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BREXIT TRADE AGREEMENT

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**USUAL SUSPECTS**  
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

## Farmers willing to resume talks on Tue

Umbrella body of 40 unions Sanyukt Kisan Morcha writes to Centre, insists on repeal of laws

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers' Unions on Saturday wrote a letter to the Centre to resume their dialogue to find a solution to the ongoing deadlock over the three contentious agri laws. The farmers union proposed to hold a meeting with the Government on December 29.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of 40 farmers' unions protesting at various Delhi border points against the new agriculture laws. The unions also said that farmers will hold tractor march on Kundli-Manesar-Palwal highway on December 30.

Meanwhile, the protesting farmers on Saturday blocked the main Delhi-Mohan Nagar road at UP Gate (Delhi-Ghaziabad border).

In a letter to Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Vivek Aggarwal, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha said, "We propose that the next meeting between the farmers' representatives and the Government of India be held on December 29, 2020 at 11 am."

"As the Government is willing to hold talks with us and asking us for date and our issues, we have proposed to hold dialogue on December 29.

Now, the ball is in the court of Government when it calls us for talks," Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said.

Addressing a press conference at Singhu Border, the Morcha said that they are ready for talks with the Government but they have to repeal the three farm laws and guarantee

for MSP — Minimum Support Price at which the Government procures crops from farmers.

"The Government should make it a part of the agenda for resuming talks with the Government. We have proposed for talks on December 29. The farmers have also decided to hold tractor march

on the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) highway on December 30 in protest against the Centre's agri laws. We request people from Delhi and other parts of the country to come and celebrate New Year with protesting farmers," said Darshan Pal Singh, farmers' leader.

"The farmers have decided to march from Singhu to Tikri to KMP. We also ask farmers of surrounding areas to join us and come in huge crowd on their tractors and trolleys," said Rajinder Singh, another farmer leader.

"If the Government doesn't want us to block the KMP

highway, then they better announce the repeal of the three farm laws," said Singh.

Meanwhile, on Saturday morning around 9 am farmers at Ghazipur border blocked the National Highways 24 and 9 leading to a traffic jam between Delhi and Ghaziabad.

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Farmers during their protest against the new farm laws at Ghazipur border on Saturday

PTI

## RLP quits NDA over farm laws

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After quitting all Parliamentary forums as a protest against the new farm laws and slamming the Modi Government's handling of the farmers agitation on the outskirts of Delhi, the BJP ally Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) on Saturday announced its exit from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

RLP chief and the Jat leader from Rajasthan Hanuman Beniwal said, "I announce that I am leaving the NDA. I am breaking away."

The RLP is the second BJP ally after the Akali Dal to leave the NDA over the new farm laws.

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## A bit ideological sacrifice for widening base is fine

A page from history is sometimes instructive to understand contemporary issues. In January 1977, days after Indira Gandhi announced the overdue general election after some 18 months of a draconian Emergency, her senior Cabinet Minister Jagjivan Ram dropped a bombshell by announcing his resignation. Along with H N Bahuguna, Nandini Satpathy — both former Chief Ministers — and others, they repudiated the leadership of Indira.

The impact of their revolt was explosive. A dispirited Opposition, most of whom had just come out of a long spell in prison, had imagined that the election would be a formality and that the Congress would sail back to power. After all, besides the Congress and the CPI no party was able to operate openly during the Emergency.

Jagjivan Ram's revolt transformed the public mood overnight. Suddenly people found courage to speak out openly against the excesses of a period when the Government and the ruling party had no accountability to anyone apart from Indira and her son Sanjay. The revolt was the trigger that unleashed the forces that contributed to the Congress' defeat in the elections two months later.

However, it was during the fractious post-victory negotiations that I first heard the mutterings against Jagjivan Ram. Why, it was asked, should a man who never opened his mouth against the Emergency, except when it was safe to do so, walk away with the proverbial malai? Shouldn't preference be given to those who had resolutely and consistently opposed Indira Gandhi since 1969? Yet others insisted the Congress culture was being reimposed on a new Government that had come to power promising a new start.

Looking back at the events 43 years ago, some conclusions are in order. Jagjivan Ram didn't split the Congress with his resignation. The overwhelming majority of the party remained loyal to Indira Gandhi. It was, after all, the

Congress (Indira). The rudimentary organisation on which the Janata Party was constructed belonged to the erstwhile Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal of Charan Singh and the rump of the socialist movement. What Jagjivan Ram did was to prise the anti-Congress sentiment overground. The question of whether or not the Janata Party would still have won without Jagjivan Ram's important catalytic role is difficult to answer. History cannot be assessed on the strength of counterfactual narratives. We can at best try and assess the role of Jagjivan Ram at a crucial moment in

history. The rest is speculative. The question assumes a measure of importance in view of a sectional reaction to the constant influx of leaders and ordinary workers from the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the Congress and even the CPI(M) to the BJP in West Bengal. A group of those who have travelled with the BJP in the days when losing deposits was normal are miffed that they are in danger of being sidelined by the new entrants. The expressions of disquiet have been noticed by a gleeful media ever since Subhendu Adhikari walked out of Mamata Banerjee's Cabinet and the TMC and joined the BJP. Although Adhikari has not been given any formal post in the BJP, it is expected that he will play a big role in the BJP's election campaign against Mamata. It is also expected that many of the new entrants from different parties will be given tickets to fight the Assembly election as BJP candidates. The claims of many old loyalists may well be overlooked as importance is accorded to winnability.

The defection of Adhikari — likely to be followed by others — to the BJP raises important issues. First, unlike Jagjivan Ram in 1977, Adhikari did not trigger a simmering revolt against Mamata. That revolt first found expression in 2019 when, despite profound organisational weakness, the BJP defeated the TMC in 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats. The theory that Adhikari galvanised the mood against the TMC cannot stand scrutiny. As someone put it evocatively, those who put their hands on a moving rath of Jagannath also get blessed.

Yet, the Adhikari defection had a colossal significance in conveying an impression to the wider world that the TMC edifice was crumbling. It was such an impression that was conveyed to voters way back in 1966-67 when Ajoy Mukherjee and his supporters walked out of the Congress and established the Bangla Congress. In the election of 1967, Ajoy Mukherjee stood against the incumbent Congress Chief Minister Prafulla Chandra Sen and defeated him. The incorporation of Adhikari in the BJP brings two other tangible benefits to the saffron cause. The stalwarts of the TMC, with their record of having fought and defeated the mighty CPI(M), brings to the table their invaluable experience of electoral politics — something the State BJP has all along lacked. Additionally, they add to the BJP's kitty the support from districts where the BJP presence was patchy. In the battle for votes, these contributions cannot be disregarded.

Then there is the larger question of how the new entrants will affect the ideological purity of the BJP. This is an issue that needs extended deliberation. However, it can be said that for a party to move from the fringes to the centre, ideological purity has to be sacrificed at the altar of political aggregation.

The first major step in this direction was the replacement of the Jana Sangh with the BJP in 1980 — a step that extended the boundaries of the BJP beyond the Sangh Parivar. It is this extension that was witnessed in States such as Karnataka, Telangana, Assam and the North-eastern States. It is now being experienced in West Bengal. Power is no doubt the great attraction. That is understandable as long as the commitment to meaningful and wholesome change isn't lost sight of.

## 150 jawans lined up for R-Day parade test Covid positive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 150 Army jawans have tested positive for coronavirus here. They were part of the contingent to take part in the upcoming Republic Day parade and the Army Day parade on January 15 here. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is the chief guest for the forthcoming Republic Day celebrations at the Rajpath.

Giving details of the corona test, sources said, "The soldiers who came in from outside to participate in various parades were tested before putting them into a safe bubble. Some of them tested positive. Almost all except seven are asymptomatic."

These were among few thousand soldiers who have been tested, the source stated. Officials said the soldiers who tested positive were quarantined where Covid-19 facilities have been set up since April.

As regards the Republic Day parade preparations, they

said protocols have been put in place for safe conduct of the parade.

While unconfirmed reports suggested the upcoming Republic Day parade may be curtailed with minimal public participation, sources said plans to hold the parade on the Rajpath on January 26 this year are underway despite Covid-19 pandemic.

It was also learnt that as of now there is no proposal to cut down the number of marching contingents. They also said the thrilling fly past by the fighter jets will also take place like every year.

These contingents from the Army, IAF and the Navy besides the paramilitary forces and the Delhi Police march past the saluting base at the Rajpath and march for nearly ten kilometres to the Red Fort. The entire marching route is lined with spectators. However, in view of the raging pandemic, some restrictions may be enforced, it was learnt.

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## Genome sequencing for 5% of +ve cases amid UK strain fear

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As a preventive measure amid reports of UK-new Covid variants doing round in the country, the Government has decided to conduct genome sequencing of at least 5 per cent of the total Covid tests being conducted daily.

This was decided at a meeting of National Task Force on Covid-19 on Saturday. The ICMR called the meeting to discuss evidence-based modifications in testing, treatment and surveillance strategies for SARS-CoV-2 in view of the recent reports of emergence of a new variant strain of the virus from the UK.

The participants at the meet emphasised that since the UK strain was supposed to cause increased transmissibility of the virus, it is critical to identify individuals infected with this strain and adequately contain them to prevent its transmission in India.

"At least, 5 per cent of the positive cases from all



States/UTs will be tested for genome sequencing," the committee decided, as per an official from the Union Health Ministry.

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## 32 more fliers from UK test Covid positive

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

At least 32 more passengers from the United Kingdom who landed between November 25 and December 21 in India have been found positive for the coronavirus as concerns mounted over new virus strain.

Of those who tested positive, 14 have been reported in Karnataka, eight in Kerala, four in Tamil Nadu, three in Uttar Pradesh, two in Maharashtra, and one in Assam. Their samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune for genomic analysis.

In Rajasthan, over 800 British tourists entered the 28 districts of the State in the last one week. Tracking them will be a nightmare. The number of returnees from the United Kingdom, having tested positive, are likely to increase further in the coming days.

The Himachal Pradesh Government has issued an alert for 51 UK returnees to contact the local administration and get themselves tested.

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## CAPSULE

### UP COPS OFFER SUPERINTENDENT TO INTER-FAITH COUPLE

**Bareilly:** The Uttar Pradesh Police has offered security to two interfaith couples after two Muslim women married youths after converting to Hinduism in Bareilly district. "Both the women have claimed themselves to be adults on the basis of official documents and married youths of other community on their own accord. These incidents have nothing to do with love jihad," Bareilly's Senior Superintendent of Police Rohit Singh Sajwan said on Saturday.

### DDC POLLS 'MOMENT OF PRIDE' FOR INDIA: MODI

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that free and transparent DDC polls in Jammu & Kashmir coupled with voters' keen participation are a "moment of pride" for India, while hitting back at his rivals for giving him "lessons in democracy".

### CBSE EXAM DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED ON DEC 31

**New Delhi:** Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank will announce the examination dates for CBSE Boards 2021 on December 31 at 6 pm.

## Shram Shakti, Transport Bhavan to give way for Central Vista project

MPs' chambers to come up there

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Shram Shakti Bhavan and Transport Bhavan in Lutyens' Delhi will be the first two buildings to be razed to pave the way for the construction of chambers of Members of Parliament there as part of Central Vista redevelopment project.

An official from HCP Design, Planning and Management Pvt Ltd, which has prepared the masterplan of the ambitious project, said that offices for MPs will come up where Shram Shakti Bhavan and Transport Bhavan are currently located on Rafi Marg and Sansad Marg respectively.

The Government has identified around four locations —

in Gole Market, KG Marg, near Africa Avenue and near Talkatora Stadium — in Central Delhi for the temporary shifting of offices of various ministries.

The foundation stone for the new Parliament was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 10. The new building will have 888 seats for members of the Lok Sabha, 384 for those of the Rajya Sabha. For joint meetings, the Lok Sabha Hall on the ground floor shall be able to house 1,272 members. The National Emblem will crown the new Parliament building.

According to the plan, a tunnel would be constructed to connect the building with chambers of MPs in the Parliament complex. "The new Parliament will have six committee rooms to conduct business," the HCP official said. Sources said the demolition of buildings will be carried out in phases to ensure smooth functioning of ministry offices.

To construct Common Central Secretariat for Ministry offices, several buildings like Shastri Bhawan, Udyog Bhawan, Nirman Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan among others are likely to be demolished.

The project of Central Vista — the nation's power corridor — envisages a new triangular parliament building, a common central secretariat and revamping of the 3-km-long Rajpath, from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

## China rushes top leader to Nepal to forestall NCP split

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A high-level delegation led by a vice minister of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) here to assess the ground situation and avert a verbal split in the ruling Nepal Communist Party, according to media reports on Saturday, nearly a week after embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli got the House of Representatives dissolved.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis last Sunday after Oli, known for his pro-Beijing leanings, in a surprise move, recommended dissolving the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda".

Acting on Prime Minister Oli's recommendation, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same

day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) led by Prachanda, also a co-chair of the ruling party.

China is sending a high-level delegation led by Vice Minister of the International Department of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) Guo Yezhou to Kathmandu, *The Kathmandu Post* reported.

"Leading a four-member team, Guo is scheduled to land in Kathmandu on Sunday morning, leading a four-member delegation, My Republica newspaper reported.

Observers here believe that the visit could be to assess the ground situation in Nepal following the decision of Oli to dissolve the House of Representatives and the rival faction within the NCP taking to the streets, it said.

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# Varanasi to have world-class facilities for tourists

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the initiative taken by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the holy city of Varanasi, known as a religious and spiritual heritage, will soon be a new city with world-class facilities to the tourists that will add to the grandeur of Kashi.

An official communiqué confirmed here on Saturday that a new tourist destination will soon be added to the tourist map of the country that will have all the modern facilities.

One of the 84 ghats of the city, the Khirkhiya Ghat, is being developed using modern techniques and once completed, it will have all the facilities that the other existing ghats do not have.

According to the officials, the renovated ghat will be eco-friendly and unlike other ghats, it will have parking facilities for 120 four-wheelers and 250 two-wheelers.

"The structure of the ghat will be based on gabion and retention walls structure and it will retain its appearance and looks just like the other heritage ghats. Being built in 11.5 acre of land, it will cost about Rs 35.83 crore. It is expected to open for the public by July 2021," said Anil Yadav, the general manager of National Building Construction Corporation.

Construction Corporation.

According to Varanasi Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agarwal, the renovated ghat will be laced with facilities like water adventure sports, jetty, food court, park, morning walk stretch, library, CNG station, etc.

The area and space of the ghat will also increase, catering to crowd management on events like Dev Deepawali.

"Ghats like Assi and Dashaswamedh attract most tourists but it is very difficult to reach there on your vehicles. Keeping this in mind, the renovated ghat is being given a drive-in and parking facility. The construction is being done as per the Make in India vision and it will also be based on Vocal for Local. The visitors will also have the option to book tickets for offering prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. It will also be having a multi-purpose platform where helicopters can also land," Agarwal said.

In addition, the ghat will have outlets for local handicrafts, fresh drinking water RO units, a place for cultural programmes, etc.

"Boat rides, gallery for viewing the famous Ganga aarti, etc. will add to the tourists' visit and in future, we will also provide options

for combo-tickets (to other tourist destinations), railway ticket booking, and open space for cultural programmes," he said.

Meanwhile, the entire world raves about the works of artisans of Baba Vishwanath's Kashi, a place famous for its heritage and spirituality. Even the foreign tourists seem completely smitten by the designer clothes made in Varanasi. The special costumes of Varanasi attract all, irrespective of their taste in fashion. Silk dresses made in Varanasi are also the first choice of famous dress designers.

To promote Vocal for Local and One District One Product (ODOP) campaigns, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has urged the state residents to buy these products and gift their friends and families on festivals which they will relish for years to come.

In this regard, on the occasion of Christmas, people from other countries made a lot of purchases and gifted desi products to their loved ones.

It is to be mentioned that for the last 15 years, priests from Rome, Greece and America, on the occasion of Christmas, wear designer gowns that have been prepared in Varanasi.

In the Adampur area of

Varanasi, weaver Syed Hussain and other artisans have been preparing special gowns for the priests. These gowns are made from zardozi, brocades, lambda materials, and hats made from silk.

It is to be mentioned that in 2005 when Syed Hussain went to Greece and Rome to organise a clothing exhibition, he showed some unique designs to the designers after which they suggested some changes to the old costumes and ordered Hussain to prepare the costumes. Since then, the clergies have been wearing only garments made from Kashi's zardozi.

The gowns and hats are made by the hands of artisans in Varanasi. The artisans start getting orders for these costumes a year before Christmas from abroad. These designer costumes, prepared by craftsmen are shipped to Rome, Greece, and America.

## REGULAR INSPECTION OF COW SHELTERS HOMES

Facing severe criticism over the condition and death of cows in government-run shelters, particularly in the Bundelkhand region, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday directed officials of the district to regularly monitor these cow shelter homes like they do of

paddy and sugarcane purchase centres. "The district officials will have to regularly check and report back to the government about the condition of the cow shelters homes like they do about the performance of paddy and sugarcane purchase centres," the chief minister said while reviewing the functioning of the departments here on Saturday.

Recently, a video was circulated about the bad condition of a cow shelter home in Hamirpur in Bundelkhand region and how the cows were left to die. In protest against this, the Congress held a march in Bundelkhand on Saturday and its state president Ajay Kumar Lallu was arrested along with other party leaders and workers in Lalitpur after they started the march. The slogan of the march, banned by the government, was 'Gai Bachao, Kisan Bachao'.

During the meeting, the chief minister also warned the officials following reports of bad treatment to the farmers by the purchase centre employees at several places.

"The senior officials of the districts should themselves go to the fields and check the purchase centres along with the cow shelter homes," he said while asking them

to report back to the government with regular reports.

## GOVT TO USE RAINWATER FOR LARGE-SCALE FARMING

Water is life and water conservation is the need of the hour, hence to make sure that not a single drop of water is wasted, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to use rainwater for large-scale farming. The Yogi Adityanath government has decided to fulfil the shortage of water required for farming in the drought-prone and overcrowded areas of the state with rainwater. Also, Yogi Adityanath is working to ensure the availability of pure drinking water in such areas.

The state government, in collaboration with the Union Ministry for Rural Development, is going to start 85 water harvesting projects in 4.50 lakh hectares of overcrowded and drought-prone areas, including 31 rain-fed districts, in 2021-22. With this project, people residing in drought-prone areas will have sufficient drinking water and farmers will also be able to get water easily for farming.

The responsibility to prepare the primary project report has been given to Greater Sharda assistant command project officer.

# Case against BJP MLA for submitting forged Covid report

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A local court in Sant Kabir Nagar has ordered registering of a case against ruling BJP MLA Rakesh Singh Baghel for submitting a forged Covid test report.

It has been reported that the MLA from Medhawal, in order to escape his presence in the court in a case, submitted a forged coronavirus positive report in October last.

Special MP/MLA Court Judge Deepkant Mani ordered registering of a case against the MLA and the Chief Medical Officer Har Govind Singh under Epidemic Diseases Act at Khalilabad Kotwali police station, sources said.

According to the reports confirmed on Saturday the BJP MLA was facing a trial in an old case of 2010 for damaging public property but he was not appearing in the court for the past four years.

Recently, to escape the court's directive, on October 9, 2020, the MLA submitted a Covid-19 test report which showed that he had tested positive for coronavirus infection and was in home isolation. But later the court found that the Covid test report was forged.

# Six lakh farmers join CM Yogi Adityanath on social media

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Friday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath again created a record of sorts when more than six lakh farmers joined him on social media through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Not only this, 11,33,392 farmers participated in the virtual programme organised at 2,160 different

places in the state, creating a record of such a large number of farmers participating in a programme.

Sources here on Saturday claimed that as soon as the UP chief minister castigated the opposition for misleading the innocent farmers, within minutes people in huge numbers joined the event and also followed Yogi Adityanath later.

After the live event was finished, lakhs of people watched the programme on YouTube.

"We cannot deny the fact about



the way CM Yogi delivers his charismatic speeches, making people go crazy for him. It is Yogi's captivating personality that his followers of the micro-blogging site have crossed over 1.25 billion," a senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader here claimed.

Notably, many dignitaries, including BJP MPs and MLAs, agricultural experts, and ministers took part in the event held on December 25. They spoke about how farmers' laws brought by the Central government will improve agriculture and

bring a change in their lives.

## YOGI TO HOST GURBANI KIRTAN

To remember the martyrdom of four Sahibzadas of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, and Mata Gujri, the Sahibzada Day will be observed at the official residence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Sunday.

To mark the occasion, for the first time at the chief minister's residence, and reminisce the heroic

deeds of the Sahibzadas at a very young age, Gurbani Kirtan will also be held at 11:30 am and it will be attended by a number of ministers of the state government along with the chief minister. It may be mentioned that Gurbani Kirtan and a langar was also organised at the chief minister's residence to mark the 550th Prakashotsav of Guru Nanak Dev on November 12 and over 25,000 people of the Sikh community had participated in the langar and received prasad.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

NOTICE

I, Vineeta Pandey W/o Ajit Kumar Pandey Army No-14922449 P, 227/5/4 Gautam Nagar, T.P. Nagar, Alld. have change my name from VINEETA PANDEY to VINITA PANDEY for all future purpose.

**NOTICE**

LR 590514 2020.pdf This is to inform you that I Ramesh Chandra S/o Lakhumal R/o Awas Vikas Colony A-200, Sitapur have actually lost my house possession Letter and Allotment Letter. Use of above documents will be illegal.

**सूचना**

मैंने अपना नाम MOHAMMED ARIF GAFFAR से बदलकर MOHD ARIF GAFFAR रख लिया है भविष्य में मुझे इसी नाम से जाना पहचाना जाए, MOHD ARIF GAFFAR S/O ABDUL GAFFAR R/O 88/294, चमनगंज, कानपुर

**NOTICE**

It is Notified for the Information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main Secondary Examination of Year 2011 and Roll No. 5263206 Issued by CBSC has been Actually Lost. SHISTA GAUTAM R/O -House No. 90, Shaheed Nagar, Near Aryavart College, Raebareilly Road Lucknow, U.P 226025 Mob-7991784444

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**Syed Naved Ahmad Manager**

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I, Smt Lalmani mother of No-7788189 W Rank Sep Sanjeev Resident of Vill-Kerwari, Po-Devapur, Teh-Mariyahu, Dist-Jaunpur (UP) have changed my name from Smt Lalmani to Smt. Lalmani Yadav for all future purpose.

**NOTICE**

I Declare that My Date of Birth 27/04/2006 is Wrong in My Personal Document. My correct Date of Birth is 27/12/2006. Sachin Kumar S/O Late Kewal Ram Vill-Bhapur Charoa, P.O.-Terhi Kaptanganj, Dist-Azamgarh (UP)

**NOTICE**

This is to inform you that Yasmeen Qadeer and Yasmeen Khan both name are one person. In future I will be recognized with the name of Yasmeen Khan. Yasmeen Khan W/o Mohammad Qadeer Khan, R/o 255/A/7, Kundri Rakabganj, Rajendra Nagar, Wazirganj, Lucknow.

**NOTICE**

I, Lal Bahadur father of No-7788189 W Rank Sep Sanjeev Resident of Vill-Kerwari, Po-Devapur, Teh-Mariyahu, Dist-Jaunpur (UP) have changed my name from Lal Bahadur to Lal Bahadur Yadav for all future purpose.

**NOTICE**

Two sale deeds regarding the sale of 2040 sqft. land of S.M. Plot No. 469/1 Mauza-Chintpuri, Pargana Dehat Amanat, Tehsil & Dist.- Varanasi dated 02-12-2002 executed by Ishwar S/O Late Heera Lal in favour of Ashish K. Jaiswal alias Raja Babu S/O Late Amar Nath duly registered with Sub Registrar Office Varanasi in Book No. 1, Vol. No. 3366 as D.No. 5571 and Sale Deed dated 12-08-2004 executed above said Ashish Kumar Jaiswal alias Raja Babu in favour of Matti Devi W/o Keshav Patel. Duly registered with Sub Registrar Office Varanasi in Book No. 1, Vol. No. 570 as D.No. 4084 has been lost away. This property is going to be mortgage with LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Varanasi, if any body/institution has any information/objection contact Harishchandra Rai, Advocate, Chamber No.-110, Banaras Bar Building, 11nd Floor, Civil Court, Varanasi. Mob. 9451525826 within 15 days.

## PM Modi to inaugurate EDFC railway track

**Kanpur (PNS):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the railway track of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) between Bhaupur and Khurja through a video conference on December 29.

The programme was earlier fixed for December 25 to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Now, according to directives issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the DFCCIL has fixed the date of inauguration as December 29 and released an advertisement to this effect.

DFCCIL Deputy Chief Manager Baldeo Singh Jaryal said, "He has information about the inauguration of the railway track by the prime minister on December 29 through video conferencing but has not received any official communication from the PMO so far." However, officials were hopeful to receive the prime minister's official programme within a day or two.

The inauguration of the largest section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor aims at launching the operations of one of the largest rail infrastructure projects in India. The 351-km Khurja-Bhaupur (Kanpur) section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor is ready and necessary trials and testing have already been concluded. Modi will dedicate to the nation the new rail freight corridor along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Along with the section, Modi will also unveil the state-of-the-art operation control centre of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, based in Prayagraj.

The Khurja-Bhaupur section, after the inauguration, will see a substantial number of freight trains and container traffic diverted to the freight corridor, resulting in not just faster movement of goods but also decongestion of the existing railway line carrying traffic to North India.

Some of the important industrial areas that straddle this section are Aligarh, Khurja, Firozabad and Agra.

