daman and Diu Mining Concessions (Abolition and Declaration as Mining Leases) Act, 1987, commonly known as the Abolition Act, 1987. This harmonisation can only come through policy clarification and legal amendment. The

State Government as well as the mining industry and experts are unanimous in their decision that they want an end to the *status quo*. The entire State Assembly has unanimously put in a request to the Central Government to allow Goa to recommence mining operations at the earliest, through appropriate means.

Prior to December 19, 1961, Goa was a Portuguese territory and mining concessions were granted under the Portuguese Mining Colonial Laws, 1906. After Goa became a part of the Indian Union in 1961, the MMDR Act, 1957 was extended to Goa in October 1963. In 1975, notices were served to concessionaires under the Mining Lease Modification Terms Rule, 1956, by the controller of mining leases. This was done to bring in parity with the provisions of the MMDR Act, the Mineral Concession Rule and the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR).

Thus, the end of the Mineral Concession Rule was not to put mining operations in Goa at a disadvan-

tage, it was an effort to bring it at par with the MMDR Act that is operative in the rest of the country. Thus, the stalemate caused by the delay in harmonising the two is definitely not called for.

The Central Government should come forward and resolve the issue of date of applicability of the Abolition Act, 1987 and the MMDR amendment of 2015/20, by accepting the prospective time period of lease from the introduction of the Abolition Act on May 23, 1987 for 50 years i.e. till 2037. Thus, it is important to settle the interpretation that it is prospective and not retrospective and the lease thus is entitled till 2037. The same can be done through a legislative amendment in the Abolition Act, which is a law applicable for the State of Goa and shall not affect mining regimes in the rest of the country. The State Government has on multiple occasions sought the intervention of the Central Government on the matter. Goa has requested for putting an end to the inequitable situation which arose out of the rest of

the States being allowed to renew mining leases for 50 years.

This has been represented before the Supreme Court through petitions, reviews and interlocutory petitions among others, by the Goa Government, the mining industry and even the panchayats from the mining districts in the State, who have been devastated by the financial distress arising out of the end of mining.

There is an urgent need to decide quickly and set a credible and consistent way forward so that mining operations can start with immediate effect. All the above issues can be resolved in one stroke if the intention is to make Goa a shining example of an *atmanirbhar* State contributing to the GDP of the country. The resumption of mining activities in the State will bring great relief to the State and its populace in the short term and substantial benefit in the long run. It will also result in Goa being a State with the highest per capita income again.

(The writer is former Secretary to the Government of India)

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ROJGAR YOJANA

Cabinet OK's ₹23k cr to boost fresh hiring

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved ₹22,810 crore outlay for the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) that aims at encouraging businesses to do fresh hiring amid the pandemic.

“The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has given its approval for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana to boost employment in formal sector and incentivize creation of new employment opportunities during the COVID-19 recovery phase under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0,” an official statement said.

The Cabinet has approved an expenditure of ₹1,584 crore for the current financial year and ₹22,810 crore for the entire Scheme period - 2020-2023, it added.

Under the scheme, the government will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after October 1, 2020, and up to June 30, 2021, Labour Minister Santosh Gangawar said in a briefing on the Cabinet decision.

Under the scheme, the government will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after October 1, 2020, and up to June 30, 2021

The government will pay both 12 per cent employees' contribution and 12 per cent employers' contribution i.e. 24 per cent of basic wages towards EPF (employees provident fund) in respect of new employees in establishments employing up to 1,000 employees for two years.

However, the government will pay only employees' share of EPF contribution i.e. 12 per cent of wages in respect of new employees in establishments employing more than 1,000 employees for two years.

An employee drawing a monthly wage of less than Rs 15,000, who was not working in any establishment registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) before October 1, 2020, and did not have a Universal Account

Number or EPF Member account number prior to October 1, 2020, will be eligible for the benefit.

Any EPFO member possessing Universal Account Number (UAN) drawing a monthly wage of less than Rs 15,000, who exited employment during COVID pandemic from March 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020, and did not join employment in any EPFO covered establishment up to September 30, 2020, will also be eligible to avail the benefit.

The EPFO will credit the contribution in Aadhaar seeded account of members in an electronic manner.

The EPFO will develop software for the scheme and also develop a procedure which is transparent and accountable.

It will work out the modality to ensure that there is no overlapping of benefits provided under the ABRY with any other scheme implemented by the EPFO.

About the number of beneficiaries under the scheme, the minister said it is estimated that lakhs of workers will be benefited through the plan.

Sensex breaches 46k-mark as FIIs keep the faith

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex soared 495 points to cross the 46,000-level for the first time on Wednesday amid persistent foreign fund inflows and positive cues from global markets.

After touching a record intra-day high of 46,164.10, the 30-share BSE index ended 494.99 points or 1.09% higher at 46,103.50.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rallied 136.15 points or 1.02% to its new record high of 13,529.10. It touched its lifetime peak of 13,548.90 during the day.

Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 3%, followed by Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Reliance Industries and ITC. On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, Maruti, SBI and Bajaj Auto were among the laggards.

“Domestic equities remained buoyant with Nifty and Sensex recording fresh highs today mainly supported by sharp rebound in global markets,” said Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities.

The favourable progress on COVID-19 vaccine approvals and distribution across the globe has overshadowed the concerns over sharp rise in new cases and resultant lockdowns in various countries, he said.

Indian equities emerged as a preferred destination for foreign investors given the government's strong commitment to revive economy, he said, , adding that prospects of corporate earnings recovery have emerged strongly, which is much evident from key economic data and management commentaries.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 2,909.60 crore on Tuesday, according to provisional exchange data.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended on a positive note, while Shanghai finished in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with gains in early deals.

The global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 0.96% to USD 49.31 per barrel.

₹ touches 7-wk high of 73.57 on fund inflows, firm equities

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee strengthened by another 3 paise to mark its seven-week high of 73.57 against the US dollar on Wednesday, with sustained foreign fund inflows and firming domestic equities lending support. Traders said weakening of the American currency in the overseas market also favoured the local unit. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.58 against the US dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 73.49 and a low of 73.61. The local unit finally closed at 73.57 against the American currency, registering a rise of 3 paise - its highest level since October 22.

Gold falls ₹118; silver drops ₹875

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell Rs 118 to Rs 49,221 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday on a weak global trend, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 49,339 per 10 gram in the previous trade.

Silver prices also declined Rs 875 to Rs 63,410 per kg, from Rs 64,285 per kg in the previous trade.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	13458.10	13548.90	13449.60	13529.10	136.15	
UPL	475.10	495.00	475.10	494.50	21.70	
ASIANPAINT	2450.00	2532.10	2447.00	2528.00	89.10	
IOC	91.40	94.25	91.10	94.05	3.00	
KOTAKBANK	1836.10	1889.00	1836.10	1882.60	48.80	
HDFCBANK	1377.00	1410.05	1375.05	1408.50	32.20	
INFY	1168.05	1179.50	1157.00	1176.25	12.00	
AXISBANK	619.15	636.70	619.00	637.30	23.05	
RELIANCE	2009.95	2033.80	1999.25	2026.00	32.25	
ITC	205.00	207.80	204.65	205.40	2.95	
HINDUNILVR	2260.00	2296.00	2243.25	2288.55	28.55	
BPCL	392.15	398.80	391.00	395.00	4.55	
INDUSINDBK	930.00	938.50	918.70	927.05	10.35	
BAIFINANCE	4820.00	4852.85	4791.20	4844.55	52.40	
LTI	1178.00	1185.00	1166.35	1183.00	11.60	
HCLTECH	866.10	880.00	862.10	871.35	7.55	
DREDDY	5025.00	5100.00	5050.00	5058.00	42.80	
DIVISLAB	3710.00	3736.00	3695.60	3720.00	30.00	
GAIL	123.00	124.10	121.75	122.70	0.95	
HEROMOTOCO	3174.95	3204.00	3156.15	3192.00	24.05	
POWERGRID	192.90	194.75	191.10	192.95	1.35	
TATAMOTORS	183.00	186.40	181.85	182.85	1.05	
COALINDIA	135.40	137.20	134.60	135.00	0.75	
TCS	2815.00	2840.00	2791.25	2812.05	14.75	
BAJAJFINSV	901.80	907.50	895.10	901.60	46.60	
SBIILE	858.00	864.00	854.80	857.95	4.15	
ICICIBANK	510.00	515.00	506.05	510.70	2.30	
ONGC	91.50	92.85	90.95	91.15	0.40	
NESTLEIND	1754.60	1764.70	1748.15	1759.00	70.55	
ADANIAPORTS	467.65	469.90	458.15	465.05	1.70	
HDFCLIFE	655.30	656.50	645.00	653.80	2.30	
SUNPHARMA	571.00	581.95	567.50	570.60	1.90	
NTPC	99.25	99.90	97.90	98.40	0.20	
LIT	1430.00	1435.00	1417.55	1428.35	0.50	
M&M	756.80	762.95	750.20	754.00	0.00	
EICHERMOT	2551.10	2560.65	2530.10	2547.05	-1.15	
BHARTIARTL	2318.00	2334.65	2280.60	2306.00	-3.75	
HDFC	50.00	50.90	49.10	50.75	-0.85	
JSWSTEEL	368.00	368.25	359.10	362.00	-0.65	
TECHM	938.00	939.70	925.90	930.50	-1.80	
BRITANNIA	369.90	366.00	361.10	363.60	-0.40	
CIPLA	764.90	766.00	759.95	762.95	-3.05	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3335.00	3353.65	3300.00	3320.00	-18.60	
SRIN	272.10	274.90	269.20	270.25	-1.65	
GRASIM	926.95	933.75	916.15	919.60	-6.20	
MARUTI	7775.00	7799.95	7692.00	7708.00	-54.70	
TATASTEEL	68.00	62.70	60.70	60.85	-5.30	
WIPRO	367.75	367.75	357.50	360.35	-3.35	
ULTRACEMCO	5217.75	5239.00	5176.15	5166.00	-51.75	
SHREECEM	24890.00	24949.20	24531.00	24420.05	-347.70	
HINDALCO	246.50	248.05	239.95	241.90	-3.80	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	31893.20	31990.05	31662.85	31722.20	7.80	
DLF	207.90	213.95	206.35	212.50	6.00	
URL	1120.00	1144.95	1112.10	1143.50	30.85	
NAUKRI	4300.00	4375.00	4289.00	4373.10	103.95	
INFRATEL	241.00	247.10	240.00	246.00	5.80	
SIEMENS	1543.10	1588.95	1540.05	1570.00	31.75	
PFC	116.65	122.85	116.25	121.25	2.30	
HINDZINC	238.15	247.25	235.30	242.10	4.60	
ROSCHLTD	13390.00	13646.35	13250.00	13500.00	253.65	
GICRE	143.75	148.45	141.50	145.00	2.35	
BERGEPAINT	669.50	681.00	664.00	678.10	9.95	
HINDPETRO	217.85	220.25	215.65	218.80	2.95	
MARICO	395.00	400.65	395.00	399.00	4.95	
OFSS	3137.90	3190.05	3127.90	3156.40	38.35	
BIOCON	445.45	453.55	445.10	450.90	5.45	
ICICIPRULI	485.40	488.40	477.00	487.60	4.30	
CADILAHC	564.00	574.40	563.40	569.20	4.15	
TATACONSUM	564.00	570.00	560.35	566.20	3.45	
PIDILITIND	1619.00	1630.00	1615.05	1619.00	7.85	
HAVELLS	827.30	828.60	819.10	823.90	4.40	
LUPIN	954.00	960.75	944.10	951.00	2.75	
ALKEM	2939.00	2939.00	2889.95	2913.00	2.60	
ABBOTINDIA	15480.00	15480.00	15350.00	15400.00	10.15	
DABUR	510.00	510.00	501.00	502.70	0.10	
MOTHERSUMI	158.90	161.20	157.05	158.00	-0.05	
GODREJCP	709.00	712.45	703.20	706.00	-0.50	
CONCOR	407.05	408.95	404.00	402.30	-3.35	
LTI	327.10	331.60	325.40	325.80	-0.45	
BAJAJHSD	3101.75	3101.75	3056.85	3071.20	-3.70	
BANKBARODA	67.35	67.60	64.20	65.10	-0.10	
PGHIL	10930.00	10993.10	10870.00	10916.65	-18.05	
COPAL	157.80	158.00	155.90	155.80	-4.85	
TORNTPHARM	2690.00	2690.00	2651.05	2660.00	-11.55	
MUTHOOTFIN	1200.00	1203.70	1185.00	1190.50	-5.20	
MCDOWELL-N	587.40	592.45	578.30	583.25	-3.05	
HDFC AMC	2829.40	2863.55	2822.00	2812.95	-16.45	
NMDC	108.45	109.35	106.80	107.05	-0.75	
ICICI GI	1480.00	1510.00	1444.00	1453.15	-11.25	
ADURPHARMA	902.00	908.00	885.20	888.90	-7.25	
DMART	2652.00	2755.00	2586.00	2630.00	-22.10	
INDIGO	1749.00	1768.60	1725.10	1733.00	-14.65	
BANDHANBNK	407.00	407.00	396.00	400.40	-3.50	
IGL	491.00	493.70	480.55	483.30	-4.30	
PIEL	1492.00	1493.75	1461.10	1467.30	-16.15	
ADANTRANS	432.65	435.00	425.10	426.90	-5.00	
PETRONET	263.45	265.90	257.05	258.80	-3.70	
SBCARD	857.00	862.00	841.00	843.40	-12.25	
AMBUJACEM	258.90	259.00	251.00	253.40	-3.70	
ACC	1695.00	1699.10	1653.00	1659.00	-25.50	
ADANI GREEN	1100.00	1110.00	1050.00	1079.00	-19.65	
PNB	42.20	42.65	39.50	39.30	-1.30	

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
HDFC	2345.00	2345.00	2280.35	2305.20
RELIANCE	2013.00	2033.80	2000.00	2026.65
IDEA	9.60	10.00	9.45	9.87
SBIN	272.00	274.85	269.25	270.35
VEDL	138.00	145.70	137.20	143.65
ITC	204.60	207.70	204.60	205.35
INFY	1167.15	1179.00	1157.30	1175.15
HDFCBANK	1380.00	1409.90	1376.30	1405.85
TATAMOTORS	182.65	186.40	181.80	182.70
PNB	42.20	42.60	39.10	39.40
BANKBARODA	67.25	67.60	64.20	65.60
INDUSINDBK	927.00	938.20	919.40	928.10
KOTAKBANK	1836.00	1887.00	1836.00	1882.75
ICICIBANK	511.40	514.95	506.10	511.30
LALPATHLAB	2244.60	2249.05	2175.00	2186.70
HINDUNILVR	2250.00	2294.95	2245.05	2291.60
TATAPOWER	72.90	75.90	71.95	73.15
CANBK	141.90	146.00	127.10	128.10
BAJFINANCE	4806.00	4850.00	4791.00	4843.00
PVR	1399.00	1504.95	1390.95	1487.70
HCLTECH	869.40	880.00	864.40	870.50
TATASTEEL	619.00	620.70	607.05	609.25
TCS	2818.00	2840.00	2793.85	2809.80
BEL	116.00	122.50	114.80	116.85
SAIL	55.90	56.40	54.45	54.70
ADANIPOWER	53.45	54.20	48.65	49.35
WOCKPHARMA	508.80	535.20	498.20	505.85
DMART	2654.80	2752.20	2586.90	2622.40
AXISBANK	620.45	636.60	618.65	634.05
IRCTC	1661.00	1701.00	1620.50	1618.05
ULTRACEMCO	5230.25	5257.90	5119.15	5147.95
WIPRO	367.00	367.75	357.75	359.65
BHEL	36.95	37.60	36.30	36.55
IOC	91.25	94.20	91.10	93.95
INOXLEISUR	282.50	299.70	279.50	292.10
DRREDDY	5015.00	5099.45	5015.00	5056.55
LT	1180.00	1185.00	1167.30	1181.10
ONGC	91.15	92.80	90.90	91.15
SOUTHBANK	9.86	10.61	9.78	10.31
IBULHSHS	200.50	204.45	198.35	199.00
MARUTI	7799.80	7799.80	7698.30	7707.75
ASIANPAINT	2445.10	2530.00	2445.10	2521.15
DISHTV	11.40	13.45	11.29	13.22
BPCIL	391.00	398.55	391.00	395.20
BHARTIARTL	504.55	506.85	499.15	503.00
SUNPHARMA	572.70	583.75	567.45	569.55
UPL	474.00	494.90	474.00	492.30
RLBANK	240.75	240.75	235.70	236.75
SPICEJET	96.80	97.00	92.80	93.80
MFSL	637.00	640.00	634.20	635.65
BIOCIN	450.00	453.40	446.00	451.05
SUNTRANSFIN	1068.60	1078.50	1049.50	1060.45
APOLLOHOSP	2500.00	2519.25	2434.25	2441.15

US SC rejects Trump election appeal on Pennsylvania

AFF ■ WASHINGTON

The US Supreme Court dealt the latest blow on Tuesday to Donald Trump's effort to overturn his election loss when it denied his allies' attempt to block the certification of votes in key state Pennsylvania.

The nation's highest court, which includes three Trump-appointed justices out of nine, did not explain its decision, and none of the members expressed dissent.

More than a month since the November 3 election, Trump still refuses to concede to Democrat Joe Biden -- who has a seven million-vote lead -- and continues to make baseless claims of fraud.

Trump and his allies have filed dozens of lawsuits in several key states, almost all of which have been thrown out by the courts.

One of them, brought by Republican congressman Mike Kelly, challenged the legality of mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania, a crucial battleground state.

Biden carried Pennsylvania in November's vote, four years after Trump won the state.

After the case was rejected by the state supreme court, the plaintiffs turned to the national Supreme Court, asking it to freeze all electoral operations while they developed their arguments.

In dismissing the case, the Court put an end to the procedure and signaled that it is not inclined to get involved in post-election litigation.

Trump had hoped that the high court, whose bench he has tipped solidly to the right, would intervene in his favor.

In 2000, the Supreme Court halted a recount in Florida, where George W. Bush was only 537 votes ahead of Democrat Al Gore, allowing the Republican to win the election.

The Republican-led state of Texas filed another appeal Tuesday to the Supreme Court, requesting the invalidation of results in four key states, but experts were not optimistic regarding its chance of success.

Trump threatens to veto \$740 bn Pentagon budget for 2021

AFF ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump threatened Tuesday to veto a Pentagon budget bill, as the House prepared to vote on the spending blueprint that has strong support from both parties.

"I hope House Republicans will vote against the very weak National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which I will VETO," Trump, who leaves office January 20, tweeted using the formal name of the legislation.

The \$740 billion budget for 2021 was to be voted on Tuesday afternoon by the House of Representatives, and go before the Senate over the next few days. But it needs Trump's signature to become law.

In July, separate versions of the bill won more than two-thirds support in both chambers.