# शिक्षा व्यवस्था में बढ़ते कदम

## वर्चुअल स्कूल

**कक्षा-10 एवं 12 के विद्यार्थियों के लिए दूरदर्शन, उत्तर प्रदेश (DD UP) चैनल और कक्षा-9 एवं 11 के विद्यार्थियों के लिए चैनल e vidya-9 एवं e vidya-11 पर शैक्षणिक वीडियो के माध्यम से 28.12.2020 से 01.01.2021 तक ई-लर्निंग प्रसारण का उन्नीसवां चरण**

| दूरदर्शन, उत्तर प्रदेश (DD UP) चैनल पर यू.पी. बोर्ड की कक्षा-10 एवं 12 हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी |   |  |  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| दिनांक तथा समय   | कक्षा-10  |  |  |   | कक्षा-12   |  |  |
|  | अपराह्न 1:00 से अपराह्न 1:30 बजे तक                       | अपराह्न 2:30 से अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक                        | अपराह्न 4:00 से अपराह्न 4:30 बजे तक                        | सायं 5:30 से सायं 6:00 बजे तक                             | अपराह्न 1:30 से अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक  | अपराह्न 3:30 से अपराह्न 4:00 बजे तक                      | अपराह्न 4:30 से अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक                      |
| 28-12-2020 सोमवार  | संस्कृत अध्याय-7 पद-वीथुयम् विद्यार्थियों, भाग-2          | सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 भूगर्भीयकृत विश्व का बनना, भाग-1  | सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 भूगर्भीयकृत विश्व का बनना, भाग-2  | सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 भूगर्भीयकृत विश्व का बनना, भाग-3 | अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-2, राष्ट्रीय आय का लेखांकन भाग-2                          | अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 A Fellow Traveller भाग-1               | अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 A Fellow Traveller, भाग-2              |
| 29-12-2020 मंगलवार   | सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 भूगर्भीयकृत विश्व का बनना, भाग-4 | विज्ञान अध्याय-3 वायु एवं अणु भाग-1                        | विज्ञान अध्याय-3 वायु एवं अणु भाग-2                        | विज्ञान अध्याय-12 विद्युत भाग-1                           | गृह विज्ञान अध्याय-12, व्यक्तिगत पर बाल्यावस्था का प्रभाव, भाग-3             | अंग्रेजी अध्याय-1 Character of Happy Life, भाग-2         | हिन्दी अध्याय-5 रॉबर्ट नॉर्सिंग होम भाग-1                |
| 30-12-2020 बुधवार  | विज्ञान अध्याय-12 विद्युत भाग-2                           | विज्ञान अध्याय-12 विद्युत भाग-3                            | गणित अध्याय-8 त्रिकोणमिति का परिचय, भाग-1                  | अंग्रेजी अध्याय-9 Composition भाग-1                       | उपसहसंयोजी योगिकों में समावयवता, भाग-1                                       | अंग्रेजी अध्याय-4 The True Beauty भाग-1                  | गणित अध्याय-4 सारणिक भाग-2                               |
| 31-12-2020 गुरुवार   | अंग्रेजी अध्याय- Grammar Composition भाग-2                | अंग्रेजी अध्याय- Grammar Composition भाग-3                 | अंग्रेजी अध्याय- Grammar Composition भाग-4                 | अंग्रेजी अध्याय- Grammar Composition भाग-5                | उपसहसंयोजी योगिकों के महत्व, भाग-1   | गणित अध्याय-4 सारणिक भाग-3                               | गणित अध्याय-4 सारणिक भाग-5                               |
| 01-01-2021 शुक्रवार  | हिन्दी अध्याय-6 हिमालय से, वर्षा सुंदरी के प्रति भाग-1    | हिन्दी अध्याय-4 भारतीय संस्कृति डॉ. राजेन्द्र प्रसाद भाग-1 | हिन्दी अध्याय-4 भारतीय संस्कृति डॉ. राजेन्द्र प्रसाद भाग-2 | हिन्दी अध्याय-5 सुमित्रानन्दन पन्त चौटी भाग-1             | अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-4 पूर्ण प्रतिस्पर्धा की स्थिति में फर्म का सिद्धांत भाग-1 | जीव विज्ञान अध्याय-5 वंशगत तथा विविधता के सिद्धांत भाग-3 | जीव विज्ञान अध्याय-5 वंशगत तथा विविधता के सिद्धांत भाग-4 |

**नोट :- DD-UP, अब आप इन चैनलों पर भी देख सकते हैं, डी डी फ्री डिश-45, डेन-137, नेटविजन-138, डिश टीवी-229, लखनऊ 9-2-237, बिग टीवी-250, एयरटेल-400, हाथवे-400, सिटी केबल-671, वीडियोकॉन डी 2 एच-889, टाटा स्काई-1195**

| चैनल e vidya-9 पर कक्षा-9 एवं चैनल e vidya-11 पर कक्षा-11 यू.पी. बोर्ड हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| दिनांक तथा समय   | कक्षा-9  |  | कक्षा-11   |   |
|  | प्रातः 8:30 से प्रातः 9:00 बजे तक  | प्रातः 9:00 से प्रातः 9:30 बजे तक                                      | सायं 6:30 से सायं 7:00 बजे तक  | सायं 7:00 से सायं 7:30 बजे तक   |
| 28-12-2020 सोमवार  | सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-1, लोकतंत्र क्या? लोकतंत्र क्यों? नागरिक शास्त्र लोकतांत्रिक राजनीति-1 भाग-1/2  | वाणिज्य अध्याय-15, मुद्रा की परिभाषा कार्य व महत्व भाग-1/1             | रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4, रासायनिक आबंधन तथा आण्विक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1), भाग-5/10 | इतिहास अध्याय-3, (बदली परंपराएं-कालक्रम तैयार) लगभग 1300-1700 विषय-6 विश्व इतिहास के कुछ विषय, भाग-1/2                    |
| 29-12-2020 मंगलवार   | वाणिज्य अध्याय-19 अर्थशास्त्र का अर्थ एवं परिभाषा भाग-1/2  | गणित अध्याय-12 हीरोन का सूत्र भाग-1/2                                  | रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक आबंधन तथा आण्विक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1), भाग-6/10  | गृह विज्ञान अध्याय-4 आवास्यकतायें तथा परिस्थितियाँ, जिससे भग्नाशा उद्वहन होती है खण्ड-(ख), भाग-1/2                        |
| 30-12-2020 बुधवार  | सामाजिक विज्ञान, अध्याय-1 लोकतंत्र क्या? लोकतंत्र क्यों? नागरिक शास्त्र लोकतांत्रिक राजनीति-1, भाग-2/2 | हिन्दी अध्याय-7, सूर्यकान्त त्रिपाठी निराला दान- हिन्दी काव्य, भाग-1/2 | रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4, रासायनिक आबंधन तथा आण्विक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1), भाग-7/10 | इतिहास, अध्याय-3 (बदली परंपराएं-कालक्रम तैयार) लगभग 1300-1700 विषय-6 विश्व इतिहास के कुछ विषय, भाग-2/2                    |
| 31-12-2020 गुरुवार   | वाणिज्य अध्याय-19 अर्थशास्त्र का अर्थ एवं परिभाषा भाग-2/2  | गणित अध्याय-12 हीरोन का सूत्र भाग-2/2                                  | रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक आबंधन तथा आण्विक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1), भाग-8/10  | गृह विज्ञान, अध्याय-इकाई-1 समाजशास्त्र मानव आवास्यकतायें तथा परिस्थितियाँ, जिससे भग्नाशा उद्वहन होती है खण्ड-(ख), भाग-2/2 |
| 01-01-2021 शुक्रवार  | संस्कृत, अध्याय-8 खण्ड-(ख) व्याकरण-वाचुरूप परस्मैपद पद, गम्, अस्, भाक, प्रच अनुवाच, भाग-1/1            | हिन्दी, अध्याय-7 सूर्यकान्त त्रिपाठी निराला दान- हिन्दी काव्य भाग-2/2  | रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक आबंधन तथा आण्विक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1), भाग-9/10  | हिन्दी, अध्याय-1 खण्ड-ख, संस्कृत व्याकरण सन्धि (शब्, कथा साहित्य, काव्य संस्कृत दिग्दर्शिका) भाग-1/2                      |

**नोट: e vidya-9, जियो टीवी एप, डिश टीवी चैनल-950, वीडियोकॉन चैनल-447, एयरटेल चैनल-440, फ्री डिश-128 तथा टाटा स्काई चैनल-756 पर उपलब्ध है। e vidya-11, जियो टीवी एप, डिश टीवी-952 तथा NCERT OFFICIAL YouTube पर उपलब्ध है।**

**माध्यमिक शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश की एक पहल**

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# Eight of UK visitors to UP have tested Covid positive

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Eight of the travellers from the UK to Uttar Pradesh have tested positive for coronavirus till Saturday. A senior health official said the samples of these people have been sent to Delhi for genome sequencing, results of which will come in the next 2-3 days. However, he hastened to add that there is no need for people to panic.

“Three of them have tested positive in Meerut, three in Gautam Buddha Nagar and two in Ghaziabad. The two admitted to a Ghaziabad hospital are residents of Delhi,” he said. All those who have tested positive are Indian nationals and admitted to private hospitals in separate wards.

He said there have been contacts also of these patients who have tested positive. The official said that the total number of travellers who have arrived at Uttar Pradesh from the UK since November 23 is 2,568. “We are still in the process of tracking them. There

is also duplication of names and new lists are coming from the Central government, and hence we have to update them,” he said.

Asked about the threat in the wake of the mutated strain of coronavirus from the UK to UP, he said they are waiting for the results of genome sequencing. “The only thing that the general public should be careful about is that if they had guests from the UK, they should confine themselves to their homes and also ask the UK travellers to confine themselves. That is the only thing that needs to be done at this stage,” he said.

However, reports of 81 out of the 134 UK travellers who have arrived at Lucknow have come out negative. Additional CMO MK Singh said more reports are awaited. “Some of the travellers have also come from other European countries and if anyone tests positive, the protocols will be followed,” he said. As many as 22 out of these travellers are outside Lucknow.

“They have been cross-notified about the same. Testing has been carried out on 112 people who have come after December 8,” he added.

It may be noted that 130 UK travellers have come to Lucknow from November 23 to December 8 and are under surveillance for 28 days while 134 who arrived after December 9 are being tested along with their contacts.

A refresher course on training for Covid vaccination was carried out for district officials through video-conferencing. A senior health official said the training was organised to answer the queries of those involved in the process.

Meanwhile, Prof D Himanshu from KGMU said that the number of deaths at the Covid hospital has decreased in the recent past. “The number of cases has decreased in the city but being a Level-3 hospital, we keep getting patients, including those from other districts, but this number is also coming down,” he pointed out.

He said the trial of the BCG vaccine at KGMU has been completed and follow-up is underway.

Meanwhile, 229 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Saturday while 231 patients recovered. Lucknow's death toll stands at 1,101 and there are 2,881 active cases in the district. The fresh cases included 19 from Gomtinagar, 22 from Indiranagar, 15 from Chinhat, 14 from Rae Bareilly road, 12 from Jankipuram, 11 from Gudamba, and 10 each from Talkatora, Chowk & Madaon. Across the state, 1,102 persons tested positive, including 36 in Kanpur, 40 in Ghaziabad, 29 in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 83 in Varanasi and 79 in Meerut, taking the UP tally to 5,81,080. There were 14 deaths in the state, including three in Kanpur, two each in Bareilly and Rae Bareilly, and one each in Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Ballia, Barabanki, Etawah, Rampur & Bhadohi, taking the toll to 8,293.

# BPharma student killed in road mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A BPharma student was killed in a road mishap in Thakurganj on Friday night. He was identified as Shubham Rawat aka Ashish of Kakori. He was going to Buddheshwar crossing via Dubagga crossing on a motorcycle and was hit by an unidentified vehicle at Bhunwar culvert around 11:30 pm. He was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre where he was declared brought dead.

In another incident, a 21-year-old boy, identified as Kanhaiya of Sushant Golf City police station area, was crushed under a wheel of a tractor-trolley while working on Thursday evening. Reports said Kanhaiya

## Two groups of students clash

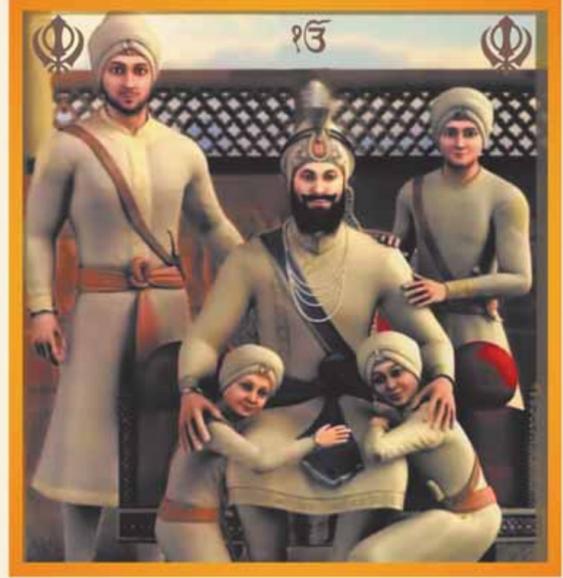
Lucknow (PNS): Two groups of students had a fierce clash at the gate of their school in Vikas Nagar on Saturday afternoon. There were reports that the warring groups lobbed stones and even bombs, leaving the local shop-owners scared. The clash was said to be a fallout of the rivalry over ascertaining supremacy. The shop-owners assembled at the spot and nabbed two of them. The police said those involved in the clash were class X students. “The students detained were minor and they were let off after a warning on the request of their parents,” police said.

was unloading the bricks in Semra village of Chinhat. All of a sudden, a septic chamber caved in and one of the wheels got stuck in it. The victim suffered injuries as the trolley tilted on him. He was rushed to RMLIMS where he was declared brought dead.

Meanwhile, a youth ended his life at the house of his aunt in Gudamba on Friday afternoon. Identified as Ratin Kumar Mullick of Khurram Nagar locality, he was staying with his aunt Kavita in Mayapuri Colony in Gudamba. Around 2:30 pm on Friday, he was found hang-

ing from the ceiling with a saree tied around his neck. He was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

In another case, a 25-year-old man jumped into Gomti river from Pucca Pul under Chowk police station area on Saturday. Reports said Lalit of Saadatganj reached there on his e-rickshaw along with his wife Renu and their son. Lalit asked Renu to drop a coin into the river for their son and the couple picked up a fight over the issue. All of a sudden, he jumped into the river. Police said Lalit was upset over some family issue and he jumped into the river in the afternoon. The police said they were searching for him.



**साहिब श्री गुरु गोबिन्द सिंह जी महाराज जी के चार साहिबजादों**

एवं

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davp 10801/13/0015/2021

# 3 kids among 4 burnt alive

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, a woman and her three children were burnt alive when their thatched house caught fire in Banda early Saturday morning.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath condoled the deaths and directed the officials to extend all possible help to the family. Police said the fire broke out from the fire room to keep them warm. The villagers tried to rescue the family but they failed to douse the fire in time. The fire brigade also reached the spot

very late due to which all the belongings were reduced to ashes.

Police said that Sangita (35) used to stay in the house along with her three children while her husband was away as he worked as a labourer in Rajasthan.

The children, who were killed in the fire, were identified as Angali (9), Ashish (6) and another 3-year-old-girl.

Additional Superintendent of Police Mahendra Pratap Chauhan said that though it appeared to be a mishap, the police were investigating the reason for the fire.

Meanwhile in Kasganj,

four members of a family were killed and two others were critically injured when their car rammied into a pile of bricks due to dense fog on early Saturday morning.

The incident took place at Kasganj-Bareilly highway, near Mamo village, when the occupants were returning from a marriage function, police said. Three of the car occupants died on the spot while another succumbed to his injuries.

The deceased were identified as Aman, Asif and Sajid. The injured Samir, Arshad and Yasir were shifted to hospital where one of them succumbed to his injuries.

# 'Akhilesh did nothing for development of Azamgarh'

**Lucknow (PNS):** Uttar Pradesh's Sugarcane Development Minister Suresh Rana on Friday alleged that Samajwadi Party supremo and local MP Akhilesh Yadav used Azamgarh for his political gains for years but did nothing for its development.

Addressing an agriculture fair in Azamgarh on the occasion of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary, Rana asserted that the Centre's recent farm laws were in the interest of farmers and accused the opposition of "misleading" farmers protesting against the legislations.

"If those protesting against the laws have any suggestions, they should tell it to the government whose doors are always open," he said, and added, "The farmers should come forward with their suggestions and talk."

Targeting the Samajwadi Party president, Rana said, "Akhilesh used Azamgarh for politics for years but did nothing for its development." "Akhilesh should say what his government had done for farmers. He believed in laying foundation stones only, whereas Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath does inaugurations after completion of projects," he added.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paying floral tribute to former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary at Lok Bhawan

Pioneer

# Gupta murder case: Sketches of accused released

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow police on Saturday released sketches of the two accused who had shot former gram pradhan Sujeet Pandey in Mohanlaljanj. A cash reward of Rs 50,000 was also announced for anyone who gives the police a tip-off about

the accused. ADCP, South, Suresh Rawat said the police succeeded in preparing the sketches of the suspects after detailed talks with eyewitnesses. "This is a big step towards unravelling of the murder mystery," he said. He appealed to people to share details about the suspects, if they have any.

On Friday, Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma met the family members of Gupta and assured them speedy investigation into the case and arrest of the killers. He asked the police to expedite the probe.

On Saturday, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief Shivpal Yadav also met the

bereaved kin and assured them all help. He expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order and spurt in crime cases.

Meanwhile, farmers took out a protest march on Saturday demanding immediate arrest of the killers. They said crime incidents have been on the rise in Mohanlaljanj of late.



Christmas celebrations at Cathedral church on Friday

Pioneer

# UP minister slams Rajbhar for joining hands with Owaisi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh minister Anil Rajbhar said that Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief Om Prakash Rajbhar was a "samaj ka dushman" (enemy of society) for joining hands with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM for the 2022 UP Assembly polls.

Buoyed by the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin's (AIMIM) good showing in the recent Bihar Assembly polls, Owaisi had met Om Prakash Rajbhar, a

former Bharatiya Janata Party ally, in Lucknow earlier this month. After the meeting, Om Prakash Rajbhar, referring to the Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha, had said that they would contest the 2022 Uttar Pradesh elections together.

The Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha is a front of smaller parties in the state formed about a year ago.

"Om Prakash Rajbhar is a 'samaj ka dushman' and has betrayed Maharaja Suheldev after whom he formed his party," Anil Rajbhar said in Ballia on Saturday.

"Om Prakash Rajbhar has nothing to do with either the society or Maharaja Suheldev's honour and dignity. Earlier too, he had joined hands with the children of Syed Salar Ghazi, Mukhtar Ansari and Afzal Ansari, for his politics and now he has joined hands with Owaisi," he said.

"He wants to mislead the Rajbhar community but he stands fully exposed," the Divyangjan Empowerment minister added.

Maharaja Suheldev, an 11th century king, is said to have defeated Syed Salar Ghazi

in a battle. Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party chief Om Prakash Rajbhar was sacked from the Yogi Adityanath cabinet in May 2019 for his derogatory comments against the chief minister and the BJP.

On Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia comparing the schools in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in terms of progress made by the respective governments in improving infrastructure, Anil Rajbhar asked Sisodia, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh to visit schools in Varanasi.

# Resentment continues as one more senior leader quits Cong

**Lucknow (PNS):** Resentment against the working style of AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and UP Congress president Ajay Kumar Lallu continued with one more senior leader, Vinod Kumar Mishra, who was also convenor of the Brahmin Mahasabha, resigning from the party on Friday citing high-handedness of the top brass.

Mishra, a former general secretary of the UP Congress, was also in charge of Lucknow district during Raj Babbar's tenure as UP Congress chief.

In his statement soon after quitting the party, he blamed Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for his resignation and alleged that the Gandhi parivar was using the party to save itself from the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate, hence it was insulting veteran leaders and forcing them to leave the party.

"The UP Congress has already been handed over to leftist leaders and now they are managing everything which is unfortunate for the century-old

party which was a symbol of the freedom movement of the country," Mishra said in his statement. He, however, denied that he would join any other political party and said that he would now onwards devote his entire time on strengthening the Brahmin Mahasabha. However, sources said that like other Congressmen who joined Aam Aadmi Party soon after they left the Congress recently, Mishra too would shake hands with his colleagues to start his new political innings under Arvind Kejriwal's leadership.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, UTTAR PRADESH JAL NIGAM, DDU NAGAR CHANDAULI**  
 Letter No.3220/M-8/164  
 Date:- 24-12-2020  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
 Online percentage rate basis e-tenders in two bid system for Construction work of testing lab and Renovation work at Existing lab & T&P etc. complete, District Chandauli, are hereby invited on behalf of Chairman, U.P. Jal Nigam from the reputed contractors and having requisite work experience. Interested contractors may view & download tender document from 28.12.2020 and upload their tender, duly filled, online on e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> latest by 02.01.2021 up to 17:00 Hrs. Uploaded tenders will be opened on 04.01.2021 at 15:00 Hrs.

# Xmas brings highest ridership for metro after lockdown

**Lucknow (PNS):** Lucknow metro got the maximum ridership (38,471) on Christmas since the services resumed after lockdown on September 7. UPMRC managing director Kumar Keshav said the commuters had a gala time at the Christmas celebrations organised by them.

The Santa Claus in and around stations and onboard trains became very popular with the riders as they were treated with sweets. Santa was on the move starting from Munshipulia station, around IT College station area and Hazratganj clicking pictures with excited commuters.

A special musical performance by 'The Triological Blend Official' band at the Hazratganj station made the evening for people fun-filled.

Meanwhile, UPMRC, in association with an organisation, will organise a warm clothes collection drive at Munshipulia and Krishna Nagar stations from December 29 to 31.

# Mission Shakti: Efforts on to make women self-reliant

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under the successful Mission Shakti initiative, the Uttar Pradesh government is sparing no efforts to not only make women aware of their rights but also make them self-reliant and self-independent.

Under this campaign launched by Yogi Adityanath, the Department of Women and Child Development has already taken a few steps to ensure women's security and empowerment by organising various awareness programmes. The recent data

shows that till December 25, the Department of Women and Child Development has sensitised over 5.5 crore people, including 1,98,74,468 women and 1,37,16,793 girls under the Mission Shakti campaign. The department had organised many events including Shakti Samwad, programmes on child labour, child marriage, mental health, Betiyon ki Pehchan, etc. Manoj Rai, the director, Women and Child, UP said.

It is to be mentioned that last month, a virtual programme 'Haq Ki Bat, Zilaadhikari Ke Saath' was organised in every district across the state, where women and girls had a conversation with the district magistrates on the topics of sexual violence, gender inequality, domestic violence, and dowry violence via video conferencing.

It is worth mentioning that Chief Minister Yogi launched the Mission Shakti programme on October 17, 2020 with an aim to reduce crime against women and it was implemented for six months and will come to an end on Basant Navratri in April 2021.

# 'Have to live in harmony with nature'

**Lucknow (PNS):** The year 2020 has been declared as the year of biodiversity but it is a matter of concern that instead of reducing, the crisis is increasing and human activities are the main reason for this. To save the earth from going towards destruction, we have to live in harmony with nature.

These views were expressed by chairperson of National Biodiversity Authority Dr VB Mathur, who was the chief guest at the victory

function of the Biodiversity Conclave under 6th India International Science Festival (IISF-2020), organised at NBRI.

Principal coordinator Dr KN Nair presented the conclave report of various events and activities held during the two-day event while Prof Adarsh Pal Vig welcomed the chief guest. To generate awareness about biodiversity among young minds of India, an e-poster session and nature-wildlife photography expo were

organised while a short film was also screened. A session on 'Indigenous Community - S&T Experts Meet' was organised and was addressed by experts.

The experts discussed the importance of tradition knowledge in developing ayurvedic drugs and emphasized the need of S&T intervention among tribal communities for generating better income opportunities. They also emphasised on sustainable utilisation of forest and wild resources.

# Directions issued for uniforms of bus drivers, conductors

**Lucknow (PNS):** Uniforms should be fixed for the drivers and conductors of city buses and identity cards be provided to them. A workshop should also be organised to teach them how to behave with passengers.

These were the directions issued by Divisional Commissioner Ranjan Kumar, who presided over Lucknow City Transport Services Limited Board meeting on Saturday. A committee headed by ADM (East) was also formed to make the company more profitable. This panel consists of additional municipal commissioner,

LDA chief engineer and chief finance officer of City Transport. The divisional commissioner asked the committee to submit a report within 15 days after carrying out a review of how can income be enhanced and expenditures curbed, how to make provision of LED screens in buses and how to generate revenue through publicity.

Kumar said that proper publicity of the time schedule of the buses should be made and the buses should run on time. He said that the routes should be charted on the basis of the availability of passengers.

## CITY BRIEFS

### MISSION SHAKTI

The department of Linguistics, Lucknow University, organised a special event online under the Mission Shakti initiative of the UP government. Violina Borah, assistant professor at the Department of English (Daulat Ram College), delivered a lecture titled 'Hissedaari' and spoke of the interaction between gender and language. She also announced the results of the poster and poetry contests and appreciated the gender-equal participation. Shivansh Sharma, Saumya Tiwari and Krishna Narayan won the prizes in poetry competition while Ayushi Sahu, Karishma Singh and Prashant Awasthi in poster making.

January 1 to 31. She will be trained along with other volunteers selected from across the country for the main parade to be held at the Red Fort. Anshu is a student of BCom (Hons) at Rural Management department.

### REPUBLIC DAY

Students of National Service Scheme participated in the National Integration Camp in March, which was organised in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh under the leadership of Dr Ramesh Kumar Chaturvedi and Dr Taruna, programme officer of National Service Scheme (NSS) of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Central University. The BBAU NSS team won many medals and awards there. Anshu Srivastava, a student of the same group, got selected for the Regional Republic Day Parade Camp held in Agra from November 26 to December 4. The central team present at that camp has now selected Anshu Srivastava for the January 26 Republic Day Camp to be held in Delhi. Anshu will now participate in the NSS Republic Day Parade Camp to be held from

### GOLD MEDAL

Shardul Awasthi, a class IV student of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus I, brought laurels to the institution by winning the gold medal at the state-level Abacus Competition, which was organised under the aegis of educational institute Brainobrain.

Students of several noted schools participated in the contest to showcase their analytical skills. Shardul opted for various abacus tricks to solve mathematical problems and emerged winner amidst a tough competition. He was awarded a gold medal and certificate of merit.

# Administrators replace pradhans in 58,656 village panchayats

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the end of the five-year term of the elected gram pradhans on Friday, the state government has appointed administrators replacing them in as many as 58,656 village panchayats.

The elections to the three-tier panchayat institutions are slated to be held next year and the process is targeted to be completed by the end of March next year.

Official sources said here

on Saturday that assistant development officers in the block development office had been appointed as administrators in all the village panchayats while the government had removed the digital signatures of the pradhans from the portal of the e-Gram Swaraj to prevent any fraud.

Meanwhile, the UP State Election Commission is preparing for the panchayat polls and there is a possibility that the elections could be held in four phases.

The elections of gram pradhans, members of gram sabhas, and members of kshetra panchayats and members district panchayats will be held simultaneously.

Presently, the process of revision of electoral rolls is underway and the final voter list is expected to be published next month.