That would be a so-called "super majority" big enough to override a Trump veto.

But some Republicans could end up changing their minds. Trump has several complaints about the bill.

It does not call, as he wants, for the abolition of a law known as Section 230, which grants social media firms protection from liability for third-party content carried on their platforms. Trump has railed against the law repeatedly and says giants like Facebook and Google are biased against him.

Trump is also displeased with the bill because it calls for renaming US military bases that honor Confederate heroes from the pro-slavery South from the US Civil War.

The bill also goes against Trump's drive to slash the US troop presence in Germany.

President-elect? GOP may wait for Jan to say Biden won

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Americans waiting for Republicans in Congress to acknowledge Joe Biden as the president-elect may have to keep waiting until January as GOP leaders stick with President Donald Trump's litany of legal challenges and unproven claims of fraud.

Tuesday's deadline for states to certify their elections -- once viewed as a pivot point for Republicans to mark Biden's win -- came and went without much comment. Next week's Dec. 14 Electoral College deadline may produce just a few more congratulatory GOP calls to Biden.

Increasingly, GOP lawmakers say the Jan. 6 vote in Congress to accept the Electoral College outcome may be when the presidential winner becomes official. Senate

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has signaled Jan. 20 as the certain date when the country is "going to have the swearing-in of the next president."

The result is a risky stand-off like none other in US history. The refusal to agree upon the facts of the election threatens to undermine voter confidence, chisel away at the legitimacy of Biden's presidency and restack civic norms in still-unknowable ways.

Yet some GOP officials see the dragged-out process as their best shot at answering the fiery questions, calls and complaints of their constituents who voted for Trump and refuse to believe he legitimately lost the race to Biden.

"The country needs to understand, at least, it was fair," Rep. Alex Mooney, R-W.Va., said in an interview.

Biden makes pitch for retired general to be Pentagon chief

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday made his case for retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin to be secretary of defense, urging Congress to waive a legal prohibition against a recently serving military officer running the Pentagon.

With concern rising in Congress about maintaining civilian control of the military, Biden suggested he felt a need to counter an emerging narrative that Austin's nomination blurs the lines between civil and military roles.

"Given the immense and urgent threats and challenges our nation faces, he should be confirmed swiftly," Biden wrote in The Atlantic. It was his first public confirmation that Austin is his pick for Pentagon chief, although word had leaked out

Monday, prompting criticism and skepticism from some in Congress.

Biden countered the concerns by arguing that Austin knows that a Pentagon chief's duties are different from those of a military officer. He said Austin is aware that "the civil-military dynamic has been under great stress these past four years," an allusion to President Donald Trump's hiring of numerous retired generals for key posts early in his administration, including retired Marine Gen. Jim Mattis as defense secretary.

Biden argued that Austin would work to put the civil-military balance "back on track." He said the main reason he picked Austin was because he reacts well under pressure.

"He is the person we need in this moment," Biden wrote.

Trump signs executive order prioritising Covid-19 vaccine for Americans

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order that prioritises Americans' access to Covid-19 vaccines before the US potentially begins helping other nations.

If necessary, Trump said, he is ready to invoke the Defence Production Act to ensure that Covid-19 vaccines first get to the Americans. The Defence Production Act allows a president to force private manufacturers to ramp up production and give the federal government priority on any orders it places.

American companies, he said, were the first to produce a verifiably safe and effective vaccine.

"Together, we will defeat the virus, and we will soon end the pandemic, and we will save millions and millions of lives, both in our country and all over the world. And we've already started," Trump said

during signing the executive order on Tuesday at a White House event celebrating 'Operation Warp Speed', his administration's effort to produce and distribute safe and effective vaccines for Covid-19.

Trump told reporters that his administration provided a total of USD 14 billion to accelerate coronavirus vaccine development and to manufacture all of the top candidates long in advance.

As a result of this "unprecedented investment", both Pfizer and Moderna have announced that their vaccines are approximately 95 per cent effective, he said.

Pfizer has developed its vaccine outside of 'Operation Warp Speed', but is collaborating with the US Government on manufacturing and distribution.

The UK on Tuesday began its vaccinations with the first set of people injected with their first of two doses of the

Pfizer/BioNTech jab.

The deadly virus has so far killed more than 285,000 Americans and some 1.5 million people worldwide.

As per the executive order, the Secretary of Health and Human Services is directed to provide priority access to Covid-19 vaccines to Americans.

"Through this action, Trump is putting the health and safety of Americans, the viability of our economy and the security of our nation first," the White House said.

The US has led and will continue to lead the world's public health and humanitarian response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it said.

The Trump administration is prepared to ship Covid-19 vaccine doses to every corner of America within 48 hours of the issuance of an Emergency Use Authorisation by the US Food and Drug Administration, the White

House said. Trump said more companies are in the pipeline of the vaccine announcement soon.

WH PROPOSES NEW \$916 BN PANDEMIC STIMULUS PLAN: US TREASURY CHIEF

Washington: US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin unveiled a new \$916 billion pandemic aid proposal, aiming to break a months-long deadlock in Congress over additional aid to coronavirus-ravaged US economy. The proposal, slightly larger than a \$908 billion measure unveiled by a bipartisan group of senators last week, would include "money for state and local governments and robust liability protections for businesses, schools and universities," Mnuchin said in a statement, all of which have been key sticking points in negotiations.

Biden vows 100 mn vaccinations in US in first 100 days

Wilmington: US President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday laid out his plan to fight the coronavirus pandemic during his first 100 days in office, saying his administration would vaccinate 100 million Americans, push to reopen schools and strengthen mask mandates.

Biden, who formally introduced his public health team on Tuesday, also announced he would nominate retired Army General Lloyd Austin as the country's first Black defense secretary. He also picked US Representative Marcia Fudge of Ohio to lead the Housing and Urban Development Department, and Tom Vilsack, the former agriculture secretary, to fill the same role again, according to news reports on Tuesday.

Rich countries have bought too many vaccines: Amnesty

Paris: Rich countries have secured enough coronavirus vaccines to protect their populations nearly three times over by the end of 2021, Amnesty International and other groups said on Wednesday, possibly depriving billions of people in poorer areas. Britain approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine this month, raising hopes that the tide could soon turn against a virus that has killed nearly 1.5 million globally, hammered the world economy and upended normal life.

Amnesty and other organisations including Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam, urged governments and the pharmaceutical industry to take action to ensure intellectual property of vaccines is shared widely.

Official: China, Russia haven't sought European authorisation for vaccines

Rome: Russia and China have not requested authorisation from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) for their COVID-19 vaccines and the agency is not under political pressure to speed up vaccine approvals, the regulator's chief said in remarks published on Wednesday.

"For the time being they have not sought authorisation for their vaccines. If they do, we will study the data," EMA's Executive Director Emer Cooke told Italian daily la Repubblica, when asked about the Chinese and Russian vaccines.

China has approved three vaccine candidates developed by Sinovac and state-owned Sinopharm for emergency use.

Israel gets first delivery of Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine

Tel Aviv: Israel received its first batch of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine on Wednesday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declaring the pandemic's end was "in sight" and vowing to get the first jab.

"This is a great celebration for Israel," he said on the tarmac at Ben Gurion airport, near Tel Aviv, as a fork-lift truck started unloading the cargo from a red and yellow DHL air freighter.

The shipment was the first of eight million doses ordered from US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer BioNTech.

It came ahead of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, which begins on Thursday.

"The end is in sight," Netanyahu said.

France unveils draft law to fight Islamist radical 'enemy'

AP ■ PARIS

A draft law aimed at arming France against Islamist radicalism was unveiled on Wednesday, a measure promoted by President Emmanuel Macron to rout out what he calls "separatists" undermining the nation.

Parliament is expected to open what is likely to be a lively debate on the draft law in the months ahead.

The measure, long in the making and refined until days before its presentation, has gone through various name changes and is now known by the delicate title "Supporting Republican Principles".

Prime Minister Jean Castex said those whose project is to "divide and spread hate and

violence" are at the centre of "separatism".

Separatism is especially dangerous because it "is the manifestation of a conscious, theorised, political-religious project with an ambition to make religious norms predominate over the law," he said at a news conference.

In an interview with the newspaper *Le Monde* he said the nature of a law is long-term and it would apply to any political ideology that threatens French values, "even if today it is radical Islamism that we try by all means to fight".

Castex and others insist that neither Islam as a religion nor regular Muslims are targeted by the draft law.

Neither is named in the text made up of about 50 arti-

cles aimed at enabling better oversight of mosques, associations, public services and schools.

The aim is to reduce the space where radicals can operate and ensure that French values, including secularism, are guaranteed.

Among notable measures is making school obligatory from age 3 with the ability to opt out in favour of home schooling for special cases only.

The measure is aimed at ending so-called clandestine schools run by fundamentalists with their own agenda.

Another article encourages mosques to register as places of worship, so as to better identify them. Many of the nation's more than 2,600 mosques currently operate

under rules for associations.

Foreign funding for mosques, while not forbidden, would have to be declared if more than 10,000 euros.

The draft law would make it a crime punishable by fines and up to one year in prison for a doctor to provide a young woman with virginity certificates, sometimes demanded ahead of marriage.

To do away with forced marriages, a measure requires the couple to meet separately for an interview with an official when there is a doubt about free consent. If the doubt persists, the official must take the issue to a prosecutor who could forbid the marriage.

Those practising polygamy would be forbidden French residence cards.

5 killed, 1 hurt as helicopter crashes in French Alps

Paris: Five members of a mountain rescue team were killed and a sixth was seriously injured when their helicopter crashed in the French Alps, authorities said.

The helicopter was carrying the team on a training mission in the Savoie region on Tuesday evening. The helicopter came down at an altitude of 1,800 meters (5,905 feet), the prefecture of Savoie said in a statement.

The surviving crew member was able to give the alert. He has been transported to a hospital in the city of Grenoble, the prefecture said. Weather conditions were particularly bad, local authorities said.

French President Emmanuel Macron paid tribute in a tweet overnight to rescuers who "to save lives, are taking all the risks."

Indian-origin scientist's paper-based test can detect Covid in less than 5 minutes

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A team led by an Indian-origin scientist has developed a rapid, ultrasensitive Covid-19 test using a paper-based electrochemical sensor that can detect the presence of the novel coronavirus in less than five minutes.

The researchers from the University of Illinois in the US created a graphene-based electrochemical biosensor with an

electrical read-out setup to selectively detect the presence of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material.

According to the research published in the journal ACS Nano, there are two components to this biosensor: a platform to measure an electrical read-out and probes to detect the presence of viral RNA.

To create the platform, the researchers led by professor Dipanjan Pan first coated filter

paper with a layer of graphene nanoplatelets to create a conductive film.

They then placed a gold electrode with a predefined design on top of the graphene as a contact pad for electrical readout.

Both gold and graphene have high sensitivity and conductivity which makes this platform ultrasensitive to detect changes in electrical signals, the researchers noted.

US judge orders partial disclosure of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi murder files

New York: A New York judge on Tuesday ordered US intelligence agencies to acknowledge they possess a tape recording of the 2018 murder of Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi, in a ruling hailed by rights activists.

The judge also instructed the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to explain why they are withholding the tape and a CIA report on the gruesome killing.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist, was suffocated and dismembered inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate after going inside to get documents for his marriage to his Turkish fiancée.

The October 2, 2018 murder sparked an international outcry and tarnished the reputation of oil-rich Saudi Arabia and its powerful crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

Pakistan determines price of Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor's ancestral houses in Peshawar

Peshawar: Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has determined the price of the ancestral houses of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor in the heart of this city at Rs 80,56,000 and Rs 1,50,00,000 respectively. The provincial government in September decided to purchase their ancestral houses to conserve the historic buildings which are in dilapidated condition and facing demolition threat. The two buildings, located in the heart of this northern Pakistani city, have been declared as national heritage. Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar Muhammad Ali Asghar, following a report of the Communication and Works Department, fixed the price of Dilip Kumar's four Marla house for Rs 80,56,000 while that of Raj Kapoor's six Marla house for Rs 1,50,00,000 (USD 93,529).

PTI

Google and FB risk big fines under draft Australian news law

Canberra: Google and Facebook would risk multimillion-dollar fines if they failed to comply with proposed legislation introduced into the Australian Parliament on Wednesday that would make the tech giants pay for journalism they display.

Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg introduced the so-called News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code and revealed details of his plan for Australia to become the first country to force the digital platforms to compensate news media for journalistic content.

"We are not seeking to protect traditional media companies from the rigor of competition or technological disruption, which we know benefits consumers," Frydenberg told Parliament. "Rather, we are seeking to create a level playing field where market power is not misused and there is appropriate compensation for the production of original news content."

UK regulator issues allergy warning for Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's medicines regulator on Wednesday issued a warning for people with "significant" history of allergic reactions to medicines, food or vaccines to not have the Pfizer/BioNTech jab, a day after the first set of patients were administered their first of two doses of the vaccine against COVID-19.

The warning comes after two National Health Service (NHS) workers experienced "anaphylactoid reaction" symptoms shortly after being injected, but are now said to be recovering well.

NHS England said all its trusts involved with the mass vaccination programme have been informed and from Wednesday, all patients scheduled to receive the vaccine will be asked if they have a history of allergic reactions.

"As is common with new vaccines, the MHRA have advised on a precautionary basis that people with a signif-

icant history of allergic reactions do not receive this vaccination after two people with a history of significant allergic reactions responded adversely," said Professor Stephen Powis, medical director for the NHS in England.

An anaphylactoid reaction tends to involve a skin rash, breathlessness and sometimes a drop in blood pressure and both the NHS workers who experienced this are said to have a history of serious allergies and carry adrenaline pens around with them.

"We have been advised by MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) of two yellow card reports that may be associated with allergic reaction due to administration of the COVID-19 BNT162b2 vaccine," Pfizer UK said in a statement.

"As a precautionary measure, the MHRA has issued temporary guidance to the NHS while it conducts an investigation in order to fully understand each case and its causes," it said.

Dr June Raine, the head of the MHRA, told a joint select committee hearing on Tuesday that "real-time vigilance" will continue throughout the vaccine rollout process.

"We know from the extensive clinical trials that this (allergy) was not a feature, but if we need to strengthen our advice now that we have had this experience in vulnerable populations, the groups selected as a priority, we get that advice out immediately," she said.

Experts have indicated that such reactions are to be expected in rare cases with any vaccine, including the annual flu vaccine.

Several thousand people became the first to be vaccinated against COVID-19 on Tuesday, the day marked as V-Day or Vaccine Day in the UK. Indian-origin husband and wife couple, Hari Shukla, 87, and his wife Ranjan, 83, were among those on the prioritised list of recipients finalised based on those at the highest risk of death from the deadly virus.

The NHS has announced that the vaccination programme will be expanded out of the 50 hospital hubs to general practitioner (GP) surgeries around the country from next week. Doses are expected to be delivered to around 200 GP surgeries initially to allow them to start next Tuesday, when over-80s will be invited first.

Once the first 200 GP practices have received their doses, the programme will be expanded out to more than 1,000 surgeries -- with each local area having a designated site.

Nearly 70 hospital hubs across the UK have now taken delivery of 800,000 doses, and another delivery of more than 1 million is expected to be shipped from Belgium by next week to allow the community programme to get under way.

By the end of the year, the government hopes to have had around 5 million doses delivered in total -- enough for 2.5 million people as two doses of vaccine are needed for full protection.

Trend Slazer

Deepika's smile featured in Athens

Actor **DEEPIKA PADUKONE** has been featured at Athens International Airport, in an exhibition of 'The Authentic Smiles of People of the World.'

The Authentic Smiles Campaign was put together when the Athens International Airport resumed welcoming guests after a break due to COVID-19.

Her fans in Athens can see the grey marble sculpture of the heroine. It is draped in a saree and is embellished with a choker necklace and a small bindi. The text reads, "Indian Bollywood Actress smiles at Athens International Airport. Grey Marble, 2020 A.D."



'It finally feels like this is my time and may it never pass. I want to give the audience one memorable

film after another, one great role after another. Entertaining the world has been my long-standing wish. I want to do one hell of a job at it. 2020 was rude to the world. But I have nothing but gratitude for how my career and roles have shaped up.'

—Pankaj Tripathi

Actor **SONU SOOD**, who is in the limelight for the charity work he has been doing during lockdown, says the kind of roles coming his way have changed.

He said, "The kind of roles that are being offered to me now are different. They are larger than life, and real life hero roles. Things that I have done in real life, they are trying to put that in my scripts, too, which is different. I have to make sure that I live up to the expectations and do justice with whatever I do. There is a huge amount of responsibility."

Sonu is now hosting *Bharat Ke Mahaveer*, which tells the stories of kindness in pandemic.

Nick to do a cameo in Priyanka's next

Pop star **NICK JONAS** will be seen alongside his wife, actor **Priyanka Chopra**, in a cameo role in her forthcoming Hollywood romantic drama, *Text For You*.

The news spread after Nick was spotted shooting a scene in a cab along with Priyanka in London.

The pair are thought to be shooting a tense argument scene as Priyanka was overheard saying, "Get out of my cab," while in character. Nick was then seen opening the door of the cab and stepping out.

Written and directed by Jim Strouse, the film is an English remake of the German-language film, *SMS Fur Dich*, based on Sofie Cramer's novel.

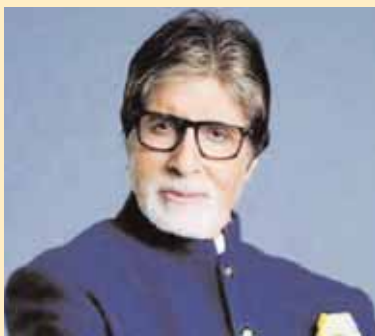


A star-studded ballot

Actors **AMITABH BACHCHAN**, **AKSHAY KUMAR**, **ALIA BHATT** make it among the most influential celebrities in Forbes Asia 100 Digital Stars list

Actors Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt and Hrithik Roshan feature in the Forbes list of Most Influential Celebrities on Social Media in the Asia-Pacific region. The list also mentions actors Katrina Kaif, Anushka Sharma, Jacqueline Fernandez, Shahid Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, besides singers Shreya Ghoshal and Neha Kakkar.

In the inaugural 100 Digital Stars list, Forbes Asia highlights celebrities who, despite cancelled physical events and activities, managed to remain active



using social media to interact with their fans, raise awareness, inspire optimism and even helped causes like COVID-19 relief. The list comes without any ranking.

In the list, Big B has been credited for raising \$7 million for COVID-19 relief this year.

Describing Akshay as Bollywood's highest-paid actor, the list states that the actor donated \$4 million to COVID-19 relief in India and took part in the 'I For India' fundraising concert on Facebook Live in May,



which raised ₹520 million (\$7 million) for GiveIndia's COVID-19 fund.

The list also includes international stars like Hugh Jackman, Chris Hemsworth, South Korean girl band Blackpink, boy band BTS, actor and singer Jay Chou, Lee Min-ho and actors Mahira Khan, and singers Atif Aslam, Troye Sivan among others.