The process of delimitation and reservation of wards for the SCs and OBCs will be completed by the third week of February next year.

The State Election Commission is likely to issue the election notification as soon as the reservation of wards is completed.

The terms of gram panchayats ended on December 25, while the terms of kshetra panchayats and district panchayat members will end on January 14 and March 18 next year respectively. The official sources said the preparations for the panchayat elections were underway on a war footing. Unlike the last election in 2016, this time the election of gram pradhans, members of gram sabhas, kshetra panchayats and district panchayats will be held simultaneously.

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY** Notification No.164/2020  
**Important Notice for the Rail Passengers**  
 It is notified for information of General Public that following Puja Special Trains will run with extension of Periodicity, Revised Timings as under:-

**04185/04186 Gwalior — Barauni Jn. — Gwalior Special Train (05 Days a Week)**

Train No. 04185 Ex. Gwalior from 01.01.2021 to 31.01.2021 on Everyday (Except Monday & Thursday)  
 Train No. 04186 Ex. Barauni Jn. from 02.01.2021 to 01.02.2021 on Everyday (Except Tuesday & Friday)

| 04185   |             | 04186              |         |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|---------|
| Gwalior | Barauni Jn. | Barauni Jn.        | Gwalior |
| Arr.    | Dep.        | Arr.               | Dep.    |
| —       | 12.00       | Gwalior            | 20.35   |
| 12.36   | 12.38       | Dabra              | 19.11   |
| 13.04   | 13.06       | Datia              | 18.37   |
| 13.40   | 14.00       | Jhansi Jn.         | 17.55   |
| 15.38   | 15.40       | Orai               | 15.28   |
| 16.10   | 16.12       | Kalpi              | 14.38   |
| 16.30   | 16.32       | Pokhrayan          | 14.00   |
| 18.40   | 18.50       | Kanpur Central     | 12.40   |
| 19.28   | 19.30       | Unnao Jn.          | 12.02   |
| 20.35   | 20.45       | Lucknow Jn.        | 10.45   |
| 21.28   | 21.30       | Barabanki Jn.      | 09.43   |
| 21.54   | 21.56       | Burhwal            | 09.02   |
| 22.24   | 22.26       | Colonelganj        | 08.31   |
| 23.05   | 23.10       | Gonda Jn.          | 08.02   |
| 23.32   | 23.34       | Mankapur Jn.       | 07.08   |
| 23.48   | 23.50       | Maskanwa           | 06.53   |
| —       | —           | Babhan             | 06.35   |
| 00.34   | 00.37       | Basti              | 06.07   |
| 00.59   | 01.01       | Khalilabad         | 05.38   |
| —       | —           | Sahjanwa           | 05.17   |
| 02.00   | 02.10       | Gorakhpur Jn.      | 04.35   |
| 03.20   | 03.25       | Deoria Sadar       | 03.10   |
| 03.50   | 03.55       | Bhatni Jn.         | 02.44   |
| 04.20   | 04.22       | Bankata            | —       |
| 04.31   | 04.33       | Mairwa             | 02.01   |
| 04.55   | 05.00       | Siwan Jn.          | 01.40   |
| 05.15   | 05.17       | Duraundha Jn.      | —       |
| 06.20   | 06.30       | Chhapra            | 00.30   |
| 07.26   | 07.28       | Dighwara           | 23.11   |
| 08.00   | 08.05       | Sonpur             | 22.50   |
| 08.15   | 08.20       | Hajipur Jn.        | 22.35   |
| 08.39   | 08.41       | Bhaganpur          | 22.04   |
| 09.20   | 09.25       | Muzaffarpur Jn.    | 21.30   |
| 09.46   | 09.48       | Dholi              | 20.12   |
| 10.08   | 10.10       | Khudiram Bose Pusa | 19.58   |
| 10.50   | 10.55       | Samastipur Jn.     | 19.40   |
| 11.17   | 11.19       | Dalsingh Sarai     | 19.12   |
| 12.50   | —           | Barauni Jn.        | —       |

**Rate Composition—SLR/D-02, General Second Class-05, Sleeper-10, AC III-03, AC II-01 = 21 Coach**  
 Please Note:1. These train will run with full reserved accommodation. 2. It is mandatory for the passengers to follow the guidelines issued for prevention and safety from Covid-19. CP/OT-85 Chief Pass. Traffic Manager, Gorakhpur  
 About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955  
 "DO NOT TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN"

# Varanasi close to 21k-mark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

## COVID-19

The district has inched closer to 21k-mark as 55 new patients have been detected on Saturday, increasing the total number to 20,950. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 351. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 46 and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 17,265. As no patient has been discharged from any hospital, the number has remained at 2,903. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 20,168,

leaving 431 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.26 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.67 per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 52 positive patients were found out of 1,849 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,03,317 and the results of 2,333 are awaited. Out of them, 4,82,370 were negative, while 20,947 positive. The total number of samples collected was 5,28,954. Earlier,

a male aged 69 from Gillet Bazar succumbed to COVID-19 at Apex Hospital. With the addition of four new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,628 including 200 red zones. Three green zones have been converted into red zones again. There are 2,428 green zones with 11 new ones.

Meanwhile, mass / group corona antigen tests continued at the static booths and stations of the district under the direction of District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma. All the 135 tests were found negative at SSPG Hospital

Kabirchaura apart from 90 at District Women's Hospital, 21 at CHC Shivpur, 36 at Vivekanand Hospital Bhelupur, 108 at LBS Hospital Ramnagar and 42 at Sir Sundaral Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). Apart from this, all the 26 tests at Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station and 17 at Manduadih were also found negative.

Along with this, samples of 99 people were sent from SSPG, 70 from Women's Hospital, 31 from Vivekananda and 99 from LBS for RTPCR investigation.

# 67 new Covid cases in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The corona infection continued to fall in the district. Throughout the day, 5,680 people underwent a corona check of them a total of 67 new positive cases were identified. 77 people beat Corona at the same time while no death from corona infection was reported once again.

According to Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, the number of healthy people is increasing more than the infected. Out of the 77 people who have become deinfected in the district, 13 were discharged from various Covid hospitals. At the same time 64 people defeated the infection by staying in home isolation.

So far, 20,236 people have completed home isolation. According to nodal officer Dr Sahai, the infected also included pediatricians from Beli Hospital. On the other hand, the Covid report of a senior railway technician including a loco pilot, three advocates, a constable of GRP, a primary school teacher posted in Bahadurpur, a teacher of SJC and a supervisor of NTPC have come positive.

Corona infection with no symptoms will be admitted here at Kalindipuram. According to CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai, four patients have been admitted to this centre on the first day. He told that if the infection is confirmed in people coming from outside, then they will be

## Health dept to train cold chain handlers

**ALLAHABAD (PNS):** The Health department will train cold chain handlers to ensure that the doses of Covid vaccine reach the beneficiaries properly. Also, to speed up the work of vaccination, private doctors will also be identified for training.

In the first phase of corona vaccination, about 25,000 health workers will be vaccinated here. After training, the names of about 23,000 people were fed on the Covid portal till Friday. The registration of name on the portal will continue with registration. According to the Nodal Officer

admitted to this centre. Meanwhile, people as well as the Health department appear to be relieved by Corona infection. On Thursday, a screening test of 5,844 people was conducted. There have been 60 new cases of infection. At the same time, 49 people got healthy from Corona infection.

Among the infected, a lawyer, SDO of BSNL, employee of AG office, a teacher of Arya Kanya Inter College, cashier of BOB are also in the list of infected. According to nodal officer Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, the number of infected remains constant even after expanding the scope of testing.

On the same day 60 new Covid positive have been identified. Of the 49 people who got infection-free, 17 Covid

patients were discharged from hospitals. 32 people completed home isolation. So far, 20,172 people have been free from infection by getting treatment in their homes. CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai said that the number of serious patients in Covid hospitals is decreasing. There are 62 patients in SRN, 27 in Beli Hospital and 17 in United Medcity Medical College. He said that work is being done to check those coming from abroad or other states so that the spread of infection can be stopped.

According to Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, on the instructions of the government, after November 25, there are instructions to conduct a Covid test of those who travelled here from Britain or other countries. In this regard, a list of 49 people traveling abroad has returned from Lucknow. On the basis of the list, the QRT teams are collecting the details by visiting the respective people's homes.

A Covid test has been conducted for 20 people who had come from abroad. All reports have come negative. At the same time, information was collected about those 11 people who were not found at the address listed in the list. Nine people who returned from foreign travel were informed over the phone about their health. Along with them, Covid will be examined on Sunday.

## COVID TEST OF 20 PEOPLE WHO CAME FROM ABROAD CONDUCTED

After getting the new form of Coronavirus, every person

# 56 felicitated on Malviya Jayanti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Recalling the contributions of Bharat Ratna Mahatma Madan Mohan Malviya, various functions were organised in the city on his birth anniversary here on Friday. A major function was organised at Assi under the joint auspices of Ashray Sewa Sansthan and Subeh-e-Banaras in association with the Cultural department, UP Government, Regional Achieves and Microtek in which as many as 56 dignitaries, all are alumni of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), including over a dozen past and present vice-chancellors of different universities, three Padmashree award recipients and others. In BHU, Malviya Deepawali was celebrated at Malviya Bhawan which was inaugurated by the V-C Prof Rakesh Bhatnagar. Hundreds of lamps were lit between LT Guest House and Mahila Mahaviyalaya (MMV).

At Assi, apart from felicitations of dignitaries, exhibition and Kavi Sammelan 'Srijan Dhara' were also organised and the function began with offering flower tributes to Malviyajiji. Dr Vijay Kapoor presented Saraswati Vandana while girls of Panini Mahaviyalaya recited Vedic



Felicitation function being held on Malviya Jayanti at Assi, Varanasi on Friday

Pioneer

Manglacharan, while Music Faculty students 'Kulgeet' of BHU. Some artistes also presented Kathak dance.

Later, V-Cs Prof TN Singh (MGKV) and Prof Nirmal Maurya (VBSPU, Jaunpur) apart from many past and present V-Cs including Padmashree Prof Saroj Chooramani, Prof RK Mishra, Prof SS Kushwaha, Prof Durg Singh Chauhan, Prof Chandrakala Padia, Prof Harikesh Singh, Prof KP Singh and many others.

Besides, the other dignitaries who were honoured were Padmashree recipients Prof NN Khanna and Dr Rajnikant Dwivedi, Prof

Chandramauli Upadhyay, Dr Satya Dev Singh, Prof Mangla Kapoor, Prof SN Thakur, Prof KNS Yadav, Dr Subhash Chandra Yadav, Prof OP Singh, Prof Koushal Kishore Mishra, Prof Abhimanyu Singh, Prof RK Mall, Prof Sachchidanand Tripathi, Prof Jai Prasad Lal, Deena Nath Singh, Prof HS Shukla, Dr Yogendra Kumar Singh, Prof Sanjay Rai, Prof PC Upadhyay, Prof Awadesh Pradhan, Prof Maruti Nandan Tiwari, Prof MP Mishra, Prof Arvind Joshi, Prof Hridya Ranjan Sharma, Prof Devbrat Choubey, Prof Bechan Lal, Prof R Prasad, Prof UK Chaudhary, Prof BN Mishra, Dr Rajendra

Upadhyay, Prof NP Sinha, Ajay Srivastava, Prof Abhay Kumar Singh, Dr Pradeep Rai, Dr Beena Singh, Dr RP Singh, Dr OP Tiwari, Yadendra Kumar, Pradeep Kumar, Attri Bhardwaj, Ramesh Singh, Vijay Narain, Shiv Kumar Singh, Brijesh Singh, Ashok Pandey, Subedar Singh and Dr Ratnesh Verma. The function was jointly conducted by Pramod Mishra and Preetesh Acharya, while guests were welcomed by Dr Subhash Chandra Yadav, Dr Harendra Narayan Singh and Dr Ratnesh Verma. The vote of thanks was proposed by Ashray secretary Dr Virendra Pratap Singh.

# 'Air pollution main cause of asthma rise'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former head of Chest Department in Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof JK Samaria said that air pollution is one of the important reasons for the increase in asthma. "Pollution, smoking, dietary habits, nutritional deficiencies, genetic predisposition, lack of information and increase in small air particles (PM 2.5) are the main

causes behind the rise in asthma cases," he said, while talking to the presspersons here.

According to him, at the time of lockdown, a significant decrease in air pollution was observed in the first few months but as now as the things are being opened up, it is important that health should not be ignored, especially asthma patients need to pay more attention on their health. "Inhalation can play a crucial role in reducing the impact of

asthma on people's lives. With inhalers, the drug reaches directly to the lungs instead of flowing through the bloodstream and other organs of the body and the patients need lesser drug dosage. It is, in fact, the safest treatment option for asthmatics with fewer side effects," he said, adding that expanding one's knowledge on this condition is vital as patients stop using inhalation therapy mid-way which makes it difficult to control the disease.

According to him, asthma is a chronic (long term) disease usually characterised by airway inflammation and narrowing of the airways, which can vary over time. "India has 37.9 million cases of asthma, despite the number, the usage of inhalers which is the most effective treatment is abysmally low and it is estimated that in Varanasi local doctors daily see an average of around 30-35 patients suffering from asthma/respiratory diseases.

# Divyang T-20 cricket tourney inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Haryana Divyang Cricket Team won the inaugural match of Late Ajit Memorial T-20 Triangular Divyang Cricket Series by defeating Mumbai Divyang Cricket Team.

In the inaugural match played at Smpurnanand Sports Stadium in Sigra here, on Saturday the Mumbai Divyang Cricket Team won the toss and chose to field first. Batting first, the Haryana Divyang Cricket Team scored a total of 161 runs losing seven wickets in 20 overs. Chasing a target of 162 runs, the Mumbai Divyang Cricket Team could score only 134 runs losing nine wickets. And thus, the Haryana Team won the inaugural match by 27 runs. The cricket lovers were surprised while watching the game of players as they were hitting the ball for the boundaries like the players of any national and international cricket team. And at the same



BJP regional chief MC Srivastava inaugurating Divyang T-20 cricket tournament in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

time, their bowling, fielding and catching the balls were superb. Nikki Tiwari and Chandra Prakash were umpires in the inaugural match.

Earlier, the regional president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mahesh Chandra Srivastava formally inaugurated the tournament and said

that the tournament will explore the talent of those physically challenged players who have so far not got opportunities to show their sports skill. Extending his congratulations to the organisers, he emphasised on conducting such more tournaments to encourage divyang players. He

also unveiled the trophy to be handed over to the winning team. The Uttar Pradesh Divyang Cricket Association is conducting the tournament and its president Dr Manoj Kumar Srivastava informed that three teams are participating in the tournament and the third team is Uttar Pradesh Divyang Cricket Team besides the teams of Haryana and Mumbai. It is for the first time that the T-20 cricket series of divyang is being conducted in the state and it has approval of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The tournament will conclude on Sunday and the chief guest will be Arjuna Awardee and International para-athlete Jageer Singh, he informed.

Prominent among those who were present on the inaugural occasion included Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh, Prakash Kumar Srivastava, Dr Ritu Garg, Rakesh Singh and Dr Nandlal Singh.

ensures that shunting locomotive used for placement of coaching rake is not sprayed with water to avoid any damage to the locomotive. This automatic coach washing plant reduces water consumption substantially as only 300 litres of water is needed per coach for exterior cleaning against approximately 1000 litres consumption per coach in conventional cleaning process. This ACWP is equipped with inbuilt effluent treatment plant which recycles approximately 80 per cent of water used in this machine making it extremely efficient w.r.t. water consumption.

Highlighting details of this project, DRM Agra SK Srivastava said that ACWP is capable of cleaning the rake upto 8 kmph placement speed and it takes only five minutes to clean a 24 coach length rake utilising ACWP. General Manager Rajiv Chaudhry complemented Agra division for this important achievement and advised that such ACWPs

should be installed at all washing lines to ensure quality cleaning in an environment friendly manner. Later two Plug and Play type packaged Sewage Treatment Plants installed in Railway colony near Jhansi railway station were also inaugurated by GM Chaudhry. With total installed capacity of 1,00,000 litres, these units will be used to recycle waste water of and treated water to be used in gardening, and cleaning. Design followed over NCR for packaged STP is Plug and Play type requiring minimal space and time for installation and recycled water is potable grade as all the parameter of treated water from this plant are within the specified limits for drinking water. DRM Jhansi Sandeep Mathur highlighted benefits of this compact treatment plant and also shared efforts towards overall landscape development near these plants. General Manager complemented Jhansi division for their important contribution towards water

conservation. He said that it is our legal and moral duty to conserve water for future generations and such packaged and easy to install STPs are important tool in this endeavour. GM also announced group awards for both Agra and Jhansi division successful completion of these important works. With keen interest of General Manager Chaudhry in water conservation, North Central Railway has made pioneering efforts in this direction through installation of STPs and ETPs, digging of ponds, rainwater harvesting, water consumption auditing and other conservation measures. Installed water recycling capacity over North Central Railway is approximately 25 lakh litres per day and this railway could recycle more than 15 crore litre water in last one year. North Central Railway HQ office complex is a net zero discharge unit and recycles 100 per cent waste water through similar packaged plug and play type STP.

# NITI Ayog CEO reviews progress of projects

**VARANASI (PNS):** The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Ayog Amitabh Kant on Saturday said, after the completion of development and welfare programmes in Sewapuri Development Block of the district, the development model of this block will be applied in the entire nation.

Chairing a meeting with the officers of various depart-

ments, Kant reviewed the progress of various development and welfare projects being implemented here and directed for materialising all the projects within stipulated time. It is pointed out, the Sewapuri Block of the district has been selected to develop as a model block by the NITI Ayog in view of the COVID-19 and all the 87 villages of this block are to be saturated with all the development and welfare projects

being run by the government at Centre and in the state as well. If the block is developed as model block successfully, it could be applied in the entire nation. The works related to development have been completed but the works regarding the behaviour changing are to be completed, he said adding, after the completion of all the works, the development model of this block will be applied in

the entire nation. He lauded all the departments engaged in implementing the projects and said, the works of the block will be handed over to the community after it is declared as the model block. After this block is declared as a model block, the officers will start work making other blocks as model blocks and they will face no difficulty as they will gain experience by then, he added.

main bath festival of Magh Mela. During this period, Chief Principal Manager held a video conference from Prayagraj with the regional managers of Jhansi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Faizabad, Varanasi, Chitrakoot, Gorakhpur for smooth running of buses during Magh Mela period. During this, PR Belvariya said that all the regional managers should keep

their regional buses ready for the Magh Mela. Passengers should be seated in the buses only after sanitising them. During this, the number of passengers in the buses should be seated, as many seats are there. During the meeting, Regional Manager Prayagraj TKS Bisen said that buses from Lucknow, Faizabad, Pratapgarh, Kanpur route will be operated from

# NCR GM inaugurates automatic coach washing plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In a virtual function held on Saturday through video conferencing, General Manager, North Central Railway, Rajiv Chaudhry inaugurated automatic coach washing plant installed at coach maintenance depot Agra Cantt. and Plug and Play type packaged Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) installed near Jhansi railway station.

Automatic coach washing plant installed at washing line Agra Cantt. is equipped with 12 stages automatic exterior coach washing units for superior and uniform cleaning. Combination of cylindrical brushes, cleaning chemical application and multiple cleaning stages ensures superior coach washing without any manual effort. Sensor installed at approach of ACWP ensures that machine is pressed into action at appropriate time and it also detects type of stock—coach and locomotives.

This intelligent feature

# CPM visits temporary bus station

**ALLAHABAD (PNS):** The Chief Principal Manager of Roadways PR Belvariya reached Prayagraj on Friday to take stock of the preparations for the annual Magh Mela. Here he visited the temporary bus station being constructed for the fair. During this, officers informed him that buses will be operated from different places a day before and a day after the

Civil Lines Bus Station during the main bathing festival of the fair. Buses of the Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh etc. routes will run from the temporary bus station being built in Jhansi, while the buses of Mirzapur, Banda, Chitrakoot, Rewa route will operate from the temporary bus station located in Leprosi Naini.

# Covaxin completes another trial phase in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

India's very own indigenous-developed COVID-19 vaccine, Covaxin, has completed another trial phase in Kanpur Nagar.

The trial included administering the vaccine to 1,000 volunteers across the city from different walks of life.

This phase of the trial was completed on December 21 at Prakhari Hospital in Arya Nagar. The first dose of the indigenously developed Covaxin was successfully administered to 1,000 volun-

teers as part of the phase-3 trial at Kanpur's Prakhari Hospital.

Now, for the next phase of the Covaxin trial, the same 1,000 volunteers will be administered the vaccine before January 3, 2021.

Dr JS Kushwaha, the principal investigator at Prakhari Hospital, said that the first dose of Covaxin was administered successfully to all the volunteers and there was no report of any reaction or health issue faced by them. To successfully administer the vaccine to the 1,000 volunteers, it took the hospital and the staff a total of

17 days. The volunteers were observed before and after the vaccine was administered to them so as to properly gauge the impact of the vaccine on the human body.

"Now, the next phase of the trial is set to begin soon and the volunteers have so far not shown any negative or side effects," Dr Kushwaha added.

The Covaxin has been developed by India's very own Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). As of now, hospitals are awaiting emergency approval for the

usage of the vaccine from the Drug Controller General of India.

According to research on primates, Covaxin does not just fight off the COVID-19 virus, it makes immune systems stronger, which can then fight off many diseases, the primary one being the SARS-CoV-2 strain of the coronavirus.

Interestingly, the Covaxin trials are not the only vaccination trials going on in Kanpur. Earlier this month, a total of 13 volunteers were given the Sputnik V, a Russian vaccine for the COVID-19 virus.

## 30 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 30 more coronavirus positive cases on Saturday evening. Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 30 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Friday evening and Saturday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 32,115 cases. He said that 8 patients were discharged from hospital. He said no COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Saturday evening. The CMO said at present 597 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 3776 samples were sent for testing in the city.

## NER GM inspects rest houses

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

General Manager of North Eastern Railways (NER) Vinay Kumar Tripathi on Friday inspected the Gorakhpur-situated staff rest house and officers' rest house. On the occasion Principal Chief Engineer (PCE) Satish Kumar Pandey, Senior Deputy General Manager Amitabh Ojha, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer AK Shukla, secretary/ General Manager DK Khare, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh, Deputy General Manager/General Krishna Chandra Singh, Deputy Chief Engineer/ Gorakhpur Ravinder Mehra and Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer/Colonel AK Singh and other officers and employees were present. On seeing the solar water heater installed on the roofs of Rapti rest house, Tripathi said that solar energy should be used in other places also. Besides the the officers concerned were instructed for ensuring cleanliness in the premises of the rest house and taking proper upkeep of the lawn. He also instructed for repair of the furniture at the Aami rest house where guest houses have been made for Group-C and Group-D employees. Tripathi said whatever work is done care should also be taken of the satisfaction of the user along with better quality.



the Covid-19. The 04185 Gwalior-Barauni special will leave Gwalior at 12.00 hrs, Dabra at 12.38 hrs, Datia at 13.06 hrs, Jhansi at 14.00 hrs, Orai at 15.40 hrs, Kalpi at 16.12 hrs, Pokhrayan at 16.32 hrs, Kanpur Central at 18.50 hrs, Unnao at 19.30 hrs, Lucknow to 20.45 hrs, Barabanki at 21.30 hrs, Burhwal at 21.56 hrs, Colonelganj at 22.26 hrs, Gonda at 23.10 hrs, Mankapur at 23.50 hrs, Maskanwan at 23.50 hrs, second day Basti at 00.37 hrs, Khalilabad at 01.01 hrs, Gorakhpur at 02.10 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 03.25 hrs, Bhatni at 03.55 hrs, Bankata at 04.22 hrs, Mairwa at 04.33 hrs, Siwan at 05.00 hrs, Duraundha at 05.17 hrs, Chhapra at 06.30 hrs, Dighwara at 07.28 hrs, Sonpur at 08.05 hrs, Hajipur at 08.20 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 08.41 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 09.25 hrs, Dholi at 09.48 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 10.10 hrs, Samastipur at 10.55 hrs, Dalsinghsarai at 11.19 hrs and reach Barauni at 12.50 hrs. During the return journey, 04186 Barauni-Gwalior special will leave Barauni at 18.45 hrs, Dalsinghsarai at 19.14 hrs, Samastipur at 19.45 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 20.00 hrs, Dholi at 20.14 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 21.35 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 22.06 hrs, Hajipur at 22.40 hrs, Sonpur at 22.52 hrs, Dighwara at 23.13 hrs, Chhapra at 00.40 hrs, Siwan at 01.45 hrs, Mairwa at 02.03 hrs, Bhatni at 02.49 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 03.15 hrs, Gorakhpur at 04.45 hrs, Sahajanwa at 05.19 hrs, Khalilabad at 05.40 hrs, Basti at 06.10 hrs, Babhan at 06.37 hrs, Maskanwa at 06.55 hrs, Mankapur at 07.10 hrs, Gonda at 08.07 hrs, Colonelganj at 08.33 hrs, Burhwal at 09.04 hrs, Barabanki at 09.45 hrs, Lucknow at 10.55 hrs, Unnao at 12.03 hrs, Kanpur Central at 12.50 hrs, Pokhrayan at 14.02 hrs, Kalpi at 14.40 hrs, Orai at 15.30 hrs, Jhansi at 18.15 hrs, Datia at 18.39 hrs, Dabra at 19.13 hrs and reach Gwalior at 20.35 hrs. A total of 21 coaches, including two of SLRD, five of general second class, 10 of sleeper, three of AC third class and one of AC second will be attached in this special train.

# Rest house of Kanpur Circuit House to be named after Atal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has announced that the Kanpur Circuit House Vishram Grih (rest house) would be named after Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

At a meeting organised at the Circuit House here on Thursday, the deputy chief minister said a 10-ft high statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee would be installed there.

On the occasion of the former prime minister's birth anniversary, Maurya also



unveiled a portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Circuit House and laid the foundation for his statue.

He directed PWD Chief Engineer Diwakar Shukla to start the work within a month. Mayor Pramila Pandey, MLAs Surendra Maithani, Mahesh Trivedi, former MLA Raghunandan Singh Bhadauria, Sunil Bajaj, Kiran Nishad and Santosh Shukla were present.

Dy. Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya unveiling the portrait of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the circuit house.