As per the list, Hrithik appeared in May's 'I for India' concert to raise funds for COVID-19 workers. His Instagram post of the event drew over two million views.

Forbes Asia's 100 Digital Stars list evaluated the candidates based on the social media reach and engagement, their recent work, impact and advocacy, brand endorsements and business endeavours. Their recognition profile on a local, regional and global level were also considered.

—IANS

WHAT THE WORDS MEAN

India is witnessing an unprecedented boom in podcasts. Here's how the demand for audio content in regional languages is fuelling their growth. By TEAM VIVA

When it comes to the audio industry, podcast has become the new buzzword and a favourite. Being able to penetrate multiple geographies at the same time, podcasts have started gaining huge popularity. A combination of the terms, "iPod" and "broadcast," podcast is a significantly growing segment in the country's online entertainment sector and holds great potential for reaching new heights in the future.

Going as per the trends and official data, India has an internet user base of 500 million, out of which 40 million tune in to listen to a podcast. The market is led by the Apple Podcasts, which has around 5.5 lakh active podcasts in 100+ languages available for the users. However, the emergence of home-grown podcasting companies in recent years has been a growth catalyst for the industry.

According to PwC, the total revenue generated from podcasting is estimated to reach \$1 billion by 2021. Another report by Google reveals that India is among the top five countries using Google Podcasts app with an increased affinity towards on-demand content.

Well, now, the growth of podcasts are being further fuelled by regional languages in India and Pulkrit Sharma, Co-Founder and CEO of Khabri, tells us how.

India is a country with 22 modern Indian languages and around 720 recognised dialects. The linguistic diversity in India is increasing the demand for the information available on various platforms in vernacular languages. With a growth rate of 33 per cent, the vernacular internet ecosystem in the country is thriving.



Not surprisingly, a study conducted by KPMG found that 73 per cent of internet users prefer content in vernacular language in India, and any company which targets this group is likely to enjoy an upward growth trajectory.

As per DataLabs by Inc24, the estimated market opportunity for vernacular content in India is 53 per cent billion for the year, 2021. Google and KPMG's joint study, titled *Indian Languages Defining India's Internet*, also predicts that by the year 2021, Hindi internet users will surpass the number of English internet users. 90 per cent of these new internet users will prefer con-



suming content online in their preferred vernacular language, which is enough to indicate the demand for local language content.

Podcasts in India have successfully tapped into the growing demand for online content in vernacular languages. Out of the total number of new internet users, nearly 75 per cent of the users belong to tier-II and tier-III towns, out of which around 80 per cent of them want to consume information in their native or local language. Thus, initially beginning in the English language, podcasts in India have now garnered a regional appeal by providing content in

Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Bengali, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Bhojpuri, and Assamese to name a few. The other advantage of releasing the content in regional language is that the podcast hosts can reach the rural areas of the country, where the majority of the population is not comfortable with speaking or listening to English audios.

When it comes to topics or issues of discussion, there are different types of podcasts available to cater to people of all age groups and moods. They can offer content varying from news, to mythological series, fun stories, and poems, and even educational content in the local language based on the geography they are trying to target. This is an indicator that podcasts have limitless growth possibilities when released in the language preferred by the consumer of the content.

Most of the leading content-generating platforms like YouTube have already started focussing on the Hindi language to increase the engagement rate of their content. Facebook and Google, too, have started focussing on native languages for enabling mass distribution of the regional content among the locals.

The demand for audio content in regional languages is rising among internet users in India. Hence, it is essential for podcast platforms to increase the variety of content they provide in vernacular languages. These podcasts in local languages can be used to create social awareness, do storytelling by rural people, and bring new talent onboard. The increased demand for local languages and on-demand content gives podcast platforms the opportunity to provide a user experience, thereby leading to an unprecedented podcast boom in India.

The sun in cool climes

The series, *Ladakh Warriors: The Sons of the Soil*, voiced by actor **RANDEEP HOODA**, documents the life and struggles of the hill station's scouts



tioned to fight at heights of over 15,000 ft, the young Ladakhi boys only dream of being the human shield to protect their country. It is a story of determination and love for the motherland. Narrated in Hindi by the Indian equestrian, actor and nature & wildlife enthusiast, Randeep Hooda, the show depicts the gruelling training that these Snow Warriors go through at one of the highest regimental centres in the world. On lending his voice for the show in Hindi, Randeep Hooda said, "I have always been in awe of Ladakh's beauty. However, associating with this show, I am now equally mesmerised by the stories of these warriors, who come with a determination towards their country and train in such extreme conditions only to be able to protect their land. It's a great initiative by the channel and I am glad to lend my voice and take this story to every corner of this country."

Col. Sonam Wangchuk (Retd), Maha Vir Chakra awardee said, "Young Ladakhi boys come to join the Ladakh Scouts regiment with a desire to do something for their country. Physiologically, they are customised for the existing terrain and climatic conditions of this place and are irreplaceable as soldiers to deliver in extreme conditions of Ladakh. I am thankful to the show for telling this story to the people of India, encouraging many young boys and girls to do something for their motherland and make it proud."

Issac John, Direct-to-Consumer Head, APAC - Discovery, said, "There was no other show better than *Ladakh Warriors: The Sons of the Soil* to launch the channel's Originals. The show is a beautiful depiction of the spirit of Ladakh, its people and their loyalty towards their country. It will provide the viewers an unprecedented access to one of the world's highest regimental centres and we're delighted that we are kick-starting with a show that will resonate with every Indian family."

(The show is now streaming on Discovery+.)

'I have always been in awe of Ladakh's beauty. I am now just mesmerised by the stories of these warriors, who come with a determination towards their country and train in such extreme conditions only to be able to protect their land. It's a great initiative'

Ladakh, known for its stunning landscapes, beautiful snow-capped mountains and sparkling blue waters, is also home to Indian Army's Ladakh Scouts, fondly known as the 'Snow Warriors.' This picturesque land is full of stories of their bravery and sacrifice. To introduce these courageous sons of the country to the world, Discovery+ is all set to launch a visually spectacular show this year, *Ladakh Warriors: The Sons of the Soil*.

Shot in the stunning backdrop of rugged desert mountains, *Ladakh Warriors: The Sons of the Soil* is exciting and immersive and will give the heroes of mountain warfare the attention they deserve. Born with larger lungs and genetically condi-



Ayushmann's appeal

A thought leader, whose pursuits and works have always suggested a major change towards society, actor Ayushmann Khurrana, due to his progressive, dialogue-initiating films and entertainers, has been voted as one of the 'most influential people of the world' by TIME Magazine.

He was recently appointed as UNICEF's Celebrity Advocate for their global campaign EVAC (Ending Violence Against Children). Today, on World Human Rights Day, the actor talks about a child's right to have a safe environment to grow up and how parents and teachers have a critical role to play in achieving this.

Ayushmann says, "Violence can and should be prevented. As parents, teachers, members of the community and duty-bearers, we all have a role to play. We need to reach out to children and help them understand that they can speak out about the abuse and the violence they face in their everyday lives to their parents or call on the helpline — ChildLine: 1098. We have to help children understand how they can protect themselves."

He adds, "We also need to reach out to parents, friends, communities to make them aware how abuse can

take place anywhere, including at home, in school, in a playground or even by people they trust. We need to help them understand the importance of changing their behaviours and responses towards violence as well as increase reporting."

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (2018), in India, five cases of child sexual abuse are reported every hour. The National Family Health Survey reveals that one in five adolescent girls experience physical violence since the age of 15 and that majority of school children are subject to physical and mental abuse by teachers (according to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights 2012). And these are just the reported figures.

Ayushmann, as the Celebrity Advocate for UNICEF, will be reaching out to kids and families to promote awareness on this mission. He says, "My effort being a part of the UNICEF will be to reach out to maximum number of people with messages, showing them the way to end violence against all children. I am committed to using my voice, my social media platforms, my talent and my celebrity status to focus the country's attention on the need to curb this issue immediately."

Chhattisgarh is the leading state in terms of preserving forests. During the pandemic induced lockdown, the state has achieved a lot in the sector under the leadership of its Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. It has made the highest contribution in terms of minor forest produce collection during lockdown. Forest dwellers may earn annual income of upto ₹2500 crore from forest produce collection. According to the data received from TRIFED, nearly 4,76,000 quintals of forest produce worth ₹112 crore has been collected in the state till July month this year. While the pandemic hampered the economy across the world, tribal people in the state not only earned livelihood by collecting forest produce but also boosted the growth of state's economy.

While the closure of factories during lockdown worsened the problem of unemployment across the world, forest dwellers in the state are getting employment even during this time of crisis through forest produce and herbal medicine collection. New economic strategies of Chhattisgarh Government are transforming lives of people in the state. Every year nearly 15 lakh sacks of tendupatta are collected in the state, which provides employment to 12,65,000 tendupatta collector families. State Government has increased the wage rate for tendupatta collection to ₹4000 per sack, which has turned out to be a direct benefit of ₹649 crore for the labourers. The

OVER THE TOP

Under the leadership of Chief Minister BHUPESH BAGHEL, Chhattisgarh registers the largest participation in minor forest produce collection during the lockdown



number of forest produce procured by State Government at minimum support price has been increased from seven to 38.

Keeping in view the interest of forest dwellers in the state, the support

price of Mahua was increased from ₹17 to 30 per kg. The forest produce is being procured through 866 Haat Bazaars. Employment of 10 lakh man-days of is being created in the state through wood art development, lac bangles manufac-

turing, double-stone construction, drug processing, city processing, bell metal, terracotta handicrafts work etc. About 14,000 youths are provided employment through the Forest Development Corporation, construction of bamboo

tree guards, bamboo furniture manufacturing, planting of medicinal plants under Vanaushadhi Board, etc. Similarly, production of Mahua based energy bar, chocolate, pickle, sanitiser, amla based dehydrated products etc. is being planned with the help of CFTRI Mysore. This will provide employment to more than 5,000 families.

Income of forest dwellers in the state is increasing. Tea plantations in Jashpur and Surguja districts directly benefit the beneficiaries. During the COVID crisis, 1,000 women got employment for manufacturing 50 lakh masks. In the current year, about 12,000 women have received an additional income of ₹3,23,00,000 from primary processing of tamarind. In order to increase the income of the forest dwellers, 18,56,000 fruitful and beneficial plant species were planted on the private land of 10,497 forest dwellers in 2019. To promote lac production, 36,000 farmers have been selected in 164 production areas. About 12,000 quintal vermi compost is being produced every year by 800 beneficiaries. Employment of 30 lakh man-days is being generated through activities like ground water conservation, degradation of degraded forests, wells, etc. About 50 lakh man-days of employment are available under the *Narva Development Programme* under Campa. More than 7,000 tribal youths have got employment through *Avarti Charai Yojana*, production of organic manure, seed-fertiliser etc.

IN SHORT



Satish Kumar Kashyap, General Manager, Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) along with other senior officials, inspected administrative building today. Various sections of departments, staff canteen and the library were inspected. Kashyap was accompanied by the departmental heads, officers, staff and supervisors of their respective departments. He advised to improve upon the work culture and emphasised on cleanliness in the office premises. The inspection has been carried out following all the precautionary and social distancing norms for COVID-19.



The construction work of Noapara-Barasat via Bimanbandar Metro project has been going on in full swing in Kolkata. Top slab casting of the proposed station was completed on Monday. Around 1,730 cubic metre concrete were for the same used with the help of 20 transit mixtures. The casting work of a diaphragm wall of Bimanbandar station subway was also completed, for which 90 cubic metre concrete were consumed to complete the concreting work of the wall with a dimension of 18 metre x 5 metre x 1 metre. The subway will connect Bimanbandar station with Jessore Road. Besides the station, work at Jessore Road station is also under a smooth progress. A 127 metre-long noise barrier to prevent noise pollution at NAD Colony of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport is being erected. About 102 columns of this barrier have already been fixed. Covering work of these columns are in process.



Kumar Rajesh Chandra, DG, CISF along-with Sudhir Kumar Saxena, ADG (HQ), Dayal Gangwar, IG (NCR), Jitender Rana, DIG, DMRC, M S Upadhye, Chief Security Commissioner, DMRC and other senior officers reviewed operational security arrangements made by CISF in the current security scenario. DG, CISF also interacted with the CISF personnel and advised them to maintain highest level of security arrangements. He also visited Operation Control Room of DMRC where Shashank Shekhar, OCM briefed him about the importance and functioning of Operation Control Room of Delhi Metro.

ESIC takes initiative for better services



Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) during its 183rd meeting held on Monday under the chairmanship of Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State for Labour & Employment (Independent Charge) has taken several significant decisions to improve its delivery of medical services and other benefits to workers.

Directly run new/approved ESIC hospitals

Medical services to the insured workers and their dependants under the ESI Scheme are provided primarily through hospitals and dispensaries run by the State Governments. There are, at present, around 1520 ESI dispensaries and 159 hospitals across the country, out of which 45 dispensaries and 49 hospitals are directly run by ESIC while remaining dispensaries and hospitals are run by the respective State Governments. Several representatives have received deficient services in ESI hospitals run by State Governments due to poor availability of equipment and doctors.

ESIC beneficiaries to get medical care from private empanelled or hospitals empanelled under Ayushman Bharat in areas where ESIC infrastructure is not available

Keeping in view the increase in ESI coverage over the recent years and the absence of its own medical infrastructure in several areas, the corporation has now decided that in areas where ESI infrastructure is not available within a radius of 10 kms, the beneficiary can avail medical consultation for OPD services directly from a hospital empanelled with ESIC or with Ayushman Bharat without the need for referral from an ESI dispensary or hospital. In such cases if admission for indoor treatment is required, the empanelled hospital will obtain time bound permission from the ESI

approving authority through an online system.

Strengthen its super speciality services in select ESIC hospitals in Delhi/NCR in first phase

Super speciality services in cardiology including nephrology, urology and oncology will be strengthened in select ESIC hospitals in Delhi/NCR and this will be extended to other hospitals across the country in a phased manner.

Engage hospital managers

The corporation will engage hospital managers with specialisation in hospital management or hospital administration or health care administration for maintenance, housekeeping, patient assistance, patient safety and other ancillary activities in ESIC hospitals across the country.

Engage the services of project management consultant

The corporation will also engage the services of project management consultant for monitoring and facilitating execution of hospital and dispensary construction projects of ESIC from the stage of concept plan to commissioning of the project.

Extension of relaxed conditions and enhanced benefits for further six months

The corporation has also decided to extend the relaxed conditions and the enhanced benefit of 50 per cent of the average per day earning upto a maximum of 90 days under the *Atal Beemti Vyakti Kalyan Yojana* to the insured workers who became unemployed due to COVID-19 induced lockdown for a further period of six months i.e. upto 30th June, 2021. The eligible workers can file their claims on the ESIC portal (www.esic.in) with the mobile number, Aadhaar and bank details.

A greener future

The Central Reserve Police Force, the lead internal security force of the country has a culture of being in close affinity to nature and preserving it. Recently, the force surpassed its own target of planting 22 lakh trees this year by planting 25 lakh trees in a matter of few months after the Home Minister Amit Shah commenced the *Akhil Bhartiya Vriksharopan Abhiyaan*.

The force is now institutionalising its commitment by signing an MoU with the Haryana Govt which aims at creating a formal basis for cooperation and collaboration between CRPF and Forest Department, Govt of Haryana focussing on mission of Green India and to provide a healthy environment to its citizens. This online event which was attended by Dr. A.P. Maheshwari, DG CRPF, Dr. Amarinder Kaur, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests cum Managing Director, Haryana Forest Development Corporation, and other senior officers from both the signatory parties.

Calling this MoU 'historic', Dr. Amarinder said that the impact of



this initiative will be far-reaching and will be felt all over the country. She also said that the initiative will turn a forest deficient state into an example of afforestation.

In his address, DG CRPF expressed his happiness that the force has successfully committed to a noble cause that will not only benefit us but will help in providing clean environment for the generations to come.

The MoU which laid founda-

tion for this collaboration for next seven years in eight districts of Haryana was signed by, Rakesh Kumar, IG Northern Sector for CRPF and Vineet Garg, PCCF (CAMP) for Govt of Haryana. It will enable cooperation in plantation and maintenance of the trees on. Tuned with the new technology, the plantation will also be carried out by drones/UAVs to increase green cover on significantly larger stretches of land.



Art with a message

On the occasion of the International Day Of Persons with Disabilities, Evara Foundation organised an all India drawing/painting competition. It was aimed at increasing awareness about disability and persons with disabilities among the school students. The event was open for students of sixth to 10th standards from all schools of India.

Lalit Kumar 'Samyak Lalit', Chairman of Evara Foundation said that a virtual exhibition of selected paintings shall be set up on www.evava.org. The subject of this competition was 'Inclusion of Students with Disabilities' and the event was titled 'Samadhan 2020'.

Announcing the results, the project

coordinators Sharda Sumand and Madhura Aparajita said that Adya Singh and Arjun Pratap Singh from class six; Neelanjana Maggo and Akshayanshi Singh from class seven; Kiran from class eight; Kratika Pandey, Avishi Bansal from class nine and Gaurav, Simran, Pinky, and Manan Jain from class ten were selected as winners of the competition. Detailed results will be available on the Evara website. The students will be provided with certificates and gift hampers.

There are some paintings showing problems faced by persons with disabilities and then some other artworks depict the solutions for these problems. It is heartening to see that the sensitivity is developing among students for all sections of society.

NTPC to partner Narmada Landscape Restoration Project



Dr. Pankaj Srivastava, Director, IIFM



Mr. S. M. Chowdhury, ED, NTPC

NTPC Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, to implement the Narmada Landscape Restoration Project. The programme is in partnership with a grant in aid from NTPC Ltd and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in equal proportions.

The four-year project will be implemented in Khargone District of Madhya Pradesh in the catchments of selected tributaries of the River Narmada between Omkareshwar and Maheshwar dams. IIFM, Bhopal, an Autonomous Institute under the Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), GoI with the grant-in-aid from NTPC will be jointly implementing this project with Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). It will participate in this project with funding support from USAID, the international development arm of the US Government.

NLRP's collaborative approach will demonstrate the interdependency of the upstream sustainably managed forest and farm practices on downstream water resources. It aims to establish an incentivisation mechanism that can support the riparian forest.

SRM AP expands its boundaries

SRM University, Andhra Pradesh invited Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India to deliver a lecture. Prof K Hema Chandra Reddy, Chairman, Andhra Pradesh State Council Of Higher Education, Prof V S Rao, Vice-Chancellor, Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, faculty members, and more than 700 participants attended the lecture on "Art of Science in the Time of Virus and Beyond: The Brave New World."

For the first time, virtual avatars were created by the students who used applications developed by them. Further, Prof D Narayana Rao commenced the programme. He informed, "DST has taken up the daunting task of making India as one of the world leaders in science and technology with several projects aimed at motivating talent to be better equipped to face future challenges."