## Two injured in firing at marriage ceremony

KANPUR (PNS): Two persons, including a minor boy, were injured when some unidentified persons opened fire in a marriage ceremony in Moti Nagar locality of Jajmau under Chakeri police station late Friday night. Police have started investigations in the matter. According to reports, Arpit Ali, brother of Asif Rani, a friend of D-2 gang member Sablu who was recently arrested by the Chamanganj police, had gone to attend the marriage ceremony of his friend in Moti Nagar. Arpit alleged that some of his enemies entered the ceremony venue and opened fire on him. In the firing, Arpit and his relative Ubaid (13) sustained bullet injuries on their limbs. Panic prevailed at the ceremony venue and taking its advantage, the assailants soon disappeared from the spot. The injured were admitted to LLR Hospital. Station House Officer Ravi Srivastava said investigations were on in the matter. Nobody has lodged any complaint so far, he added. Sources said that during the revelry firing, after Ubaid (13) sustained bullet injury, Arpit also shot at himself. They said the names of the assailants disclosed by Arpit were found to be his enemies.

## Law & order situation reviewed

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Special Secretary (Home) Prakash Chandra Srivastava reviewed the law and order situation in the district on Friday. He visited the district late in the evening and reviewed the law and order situation by holding a meeting which was attended by DM, SP and the other administrative officers. Later he inspected the Police Lines and buildings which were under construction. During the inspection of Police Lines he was accompanied by SP Ajay Singh, ADM (F&R) UP Singh, SDM Sadar, Gaurav Srivastava, city magistrate, Jagdamba Singh, ASPs along with COs.

Sarjeet Singh Dang while addressing a programme organised under the aegis of Agriculture department at Jamalpur block headquarters as Kisan Samvad to mark the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Friday said that new agricultural laws were a milestone in the way of the uplift of farmers. He said Modi government was the first government after independence which paid attention towards farmers and provided the facility of ₹500 per month to small farmers. Apart from introducing neem-coated urea the government allocated a fund of ₹10 million crore to strengthen agriculture sector in villages. He said that it was Yogi government which cleared the

dues of ₹1 lakh crore of cane farmers. Regarding the so-called protest of farmers on Delhi borders he claimed that it was being done under the nefarious designs of the opposition. The meeting was presided over by Kishor Singh and vote of thanks was proposed by an Agriculture department official. To mark the day programmes were organised in the district. In Chhanbey block UP Forest Minister Dara Singh Chauhan addressed farmers and enumerated the benefits of new agricultural laws. Prior to attending the programme the minister garlanded the statue of former PM at Atal Chauraha. The programme was also attended by MP Anupriya Patel, MLA Rahul Kol and ADM (F&R) UP Singh.

# KDA VC orders speedy disposal of grievances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Development Authority Vice Chairman Rakesh Kumar Singh heard the grievances of the allottees and other people at the Janata Darshan programme organised on Thursday.

As many as 35 applications were received, most of them relating to property, illegal possession, freehold, registry, mutation and refund.

The KDA vice chairman directed the officials concerned for speedy and timely disposal of the applications.

KDA allottee Kuldeep Kumar Bhatia said that despite completing the registry and freehold process, he was not given possession on the plot.



KDA VC Rakesh Kumar Singh hearing the grievances of allottees at Janata Darshan programme

Sangeeta Jaiswal urged the KDA to allot her an alternative plot after the allotted one was found to be disputed.

On Rajesh Chandra Jain's application for removing the seal from his building, the executive engineer concerned informed the vice chairman that compounding was possible only after the cancellation of the Allahabad High Court's stay order.

Raj Kumar and Prem Kumar asked about the registry of plot in the Ispat Nagar Scheme while Anuj Mishra

urged the KDA vice chairman to remove the seal from his plot No. 45, 8-B/01 Block, West Scheme-26, Old Kanpur.

Ashish Shukla, Sudha Shukla, Saroj Chauhan, Pramila Devi and Ramji Tewari, general secretary of Maurang Giti Mandi Vyapar Association, also submitted their applications. KDA Secretary SP Singh, Additional Secretary Gudakesh Sharma, Finance Controller VK Lal, Chief Engineer Chakresh Jain, OSD Alok Kumar Verma, Executive Engineer Atul

Mishra, Ashu Mittal, Manoj Upadhyaya, RRP Singh, City Planner Ajay Kumar, Law Officer Shashi Bhushan Rai and other officers/employees were present in the Janata Darshan programme.

**OTS SCHEME LAST DATE DEC 31**

Meanwhile, the last date for taking benefit of the one time settlement (OTS) scheme has been fixed as December 31.

The scheme was launched by the state government to

facilitate the defaulters of development authorities and Avas Vikas Parishad. It is also applicable on all the group housing projects, properties allotted to Central/state government and government undertakings/organisations, plots allotted for schools and charitable organisations etc.

The allotment of these properties would be cancelled if the defaulters fail to apply under the OTS scheme by December 31, an official press released said.

## NTPC Rihand sends second consignment of ash

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC Rihand had established a new dimension in ash utility in the country by sending fly ash to NTPC Dabri for the first time through BTAP wagon on December 9. In the same sequence NTPC Rihand under the contract with Birla Corporation by sending the second consignment of ash to Birla Corporation's Maihar (MP) through 51 BTAP wagons recently has established

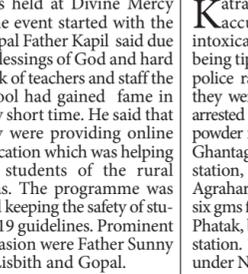


guidelines were followed on the occasion. a new area to increase ash utility. GM (O&M) KN Reddy, who was the chief guest, flagged off the BTAP wagon for Birla Group Maihar. Prominent among those present were GM of Corporate Ash Management, BB Chugh, GMs of Rihand station besides heads of departments and other senior officers. In view of Covid-19 social distancing

## Xmas programme held

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAIUN

A Christmas programme was held at Divine Mercy School, Orai, on Friday. The event started with the candle lighting ceremony. Principal Father Kapil said due to blessings of God and hard work of teachers and staff the school had gained fame in very short time. He said that they were providing online education which was helping the students of the rural areas. The programme was held keeping the safety of students in mind and as per Covid-19 guidelines. Prominent among those present on the occasion were Father Sunny James, brother Johnson, sister Lisbith and Gopal.



## Three arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Katra Kotwali police arrested three accused along with 26 gms of intoxicating powder on Friday. On being tipped off by an informer the Katra police raided Ratanganj locality where they were found waiting for a customer, arrested them and recovered five gms of powder from Vakeed of Machhali Ka Pul, Ghantaghar, under City Kotwali police station, besides 15 gms from Sumit Aghari, a resident of Makarikhoh and six gms from Munna a resident of Hathia Phatak, both under Katra Kotwali police station. The police booked the accused under NDPS Act and sent them to jail.

## Gifts presented to NER scouts, guides

PNS ■ VARANASI

On the occasion of Christmas at Scout Den near Lahartara auditorium of NER in a brief ceremony chairperson of Divisional Women's Welfare Organisation Manisha Panjjar presented gifts to NER Scouts and Guides. On the occasion Scouts and Guides presented a beautiful cultural programme. Manisha Panjjar took details of the district rally to be held next month and office-bearers of NER District



Scouts and Guides Association presented its outline before her. Panjjar assured full cooperation to the district rally and announced to give a sound system courtesy the Women's Welfare Organisation. She called upon the Scout and Guide members to prepare for the upcoming district rally. The members of Divisional Women's Welfare Organisation Executive besides those of NER Bharat Scouts and Guides District Association were present on the occasion, PRO, Varanasi, Ashok Kumar said.

# Airway clinic set up at Regency

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An airway clinic has been set up at the Regency Hospital Tower at Sarvodaya Nagar in collaboration with the Departments of ENT, Paediatrics, Pulmonary Medicine, Anaesthesia and Critical care.

Addressing media persons, Director Dr Rashmi Kapoor said the need for a multi-disciplinary approach for the treatment of airway problems was felt for a long time and Regency Hospital had taken a lead in setting up such a unit which was formally inaugurated on Saturday.

She said due to improved survival among patients of road traffic accidents and after long term ICU management, there was a simultaneous increase in airway diseases like tracheal stenosis.

As an initiative, a joint seminar was also organised on Saturday with guest lecture by

senior airway and ENT surgeon Dr Rakesh Srivastava from Lucknow, followed by a panel discussion by consultants of all the departments.

### EMANELLED PVT HOSPS TO PROVIDE TREATMENT TO CGHS BENEFICIARIES

All the private hospitals and diagnostic centres empanelled under CGHS will provide treatment/investigations to all CGHS beneficiaries, especially COVID-19 patient.

Pensioners' Forum general secretary Anand Awasthi, in a press statement issued on Saturday, said that it was observed that empanelled hospitals were refusing admission to the CGHS beneficiaries, especially COVID-19 patients, with the excuse that no bed was available in the entitled category.

He said Additional Director, CGHS (HQ) Dr

Arvind Kumar, in his office memorandum of December 22, had clarified that as per the terms and conditions of empanelment under CGHS, treatment to beneficiaries, especially COVID-19 patient, would be provided on the basis of their card in emergency and on the basis of advice from CGHS medical officer/government specialist in case of listed treatment procedures/investigations and with valid permission letter in case of unlisted treatment procedures/investigations, as the case may be. He said in case of emergency when beds were not available in the hospital then the hospital should provide necessary treatment to stabilise the patient and transport the patient safely to the nearest empanelled hospital for further management.

He directed the private hospitals and diagnostic centres to follow the CGHS guidelines strictly. He said on

receipt of any complaint, strict action would be taken against the private hospital/diagnostic centre concerned.

Awasthi said the government had also extended the tele consultation services to CGHS beneficiaries across India with effect from December 7. He said these services were started in Delhi from August 25 with the objective of facilitating CGHS beneficiaries.

The timings for tele-consultation are from 9 am to 12 noon on all working days.

To begin with, tele-consultation facility will be available in specialities including medicine, orthopaedics, eye, ENT and psychiatry. The facility may be considered for other specialities too subsequently.

The beneficiaries can avail of the facility by logging in to eSanjeevaniopd.in in application of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare using their mobile phone number.

## Vajpayee remembered

KANPUR (PNS): Former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee was always benevolent for Kanpur's mill workers. He always lent a patient hearing to the problems of trade union leaders and made all out efforts to resolve them. This was stated by former trade union leader and Vishwa Hindu Parishad activist Satish Bajpai while recalling his over half-a-dozen meetings with Atalji on the former prime minister's birth anniversary on Friday.

He as part of a delegation led by the then MP Shyam Behari Misra and Mayor Jagatvir Singh Drone, they met Atalji in New Delhi and he had assured the revival of one of the two closed units of Elgin Mills in Kanpur.

"Besides, in every public meeting addressed by Atalji in Kanpur, he always expressed his concern for the closed textile units of the city," Bajpai said and added, "Apart from his efforts for reviving the Kanpur industries, Atalji had always supported the city leaders for their cause due to his long association with them in the past."

'Civic polls in J&K have written a new chapter'

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Responding to a diatribe launched against him by the Congress party, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday announced the recently concluded District Development Council polls in Jammu and Kashmir have written a new chapter in the region.

Referring to the people's participation and the efficient manner in which the same were conducted across the Union Territory, within one year after the Abrogation of Article 370, the Prime Minister emphatically said it is a "moment of pride" for India.

Attacking the Congress without naming it, he said some people in Delhi offer him lessons in democracy day in and day out, and use "abuses" for him, but they have not carried out panchayat polls in Puducherry despite a Supreme Court order.

In a recent attack on the Modi government over the farmers' agitation across the three new agri-

laws, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had claimed that there is "no democracy" in India. The District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir have seen people winning due to their work and not names, the prime minister said.

Launching a scheme via video-conference to extend the benefits of Ayushman Bharat to all residents of the union territory, Modi said the recent local body election in Jammu and Kashmir "strengthened roots of democracy" and congratulated voters for exercising their franchise in the eight-phase election.

"I would like to congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir for strengthening democracy. I saw how the young and the old reached the voting booths in the District Development Council (DDC) polls.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir strengthened the roots of democracy in the DDC polls," PM Modi said. The Centre has undertaken all-round development of

Jammu and Kashmir, he added. Modi said a big mistake of those who were in power for decades in the country was to ignore the development of border regions, including Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern states, but his government has rectified this.

After launching the scheme the Prime Minister also interacted with the beneficiaries from the region.

Talking about the Jammu and Kashmir Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT scheme, the Prime Minister said that getting free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh under this scheme would improve the ease of living.

Right now about 6 lakh families are getting the benefit of Ayushman Bharat Scheme. All 21 lakh families living in J&K will get the same benefit after the SEHAT scheme.

Another benefit of this scheme would be that treatment is not limited to government and private hospitals in Jammu and

Kashmir only. Rather, treatment can be availed from thousands of hospitals empanelled under this scheme in the country, he added.

The Prime Minister lauded the UT administration for steps of people's welfare and accentuating overall development in the region.

The Prime Minister termed the extension of the coverage to all the residents as historic and expressed happiness seeing Jammu and Kashmir take these steps for the development of its people. He said that development of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the biggest priorities of his government.

During his address, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha termed the launch of SEHAT Scheme as a glorious chapter of J&K's history. One crore residents of J&K who were not eligible under Ayushman Bharat scheme would now be benefitted making it a first of its kind scheme in India, he added.

Underscoring the key features of the Health scheme, the Lt

Governor observed that the SEHAT Scheme will provide financial cover upto Rs 5 lakh per family on a floater basis to all residents of the UT of J&K with benefits portable across the country, without cap on family size. A beneficiary can avail free and cashless treatment in any public and private empanelled hospitals across the country, he said.

On behalf of the 1.3 crore population of the Union Territory, the Lt Governor extended his gratitude to the Prime Minister for extending the Universal Health Coverage in J&K.

Speaking on successful conduct of the recently held DDC elections, the Lt Governor observed that for the first time in the history of J&K, the 3-Tier Panchayati Raj System in the UT has been established empowering the grass root democracy.

PM's directions of holding free and fair elections were ensured and the DDC elections were held smoothly and peacefully in the UT, he maintained.

ATS nabs policeman for helping incarcerated drug accused

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In shocking development, Maharashtra's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested a policeman posted at the high-security Arthur Road Central Prison for allegedly helping two incarcerated drug accused threaten a prosecution witness.

The policeman, whose name was not immediately known, was arrested on Friday and produced before a court which remanded in ATS' custody till December 28. The policeman's arrest came on the heels of the arrest of two gangsters Harish Mandvi/kar and Sajid Electricwala, who were taken into the custody by the ATS from Arthur Road jail after Mandvi/kar threatened a witness to give false evidence in favour of Electricwala in another case.

The ATS arrested the policeman in connection with the 2015 ATS (Charkop

Unit) case, in which it had busted an illegal drug manufacturing factory in Andheri west and seized 155 kilograms of the banned Mephedrone and arrested seven persons, including the factory owner Sajid Electricwala.

The ATS subsequently arrested three others -- gangster Harish Mandvi/kar and his henchmen, Sachin Kolekar and Sujit Padwalkar. Electricwala, the prime accused in the 2015 case, was lodged at Arthur Road jail. The trial in the case got underway on November 26, 2020. Mandvi/kar, who was arrested in March 2020, was lodged in a cell next to that of Electricwala at Arthur Road jail. Both Electricwala and Mandvi/kar became friends and in court they allegedly hatched an alleged conspiracy to threaten a prime witness whose deposition is currently underway before the Special Court.

Modi Govt committed to growth, lasting peace in NE: Amit Shah

GUWAHATI: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government has a strong commitment to all round development and lasting peace in the northeastern region, Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah said on Saturday.

While addressing a public meeting at Amingaon Parade Ground in Guwahati, Shah said that the entire eastern India comprising Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal and the northeastern states have turned into a growth engine for India. "If the northeast region is not developed, India's development would remain incomplete. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited all the states of the region 30 times so far and taken the developmental mis-

sion to new heights -- be it rail, road or air connectivity or setting up various other infrastructure," he added.

"There was a time when terrorists used to give arms into the hands of the youths in these states (northeast). Almost all armed groups have joined the mainstream and the youths have launched startups competing with other startups globally." Laying the foundation stones of multiple developmental projects in the state, the Home Minister said that the NDA government headed by Modi would make Assam a tourism hub and has undertaken a series of steps and projects to provide "Rozgar" (employment) to lakhs of Assam youths.

In a significant step ahead

of next year's Assam assembly polls, he gave financial grants to the tune of Rs 2.50 lakh to each of the 8,000 Namghars (traditional Vaishnavite monasteries of Assam) under the Assam Darshan Programme.

Referring to the contribution and significance of Assamese seer Srimanta Sankardev, Shah said that Assamese culture is Indian culture, the BJP government would take the philosophy of Srimanta Sankardev not only across the country but also abroad.

Srimanta Sankardev was a 15th-16th century Assamese saint, scholar, poet, playwright, social-reformer and a figure of importance in the cultural and religious history of the state.

Hold talks with Govt, Home Min appeals to farmers

GUWAHATI: Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Saturday reiterated his appeal and urged the agitating farmers to hold talks with the government to sort out their concerns.

While addressing a public meeting at the Amingaon Parade Ground here, Shah said: "I request the farmers to hold talks with the government to resolve their issues."

Farmers led by the leaders of nearly 40 farmers' organisations have been camping on the Delhi borders since November 26, demanding that three farm laws enacted in September be repealed.

The three farm laws are -- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020; The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020; and the

Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020. The Home Minister said that 16 lakh farmers in Assam get financial benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) and the financial assistance directly gets deposited to their bank accounts.

The PM-KISAN scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February last year to provide income support to all landholder farmer families across the country.

Under this scheme, Rs 6,000 per year is released in three monthly instalments of Rs 2,000 each directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

Shah, who arrived in Guwahati on a three-day visit to Assam and Manipur on Friday night, told the gathering that the Assam government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party has provided financial assistance directly into the bank accounts of 7.20 lakh tea garden workers.

ED summons Eknath Khadse in alleged MIDC land scam

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Two months after he quit the BJP and joined the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned senior NCP leader Eknath Khadse to appear before it on December 30 in connection with an alleged MIDC land scam in Pune.

Sixty-eight-year-old Khadse, who had -- while joining the BJP -- said that "if the BJP unleashes ED against me, then I will release CDs against the BJP leaders", confirmed on Saturday evening that he had received summons from the ED and he would appear before the investigating agency on December 30. Talking to media persons at his Muktanagar residence in Jalgaon district of north Maharashtra, Khadse said: "I have received the summons from the ED to appear before it on December 30. I will appear before the agency on that day. I have already four inquiries in this land deal. I will cooperate with the ED. As far as my releasing CDs against the BJP leaders, I will do it at a later stage."

"The land in the MIDC deal has been transferred in the name of my wife. I have absolutely nothing to do with this land deal. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Pune, the Anti Corruption Bureau, Nashik, Income Tax department and a judicial committee headed by

retired Bombay HC judge Dinkar Zoting, had looked into the allegations against me. Now the ED has summoned me for questioning. I will appear before it," Khadse said.

Interestingly enough, when he joined the NCP on October 23, 2020, Khadse had recalled a conversation with State NCP president Jayant Patil and said: "In a conversation with Jayant Patil some time, I had expressed my desire to join the NCP. Patil jocularly told me: if you join the NCP, then the BJP will unleash ED against me. Then I told him: if the BJP unleashes ED against me, then I will release CDs against the BJP leaders."

Khadse, who was incidentally number two minister at one stage in the previous BJP-led Devendra Fadnis government, had gone to say that he would expose them about their alleged involvement in land scams.

"The BJP-led government had harassed me by framing me in a land scam. Let some days pass, I will expose all such BJP who grabbed plots of land illegally... I will also demand action against those who slapped cases against me by violating the rules," Khadse had said. A judicial committee, headed by retired Bombay HC judge Dinkar Zoting, appointed by the Maharashtra government earlier to probe the allegations of corruption against Khadse, had earlier given a clean chit to the Pune land deal

case. It may be recalled that on June 4, 2016, Khadse had resigned from his post as the State Revenue Minister over irregularities in the purchase of a plot of land at Bhosari in Pune district.

Acting on a directive by the Bombay High court on March 8, 2017, the State ACB had registered a case against Khadse for alleged misuse of office and corruption sections 23 (1), 1 (D), (2), (15) of Prevention of Corruption Act and section 109 (abatement) IPC and the ACB had investigated the case involving the purchase of a plot of land at Bhosari at a cheaper rate.

The charge against Khadse was that he, his wife Mandakini and son-in-law Girish Chaudhary had hatched a conspiracy and purchased a 3-acre plot of land at Bhosari near Pune owned Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) in the name of his kin for Rs 3.75 crore as against the market price of Rs 40 crore. On his part, Khadse had denied that he had indulged in any wrong doing in the Pune land deal case.

Even the State ACB had gone on to give a clean chit to Khadse. The ACB had even filed a final report before a Pune court on April 30, 2018, stating that it had not been able to prove the allegations of corruption against Khadse in the land case.

16 from UK test positive for corona on arrival in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As many 16 returnees from the United Kingdom, where a new variant of Coronavirus was detected recently, tested positive in RT-PCR tests conducted on their arrival in Maharashtra from the UK, even as the number of infections dipped to 2854 and deaths in Maharashtra came down to 60 on Saturday.

The State health authorities, who have been subjecting the passengers arriving from the UK to RTPCR tests ever since the detection of a new strain of the SARS-CoV-2 there, have so far 1122 passengers. Of those tested, 16 were diagnosed positive for Covid-19. Of those tested positive, four are from Nagpur, three each from Mumbai and Thane, two from

Pune and one each from Nanded, Ahmednagar, Raigad and Aurangabad. "The samples of positive patients will be sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune for genomic sequencing," a state health official said. "Close contacts of all positive patients are being traced. Till today, out of 72 close contacts traced, two have tested positive for Covid-19," the official added.

Meanwhile, with 2854 fresh infections reported on Saturday, the total number of infections in Maharashtra climbed from 19,13,382 to 19,16,236. Similarly, with 60 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in the state rose from 49,129 to 49,189. As 1926 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from

the hospitals since the second week of March this year went up to 18,07,824. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 94.4 per cent to 94.34 per cent. With 12 new deaths, the total number of deaths went up to 11,056 to 11,068, while the infected cases rose by 534 to trigger a jump in the total infections from 289800 to 290336.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state rose from 56,823 to 58,091. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.57 per cent. Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,69,631 to 3,70,049 while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7721 to 7725.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR DOCTORS. North Central Railway, Prayagraj Division intends to engage 09 full time Contract Medical Practitioners (CMP) (General duty / Specialist Doctors) on contract basis for a duration of one year as per details given below:-

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India. क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय - एस-2/638-ए, द्वितीय वल, चन्दा चेंबर, सेन्द्रल जेल रोड, सिकरल, वाराणसी - 221002, फोन नं० - 0542 2280997 / 94 / 96

# India's daily Covid toll now below 300



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time after over six months since June, India's daily Covid-19 fatality count was reported below 300, taking the overall death tally to 1,47,343, while the infection tally rose to 1,01,69,118, according to the Union Health Ministry.

In the last 24 hours, 251 more deaths and 22,273 infections were reported, according to the latest data. The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 97,40,108, pushing the national recovery rate to 95.78 per cent.

The exponential rise in

recoveries in tandem with lower daily new cases has resulted in consistent decline in the active cases and low mortality. India's cumulative recoveries are highest in the world.

The daily new recoveries recorded in the country have been more than the daily cases registered since the last 29 days.

India's present active case-load of 2,81,667 consists of 2.77 per cent of India's total positive cases.

According to the Ministry, 73.56 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States/UTs. "Kerala has reported the maximum number of single day

recoveries with 4,506 newly recovered cases. 1,954 people recovered in West Bengal followed by 1,427 in Maharashtra," said the Ministry.

On the other hand, 79.16 per cent of the new cases are from ten States and UTs.

Kerala reported the highest daily new cases at 5,397. It is followed by Maharashtra with 3,431 new cases. West Bengal recorded 1,541 new cases.

Ten States/UTs accounted for 85.26 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (71). West Bengal and Delhi follow with 31 and 30 daily deaths, respectively.

## Air samples from hospital, ICUs, bathrooms have high level of Covid-19: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Half of the air samples taken from several hospital hallways, ICUs, and a fifth from bathrooms had high levels of coronavirus, a study published in the JAMA Open Network has suggested. In fact, the air sampled in the ICUs were found to be more contaminated than the non-ICUs, said the study.

The study titled 'Assessment of Air Contamination by SARS-CoV-2 in Hospital Settings' was published on December 23.

For the study, the researchers had collected air samples from close patient environments, clinical zones away from patients, staff areas, toilets/ bathrooms, and six public places.

Researchers found 17 per cent of air sampled from close patient environments to be positive for SARS-CoV-2 RNA and one-quarter of all ICU rooms with COVID-19 patients were contaminated. In fact, the air sampled inside ICUs were more contaminated with the novel coronavirus than the air sampled in non-ICUs.

As per the study, 82 of the 471 air samples (17.4 per cent) collected from close patient

**Researchers had collected air samples from close patient environments, clinical zones away from patients**

environments were positive for SARS-CoV-2 RNA. The positivity rate was significantly higher in intensive care units with 27 of 107 found to be contaminated as against 39 of 364 contaminated non-intensive care units.

The study stated: "Among the 2,284 records identified, the positivity rate was five of 21 air samples (23.8 per cent) in toilets, 20 of 242 (8.3 per cent) in clinical areas, 15 of 122 (12.3 per cent) in staff areas, and 14 of 42 (33.3 per cent) in public areas came back as positive."

It added: "The results of the positivity rate in ICU and non-ICU patient environments were highly heterogeneous and appeared superior in the ICU when pooling the results. In the ICU, seven of 12 studies did not find SARS-CoV-2 RNA, whereas the remaining did, with 37.5 per cent to 100 per cent positive samples."

The study, however, clarified that the level of severity of patients' infections did not increase the air contamination.

## Heavy rainfall, snowfall likely over northern India for a few days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said widespread rainfall or snowfall is very likely over northern parts of India in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during the next few days.

The IMD has also said that cold wave to severe cold wave conditions would prevail over some States due to the strengthening of northwesterly/northerly lower-level winds from December 28.

In a series of tweets, the IMD updated its forecasts for north Indian states till the end of December, saying the cold wave conditions are likely to extend to parts of western and central India towards the end of this month. "Under the influence of the approaching Western Disturbance Scattered to Fairly widespread rainfall/snowfall is very likely over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan & Muzaffarabad," IMD said.