Hema Chandra Reddy delivered a speech on research initiatives in science and technology introduced by the Andhra govt. He informed, "Government of AP is planning to establish AP state research board to promote multidisciplinary qual-

ity research and coordination among the universities." Further, Prof Ashutosh took the virtual podium to speak about science, technology, and innovation. Picturesquely, he explained, "Innovation pertains to visual imaginations and thinking. Knowledge becomes sustainable when invention and innovation is balanced. Invention uses resources to produce knowledge, whereas innovation deploys knowledge to generate economic resources"

Prof Sharma accentuated that COVID taught us the lesson that sustainable development can address major challenges. Urging everyone to do their individual job well, he informed that capacity of learning is the most prized possession. He said, "Capacity to adapt to change, learn new things, and lifelong learning is paramount to thrive. The convergence of multiple disciplines has an instrumental role in solving crucial problems. Our education system must have parallel structures for multidisciplinary knowledge creation and research. We should be crossing borders of knowledge and expanding the boundaries of disciplines."

An informative comic

Meet *The Bijlees*, the comic book from NTPC, brought out in association with Amar Chitra Katha in both Hindi and English languages, attempts to present a panoramic view of the company's presence across the energy value chain. It aims to educate young children on the significance of electricity without overwhelming them with engineering jargons.

The comic book also presents the journey of the integrated energy player with its commitment to provide affordable, reliable, cleaner and greener energy.

It also provides an interesting platform to capture the children's attention to a complex but interesting subject and imparts knowledge about not only electricity generation but also its safety aspects which is of practical use in our everyday lives, thereby making it far more pertinent for the younger lot.

The last part of the comic



briefs about the company's initiatives to produce 30 per cent of its energy with the help of non-fossil fuels by 2032. The comic also focusses on the company's concern about the environment and informs the readers about the power major's goal to plant over 34 million trees in and around its power stations and its massive drives to save electricity every year.

It also highlights NTPC's collaboration with Ola and Zoomcar to diversify the electric charging infrastructure across the country and the power major's road map in bringing about the electric vehicle revolution in India.

A review meeting was held in the auditorium of Ghaziabad Development Authority on the preparation of Ghaziabad Loni, Modinagar and Muradnagar Master Plan 2031 based on the Central Government's *Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation* (AMRUT) scheme.

In the meeting the DDD Constituency Private Ltd who was selected to prepare the three master plans by the government made a presentation about the progress so far. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of GDA Vice President Kanchan Verma. There, the survey sheet provided by NSRA Hyderabad was related to the collection and superimposition of the villages, primary and second stage data collection and presentation on land use deviations and other topics at the relative site.

In the meeting, problems were faced especially in the Sajra collection. On this occa-

Smart mission

GDA conducted a review meeting to discuss the government's *Amrut* scheme. By ASHOK NIRWAN



sion, Kanchan Verma gave the necessary guidelines for the action of the alignment of the current and proposed alignment of Hindon Strips and Northern Peripheral Road and Meerut Expressway of RRTS. She also instructed the consul-

tant company to discharge all the obligations on time.

The meeting was attended by Chief Officer of NCR Planning Board, SC Gowda, Chief Executive of GDA, Ashish Shivpuri, along with all the officials.

Man United

Man City loanee Angelino stars as Red Devils exit Champions League after 2-3 loss to Leipzig

AFP ■ LEIPZIG

Manchester United were eliminated from the Champions League following Tuesday's 3-2 defeat at Red Bull Leipzig.

The German hosts carved out a two-goal advantage within 13 minutes after Angelino — who is on loan at Leipzig from United's local rivals Manchester City — arrowed in an early opener and then set up Amadou Haidara with a searching cross.

Justin Kluivert notched Leipzig's third from close range midway through the second half before United almost staged an improbable comeback. Bruno Fernandes converted a penalty and Paul Pogba was credited with an 82nd-minute header that appeared to strike teammate Harry Maguire on its way into the goal.

United nearly completed their late rally, but it wasn't through the late efforts of auxiliary striker Maguire or his colleagues. Instead, Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi had to save with his legs after defender Nordi Mukiele kicked the ball toward his own goal.

With the win, 2019-20 semi-finalists Leipzig confirmed their progression into the Champions League knockout rounds.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side, meanwhile, gets the consolation of Europa League football in the new year. Whether the under-fire Norwegian is in charge when the continental campaign restarts



Leipzig's Justin Kluivert, left, celebrates with teammate Yussuf Poulsen after scoring his side's third goal against Man United during Champions' League group H match

AP

Basaksehir, PSG walk off over alleged racism

AFP ■ PARIS

Istanbul Basaksehir and Paris Saint-Germain players walked off the pitch during Tuesday's Champions League match at the Parc des Princes after a member of the Turkish side's coaching staff accused the fourth official of using a racial slur.

Pierre Webo, a former Cameroonian international and current assistant at Basaksehir, who is a Black man, claimed official Constantin Sebastian Coltescu called him a "negro." In the exchange in question, heard on television, Coltescu said: "The black one over there. This is not possible. Go and identify him. That guy, the black one."

After the referee showed Webo a red card in the 16th minute for his protests, players from both teams and the Istanbul coach confronted the referee for the remarks made by his official. "Why do you say negro?" Webo could be heard saying repeatedly.

UEFA agreed to reschedule the match for Wednesday at 6:55 pm Paris time (12:55 pm ET) following an hours-long delay and confusion over a potential restart. A different officiating crew will take over, and UEFA will investigate the incident.

"UEFA has — after discussion with both clubs — decided on an exceptional basis to have the remaining minutes of the match played tomorrow (Wednesday) with a new team of match officials ... (and) a thorough investigation on the incident that took place



PSG and Istanbul Basaksehir players leave the pitch during the Champions' League group H match on Tuesday

AP

will be opened immediately," read a statement. UEFA initially said the game would resume and Coltescu would be removed as the fourth official, but staff for both teams had already begun to pack up their equipment.

Both teams were incensed when play stopped midway through the first half. An intense discussion between players and officials went on for several minutes before Basaksehir decided to head down the tunnel. PSG agreed to walk off as well in a show of solidarity.

Basaksehir striker Demba Ba, who's

been a vocal authority in UEFA's ongoing fight against racism, confronted the fourth about the incident.

"When you're mentioning the white guy, you never say this white guy. You say this guy," Ba was captured saying on the broadcast. "So why when you mention a Black guy, you have to say this Black guy?"

The result of the rescheduled match means little in the context of Group H. Basaksehir were already out of contention to make the knockout stage, and PSG advanced as a result of Manchester United's loss to RB Leipzig.

in February remains to be seen. "We started too late. Great spirit and comeback again. It's different to the Premier League — you can't give a team a three-goal lead and expect to come back," Solskjaer told *BT Sport* post-match. "We were unlucky towards the end and you almost thought it was in at the last minute there."

"Of course, you can't say we were good enough; we weren't." Leipzig must wait until Wednesday to find out whether they finish first or second in the section, after the contest between last season's runners-up PSG and Turkish champions Basaksehir was interrupted with the score 0-0 in the 14th minute. PSG, who advanced following United's loss, will claim top spot with victory in Paris.

MOUKOKO MAKES HISTORY

Borussia Dortmund striker Youssef Moukoko, aged 16 years and 18 days, became the youngest player in Champions League history as he came off the bench in a 2-1 victory away to Zenit Saint Petersburg.

Cameroon-born Moukoko, who made his European debut as a 58th-minute substitute in Russia, broke the previous record of Celestine Babayaro, who was 16 years and 87 days when he played for Anderlecht in November 1994.

Dortmund, who had already qualified for the last 16, equalised within minutes of Moukoko's introduction, with Lukasz Piszczek cancelling out Sebastian Drussi's first-half goal before Axel Witsel scored the winner.

Jorginho spared Chelsea's blushes as his penalty rescued a 1-1 draw against Krasnodar in Group E following Remy Cabella's opener in London.

Frank Lampard's side were already assured of finishing top, while goals from Jules Kounde and two Youssef En-Nesyri eased Sevilla to a 3-1 victory at Rennes.

Lazio also secured a spot in the knockout rounds for the first time in two decades following a tense 2-2 draw at home to Club Brugge in the pouring rain in Rome.

Ciro Immobile scored his fifth Champions League goal this season for the Roman side.

Denys Popov's header earned Dynamo Kiev a 1-0 victory over their former star Serhiy Rebrov and Ferencvaros in the group's other game, offering them a place in the Europa League.



Lionel Messi shakes hands with Cristiano Ronaldo

AP

Ronaldo tops Messi with 2 goals

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Cristiano Ronaldo struck twice from the penalty spot to win his battle with rival Lionel Messi and guide Juventus to a 3-0 win over Barcelona on Tuesday, earning the Italians top spot in Group G.

The former Real Madrid striker and his Argentina counterpart traded Ballon d'Or wins for a decade between 2008-2017 and were figureheads for the duelling Spanish giants, but there was only one winner at the Camp Nou as they met for the first time since Ronaldo's departure for Juve in 2018.

Andrea Pirlo's Juventus lost 2-0 at home against Barcelona in October without Ronaldo, sidelined with Covid-19, but were greatly improved and earned the first Champions League away win against Barcelona since Bayern Munich triumphed in 2013.

Both sides, tied on 15 points, were assured of qualification before kick-off, but Juve's three-goal victory handed them a superior head-to-head record.

It only took 13 minutes for Ronaldo to break the deadlock, slotting home from the penalty spot after the referee deemed Ronald Araujo's challenge on him a foul. Juventus did not relent and their pressure led to a second goal, US midfielder Weston Mckenzie volleying home Juan Cuadrado's sweetly clipped cross in the 20th minute.