Similarly, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand would also experience rainfall or snowfall and thundershowers are expected in Punjab and Haryana, on December 27 and 28, IMD said. Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan and West Uttar Pradesh are also set to experience cold wave or severe cold wave conditions because of "the strengthening of cold and dry

northwesterly/northerly lower-level winds," IMD said.

Cold day conditions are predicted for these states on December 28 and 29 and on December 29 and 30 for northern Rajasthan. Dense to very dense fog during morning hours is also expected during the morning hours in these states from December 28 till the year end. "Ground Frost conditions are likely in isolated pockets over Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Rajasthan and West Madhya Pradesh during 28th-29th December, 2020," IMD tweeted.

Towards the end of December, these cold wave conditions are also expected to spread towards western India. "Northern parts of Saurashtra & Kutch and West Madhya Pradesh also likely to experience cold wave conditions on these days," IMD said.

The weather across Kashmir has remained dry and cold since the snowfall on December 12, with the night temperature staying several degrees below the freezing point, IMD said. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 3.7 degrees Celsius, slightly up from the previous night's minus 4.3 degrees Celsius. In the south Kashmir tourist resort of Pahalgam, the mercury settled at minus 4.5 degrees Celsius, up from minus 5.9 degrees Celsius the previous

night. The famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir was the coldest place in the valley at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, down from minus 5.6 degrees Celsius the previous night, according to the IMD.

Qazigund recorded a minimum temperature of minus 4 degrees Celsius, Kupwara minus 3.6 degrees Celsius and Kokernag minus 4.0 degrees Celsius, the IMD said. Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai Kalan'— a 40-day period of harsh winter when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies, as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley. The chances of snowfall are the maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall, the IMD said.

Bitting cold conditions prevailed in Haryana and Punjab on Saturday, with Hisar reeling at a low of 2.2 degrees Celsius. Hisar in Haryana was the coldest place in the state, while Narnaul too experienced a cold night at 3 degrees Celsius, IMD said.

Among other places in the state, Karnal, Sirsa, Rohtak, Ambala and Bhiwani recorded their respective minimums at 4 degrees Celsius, 4.1 degrees Celsius, 4 degrees Celsius, 5.3 degrees Celsius and 5.6 degrees Celsius.

## Around 50 Naga insurgents likely to join mainstream

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Around 50 insurgents belonging to a breakaway faction of the Naga militant outfit NSCN(K) are likely to join the national mainstream as the group is finding it difficult to survive following enhanced cooperation between the Indian Army and the Myanmar armed forces along the border, sources in the security establishment said on Saturday.

The faction led by Niki Sumi has decided to surrender as a result of combined efforts against it by the Army, state security forces and military intelligence in the last few months, they said, adding it will be a boost for the Naga peace process.

The overall coordination and cooperation between the Indian and Myanmar armies on the management of the Indo-Myanmar border has improved following a recent visit to the neighbouring country by Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane, they said.

"The diplomatic efforts in the military domain by the Chief of Army Staff during his recent visit to Myanmar have paid rich dividends," said an official on the condition of anonymity.

In October, Gen Naravane, accompanied by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, paid a crucial visit to Myanmar during which India decided to supply an attack submarine to the Myanmar Navy besides agreeing to further deepen overall military and defence ties.

Myanmar is one of India's strategic neighbours and shares a 1,640-kilometre-long border with a number of northeastern states including militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur.

The NSCN (Khaplang) and several other Naga mili-

tant groups have been demanding the establishment of a 'Greater Nagaland' comprising all the Naga-inhabited areas of neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

The sources said Starston Lamkang, a key leader of the breakaway faction, along with 52 cadres are currently in the process of surrendering to the security forces in Phek district of Nagaland.

They said eight more cadres of the group are also likely to surrender taking the total to around 60.

The group led by Niki Sumi had broken away from the NSCN (K-Yung Aung). The total strength of the Niki faction appears to be 60-65 militants and its cadres decided to surrender as surviving in Myanmar became very difficult for them, the sources said.

Sumi is an insurgent leader from the Sema tribe and belongs to Zunhebuto district of Nagaland, the sources said, adding he was a prominent "commander" in NSCN (K) group.

He is also a key accused in the attack on an Army convoy in Manipur's Chandel district in June 2015 by the NSCN(K) in which 18 army personnel lost their lives. He carries a reward of Rs 10 lakh.

Days after the attack, the Indian Army had carried out an operation in areas near the Indo-Myanmar against the NSCN (K) militants.

India has been concerned over some militant groups from the Northeast region taking shelter in Myanmar. The country has been assuring India that it would not allow any insurgent group to use its territory against India.

Various Naga militant groups are currently holding talks with the Centre to resolve the decades-old Naga issue.

## CBI files two separate cases in ₹132 crore banking fraud



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered two separate cases of banking fraud to the tune of about ₹132 crore and conducted searches at several locations.

The first case was registered on a complaint from State Bank of India (SBI) against an Ahmedabad-based private company Krishna Knitwear Technology Ltd., its directors, unknown public servants and others on the allegations of cheating the bank to the tune of ₹67.07 crore.

## Saradha scam: CBI moves fresh plea in SC to quiz WB IPS officer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has moved the Supreme Court seeking to question senior IPS officer and former Kolkata police commissioner Rajeev Kumar in connection with the multi-crore-rupee Saradha chit fund scam case.

The central probe agency, which has been entrusted with the task of probing the Ponzi scheme cases in West Bengal by the apex court, has moved the fresh plea to quiz the senior police officer again, alleging that he has not been cooperating with it in the ongoing investigation, a source said.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said

The accused company was engaged in manufacturing of cotton yarn, knitted grey fabric and finished garments.

"It was alleged that during the period 2011 to 2015, the accused entered into a conspiracy to cheat the SBI by way of forgery/falsification of accounts and diversion of funds," the CBI said in a statement.

The company allegedly availed Fund Based Working Capital (FBWC) with SBI, MCB, Vapi Branch, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

It was further alleged that only around 20 per cent of its

receipts and payments from its debtors and creditors were routed through banking channels, and the remaining amount was siphoned off, it said.

Searches were conducted at 10 places including official and the residential premises of the accused / private company at Silvassa and Mumbai which led to the recovery of incriminating documents/articles.

The second case was registered on a complaint from Punjab & Sind Bank against a private company (borrower company) based at New Delhi/Noida, Alpine Realtech Pvt. Ltd. and others including its directors, two other private companies, unknown public servants and others on the allegations that the said accused had cheated the bank to the tune of ₹64.78 crore by way of diversion / siphoning off bank funds, misappropriation and cheating.

Searches were conducted at nine locations in Delhi / NCR at the office and residential premises of the accused including the firm.

the CBI in 2014, along with other chit fund cases.

In November last year, the apex court had sought the response of the IPS officer on the CBI's appeal challenging the anticipatory bail granted to him in the chit fund scam by the Calcutta High Court, which had filed an appeal in the apex court against the

October 1, 2019 order of the Calcutta High Court, which had granted Kumar the relief saying it was not an appropriate case for custodial interrogation.

The high court had directed Kumar to cooperate with the investigating officers and make himself available before them for questioning on a 48-hour notice by the CBI.

## SC issues show-cause notice to convict for misleading court to get favourable order



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has issued a show-cause notice to a convict for misleading it by producing a wrong copy of a trial court's verdict to get a favourable order which had allowed him to walk free on payment of a fine only in a graft case.

The top court, while issuing the notice to convict S Shankar, asked him why it should not recall the order sparing him the jail term and take "further suitable" action for the act of misleading it.

The SC, had on July 23, 2019, allowed Shankar to walk free in the corruption case on payment of ₹1,000 after his lawyer argued that the Andhra Pradesh High Court "wrongly construed" the operative portion of the judgement of a trial court delivered in the year 2000.

It was argued the trial court had not awarded a jail term of one year to Shankar but had only imposed a fine of ₹1,000 for offences of criminal breach of trust and conspiracy under the IPC and some other charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

"Since we find that the trial court had merely imposed a sentence of payment of fine of ₹1,000 on the appellant, the judgment of the high court is clarified accordingly. In view of the above, the appeal stands disposed of, making it clear that no sentence of imprisonment was imposed on Accused No. 5 (Shankar) ... by the trial court and the high court..." the top court had ordered, granting the relief.

However, a subsequent inquiry and a report of the secretary general of the apex court indicated that prima facie, the convict "misled" the bench to avoid a jail term.

## Govt's proposal for University of Disability Studies draws flak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's move to seek comments for its draft proposal aiming to set up University of Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Sciences in an inaccessible environment has drawn flak from the stakeholders particularly activists in the sector.

With just ten days allotted by the Government to study the proposal, they termed it as yet another "ill-conceived idea" which denied adequate time or space for stakeholders to respond.

The University covering disability studies and rehabilitation sciences in an accessible environment has been proposed to be launched by the Government for which the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, has invited comments from stakeholders on the draft bill.

In this regard, the DEPwD said, a draft bill namely the University of Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Sciences Bill, 2021 for establishing the proposed university has been prepared. The DEPwD said it intends to set up a University of Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Sciences, Kamrup district, Assam through a separate act of Parliament.

"The proposed university, the first of its kind, will be a unique multidisciplinary academic institution conducting research, programmes and courses from bachelor's level onwards to cater to various disciplines covering the entire gamut of disability studies and rehabilitation sciences in an accessible environment," the DEPwD said.

"The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities hereby invites comments from the public on the draft University of Disability

Studies and Rehabilitation Sciences Bill, 2021 by January 3, 2021."

Prominent disabled rights body National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled, however, felt that time was too less to study its proposed provisions.

"In this case, a mere nine days have been given to elicit response to a 131-page document," the NPRD said in a statement.

"All the more unacceptable is the fact that this university would be 'self-sustaining', in tune with the thrust of the New Education Policy 2020. With finances being generated from tuition fees, affiliation fees etc. students from the marginalised sections will stand deprived," it said.

"Rather than wasting huge amounts of money on self-sustaining segregated centres of learning, it would do a great deal if the government adheres to the guiding principles of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of equality and non-discrimination and adopts and promotes an inclusive, multidisciplinary approach," the NPRD said.

Dr Satendra Singh too criticised the haste shown by the government in such important moves which if implemented properly can be game changer.

"But the Ministry keeps embarrassing itself. The University of Disability Studies & Rehabilitation Sciences Bill 2021 confirms that none of them have any idea about what Disability Studies means. Only 10 days to submit comments," Singh tweeted.

As per the proposal the University will have eight departments such as disability studies, rehabilitation sciences, audiology and speech-language pathology, special education, psychology, nursing, orthotics, prosthetics and assistive technology, and inclusive and universal design.

## KVIC brings alive Arunachal's 1,000-yr-old Monpa Handmade Paper art in Tawang

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 1000-year-old heritage art - the Monpa Handmade Paper of Arunachal Pradesh - which was driven to extinction, has come to life once again, with the committed efforts of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

KVIC on Friday commissioned a Monpa handmade paper making unit in Tawang, aiming to both reviving the art and engaging the local youths professionally. The unit was inaugurated by KVIC Chairman Shri Vinai Kumar

Saxena. The art of making Monpa handmade paper originated in China over 1,000 years ago. Gradually the art travelled across to India and became an integral part of local custom and culture in Tawang, which is just 30 km from China. Once produced in every household in Tawang, this handmade paper was a major source of livelihood for the locals. However, the handmade paper industry almost disappeared in the last 100 years; prompting KVIC to plan revival of this ancient art.

The fine-textured handmade paper, which is called Mon Shugu in the local dialect, is integral to the vibrant culture of the local tribes in Tawang. The paper has great historic and religious significance as it is the paper used for writing Buddhist scriptures and hymns in monasteries. The Monpa handmade paper, will be made from the bark of a local tree called Shugu Sheng, which has medicinal values, too. Hence availability of raw material will not be a problem.

Back then, such was the scale of production that

Monpas used to sell these papers to countries like Tibet, Bhutan, Thai Land and Japan as no paper making industry existed in these countries at that time. However, the local industry gradually began declining and the indigenous handmade paper was taken over by inferior Chinese paper.

An attempt for the revival of this handmade paper industry was made in 1994 but failed as it was a tough task due to various geographical challenges in Tawang. However, with the strong resolve of higher management

of KVIC, the unit was successfully established. On the instruction of KVIC Chairman, a team of scientists and officials of Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, (KNHPI) Jaipur, was deputed at Tawang to set up the unit and training the locals. Over six months of rigorous efforts bore fruits and a unit has been commissioned at Tawang.

Initially, the paper unit has engaged 9 artisans who can produce 500 to 600 sheets of Monpa handmade paper per day. The artisans will be earn-

ing wages of per day Rs 400 per day. To begin with, 12 women and 2 men from local villages have been trained to make Monpa handmade paper. KNHPI is a unit of KVIC.

The most challenging task for KVIC officials was to transport the machines to Tawang owing to its difficult mountainous terrains and inclement weather conditions. The Arunachal Pradesh Government lent full support to the project and offered a building on a nominal rent to set up the unit.

The KVIC Chairman said reviving the Monpa handmade paper industry and increasing its commercial production was the key objective of KVIC. "Owing to its peculiarity, this handmade paper has high commercial value that can be harnessed to create local employment in Arunachal Pradesh. By increasing production of Monpa handmade paper, it can again be exported to other countries and regain the space occupied by China in the last few decades. This is a local product with great global

potential, which is aligned with the Mantra of "Local to Global" given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister," Saxena said. "The fatigue from the 15 hours of road journey from Guwahati to Tawang in this difficult terrain just vanished on witnessing this paper unit coming to life again. It is, indeed, a privilege to have inaugurated the unit that will revive this local art," Saxena said while lauding the KVIC-KNHPI officials for their hard work and Arunachal Pradesh government for their support to the project.

# Trump refuses to sign Covid aid bill, millions to lose jobless benefits

**PALM BEACH:** Millions of Americans saw their jobless benefits expire on Saturday after US President Donald Trump refused to sign into law a \$2.3 trillion pandemic aid and spending package, protesting that it did not do enough to help everyday people.

Trump stunned Republicans and Democrats alike when he said this week he was unhappy with the massive bill, which provides \$892 billion in badly needed coronavirus relief, including extending special unemployment benefits expiring on December 26, and \$1.4 trillion for normal government spending.

Without Trump's signature, about 14 million people could lose those extra benefits, according to Labor Department data. A partial government shutdown will begin on Tuesday unless Congress can agree a

stop-gap government funding bill before then.

After months of wrangling, Republicans and Democrats agreed to the package last weekend, with the support of the White House. Trump, who hands over power to Democratic President-elect Joe Biden on January 20, did not object to terms of the deal before Congress voted it through on Monday night.

But since then he has complained that the bill gives too much money to special interests, cultural projects and foreign aid, while its one-time \$600 stimulus checks to millions of struggling Americans were too small. He has demanded that be raised to \$2,000.

"Why would politicians not want to give people \$2,000, rather than only \$600?... Give our people the money!" the billionaire president tweeted on

Christmas Day, much of which he spent golfing at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

Many economists agree the bill's aid is too low but say the immediate support is still welcome and necessary. A source familiar with the situation said Trump's objection to the bill caught many White House officials by surprise. While the outgoing president's strategy for the bill remains unclear, he has not vetoed it and could still sign it in coming days.

On Saturday, he was scheduled to remain in Mar-a-Lago, where the bill has been sent and awaits his decision. Biden, whose November 3 electoral victory Trump refuses to acknowledge, is spending the holiday in his home state of Delaware and had no public events scheduled for Saturday.

## Millions more in tough post-Christmas lockdown in UK

**PTI ■ LONDON**

Millions more people across different parts of the UK entered tougher lockdown restrictions from December 26, the day after Christmas marked annually as Boxing Day, as part of plans announced earlier this week to contain the rapid spread of a highly transmissible variant of coronavirus.

Around six million people in east and south-east England have joined many others into Tier 4, England's highest Covid level which includes a "stay at home" order.

Lockdowns have also started in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and measures have been reimposed in Wales after

being eased for Christmas Day, when the UK crossed another grim milestone of 70,000 coronavirus deaths.

Under the toughest Tier 4 restrictions, all non-essential shops, bars and restaurants are closed and people are not allowed to meet other households, except in a support bubble or in an outdoor public space with one other person. Large parts of England were already in this tier pre-Christmas, including London, after the new mutation was found to be spreading fastest in those regions.

With the devolved administrations setting their own strategies, Northern Ireland goes into a six-week lockdown from Saturday with non-essen-

tial shops shut and hospitality open only for take-away services.

In a move similar to England's Tier 4 restrictions, Wales will be moving back into Level 4 measures which also means non-essential shops, gyms and beauty salons must close and bars and restaurants can only open for takeaways. And, Scotland is also entering the toughest tier of restrictions for at least three weeks with very similar measures in place.

Meanwhile, France confirmed the first case in the country of the more contagious coronavirus variant in a person who was a French citizen in the central town of Tours who had arrived from London on December 19.

It was among over 40 countries to suspend travel connectivity with the UK, including India, as the new rapid-spreading coronavirus variant in England last week triggered global concern.

Meanwhile, a further 570 deaths in the UK were reported, taking the total number of people dying within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test to 70,195.

This places the UK sixth after the US, Brazil, India, Mexico and Italy in terms of recorded coronavirus deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The number of people who tested positive for COVID-19 in England and Scotland increased by 32,725 on Friday.

## EU begins Covid vaccine rollout as new virus strain spreads

**Paris:** The European Union began a vaccine rollout Saturday, even as countries in the bloc were forced back into lockdown by a new strain of the virus, believed to be more infectious, that continues to spread from Britain.

The pandemic has claimed more than 1.7 million lives and is still running rampant in much of the world, but the recent launching of inoculation campaigns has boosted hopes that 2021 could bring a respite.

Hours before the first vaccine doses arrived in France, Paris' health ministry confirmed late Friday that it had detected its first case of the new variant in a citizen returned from Britain.

Several countries have reported cases of the new strain, which has sent jitters through already overstretched health services.

There was little sign of the usual Boxing Day sale rush on the streets of Sydney Saturday, as residents largely heeded the state premier's request they stay home faced with a new virus cluster.

"Even when we entered the store there were less than ten people," shopper Lia Gunawan told The Sydney Morning Herald after queuing up for the sales.

Even as some European nations eye a post-Christmas return to harsh restrictions, China's communist leadership issued a statement hailing the "extremely extraordinary glory" of its handling of the virus that emerged in the country's Hubei province last year, state news agency Xinhua reported. **AFP**

## Britain, EU publish 1,246-page Brexit trade agreement

**London:** Britain on Saturday published the text of its narrow trade agreement with the European Union just five days before it exits one of the world's biggest trading blocs in its most momentous global shift since the loss of empire.

The text includes a 1,246-page trade document, as well as accords on nuclear energy, exchanging classified information, civil nuclear energy and a series of joint declarations.

The "Draft EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement" means that from 2300 GMT on December 31, when Britain finally leaves the European Union's single market and customs union, there will be no tariffs or quotas on the movement of goods originating in either place between the United Kingdom and the EU.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson cast the deal as the final implementation of the will of the British people who voted 52-48% for Brexit in a 2016 referendum, while Europe's leaders said it was time to leave Brexit behind.

Michael Gove, a senior British minister who campaigned alongside Johnson to leave the EU, said the deal would allow Britain to put

some of the divisions of the nearly five-year Brexit crisis behind it.

"Friendships have been strained, families were divided and our politics has been rancorous and, at times, ugly," Gove wrote in The Times. "We can develop a new pattern of friendly cooperation with the EU, a special relationship if you will, between sovereign equals," Gove said. The Brexit referendum exposed a United Kingdom divided about much more than the European Union, and has fueled soul-searching about everything from secession and immigration to capitalism, empire and modern Britishness.

Such musings amid the political crisis over Brexit have left allies puzzled by a country, the world's No. 6 economy and a pillar of the NATO alliance, that was for decades touted as a confident pillar of Western economic and political stability.

**BREXIT DEAL**

The two sides finally clinched a trade deal on Christmas Eve that explicitly recognises that trade and investment require conditions for "a level playing field for open and fair competition."

## Queen references Diwali, Vaisakhi, Eid in Christmas message

**PTI ■ LONDON**

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II chose a theme of diversity and she referenced all major festivals spent in lockdown this year as part of her traditional Christmas Day speech.

The 94-year-old monarch, who spent her first Christmas in decades without a larger royal family gathering, called for tolerance and mutual respect and reminded people of the contribution made to national life by people of many faiths and backgrounds.

"For Christians, Jesus is 'the light of the world,' but we can't celebrate his birth today in quite the usual way. People of all faiths have been unable to gather as they would wish for their festivals, such as Passover, Easter, Eid and Vaisakhi. But we need life to go on," said the Queen in a pre-recorded message that is annually broadcast at 1500 GMT on December 25.

"Last month, fireworks lit up the sky around Windsor, as Hindus, Sikhs and Jains celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, providing joyous moments of hope and unity, despite social distancing," she said.

"Remarkably, a year that has necessarily kept people apart has, in many ways,

brought us closer. Across the Commonwealth, my family and I have been inspired by stories of people volunteering in their communities, helping those in need," she noted.

In a nod to the success of the vaccine, she also highlighted "the achievements of modern science" and paid particular tribute to frontline nurses as she offered her condolences to all who had lost loved ones during a tragic year.

She also spoke of her pride in the way the UK has responded to the coronavirus pandemic with a "quiet, indomitable spirit" as she urged positivity and focused on the good that has prevailed at the close of a tumultuous year dominated by the pandemic and lockdowns.

"We continue to be inspired by the kindness of strangers and draw comfort that — even on the darkest nights — there is hope in the new dawn," she said.

The message was recorded in Windsor Castle's Green Drawing Room where the monarch sat alongside a lone photograph of her husband, 99-year-old Prince Philip — who is the only other royal with the monarch at this year's scaled down festivities due to a strict lockdown across southern England.



**UK scientists trial instant immunity antibody drug treatment for Covid-19**

**London:** Scientists in the UK have begun trials of innovative antibody drug treatments that they hope could provide instant protection against COVID-19.

The University College London Hospitals NHS Trust (UCLH) said that the researchers in the Storm Chase study believe a Long Acting AntiBody (LAAB) known as AZD7442, developed by AstraZeneca, may offer immediate and long-term protection to people who have been recently exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and prevent them developing COVID-19. **PTI**

Men wearing full protective suits against coronavirus take a box containing Covid-19 vaccines from military personnel at the National Centre for Storage of the Covid-19 Vaccine, a military run facility, in Bucharest, Romania, on Saturday. **AP**

## Hundreds of migrants freezing in heavy snow in Bosnia camp

**AP ■ BIHAC, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

Hundreds of migrants on Saturday were stranded in a burnt-out squalid tent camp in Bosnia as heavy snow fell in the country and temperatures suddenly dropped amid a wintry spell of bad weather.

Migrants at the Lipa camp in northwest Bosnia wrapped themselves in blankets and sleeping bags to protect against biting winds in the region, which borders European Union

member Croatia. A fire earlier this week destroyed much of the camp near the town of Bihać that already was harshly criticized by international officials and aid groups as inadequate for housing refugees and migrants.

Authorities have failed to find new accommodation for the migrants at Lipa, leaving around 1,000 people stuck in the cold, with no facilities or heating and on meager food parcels provided by aid groups. "Snow has fallen, sub-zero

temperatures, no heating, nothing," the International Organization for Migration's chief of mission in Bosnia, Peter Van Der Auweraert, tweeted. "This is not how anyone should live. We need political bravery and action now."

Bosnia has become a bottleneck for thousands of migrants hoping to reach Western Europe. Most are stuck in Bosnia's northwestern Krajina region as other areas in the ethnically divided nation have refused to accept them.

## FARMERS WILLING TO RESUME TALKS ON TUE

The Delhi Police took to Twitter to inform commuters about the traffic situation at the borders.

"NH-9 & NH-24 closed from Delhi to Ghaziabad due to farmers' protests. People are advised to take alternate route for Ghaziabad via DND, ITO & Wazirabad," Delhi Traffic Police tweeted.

"Singhu, Auchandi, Lampur, Piau Maniyari, Saboli & Mangesh borders closed. Pl take alternate routes via Safiabad, Palla & Singhu school toll tax borders. Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba & GTK road. Pl avoid Outer Ring Rd, GTK road & NH 44.

"The chilli & Gazipur borders are closed for traffic coming from Noida & Ghaziabad to Delhi because of farmer protests. People are advised to take alternate route for coming to Delhi via Anad Vihar, DND, Apsara, bhopra & Loni borders," it tweeted.

There was no immediate response from the Government to the agenda proposed by the farmer unions for talks. An official said that the Government is ready for amendments, but maintained that there is no question of repealing the three farm laws.

On December 24, Aggarwal had written to the 40 protesting unions and invited them for fresh talks, but made it clear that it would

entire State machinery to defame and malign the farmers' movement must stop forthwith," it said.

**RLP QUILTS NDA OVER FARM LAWS**

Announcing his decision to leave the NDA, Hanuman Beniwal alleged that his Covid-19 test report was "fudged" to keep him out of Parliament.

"The farm laws were brought in my absence. If I was present in the Lok Sabha when the farm laws were brought, I would have torn them apart and thrown them away," Beniwal said.

Beniwal, the Lok Sabha member from Rajasthan's Nagaur, had given a call for two lakh farmers to move towards Delhi in support of the farmers' agitation that has been on for the past one month.

Earlier during the day, Beniwal led farmers' movement from Jaipur, Nagaur, Barmer, Jodhpur and other parts of Rajasthan into Kotputli on the way to Shahjahanpur after earlier announcing that he will lead the agitation into Delhi in opposition to the three farm laws brought by the Centre.

"Despite the farmers' protests, the Narendra Modi Government is not withdrawing farm laws because it has 303 MPs. Farmers from 1,200 kilometres away in Rajasthan are moving towards Delhi to be a part of the agitation," he said.

Protocol in view of mutations emerging in the strain. Further, since ICMR has always advocated use of two or more gene assays for testing SARS-CoV-2, it is unlikely to miss infected cases using the current testing strategy.

It was decided that all passengers who had arrived from UK between 21st December - 23rd December 2020 have been tested at the Airports, and only after the RT-PCR test result are available, the negative passengers are permitted to exit the airports.

More than 50 samples of UK returnees are currently under sequencing at the designated laboratories.

"It is proposed to continue enhanced genomic surveillance for early detection and containment of the UK variant SARS-CoV-2 strains. However, it is important to understand that like all other RNA viruses, SARS-CoV-2 will continue to mutate. The mutated virus can also be contained by measures like social distancing, hand hygiene, wearing masks and also by an effective vaccine, as and when available," an official said.

**32 MORE FLIERS FROM UK TEST COVID POSITIVE**

Karnataka Health Minister K Sudhakar on Saturday said 14 people who have come to the State from the United Kingdom so far have tested positive for COVID-19 and their samples have been sent for genetic sequencing to find whether it is a new strain of virus that has infected them. A total of 2,500 people have come (from the United Kingdom), of them 1,638 have been tested.

According to Kerala Health Minister K K Shailaja, eight people who recently returned from the United Kingdom to Kerala have tested positive for coronavirus and their samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune for genomic analysis.

Four more people who returned to Tamil Nadu from the United Kingdom have tested positive for COVID-19. Their samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune for genomic analysis.

In UP, three members of the same family in Meerut city who returned from the

United Kingdom have tested positive for COVID-19. All these three members returned from London on December 14. Health Department officials also fear that the three foreign returnees may be infected by the new variant of the virus that was detected in the United Kingdom.

In the ongoing door-to-door contact drive being conducted by the Delhi government to test UK-returned persons for prevalence of COVID-19, eight have so far been found infected with the coronavirus. A total of 19 passengers out of over 13,000 who landed from the UK at the IGI airport here between November 25 and December 21 have been found positive for the virus.

In Maharashtra a woman, who had returned to Aurangabad in Maharashtra from the United Kingdom in the last few weeks, has tested coronavirus positive. The woman is among the 44 persons who arrived in Aurangabad from the UK after November 25. In another case, one of the over 50 persons, who returned to the Kalyan Dombivli region in Thane district from the United Kingdom in the last one month, has tested COVID-19 positive.

In the past two weeks, around 102 people have come to Assam from the United Kingdom and one of them was found Covid-19 positive and his sample has been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune to ascertain whether it is the same new virus strain which hit Europe recently.

The new strain of the coronavirus was first detected in the United Kingdom, last week. As per the experts, this strain is more transmissible than other SARS-CoV-2 variants.

personnel to fall victim to COVID-19 in the three Services.

Vice Admiral Srikant died on December 15 due to Covid-19-related complications. The vice admiral, the Navy's senior-most submariner, was due to retire on December 31.

Expressing his condolences, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted, "Deeply pained at the untimely and sudden demise of Director General Seabird, Vice Admiral Srikant." The Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy will always remember his stellar contributions and remarkable service to the nation, Singh noted.

time of crisis.

In May, Hou held separate meetings with President Bhandari, the prime minister and other senior NCP leaders, including Prachanda,

when Oli was facing mounting pressure to step down. In July, she again met a number of top leaders, including the president, prime minister, Prachanda, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam to save Oli.

A number of political party leaders had termed the Chinese envoy's series of meetings with the ruling party leaders as interference

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

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

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

The Chinese Communist Party and Nepal Communist Party were regularly engaged in training programmes. In September last year, the NCP had even organised a symposium, inviting some leaders from the Chinese Communist Party to Kathmandu to impart training to Nepali leaders on the Xi Jinping Thought ahead of the visit of the Chinese president, his first to Nepal, the Post reported.

In a guarded reaction to the fast-paced political developments in Nepal, India on Thursday said it was an "internal matter" of the neighbouring nation and it was for the country to decide as per its democratic processes.

"We have noted the recent political developments in Nepal. These are internal matters for Nepal to decide as per its democratic processes," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said in New Delhi.

"As a neighbour and well-wisher, India will continue to support Nepal and its people in moving forward on the path of peace, prosperity and development," he said.

not be "logical" to include in the agenda any new demand related to the MSP, which is out of the purview of the three new farm laws.

In his letter, the officer had asked the unions to suggest a date and time for the next round of talks.

In its letter to Aggarwal, the Sankyukt Kisan Morcha said, "Unfortunately, your letter continues the Government's attempt to mislead the public by suppressing true facts about the deliberations in the previous meetings. We have consistently demanded the repeal of the three Central Farm Acts, whereas the Government has distorted our position as if we were asking for amendments to these Acts."

"If you are sincere about respectfully listening to the farmers, as you say in your letter, the Government must not indulge in misinformation about the previous meetings. The campaign launched by the

**GENOME SEQUENCING FOR 5% OF +VE CASES AMID UK STRAIN FEAR**

The NTF recommended that in addition to the existing surveillance strategies, it is critical to conduct enhanced genomic surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 especially in incoming passengers from the UK. Besides, it will also be critical to conduct genome sequencing in samples where there is dropout of the S gene in lab diagnosis, proven cases of re-infections etc. Routine genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 from representative samples all across the samples needs to be a continuous and well planned activity, said an official attending the meet.

However, the official said there was no need to change the existing Treatment

**150 JAWANS LINED UP FOR R-DAY PARADE TEST COVID POSITIVE**

India has invited Boris Johnson as chief guest for the parade which has been accepted. The Ministry of External Affairs has already clarified that the British Prime Minister will be visiting despite the scare of the new virus strain in the United Kingdom.

Incidentally, the latest incident of soldiers testing positive comes days after a Vice Admiral of the Navy succumbed to the pandemic here. He was the senior most

**FROM PAGE 1**



Over 1 crore migrant labourers walked home during March to June 2020 in India  
Over 81,000 accidents with 29,000 fatalities occurred during that period

# Walk of hunger and death

The year 2020 brought with it death and destruction like never seen before. COVID-19 affected the labour class in the worst possible manner. The lockdown announced by the Government meant that the migrant labour across the country was left stranded with no means to eke out a living. With landlords asking them to either pay rent or vacate, the only option left open for entire families, women and children, was to walk back home hundreds of km braving scorching sun, accidents and even preferring death over starvation



KAILASH SATYARTH

WE WITNESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CITIZENS, CAME FORWARD TO MITIGATE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS OF DRY RATIONS, MEDICAL AID AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

As vaccinations begin in one corner of the world, marking the beginning of recovery from the pandemic, we can't forget that the majority is fighting increasing hunger, poverty and exploitation. This blatant and brazen inequality of the world we live has been exposed by the grossly unequal response of the world to the pandemic. Of the initial \$8 trillion that has been released as global COVID-19 relief, only 0.13 per cent has been allocated to the poorest communities.

The rest has been used to bail out big businesses that have multiplied their profits in the midst of a global recession. The most grievous casualties of this injustice are our children.

We witnessed that the Government, in partnership with citizens, came forward to mitigate the immediate crisis of dry rations, medical aid and essential needs in the most affected communities at unprecedented scale, which is truly admirable.

I am proud of my children, the survivors of child labour and trafficking living in Bal Ashram, came forth to make masks for law enforcement, frontline workers and communities in Rajasthan. Several individuals and organisations stepped up at the time of crisis, risking their safety to provide life-saving relief and care.

But with extremely limited access to digital education, overnight loss of household income, and no food on the plate for millions of children, we have only barely touched the tip of the iceberg. While the pandemic did not create these inequalities, our response to it has exposed and exacerbated them to the extent that we risk losing an entire generation to child labour, trafficking, child marriage and other forms of exploitation. This will be an utter and complete breakdown of our moral, socio-economic, and democratic systems.

Now that we are looking towards recovery, it is important to understand that central to finding the solution is the understanding that the children who are forced to work are the same children who are denied education, and the same children who are undernourished and starving. We cannot

leave our children to fend for themselves in this time of crisis.

The need of the hour is that our children receive their fair share — a fair share in policies, in budgets, and in protection. A fair share for children is based on fundamental principles of justice that our children deserve. In 2015, when the world came together and committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, they did so with the promise to 'leave no child behind'.

But we are failing at this. The same communities that have been discriminated against for decades, including minorities, migrants, and farmers, are the same communities where children are denied education, nutrition and safety. They have historically and structurally been alienated from global wealth and development, and we will look back at this unprecedented period as the time when the vulnerable were pushed over the edge into unending cycles of disenfranchisement.

To be able to break this chain of intergenerational exploitation, Governments must make a tangible and radical shift to a culture of fair share for the most marginalised children and their families. That is the only way we can end child labour and exploitation, and build a world where our children learn and thrive.

The truest judge of how the world has responded to the pandemic, is the trafficked child who collapsed dead on the road because of as she walked a 100 km to reach her home, the child who was dropped out of school and was forcefully married because of lack of access to digital education, and the child labourer who was trapped in factories as their employer deserted them during lockdown. Our children are the mirrors to the world we are building.

The year 2021 provides us with the opportunity to come together to commit a fair share for children in the global wealth allocation for their development and wellbeing. 2021 has been declared as the United Nations Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, with the objective to revitalise and accelerate the global promise to end child

**COVID WARRIOR**

A 24-YEAR-OLD WOMAN CAB DRIVER WHO JOINED UBER TWO YEARS BACK DECIDED TO GIVE BACK TO THE SOCIETY IN THE TIME OF NEED BY WORKING WITH THE UBER MEDIC TEAM. THE FACILITY WAS FOR CANCER PATIENTS WHO WERE NOT ABLE TO VISIT THE HOSPITAL DURING THE LOCKDOWN.

—POOJA KUMARI  
NEW DELHI



labour by 2025 under Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

This was an ambitious target from the start, but the devastating effects of the pandemic that have brought the world to its knees and we are now facing the risk of the first ever increase in child labour in decades. We are at the precipice of losing the progress achieved over decades to reduce child labour and to ensure access to education for all children. This cannot be allowed to happen, and each one of us has a role to play including Governments, international agencies, businesses, faith leaders, media, schools and colleges and civil society.

Governments must realign their policies, politics, legislations and budgetary allocations and accountability measures towards creating a safety net for the most vulnerable communities through accessible and adequate social protection. International agencies must uphold and enforce multilateral efforts to bridge the wealth gap between nations, and set global benchmarks for child protection measures. Businesses must ensure transparency, due diligence and compliance to create child labour-free supply chains. Faith leaders must unite to prioritise children within their communities as a moral responsibility. The media must highlight and question the

state of our children and hold all stakeholders accountable for the protection of our children's rights. Schools, colleges and civil society, especially the survivors and youth, must lead from the front in demanding change and accountability, to give voice to the voiceless and forgotten children of the world.

This year has taught us many lessons that we have learnt, sometimes unwillingly. It has placed in front of our eyes the true and bare state of our world, to show us what we have long ignored or forgotten. We have recognised our inherent interconnectedness and interdependence with each other.

But most importantly, the year 2020 has proven that until each one of us is safe, nobody is safe. If the people of the world are moving in diametrically opposite directions of development, the world will be too stretched to sustain itself.

We can only truly move forward if we do it together. Whenever the world was in peril, the inherent goodness of humanity of individuals has shone forth and we have come our stronger. We have to reclaim our humanity and globalise compassion. And we must begin with our children, because they are all our children.

The writer is Nobel Peace Laureate and Founder of Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

## SOME STARTED WELL

Businesses started off the year with regular expectations of growth, with all their usual plans set in place. However, going into March and the subsequent months, it became a different story across several sectors, with scores of companies getting overturned due to the impact of the lockdowns and restrictions on movement.



DUSHYANT KOHLI

Since March, people realised the effects of excessive screen time, and the toll it could take on them. Remaining indoors for long durations, viewing phone and computer screens for hours at a stretch, has led to exhaustion and ill-health. In contrast with this, audio appealed to millions of users, as they were once again able to listen to content passively while performing other chores. It is reminiscent of our experience with radio, but with a lot more options and quality content to pick from.

We observed the trends closely and aligned our content as per the growth we were seeing in each of the categories. Since April, we witnessed a significant spike across all growth metrics, as we were able to adapt to user requirements by providing the right content at the right time. We recorded a growth of 300% in terms of our user base,

while the number of creators on Khabri grew by five times user session time grew by more than 200%, as users were listening to a greater number of content pieces.

While each of these platforms cater to different interests, we have succeeded at creating a holistic ecosystem for the next generation of creators and users. Some of the key areas of interest in our categories since April have been in motivational content, news, career information, and knowledge-based content. While it is a broad definition, they have been provided a plethora of content choices.

The pandemic has wreaked havoc for students across the country and blind students have been impacted the most. Their access to education had been cut off after the lockdowns, which made us identify the challenges. We launched the #VoiceofBlinds campaign, as we believe that every



- AROUND 12.2 CRORE PEOPLE LOST THEIR JOBS DUE TO THE PRESENT PANDEMIC.
- ALMOST 75% OF THESE WERE SMALL TRADERS AND WAGE LABOURERS.

- INDIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE SKYROCKETED TO A WHOOPING 27.1% SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE LOCKDOWN
- 43% BUSINESSES HAD TEMPORARILY CLOSED MAINLY DUE TO COVID-19

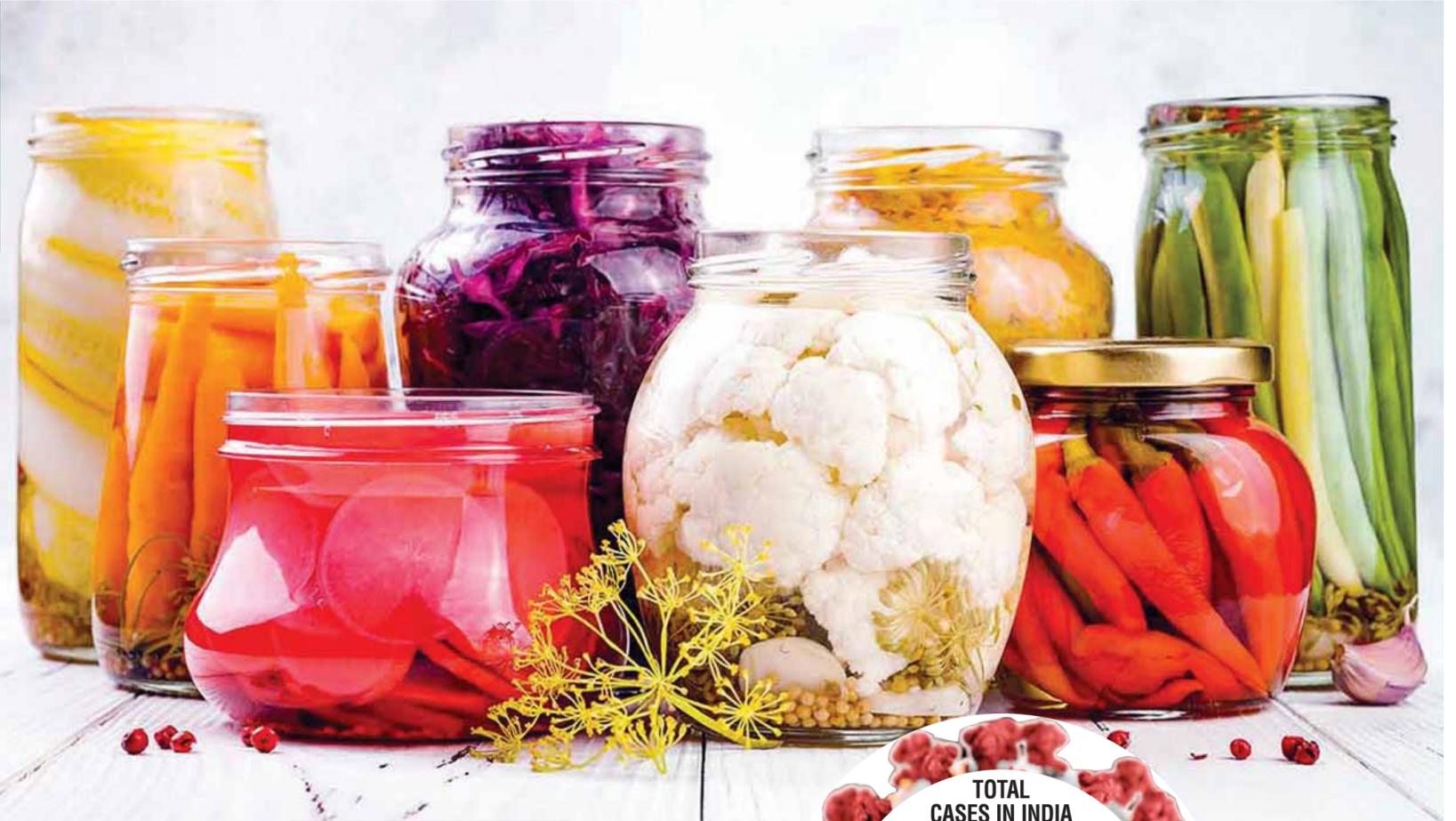
student needs access to schooling and entertainment. We facilitated audio-based learning for the blind students, connected with the community, started a helpline, and increased accessibility for thousands of blind students. When it came to product functions, we introduced special content experiences, recommendations, and playlist features, in a bid to assist users with curated listening lists, so that they listen to better content. Influencers too find our content creation tools easy to adopt.

The year 2020 has given podcasters and content creators a platform that did not exist earlier, as they had relied on YouTube even for audio content. We expect more creators to launch channels on our platform, as they can prove themselves and reach larger audiences.

The writer is COO, Khabri

# GO WITH YOUR GUT

The pandemic exposed chinks in India's healthcare sector. Till date there have been 1.47 lakh deaths in our country with the global deaths standing at 1.74 crore. With compromised immunity, people resorted to alternate medicine and probiotics to increase their body's resistance to fight the Coronavirus. Yoga and exercising took the front seat as did following a healthy eating pattern. Meanwhile, countries have been scrambling to find a cure and an effective vaccine is in the pipeline with India starting vaccination in 2021



ISHI KHOSLA

THE SIMPLEST WAY TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY GUT IS TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF MACRONUTRIENTS AND MICRONUTRIENTS. BESIDES A WHOLESOME BALANCED DIET, REGULAR CONSUMPTION OF PROBIOTICS IS LINKED TO GOOD IMMUNITY

Who could have thought that an invisible virus could hold the world to ransom? And that the trillions of microbes inside us orchestrate our lives: literally determine who we are inside out! What we look like to how well we are!

Twenty five hundred years ago, when Hippocrates stated that: All disease begins in the gut. He had an incredible intuition that only recently has been fully appreciated because of new insights into the pathogenesis of many chronic inflammatory diseases (CIDs) afflicting humankind. Until 30 years ago, when the Human Genome Project was still in its planning stage, the general hypothesis was that genetic predisposition and exposure to an environmental trigger were both necessary and sufficient to develop CIDs, including infectious, allergic, neuroinflammatory/neurodegenerative, autoimmune diseases, and cancer.

However, the epidemiological observation showing a major surge of CIDs during the past four decades in the Western hemisphere coincident with the declining rate of infectious diseases was at odds with the gene/environment paradigm. This generated the hygiene hypothesis supporting the notion that we had made ourselves too clean for our own good and that people embracing a Western lifestyle would slowly die of CIDs instead of rapidly succumbing to infectious diseases as still is happening in developing countries. (Alessio Fasano January 2020)

It is now clear that the gut microbiota is central to the pathogenesis of immune system disorders. While multiple mechanisms are involved, the immune system clearly plays a special role. Indeed, the breakdown of the physiological balance in gut microbial composition leads to dysbiosis, which is then able to enhance inflammation and to even influ-



ence gene expression.

Many might be surprised to learn that more than two-thirds of the immune system is located in the gut. The function of this system is to try and eliminate an invader by creating inflammation and activating antibodies to fight it. The immune system also eliminates the body's own cells when they become diseased.

In order to perform these activities, the cells of the immune system need to be able to tell friends from foes. Gut microbes again play a central role in this: during digestion, they break down fibre into small molecules which include short chain fatty acids (SCFAs). These SCFAs influence the immune function of the Gut and the activity of the

T cells, the informants which help the body recognise friend from foe and decide whether or not to attack a cell.

A disturbance in the gut microbiome directly affects diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, diarrhoea and many other digestive disorders. It can also be the starting point of several other chronic degenerative diseases outside the gut including asthma, skin diseases, autoimmune diseases and metabolic diseases.

Professor Sarkis Mazmanian, Professor of Microbiology at CalTech, who has studied the effect of Gut microbes on health for more than a decade, points out that: The balance of different bacterial species in the gut can influence whether the immune system becomes activated or not.

The connection between probiotics and immunity, although well-established in the scientific circles, is not easily understood by the common person. Decoding the role of probiotics in building immunity can lead to greater acceptance of these foods.

Probiotic organisms exert a direct antagonist effect on harmful microbes by decreasing their numbers, impairing their metabolism, and also by directly stimulating our immune system. Seventy per cent of our immune system is governed by our gut (intestines). Clearly, the gut is not just a digestive organ but is also the largest immune organ. The discourse around the health of the heart, liver and lungs has always been prevalent, but thanks to the pandemic, we have begun to take gut health more seriously.

The simplest way to maintain a healthy gut is to ensure an adequate supply of

TOTAL CASES IN INDIA HAS BREACHED THE 1 CRORE MARK

According to the list put out by IMA, at least 500 doctors have lost their lives in the fight against COVID-19 till October

Global COVID caseload stands at 7.98 crore with 4.47 crore recoveries and 17.51 lakh deaths

US is the worst-hit country with 1.91 crore cases

intestinal cell wall wherever adhesion is possible such that the disease-causing microbes do not get outnumbered.

All in all, probiotics augment our defense through antibody production, increasing natural killer-cell activity and the process of engulfing of foreign matter particles.

Today we know that all diseases begin with inflammation in the gut and that two-third of our immune system resides here. The gut is the largest immune organ called gut associated lymphoid tissue and produces more antibodies than any other tissue in the body — B&T lymphocytes. If what we eat is wrong for our gut it is wrong for immunity. And that strengthening our gut means strengthening our immunity.

With 25 years of my clinical practice this concept has stood the test of time. The recognition of food sensitivities and gut health has made it possible for me to treat almost all diseases from the root including Diabetes, coronary artery disease, thyroid disorders, arthritis, asthma, psoriasis, depression to name a few.

While the pandemic has thrown up uncertainties, gloom & despair the good news is that it has also brought with it a positive impact by way of being a leveller & a time when immunity & diet have assumed unprecedented importance.

It's the perfect time to begin taking a deeper dive into the gut and heal yourself to build a resilient body.



The writer is practicing clinical nutritionist, columnist, author, entrepreneur, researcher & welfare worker

## Conventionally yours

DR PARTAP CHAUHAN

We have all heard the saying, 'Sleep is the best medicine' but due to our ever increasing deadlines, especially in the work from home era where work never seems to stop and home has become the 24x7 office, we are increasingly sacrificing our sleep. Getting 6-8 hours of sleep every night can help in restoring physical, mental and emotional health.

Along with good sleep, we also need to have a balanced, healthy diet and lifestyle. Ayurveda places great emphasis on *ahar* (diet) and *vihar* (lifestyle). For example, you must have heard from elders to have *kadha* once a day for protection against Coronavirus and boost immunity. Yoga is also known to be beneficial for all sorts of health problems.

What is important to understand is that the use of alternative medicine can

make us live happier and healthier lives. And during the pandemic, if we practice all these things, we can have improved respiratory efficiency, less anxiety and better immunity.

The reason why Ayurveda is so effective is that it treats the actual cause of the disease. It goes to the root of the problem. While mainstream medicine focuses more on treating the symptom of the disease, Ayurveda corrects the root cause of the problem and improves the overall quality of life.

So while you are regularly wearing your masks and maintaining social distancing along with washing your hands, do not forget to inculcate the ageold practices of Ayurveda, which can help in leading a better life.

The writer is Director of Jiva Ayurveda, author, public speaker, TV personality and Ayurvedacharya

## EFFECTIVE SUGAR PILLS

DR KUSHAL BANERJEE

The provision of advice of homeopathic or other AYUSH systems was and still is, conveniently, being equated to promotion of risk increasing behaviour. The ministries of AYUSH and of health made it clear that all public health advice regarding prevention of COVID-19 was to be followed. Middle ground seemed to emerge where complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) advice could be dispensed while enforcing other measures.

Some titans of industry also felt comfortable lending their voice to encourage the consumption of homeopathy. We were keen to understand the protective effect of our prophylaxis protocol.

It is disappointing that while a vaccine was developed from scratch following the sequencing of the genomic code of a new virus discovered just over 11 months ago and run through multinational trials involving hundreds of thousands of participants; trials involving homeopathic drugs which have been



in use for two hundred years and which have an impeccable safety profile have still not been completed.

The difference in pace may be attributed partly to the almost complete absence of interest by homeopathic pharmaceutical companies in conducting peer reviewed research. Running a series of expensive trials involving commonly available homeopathic drugs does not provide any return on investment to these companies.

India is the torch bearer of CAM for

the world. We should not take this responsibility lightly. Ayurveda is the ancient Indian system of healing, but homeopathy's home has also been India for many decades. The sheer popularity of the system amongst Indians is unparalleled. Policy makers should ensure that the allocation of resources to AYUSH systems is equitable and rise above a misplaced sense of patriotism.

In the context of COVID-19 and in the practice of evidence-based medicine in general, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. This adage is being applied to conventional medicine and ignored for CAM. CAM should not be withheld from patients who are not responding to conventional medicine or those who are unable to take conventional medicines because of co-morbidities or conventional drug interactions which preclude its use. Most importantly, the values and preferences of patients should always direct our clinical decision-making, rather than our personal bias.

The writer is Consultant Homeopath, Dr Kalyan Banerjee's Clinic

## COVIDWARRIOR

MASOOM REZA NEW DELHI



A phlebotomist by profession, 35-year-old Reza was the first person in Delhi-NCR to collect a sample of a suspected Corona patient back in March. It wasn't as easy as it seems. The profession demanded him to keep a close watch on his body to check for any symptom. In the nine-month long fight against Corona, despite being on the forefront, Reza has come across people who didn't shy away from discriminating against him, because he wore a PPE kit.

UAESAY



The 13th edition of Indian Premier League took place behind closed doors in United Arab Emirates, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah played host for 60 matches as defending champions Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals in the final on November 10 to win the record-extending fifth title.

WIMBLEDON SCRAPPED



Wimbledon organisers scrapped the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament for the first time since World War II as the coronavirus wreaks further havoc on the global sporting calendar.

SEE YOU IN 2022



Owing to disruption caused by Covid-19 pandemic, ICC postponed 2020 edition of T20 World Cup in Australia to 2022.

FIRST IN HISTORY



The 2020 Tokyo Olympics have been postponed to no later than the summer of 2021 because of the Coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe, the International Olympic Committee announced on March 24. The Games were scheduled for July 24 to August 9, but after telephone discussions between IOC president Thomas Bach and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a historic joint decision was taken for the first postponement of an Olympics in peacetime.