The Catalans and their captain Messi finally woke from their slumber, as the attacker had one effort blocked by Matthijs de Ligt and another saved by veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, while Pjanic lashed over the bar.

Ronaldo notched his second from the penalty spot in the 52nd minute after Clement Lenglet handled clumsily in the area, as the hosts imploded.

Antoine Griezmann, who was invisible in the first half, grazed the crossbar with a looping header from a Messi free kick, and Buffon beat out another effort, with De Ligt's pressure enough to stop Martin Braithwaite converting the rebound.

Leonardo Bonucci had a fourth goal ruled out for offside after he tapped in Ronaldo's effort from close range, with Messi trying in vain at the other end to answer Ronaldo, but he found the 42-year-old Buffon in his way time and time again.

SINGLES

INDIA FINED FOR SLOW OVER-RATE

SYDNEY: The Indian cricket team has been fined 20 per cent of its match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate in the third T20i against Australia. ICC match referee David Boon imposed the sanction after India was ruled to be one over short of the target on Tuesday, after time allowances were taken into consideration. On-field umpires Rod Tucker, Gerard Abood, TV umpire Paul Wilson & fourth umpire Sam Nogajski levelled charge.

GREEN, SWEPSON IN AUS A SQUAD

SYDNEY: In-form all-rounder Cameron Green and leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson were on Wednesday included in the 12-member Australia A squad for the day-night practice game against India, beginning at the SCG on Friday. The 21-year-old Green, who scored an unbeaten 125 in first practice match against India A, will look to seal his place in the first Test playing eleven with another good outing. Swepson, on the other hand, featured in all three T20Is against India and captured five wickets. Led by Alex Carey, the Australia A side also includes Test squad members Joe Burns and Sean Abbott, besides all-rounder Moises Henriques and pace bowlers Mark Steketee, Harry Conway and Will Sutherland.

SA TO TOUR PAK FOR 2 TESTS, 3 T20IS

KARACHI: South Africa will tour Pakistan for the first time in 14 years for two Tests and three T20Is starting in January, the country's cricket board (PCB) said on Wednesday. While Karachi and Rawalpindi will hosts the two Tests, the three T20Is will be held in Lahore. "South Africa will arrive in Karachi on 16 January and will play the first Test at the National Stadium in Karachi from 26-30 January," PCB said in a statement. "They will then travel to Rawalpindi where the second Test will be held from 4-8 February. The iconic Gaddafi Stadium, headquarters of Pakistan cricket, will be the venue of the three T20Is, which are scheduled for 11, 13 and 14 February."

MOMOTA ANNOUNCES RETURN TO COMPETITION

TOKYO: Japan's badminton world No 1 Kento Momota on Wednesday announced his long-awaited return to competition as he begins his bid for home glory at the Tokyo Olympics nearly a year after suffering serious injuries in a car crash. Momota will compete at the All-Japan national championships in Tokyo later this month before playing in the Thailand Open in January following a difficult year in which he feared his career might be over after fracturing an eye socket in the accident. "I'm nervous but I'm really looking forward to it," said Momota, who was badly hurt when the vehicle taking him to Kuala Lumpur airport just hours after he won the Malaysia Masters was involved in an accident that killed his driver. "I'm really looking forward to playing against the best international players after such a long time."

ENG RETURNING TO SL FOR 2 TESTS

LONDON: England will return to Sri Lanka for a rearranged two-Test tour in January, 10 months after leaving the Asian country as the coronavirus pandemic began to take hold. England's players will isolate for three days in Hambantota after arriving in Sri Lanka on January 2, with the first Test starting January 14 in Galle. The second Test starts on January 22. The travelling squad will undergo full coronavirus testing every two days throughout the trip and players are expected to be offered mental health screening ahead of the tour, following concerns about their well-being in a bio-secure bubble.

Agencies

Injured Warner out of 1st Test



PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia opener David Warner has been ruled out of the opening Test against India in Adelaide due to a groin injury that he suffered during the limited-overs series.

The opening Test of the series, to begin on December 17, will be a day-night affair and Warner said he wants to be cent percent ready for the rigours of traditional format and was targeting a return in the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

"The injury feels a lot better, but I need to be able to satisfy in my own mind and to my teammates that I am 100% ready for Test match conditions — that includes running between the wickets and being agile in the field," Warner said.

"Right now I feel I am short of being able to play at peak fitness and another 10 days will make a difference."

The 34-year-old Warner had sustained the injury in the second ODI and was subsequently ruled out of the third game and the three-game T20 series.

Australia coach Justin Langer exuded confidence about Warner's return in the second Test.

"If there is one guy you know will go well above and beyond that's Dave," Langer said.

"He has done an incredible job to get to where he is today and we hope to have a fully fit David Warner at his absolute best in Melbourne."

Warner's absence will leave Australia with a headache for the opener's slot, especially after young Will Pucovski suffered a concussion during the three-day first warm-up game between India A and Australia A.

‘Virat’s absence chance for others’

AFP ■ NEW DELHI

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar said captain Virat Kohli's departure will leave a "void" for India in their Test tour of Australia, but added that it will hand a golden opportunity to a younger player.

Kohli will only lead the side in the first of the four Tests, starting in Adelaide on December 17, before returning home for the birth of his first child.

"When you lose an experienced player like this (Kohli) there is without any doubt a void," Tendulkar, the record run-maker and former India captain told AFP.

"But let's understand, this is not about individuals. It is about our team and the best part about Indian cricket right now is there is bench strength," added Tendulkar.

"So Virat has to come back for personal reasons and some youngster is going to get a chance to play in his spot and that's an opportunity for someone else."

Tendulkar said the current Australian side is a lot "stronger"



with leading batsmen David Warner and Steve Smith back from the ball-tampering suspensions that kept them out two years ago.

"From the last time that Australia played India they have got three important players. They have got Warner who is back in the team, Smith and (Marnus) Labuschagne," said Tendulkar.

"This is a far better squad compared to the earlier one. When a couple of your senior

members are not there, suddenly that void is felt and that is what Australia felt."

But Tendulkar insisted that India's bowling attack led by the fiery Jasprit Bumrah and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is also stronger and can challenge Australia.

"I can say that it (India) is a complete bowling attack. So it doesn't matter what kind of surfaces you are playing on, you have got all sides covered."

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Parthiv Patel, one of the youngest to have played Test cricket for India at the age of 17, on Wednesday announced his retirement from all forms of the game, three months short of his 36th birthday.

The baby-faced Parthiv, who made his Test debut under Sourav Ganguly, aged 17 years and 153 days, played 65 international games for the country, which included 25 Tests, 38 ODIs and two T20 Internationals.

"Today, I announce retirement from all forms of cricket and as I bring down curtains on this 18 year-old cricketing journey, I feel heavier with gratitude for many," the 35-year-old Parthiv said in a statement on his official Twitter and Instagram account.

The left-handed batsman scored nearly 1700 runs (1696) across formats with 934 runs (6 half centuries) coming in the longest format.

In ODIs, he scored 736 runs with four half-centuries and a highest score of 95. He effected 72 dismissals in Tests, which include 62 catches and 10 stumpings.

Parthiv burst onto the scene in early 2002, when he was sent to England after having played for India A in South Africa and even before he made his Ranji Trophy debut.



In fact, he played his first Ranji Trophy after he was dropped from the India squad in 2004 due to below-par glove work on tours of Australia and Pakistan.

He was thankful to all his captains and "especially Dada", referring to BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

Once Mahendra Singh Dhoni burst on

Rahul in top 3 of T20 rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Virat Kohli moved up a place to eighth while KL Rahul broke into the top three in the latest ICC rankings for T20 batsmen, after their impressive performances in the three-match series against Australia.

Taking the third spot in the chart, Rahul has bagged 816 rating points and is 55 points behind second-placed Babar Azam in the current standings.

England batsman Dawid Malan (915 points) retained the top spot, while Australian limited-overs skipper Aaron Finch slipped to the fourth spot.

Kohli, who struck a brilliant 85 in the third T20i, gained one spot to be at No 8.

Among the bowlers, Australia leg-spinner Adam Zampa jumped two places to be placed at number five. England's Chris Jordan also broke into the top 10, while Afghanistan's spin duo of Rashid Khan and Mujeeb-Ur-Rahman were placed at the first and second positions respectively in the list, ahead of England leg-spinner Adil Rashid.

Chappell appreciates Rahane's aggressive style of captaincy



NEW DELHI: Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has found Ajinkya Rahane to be a "fabulous captain" and expects that his "aggressive style" will suit the Indian team which would fancy its chances against a David Warner-less hosts in the first Test in Adelaide from December 17.

"Well, I saw him captain in one Test against Australia (in Dharamsala in March, 2017) and found his captaincy to be fabulous. He was really an

aggressive captain," Chappell told PTI.

Chappell then cited nuggets of Rahane's captaincy during that Australia Test that had caught his attention.

"I remember a couple of aspects about his captaincy. What stood out for me was in the Australian first innings, Warner was going well and getting on top of Indian bowlers. He brought in Kuldeep Yadav (debutant) and he dismissed Warner."

"The second thing I remember was India chasing a low total and they lost a couple of wickets. Rahane just came in and attacked the Australian bowlers and scored some 20 odd (38 off 27 balls). I liked that approach."

"Look, as a captain, you always have two choices — one is the aggressive route and the other is a conservative approach. I have believed that in Test cricket aggressive approach is must and Rahane is aggressive." PTI