COVIDWARRIOR  
SYED UZMA PARVEEN  
LUCKNOW



The 30-year-old burqa clad Lucknow University graduate and a mother of two — Veer Abdul Hameed (1) and Wali Ullah (6) — was seen sanitising temples, mosques and gullies of the city during the COVID-led lockdown. Parveen started the work from her area, Saadatganj and then proceeded to the Sitaram temple in Faizullahganj. It was love for the country and its people that made her take up the cause even at the cost of risking her life.

NO TO SALIVA



ICC temporarily banned one of its oldest practices — the use of saliva to shine the ball — as an Anil Kumble-led ICC committee recommended banning it owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WELCOME 2021



The 2020 edition of European championship, due to be played in June and July in 2020, was postponed until 2021 and will now be played from June 11 to July 11 next year.

NO BALLON D'OR



For the first time since its creation in 1956, Ballon d'Or was cancelled in 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic's impact on football.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



Formula One races were held behind closed doors for the first time, with teams operating in bubbles to protect against Covid-19. Also, three drivers caught the novel coronavirus, including Hamilton.

**Francisco Garcia** (21), Spanish football coach, died on March 17 in Malaga



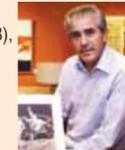
**Azam Khan** (95), Pakistani squash player, died on March 28 in London



**Benito Joanet** (84), Spanish footballer and coach, died on March 22 in Alicante



**Goyo Benito** (73), Spanish footballer, died on April 2 in Madrid



**Zaccaria Cometti** (83), Italian footballer, died on April 2 in Romano di Lombardia



**Donato Sabia** (56), Italian athlete, died April 8 in Potenza



**Zafar Sarfraz** (50), Pakistani cricketer, died on April 13 in Peshawar



**Shobushi** (28), Japanese sumo wrestler, died on May 13



# THAT EMPTY FEELING

From cancelled Olympics in Japan to no spectators at IPL 13 that shifted to UAE to the T20 World Cup being cancelled and to scrapped Wimbledon Championship, the year has been a mixed bag for sports. It brought the much needed break for many to practice for the coming games in 2021, while for others it spelt doom since they would fail to meet the eligibility criteria for next year



ANJUM CHOPRA

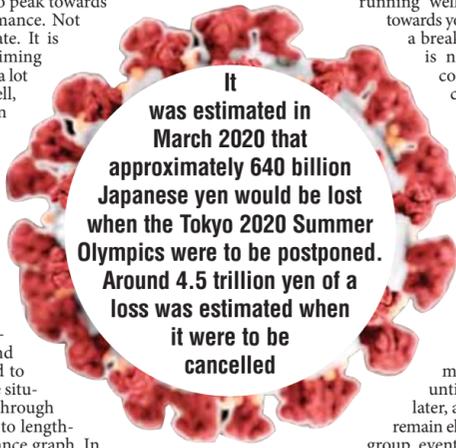
THE ONE SILVER LINING IN HAVING A LONG BREAK WITH NO SPORTS ACTIVITY HAPPENING IS THAT YOU CAN TAKE A BREAK FROM TRAVEL AND SPEND TIME WITH YOURSELF

I was in Australia covering the ICC women's T20 World Cup when we were beginning to realise an alarming situation emerging globally. The rise in the number of COVID-19 cases worldwide and a discussion regarding the impact that it could create in India. As the numbers grew and the questions of its emergence started gaining attention, it seemed more a probable situation that the world may head towards a lockdown mode. It was only a matter of time that the day was nearing when we might not know when we would even be able to step out of our house. A day became a week and then months started getting counted as more and more postponement of events, daily activities stared happening. For most sports people the reality of having to play the waiting game started the moment the first event got pushed forward to a later unidentified date. The Olympics was the biggest draw. Here is an insight on how these delays, postponements would have worked for different sports players. An icon cricket player like MS Dhoni; who the world could have seen in action playing for India at the ICC T20 world cup decided to hang his India shirt and focus only on franchise cricket. He had already retired from Test cricket and with no World Cup events lined up after 2020 for men's cricket, it might have been the last or second last opportunity to see him in action in India blues. Double Olympic Gold medalist and five-time world champion Lin Dan announced his retirement after the decision of the Olympics getting pushed over to the next year came. It may be argued that Lin Dan being of the sports greats was not getting younger and a call at the age of 36 was maybe the right one. But, would that announcement be made had the Olympics been held on time. Possibly no! Maybe after the

Olympics. Momentum is important for sports people. You train to be in the right rhythm, obtain the right fitness and skill level. And this training carries you through the tournament and provides you the right momentum to peak towards your optimum performance. Not too early, never too late. It is never easy to find the timing right and it depends on a lot of other factors as well, but as a sports person you work towards finding that right balance. It is often said that a sports person peaks when he/she is around their 30's. Largely cause as a player; you tend to understand your game better. One understands the demands of the professional sport more and the skill levels required to deal with high pressure situations. Once you sail through the phase you are able to lengthen your high-performance graph. In cricket — the ability to pick the ball early, judge its trajectory and speed helps in reducing the individual's reaction time. This requires constant training of mind and skills along with regular competition to be able to judge the performance. If there is any lag, an imbalance, there can be a dip in the perfor-

mance. In some cases, you might even struggle to find the right balance altogether after a hiatus. It can affect a young high-performance athlete too. A break in the momentum can have an adverse effect in the overall performance. You might be running well and peaking nicely towards your upcoming race. But a break like this where there is no surety of the next competitive tournament can lead you to tread in unknown territory. The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in India was to be played in November, 2020. It got cancelled. This cancellation took away the opportunity of many players who may not get a chance to play at all in this tournament. Either the tournament might not be held until next year or even if later, a lot of players will not remain eligible to play in the age group event. The inaugural ICC U19 women's cricket World Cup that is scheduled to be held in 2021 will also be pushed to a later date. The fate of the young players hangs in a balance trying to remain eligible and probable for selections. With the Indian cricket board — BCCI ensuring

the smooth conduct of Indian Premier League in the UAE, it has provided a fillip to sports to be conducted with bio-bubbles and secure safety standards. It is a tough standard but certainly a way forward. Yes, there were no crowds allowed into the stadiums during the IPL which is rare for a competitive sport but with the Australian government allowing spectators during the India cricket teams tour of Australia, it is a step towards restoring normalcy. It is not an easy life inside a bio bubble. Living within the parameters, interacting with the same set of people and not being allowed to step away from the same scenery for days can be mentally challenging too. And especially if you are away from family. With the travel restrictions and regulations, one is always away from home. The one silver lining in having a long break with no sports activity happening is that you can take a break from travel and spend time with yourself and work on stuff that has been on the back burner. Nurse a recurring injury, rest to recover well from ailments, build muscle strength and work on agility. There is always scope for more in the sporting life of a sports person. This year with all the restrictions and impacts has been a mixed bag. It has been very challenging for the human race to survive yet given opportunities to fight the scenario all together. Maybe it was good too — to value our lives a bit more. To value the things that we already have and what we aspire for. The impact has been felt by all. For some it might have been more than others. For how long it continues we are still unsure but as sports people we always look to start each day with the same zeal and enthusiasm. The writer is former Captain and commentator



It was estimated in March 2020 that approximately 640 billion Japanese yen would be lost when the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics were to be postponed. Around 4.5 trillion yen of a loss was estimated when it were to be cancelled

BYE, SAYS THE CAPTAIN



Former Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni announces his retirement from all forms of International cricket on August 15, more than an year after playing his last game for India in the ICC World Cup 2019 semifinal against New Zealand on July 10. His former Indian and CSK teammate Suresh Raina also retires moments after Dhoni's announcement.

LOST HOPES



Meg Lanning led Southern Stars beat Harmanpreet Kaur's India in the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup played at Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of record 86,174 fans on March 8 to lift the fifth World title.

36 IT IS



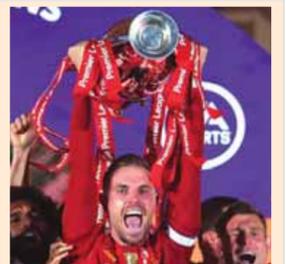
India suffers historic humiliation in the first Test of Border-Gavaskar trophy against Australia in Adelaide on December 19, when they were all out for 36 runs in the second innings of the Day-Night Test. The score was India's lowest ever innings total in the longest-format of the game.

DIL SAY WELCOME

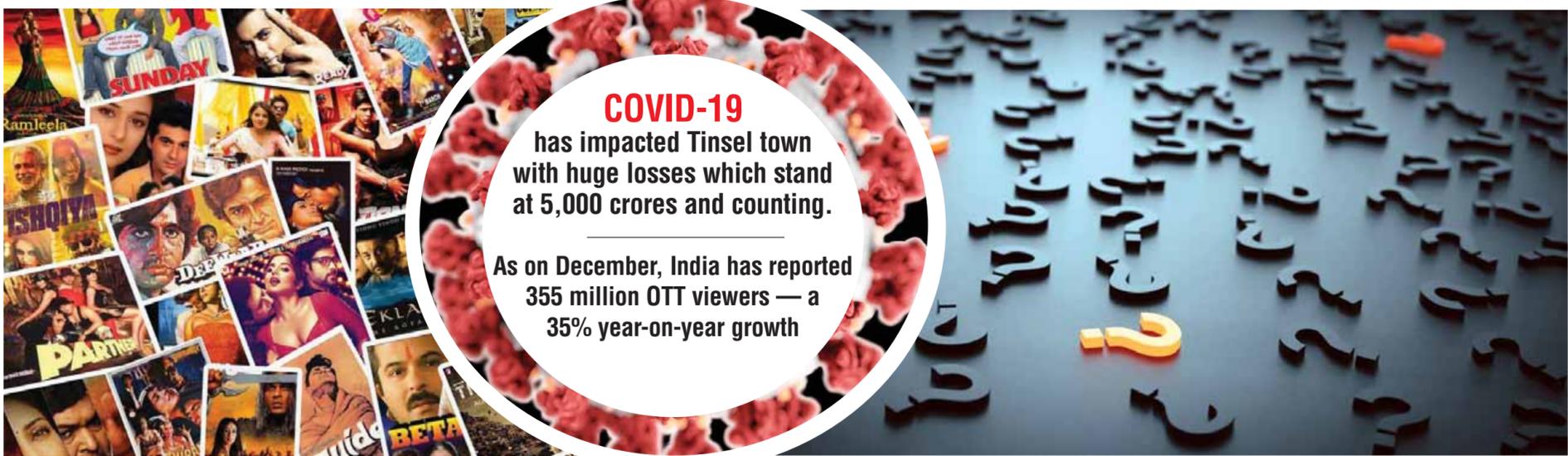


Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stadium in Ahmedabad becomes the world largest cricket stadium with an official seating capacity of 1,10,000 audience.

LIVERPOOL ON TOP



Liverpool FC ended three decade wait for top flight English title after Jurgen Klopp's men win the 2019-2020 edition of Premier League title after reaching 99 points in 38 games.



**COVID-19**  
has impacted Tinsel town  
with huge losses which stand  
at 5,000 crores and counting.

As on December, India has reported  
355 million OTT viewers — a  
35% year-on-year growth



VIKRAM BHATT

# TRUTH DIED TOO

The pandemic hit every sector including the entertainment industry in the worst possible manner. Not only were there deaths and suicides of names like Irrfan Khan, Rishi Kapoor and Sushant Singh Rajput that shocked the nation, there were several controversies that the industry was caught in and the truth was never told. Not only this, due to the lockdown the industry has also suffered a loss of thousands of crores. With the small time actors and the crew suffering the most. The lockdown impacted theatres affecting the Box Office collection and pushing makers defer releasing movies like Radhe, Sooryavanshi and '83. The silver lining however is how the OTT platforms came to fore

MORE THAN THAT VIRUS OUTSIDE THAT KILLED SO MANY PEOPLE, WE INADVERTENTLY MANAGED TO KILL SOMETHING THAT IS USUALLY HELD IN HIGH REGARD AND THAT SOMETHING IS CALLED THE TRUTH. IF THE YEAR-END THEME OF THIS PUBLICATION IS DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THEN NOTHING HAS MET ITS DEATH MORE THAN TRUTH HAS THIS YEAR

2020 is definitely the year that will go down in contemporary history as the year where our modern way of life changed forever. Yet, this is not a piece about the never-ending woes that the year has brought upon us. Far from that. It is more likely a piece about what this year has helped bring about in all of us.

Never has one person's misery been another person's entertainment, like it has been this year. And you know where this is headed, don't you?

The pandemic came upon us in March and the lockdown soon after. The effects on our country were catastrophic, to say the least. However, my mandate here is to write on the entertainment industry and thus I shall desist from going off about migrant labour, the economy, the death rate, the Tabligi Jamat or any such deeply felt but unfortunately unrelated topics.

It is the job of the entertainment

industry to entertain and perhaps that's what we did, but at a great cost to ourselves.

In early June one of our very own, Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead at his suburban Mumbai residence. A tragedy of epic proportions. And the beginning of several more tragic events that were to follow soon after.

An actress, we know only too well, claimed that it was the burden of being an outsider in an industry that abhorred outsiders, that took his life. Unsubstantiated in its claim, but dramatic. Names of popular filmmakers came up that were said to be blamed for the tragedy. The filmmakers became the scorn of the media and the social media. They were shunned by one and all, thrown into the abyss of infamy.

More unsubstantiated claims sprang up. The dead actor's girlfriend surely killed him. She was having an affair with her mentor after all? The guns that were

trained on the filmmakers were now trained on these new suspects. The media trial was the obsession of every household that was going through the grind of the lockdown.

The manager of the dead actor, who had committed suicide a week earlier, was dragged into the conspiracy theory, albeit posthumously. There was a connection between the two deaths insisted a Facebook post that became the basis of major inquiry. I forget to mention, this was part of the more unsubstantiated claims.

Like a circle in a spiral, the theories went berserk with the aid of a news hungry media. Was it just murder or double murder? Was it poison or drugs? Was she a gold-digger?

On and on and on, more claims, more victims, more investigations, more television debates, till I disconnected from the goings on and preferred to spend my time mastering the Monaco

circuit on Formula One.

The pandemic still rages in our country unabated. We feared it when it was nascent and don't give a damn about it now that it is rampant. And as I write this none of the unsubstantiated claims have been proved by any agency. But more than that virus outside that killed so many people, we inadvertently managed to kill something that is usually held in high regard, and that something is called the "Truth".

If the year-end theme of this publication is death and destruction then nothing has met its death more than Truth has this year. Truth has been replaced by the perception of the Truth and what is more, it's okay to destroy lives with that perception.

The events of this year have seen the entertainment industry turn upon itself to provide fodder for never ending drama on prime time television. We accused each other, blamed each other

and in the end, sentenced our own in the courts of the evening news.

Who is going to apologise to the filmmakers who had nothing proved against them? To the grieving girlfriend? To the maverick filmmaker of the yesteryears? To the family of the dead manager? No one I guess. If you are not responsible for the Truth why would you be responsible to the lives that you have ruined in the name of conspiracy theories?

2020, to my mind, will be remembered as the year when the need for the Truth died and in its place the entertainment value of the perceived truth was preferred. We will find vaccines for the virus and we will prevail against it, but how will we find a vaccine against the virus in our heart that has taught us to bend the truth to suit our purpose?

Even if we vanquish the virus, the virus will look at the mangled body of the Truth and have the last laugh!

## BIG LOSS

### IRRFAN KHAN



Died at the age of 53 on April 29, 2020 due to colon infection

### RISHI KAPOOR



He died of leukaemia on April 30, 2020

### WAJID KHAN



Died on June 1, 2020 at 42 due to Coronavirus complications

### SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT



Committed suicide on June 14, 2020

### SAROJ KHAN



Died on July 3, 2020 of a sudden cardiac arrest

### SAMEER SHARMA



He was found hanging in his Mumbai residence on August 5, 2020

### ASIF BASRA



On 12 November 2020, he was found hanging in his apartment

## It's a small whirl

The pandemic has been destructive for most industries including the media. What people don't quite realise about our industry is that it has been quite bad for us. This is because our industry is very heavily daily wage dependent. People don't realise that apart from the main actors, the directors and HoDs, everyone else is paid per day. This is true even for the smallest of films; it will have a minimum of 100 people working per day. The impact of livelihood on people has been severe. The six months when there was no shooting, it has been terrible for people.

In the midst of this was the hate campaign by certain news channels against Bollywood which all came to complete not. There is no substance to any of the accusations. One saw the kind of destruction that was reeked — whether it was in terms of an innocent girl being arrested, or the harassment of other people, the slander of the industry, against the industry — it was very unfortunate. The year has been bad for the industry; it has taken a beating both financially and economically including the exhibitors



SWARA BHASKER

THE THEATRE BUSINESS HAS BEEN IMPACTED. THE YEAR HAS BEEN EMOTIONALLY DRAINING AS WELL. ONE HAS TO LOOK AT THE NUMBER OF SUICIDES TO GAUGE HOW DRAINING IT HAS BEEN

because the industry is facing hardships. The theatre business has been impacted. The year has been emotionally draining as well. One has to look at the number of suicides to gauge how draining it has been. And it is not just Sushant (Singh Rajput) — he got the most amount of attention, it has been an unfortunate year.

For the actors, it has been bad if they have not been able to tide over the lockdown days. For me, I have been able to use this time to go home to my parents and spend time with them. But this has not been the case for everyone. This has been a time of stress for everyone in the industry. Luckily, for actors, since the OTT has opened up, this has been good for us. But other than that, the real stress is how the theatres and exhibitors will pan out. When will the films start releasing here? Will audiences come back? That is what is uncertain. Our whole star system is completely structured around Box Office. If the Box Office is not going to be there, then there is no star system will change which means that Bollywood is going to change in a very fundamental

way. We don't necessarily realise how, at this point in time. If I had to answer this how, it would all be speculation.

There is some good as well. See the way OTT has come up. It is a space where newer stories are being told and newer kinds of characters are being written. For people who have had the wherewithal and the means to ride the bad, this break has been great. As long as one has the financial wherewithal to tide by these times, one can use this time and take an off and think about other things and so forth.

For example, the pandemic was sort of good. I spend months with my parents after being away from home for 10 years. I also adopted a dog two days before the pandemic. So there has been an addition in the family. This was nice. I had three shows that released. I don't remember a year where I have had three pieces of work releasing — be it *Flesh* on Eros Now, or *Rasbhari* on Amazon Prime and latest — *Bhaag Beanie Bhaag*.

But one can't look away from the fact, that this has

been a time of extreme hardship for others. It is thought to say that this time has been equal for all actors. Actors are of homogenous category. There are background actors, there are actors who get less work, there are actors who are paid per day and there are actors in theatre who are paid according to show per day. Mumbai is an expensive metro. I am sure it has been hard for actors who don't make the kind of money stars do, and it is not just the actors, there are dancers too.

This is what people don't understand the nature and make up of Bollywood. You think of Bollywood and you think Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan and couple of other A-list actors and actresses. This is not Bollywood. Bollywood is actually made up of labour, it is made up of people who are actively daily wage labourers on the sets. We don't think of them and we don't think of the extras. We don't think of the crew — the lighting, the art crew and the cameramen. We must think of all these people as well when we talk about Bollywood.

As told to Shalini Saksena

## CINEMA IS FOREVER

We are called the dream merchants who make the impossible, possible. This year though, we needed to find some of this magic dust ourselves because nothing went according to the script. The pandemic made us realise that sometimes we must deal with twists that we have no control over. Cinema after all is not just about make-believe but livelihoods and 2020 was hard on businesses around the world. The cinema industry earns billions globally and supports not just production houses but production assistants, make-up and costume professionals, set designers, spot boys, technicians, all the hardworking folks who are dismissed as extras and so many more people behind the scenes who never get enough credit. When we talk of big financial losses this year, let us not just talk numbers but also discuss how these losses impacted the lives of real people.

Regardless of what anyone likes to believe, the industry has never had it easy. For the longest time, we were not even recognised as an industry. We have dealt with rampant piracy, the upsurge in alternative forms of entertainment and even before the pandemic, we were being told that OTT platforms are going to make us obsolete. Now that din has grown louder because for what seems like forever, cinema halls have not seen the footfalls or the content streams that they need to survive.

We can't be flippant about these losses because again when we are talking revenue, we are talking about jobs and people who depend on them to make a living. Suddenly the danger from OTT platforms seems clear and present. We are being asked: Should producers give their films to OTT platforms



ANAND PANDIT

when cinema owners are struggling to find new content? Will producers continue to prefer OTT platforms for their films even when the pandemic is over?

In an unprecedented time like this, these are the wrong questions to ask. It is more important to find common ground than to get adversarial because we are an industry trying to survive what is in fact not a homegrown crisis but a global pandemic. That is the big picture we are dealing with and as I said before, survival rather than conflict is the way forward. We need to work with and not against each other. The OTT platforms enabled the industry to still take their finished productions to the audience when the theatres could not open. Without content that the industry generates, OTT platforms too would not have the diversity of entertainment that they are known for. During this crisis, we have both benefitted each other and even post the pandemic, hope we continue to. Let us find a middle ground where exhibitors and OTT platforms can meet and work out their issues because in India, there is enough space for both to co-exist and thrive.

That said, no matter what happens, the joy and magic of big screen entertainment will never be obsolete. The industry is already adapting to remote-work and on set protocols which are time and revenue consuming but necessary for now. We are reconfiguring movie production, distribution and consumption. But we have to persist because we owe it to our audiences. Pandemics will come and go. Cinema is forever.

The writer is a producer of films like Great Grand Masti, Sarkar 3 & Total Dhamaal

# Bumrah, Ashwin run through Oz

Rahane's captaincy, bowlers' show get Aussies out for 195; India 36/1 on Day 1

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Jasprit Bumrah's menace was matched by Ravichandran Ashwin's guile as an inspired India led by Ajinkya Rahane shot out Australia for a sub-par 195 to dominate the opening day of the second Test at Melbourne Cricket Ground on Saturday.

India then lost Mayank Agarwal (0) to Mitchell Starc but debutant Shubman Gill (28 batting) survived a hostile spell to hit some delectable boundaries in the day end score of 36 for 1 in 11 overs.

Giving him company was the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara (7 batting). The line-up would look to exorcise the ghosts of the Adelaide game last week when India were shot out for their lowest ever Test score of 36.

As much as the day belonged to the Indian bowling unit for another fired-up show, new captain Rahane deserved equal credit for marshalling his resources to perfection during the 72.3 overs that hosts batted.

Bumrah (4/56 in 16 overs) and Ashwin (3/35 in 24 overs) were the stars but debutant Mohammed Siraj (2/40 in 15 overs) also did his bit repaying the faith shown in him with wickets of Marnus Labuschagne (48) and Cameron Green (12) with the old ball.

However, the Test series is increasingly looking like Ashwin's paradise as he once again made the opposition's best batsman Steve Smith (0) look ordinary, exploiting the turn and bounce that the first day of the MCG track offered.

It was business as usual for Bumrah as he beat the bat and got those breakthroughs just when it mattered on a pitch that had retained moisture. As it turned out, Rahane didn't lose a bad toss.

The Indian team looked way more galvanised despite being without regular skipper



Jasprit Bumrah celebrates with Indian teammates after he dismiss Australian opener Joe Burns, right, for duck on 1st Day of 2nd Test at MCG on Saturday BCCI/Twitter

Virat Kohli, who is on paternity leave. Some great catches were taken and the intent was way more visible. Rahane's first punt was introducing Ashwin inside the first hour of play after Bumrah had forced Joe Burns (0) to nick one to Rishabh Pant.

Ashwin, who varied the pace of his deliveries cleverly, got some turn and bounce straightaway as he drew Matthew Wade into coming down the track and skying one for India's best fielder Jadeja to take a well-judged catch running backwards.

After bowling one that jumped and turned beating Smith and Pant, Ashwin kept the next a tad straighter and the former Australian skipper's

glance was pounced by Cheteshwar Pujara at leg gully. All this while, Bumrah was beating the bat at the other hand.

Interestingly, Rahane didn't give the debutant a single over before lunch break as he knew that Siraj's strength is generating pace and movement with semi-new and old ball.

Siraj initially bowled a bit short at Labuschagne and Travis Head (38) as they added 86 runs for the fourth wicket.

It was Bumrah, who provided the post lunch breakthrough with a delivery that held its line and the left-hander's thick edge was taken by Rahane at gully.

Siraj's maiden wicket was a lucky one as the ball was drift-

## Deano given mid-Test tribute

Melbourne: More than three months after his death, Dean Jones was paid another tribute at his home ground here by Indian and Australian players, who were joined by his wife, daughters and the legendary Allan Border in remembering the effervescent former player on Saturday.

Jones' family and former Australia captain Border participated in the farewell during the tea break of the ongoing second Test here.

Border, Jones' wife Jane, and daughters — Augusta and Phoebe — took a long walk from the boundary of the



Melbourne Cricket Ground to the centre, carrying his Baggy Green, sunglasses and Kookaburra bat and laid the items to rest on the stumps at the Great Southern Stand end of the ground.

ing down the leg-side which Labuschagne tried to whip but Gill, stationed at backward square leg, snapped it inches off the ground.

The Hyderabad pacer's second wicket was a much fuller ball with a hint of inward movement that caught Green plumb in-front.

Skipper Tim Paine (13) couldn't script a rescue act like Adelaide as a classical off-break saw him guide one straight into the hands of Hanuma Vihari at backward square leg.

Bumrah didn't take much time after that as he and Ravindra Jadeja (1/15) polished off the tail in a jiffy.

During the final hour of the day, Gill showed what the Indian cricket can expect of him in the new decade. He displayed positive intent and some dazzling strokes that would certainly leave fans yearning for more in the coming days.

An off-drive off Pat Cummins, a punch through covers and a flick off Starc were exhilarating.

The cover drive off Nathan Lyon had class written all over it.



Marnus Labuschagne talks with R Ashwin during 1st day play of 2nd Test AP

## Ashwin bowled before Siraj due to moisture in wicket: Bumrah

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Indian batsmen would look to be "confident without being reckless" and take one session at a time, said pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah after a fine bowling performance put the visitors in command against Australia on the opening day of the second Test.

Asked what would be the visitors' batting approach having finished the day at 36 for 1 and the memories of the first Test's 36 all out still fresh, Bumrah replied: "We are not looking too far ahead. We are looking at one session at a time.

"We don't want to be conservative in our mindset and be positive. Control the controllables. Not being reckless but playing with confidence will be the motive going forward," added the bowler, well aware of the challenge ahead.

One of the striking moves by skipper Ajinkya Rahane was introducing Ashwin in the first hour of play.

"When we were bowling in the morning there was some moisture on the wicket, so you saw Ashwin and Jaddu (Jadeja) got some spin.

"...Because we wanted to make the most of the moisture, we were trying to use them, he (Ashwin) was getting good bounce," Bumrah said after the end of the first day's play.

Rahane's field placements came in for a lot of praise from none other than Shane Warne and Bumrah said that in the second session, the bowlers altered the line knowing that

pitch was becoming easier to bat on.

"There was constant discussions going on between bowlers and the captain. The wicket changed after the first session. It got better to bat on in the second session and moisture went away.

"We were just trying to communicate what kind of lines we wanted to bowl so that we can set the field accordingly. When there was less help, we tried to change the line accordingly," he said.

Bumrah, however, downplayed any suggestions about this being India's best day 1 bowling effort overseas Tests since he joined.

"We don't think like that and we just wanted to create pressure from both ends. Ash (Ashwin) bowled brilliantly and so did Siraj. We were all trying to help each other," the speedster said.

As a senior bowler, Bumrah was all praise for debutant Siraj, who was decent in his first outing in the traditional format. "He has worked really hard and come up the ranks. He was eager to bowl in the first session itself. There wasn't a lot happening after lunch and he (Siraj) bowled with a lot of control," he said.

"Suddenly he started getting some movement and wanted to make the best of it. Playing his first Test match, he bowled really well and had confidence of using all his skills. It's a heartening sign for us and hopefully he will continue doing that."

# THE 'WRITE' STUFF

MANTA SIDHU wanted to be a journalist but she loved music too much...

#SoundsofDelhi

the pioneer

KIA

The Power to Surprise

SONET

WILD BY DESIGN

“ THAT IS WHERE I DECIDED THAT I WOULD BE IN MUSIC PROFESSIONALLY, BUT I HAD NO IDEA ABOUT HOW DEEP I WILL GET INTO IT. MUSIC WAS AN UNCONVENTIONAL CAREER CHOICE THEN ”

Manta also credits her bandmates for her songwriting. "As a writer you have a vision and it is your bandmates, who are expert instrumentalists and put your vision into action. I have been blessed in both my bands to have great bandmates. I really wouldn't change anything about my experiences." She also adds that a lot of what she knows about music was picked up from her fellow musicians, "Some of them are very highly educated in music, some have studied abroad. There are so many things that I lack that they make up for. There are numerous things that I was unaware of that I have learnt thanks to the privilege of working with them. Collaborating with others in your field is very important in any cre-

ative profession because you can't go and not go anywhere." And while not performing has taken its toll, she is very pleased that she managed to finish writing the material for the Ensemble's third album. Although when she recently caught up with her bandmates for the first time since the lockdown began, ostensibly for the first practice of the new material, no music happened. "We were meeting after so long that we just ate, chatted and partied." She says that she has been fortunate as she teaches music at the Shiv Nadar School in Gurugram's DLF Phase 1 which has meant that unlike some other musicians she has managed financially.

Talking about the revolutionary Intelligent Manual Transmission that removes the clutch but keeps the gear lever, allowing drivers to get the best of both worlds, she says, "Well, my left foot was feeling idle, but this really took me just a minute to get used to, so it isn't very difficult at all. The music is great in the car so your left foot can keep tapping to it." She hopes that the IMT concept catches on with more cars adopting it. As for the seven-speaker BOSE audio system, Manta's first comments are that it is 'beautifully balanced'. "Some audio systems are too heavy on the base, and others, like bad headphones, can be too high on treble. As musicians the experience you want listeners to have is a balanced one and that is what we try to achieve in the mixing studio and the translation on this system is perfect," she exults.

As for this year, Manta is fairly pragmatic, "There are many aspects to 2020, but some days it is great to wake up

While the Sonet has turned out to be one of 2020's best things, its music system is actually a hidden surprise for melody lovers. Here is to a very musical 2021. ■

Manta Sidhu, songwriter and vocalist for the Manta Sidhu Ensemble, always wanted to write and had chalked out a career in journalism ever since she was in school. After graduating from Delhi University's Hindu College she joined the fabled A J K Mass Communication Research Centre at Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia. Yet, after a few years of writing stories, editing and spending long hours in the newsroom, she realised that her true love was music and writing songs. While supporting herself with some freelance journalism gigs on the side, Manta was drawn more and more into music. "I was already quite deeply into it since college and I always wanted to pursue music seriously, but I didn't realise to what extent."

Despite being blessed with a great voice, Manta admits that, music was just one of several extra-curricular activities she participated in during school. It was while studying at Hindu College that she became a part of the college's active music society and met new friends — all with an interest in music. "That is where I decided that I would be pursuing music professionally, but I had no idea about how deep I would get into it. Music was an unconventional career choice then."

Yet, Sidhu states that while it might have seemed tougher earlier because there were fewer locations and gigs, nowadays with a whole bunch of younger and hungrier musicians taking up instruments, competition has ensured that 'making it' is still a challenge. "By making it I mean, earning enough to make ends meet and live comfortably, so that you can spend time writing and composing your own music and releasing albums. It is still a challenge today. Although there are so many more places to play music but there are also so many more musicians. And that is a good thing."



The internet to me is kind of like a black hole, and I never really go on it — Jennifer Lawrence



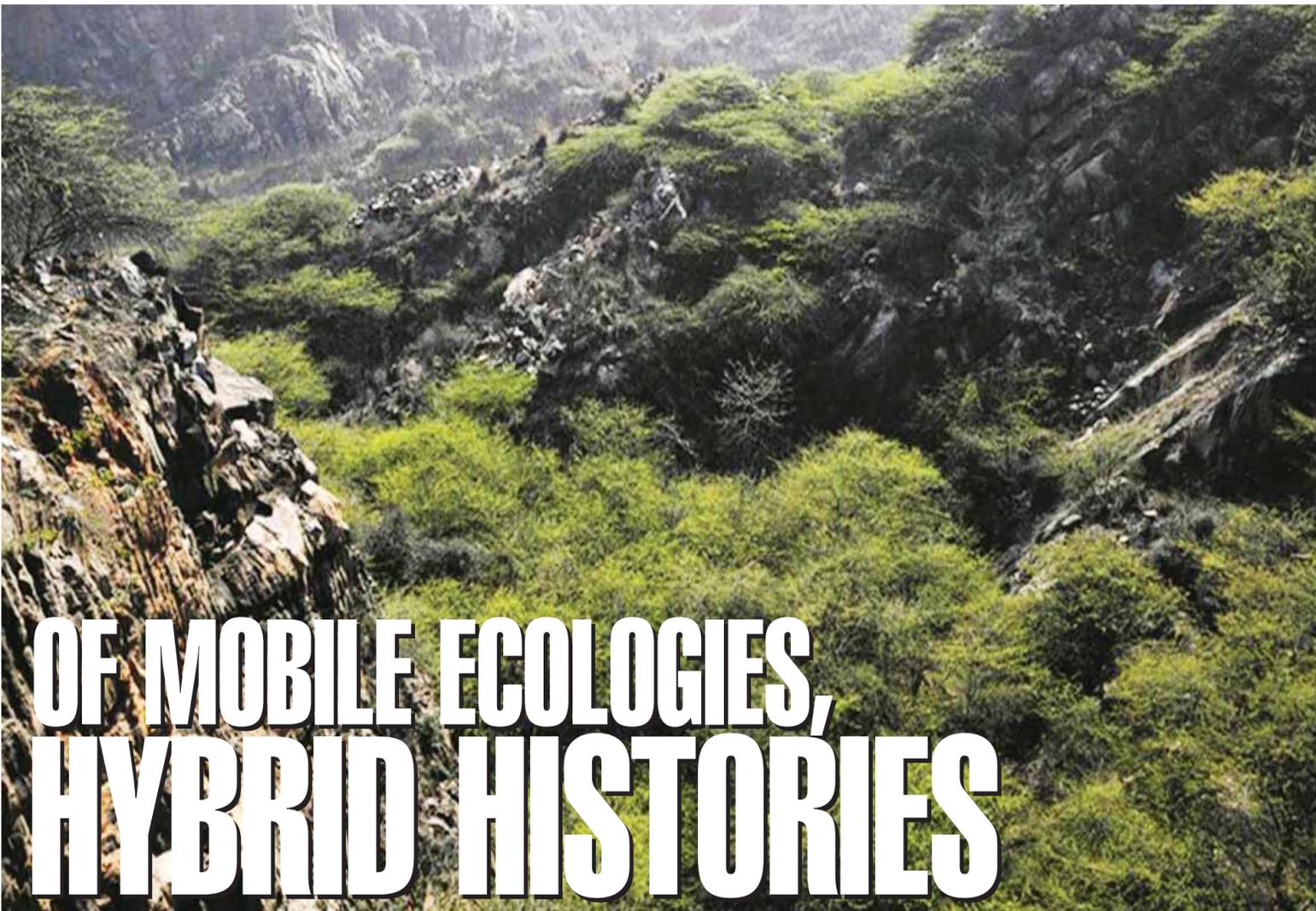
**The untold story of a great life**  
Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism is the first authentic biography of the Grand Old Man of India to be written 112 years after his death

2



4

**Let guru be your guide**  
A guru helps you understand your inherent limitations and guides you on ways to address them



# OF MOBILE ECOLOGIES, HYBRID HISTORIES

*Fractured Forest, Quartzite City: A History of Delhi and Its Ridge* by THOMAS CROWLEY tells the tale of the Ridge, which resonates far beyond the boundaries of Delhi. The Ridge offers a crucial vantage point for viewing these historical and geographical interconnections. Its trees can't be separated from the stones below them, nor the cities that rose and fell around them. Only with this perspective does a clear picture of the Ridge — and Delhi as a whole — emerge. An edited excerpt:

The British had placed a legislative stamp on a process they had started more subtly decades earlier: the assault on pastoral livelihoods and commonly held village land, and the replacement of such land with individual, salable plots interspersed with government-controlled enclaves.

### From Sacred Grove to Real Estate

This process, which started on the Northern Ridge, took a long time to spread southwards; indeed, the story is still unfolding at the far reaches of the Southern Ridge and beyond. Here, one can find traces of older ways of life, of the "reservation of wood-producing land... generally connected with religion," which the British found when they first entered the region. The most remarkable example of this is the sacred grove of Mangarvani. The grove technically falls in Haryana, outside the bounds of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (a clear-cut boundary that owes its contours to the British). Officially it is not part of the Delhi Ridge. But it is on the Aravallis, so its underlying stones and soil are identical to those of the Ridge.

What grows out of this stony soil has amazed observers from Delhi. Mangarvani is densely forested, and it is full of trees that have long disappeared from the Delhi Ridge, most notably the graceful, hardy *dhaun* tree. The thriving forest is part of common lands shared by the three villages of Mangar, Bandhwari and Baliawas, which are dominated by the Gujjar community; these villages maintain Mangarvani as a sacred grove in honor of a holy man named Gudariya Baba who used to roam these parts.

The very existence of such a remarkable ecosystem in the midst of three Gujjar settlements neatly refutes the argument originally put forward by Maconachie and Beadon, and still echoed today by some government officials and environmentalists: that villagers, especially those with strong pastoral traditions, like the Gujjars, do not care about trees, and land must be taken away from them and vested in the government if it is to be protected.

Instead, Mangarvani suggests another lesson: that the ecological behavior of pastoralists is molded by the larger systems in which they are ensconced. For example, during Mughal times, the Gujjars living close to Shahjahanabad put excessive pressure on their commons because of urban demands for meat and milk; meanwhile, the Gujjars of Mangarvani, much further away from city influences, left a more balanced ecologi-

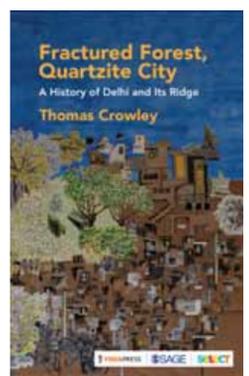
cal footprint. This remained the case during British rule as well, despite the compulsions of British land settlement efforts and despite pockets of quarrying. But, over the past several decades, Mangarvani has increasingly been drawn into the orbit of a rapidly expanding Delhi, a trend that has threatened the survival of the grove.

Regular readers of Delhi newspapers may be familiar with this story. On almost a weekly basis, one reads about a new threat to the old forest. Or about threats to people in the forest. By far the most dramatic headline came on 31 March 2014: "Birdwatchers Thrashed at Mangar Forest."

The events described in the article are a combination of the disturbing, the tragic, and the absurd, a mix that characterizes much of the Delhi region in an era of runaway growth. The birdwatchers were from nearby Gurgaon—not too long ago, a sleepy farming village and now an urban hub conjoined to Delhi and filled with automobile factories, multi-national corporate offices, small-scale garment industries, and a seemingly endless expanse of malls. (The city was renamed Gurugram in 2016, a Hindu nationalist nod to the Mahabharata sage Guru Dronacharya, who supposedly lived in this area thousands of years ago. However, for the sake of avoiding anachronisms, I will stick with "Gurgaon," the name that was current when the following events took place.)

The birders had gone to Mangarvani to spot winged wildlife in the native forests of the grove. When the first car reached the grove, they came upon a man who said he was the priest at the local temple; he wanted to know what they were doing there. Things got a bit heated, and the priest took out his phone and made a call. Within minutes, a group of young men sped onto the scene in a jeep. They jumped down, armed with sticks and iron rods, and attacked the birdwatchers, a group which included an elderly woman and a young child. The attackers fled, though, when the rest of the birdwatchers, another four or five carloads, arrived on the scene.

The priest was later arrested, along with some of the assailants. Now, though, they are all out on bail, as the rusty machinery of the justice system does its agonizingly slow work. Many of the news reports after the attack asserted that the priest has played a central role in real estate transactions in the area. The British may have been the first to introduce the idea of land as a commodity in the Delhi region, but now, centuries later, the idea has become common sense. It is embraced with gusto by the wide range of players that make the real



THE VERY EXISTENCE OF SUCH A REMARKABLE ECOSYSTEM IN THE MIDST OF THREE GUJJAR SETTLEMENTS NEATLY REFUTES THE ARGUMENT ORIGINALLY PUT FORWARD BY MACONACHIE AND BEADON, AND STILL ECHOED TODAY BY SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS: THAT VILLAGERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH STRONG PASTORAL TRADITIONS, LIKE THE GUJJARS, DO NOT CARE ABOUT TREES

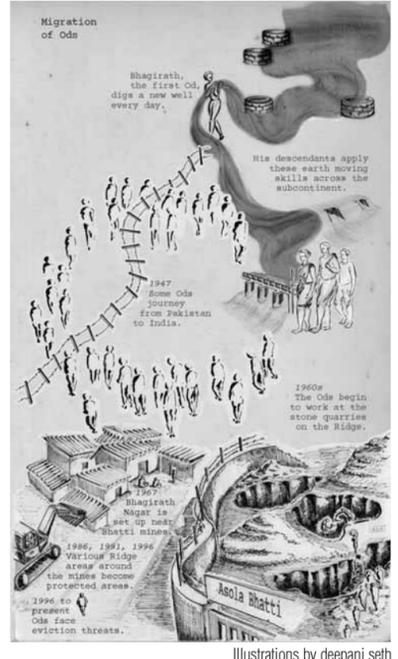
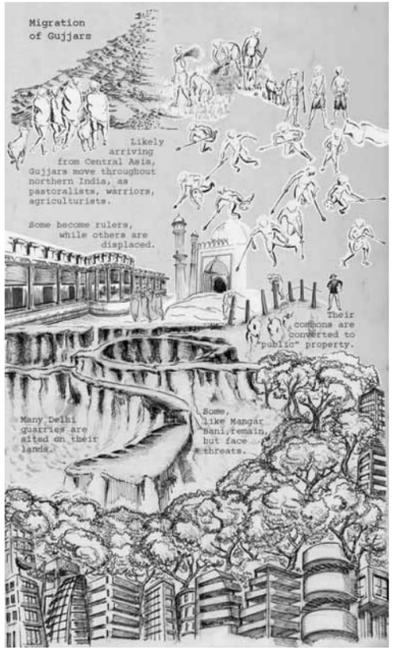
estate industry tick, a group that, apparently, includes a temple priest and his hired muscle.

Real estate is now the shadow that hovers, unavoidably, over Mangarvani and the three villages that surround it. This, though, is a relatively recent development, and it has gained traction due to the changing role of the Gujjar landowners in the villages. The fact that Gujjars are the dominant landowners suggests that, in this area at least, they long ago made the transition from nomadic tribe to settled community. Pastoralism still plays a role here, but it has long been complemented by agriculture, and it has taken place around fixed village settlements. And Gujjars have integrated into a caste-based village structure, finding themselves in a powerful position within the local hierarchy.

The complexity of the caste system is in full view with the Gujjar community. In most states in India, Gujjars come under the administrative category of Other Backwards Classes (OBC), which puts them below the traditionally "high" castes, but above Dalits (administratively: Scheduled Castes or "SC") and tribals (Scheduled Tribes or "ST"). It also makes them eligible for a range of reservations made available by the state. But this cut-and-dry state-imposed category hardly gets at the nuances and the internal differences within Gujjar communities. In some parts of India, especially in the Himalayan foothills, Gujjars still live a more tribal, nomadic existence, with little integration into settled caste systems; however, in other contexts, including Mangarvani, they are not only integrated, they are also the most powerful community in a given village.

While OBC may, then, be a wholly inadequate way to describe Gujjars, the designation is still vitally important, given its link to reservations. In some cases, Gujjars have demanded a lower status, so that they have access to more state benefits. These are the exigencies of modern-day caste politics. While the impulse behind reservations is a deeply progressive one—to provide support and opportunities to groups that have historically been exploited and marginalized—their application must deal with the messy terrain of competing communities, internal discord, and intersecting layers of privilege and power.

Such complex dynamics often lead to explosive results. In 2007, in the state of Rajasthan, a group of Gujjars began to agitate for the inclusion of Gujjars as a Scheduled Tribe (ST), in a sense a step "down" from OBC, but one which would provide them with more state support. As the protests gained momentum, they triggered state



Illustrations by deepani seth

repression. Within a span of four days in May 2007, police opened fire on four different groups of protesters, in conflicts which left 25 Gujjars and one policeman dead.

In early June, the protest turned national, as Gujjar groups from around the country descended on Delhi and other major cities, including Jaipur and Ahmedabad. In a remarkable show of community strength, the protesters successfully cut off all road access to Delhi, effectively blockading the national capital. While the agitation was largely non-violent, some protesters set fire to buses and trains. For the elite of Delhi, this destruction of property and interruption of their everyday life could not be countenanced. All the slurs and all the urban disdain toward Gujjars, from Babur to the British, were dredged up. A municipal councilor in Delhi is on the record saying that, for Gujjars, "killing is in their blood". Protests continued the next year, with 38 more Gujjars shot down by police. The agitation only stopped when the government agreed to give Gujjars reservations, not as a Scheduled Tribe, but as a Denotified Tribe—the official post-colonial term for groups that the British had dubbed Criminal Tribes.

At the height of the agitation, protesters from Rajasthan got strong support from leaders of Gujjar-dominated villages in the Delhi region, who both benefit and suffer from their proximity to state power. Their strength at the village level gives them significant pull in local elections, but despite that they cannot compete with the real power players of the capital. Economically, too, they have benefited from the ever-expanding markets of Delhi, but, except in rare cases, they have not found a place at the table of the city's elite.

The traditional ruling classes in Delhi still see Gujjar-dominated areas as a backwards hinterland, even though, with the expansion of the capital, they are often right in the midst of the urban sprawl. If not physically, they are still metaphorically on the edge of an urban zone that houses a far more powerful set of elites. And it is increasingly not just an Indian elite housed in the Indian capital, but an international elite housed in the multinational offices and luxury high-rises of Gurgaon. This is the larger context in which the Mangarvani drama has played out, as the sacred grove is being inexorably pulled into the capital's sphere of influence.

Excerpted from *Fractured Forest, Quartzite City* by Thomas Crowley, jointly published by SAGE Publications and Yoda Press under the Yoda-SAGE Select imprint



READING IS A CONVERSATION. ALL BOOKS TALK. BUT A GOOD BOOK LISTENS AS WELL — MARK HADDON

*Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism* is the first authentic biography of the Grand Old Man of India that hits the bookshelves across the country 112 years after his death, writes KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

# The untold story of a great life

It is said that history is written by victors. This is a refrain which some attribute to Winston Churchill. Though there are disagreements over who the author of this dictum is, it has been stated by many historians, archaeologists and philosophers that the power and mighty decide and manufacture history to suit their convenience. Hence robbers and dacoits get elevated as freedom fighters and great warriors.

India is a victim of manufactured history. Our political masters decided what the countrymen should and shouldn't learn as history. Much has been written by S L Bhyrappa about the manufactured history from his personal experience. The Karnataka scholar has written a true account of how late G Parthasarathi, the advisor to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi played a pivotal role in getting the Indian history re-written to suit the political convenience of his master.

Sir Henri Miers Elliot, English civil servant and historian who authored *The History of India, As Told by Its Own Historians* has stated frankly that his objective while writing history was to "make the native subjects of British India more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of the present rule". Hence, he had quoted only those portions from Persian and Arabic works which make the Indians feel that they were better served by their colonial masters.

This has been reproduced by Dr K M Munshi, former union minister and founder of Bharatiya Vidy Bhavan, in his foreword to *The History And Culture of the Indian People*, the 11-volume series of the sub-continent's story edited by the legendary R C Majumdar. The pattern was blindly followed by the brown *shahis* who manipulated and mis-interpreted facts and documentary evidences to write history as per their whims and fancies. The result? Many fighters who fought from the frontline battles against invaders, colonial masters and thugs who robbed India of its spiritual and materialistic wealth ended up as unsung heroes and non-entities.

History students feigned ignorance when asked about Shiji Maharaj, Tatia Toppe and Chapekar Brothers of Pune whose names evoked respect, adoration and admiration throughout the sub-continent. Damodarant Chapekar of Poona did not think twice before eliminating Walter Charles Rand, the special plague commissioner in Poona on June 22, 1897 when all pleas by the citizens to save



Annie Besant with an aged Dadabhai Naoroji at his house in Versova in 1915

them from the pandemic fell on deaf ears. Thousands perished in this pandemic which could have been averted had the British administrators showed some concern for Indian lives. This was the period before the advent of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subash Chandra Bose etc into the arena of the freedom movement. This was the era when the East India Company and the British colonial masters swindled India bare.

The shining star who led India's quest for freedom from British exploitation and coined the term self-rule too died unsung — Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). Other than unofficially honoring him with the title "The Grand Old Man of India", the motherland is yet to give due recognition to this great son of the sub-continent who resembled a commander-in-chief of the Indian freedom movement while strategising and devising ways and means to liberate India from the shackles of slavery without shedding a drop of blood or sacrificing the lives of innocent agitators.

The sub-continent was blessed with a

galaxy of stars like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Chettur Sankaran Nair (1857-1934) who stood for liberating the country from the colonial masters using intellectual prowess and knowledge. There is a common thread which united these personalities who struggled for their objective before Gandhi and Nehru entered the scene. Their motto was to educate the masses, especially women, and take on the British from a position of bargaining power without giving them an option to boss over the Indians.

While we have sufficient literature about Gokhale and Tilak, there wasn't much known published works on the life and times of Dadabhai Naoroji, born in a poor Parsi family in Gujarat and went on to emerge as a unifying force of the Indian National Congress in its Calcutta session in 1906. Had it not been Naoroji, the Congress would have split vertically in that session and subsequent the party would have disintegrated into factions and fractions.

It was Naoroji who set the Indian Independent Movement in motion by telling the world about the unashamed robbery committed by the British masters. Angus Maddison, the British economist who specialised in quantitative macro economic history found that India and China were the world leaders, contributing more than 40 per cent share to the global GDP before the Mughals and Britishers annexed the country. Maddison's finding was sometime in 2006 as part of a project he undertook for the OECD and European Union.

But Naoroji had established through his research between 1867 and 1880 that Indian poverty and pestilence were the fall outs of the drain of wealth from India by the "European leeches". He took the fighting straight to the lion's den — Britain. The white men had no answer to the claims by the Parsi gentleman from Bombay. The story of Naoroji's life and times has been retold in an immaculate style by Dinyar Patel, an Indian-born historian working as an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina.

*Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism* authored by Patel is the first authentic biography of the Grand Old Man of India and it hits the bookshelves across the country 112 years after the demise of the protagonist. Dinyar Patel has done an excellent job in presenting to the new generation of Indians the period in which Naoroji lived and the challenges he had to face.

Between the late 1860s and the early 1880s, he produced a prodigious amount of literature — containing extensive calculations, international comparisons, compilations of historical evidence and refutations of government pronouncements and statistics — highlighting the stark impoverishment of Britain's Indian subjects. Significantly, he established a direct link between poverty and British rule. "So far as my inquiries go at present, the conclusion I draw is that wherever the East India Company acquired territory, impoverishment followed their steps", argued Naoroji.

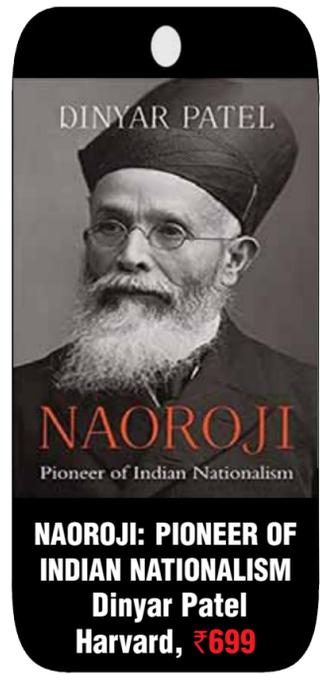
Naoroji famously contended that the drain of wealth, whereby as much as one-

fourth of the annual tax revenue raised in India, went into British coffers rather than being reinvested in the country.

This inference was not based on Government statistics. It was arrived at by the young students of Bombay's Elphinstone College, the topmost of them being Dadabhai Naoroji, who occupies the *numero uno* place in the list of the College's Distinguished Alumni. It was the education which he received from Elphinstone College which helped him to understand the truth that the provinces that had employed Indian bureaucrats were buffered from drain of wealth and were economically more robust than British India.

For Naoroji, national education meant mass public education. He dreamt of an India that was developed, progressive and prosperous as France which he visited in 1855 during his trip to the UK.

Patel's book reads like the script of a film and he creates right in front of us a period in India, uncorrupted by digital technology and greed. It is an era of innocence and love the theme of which was *Manav Seva Madhav Seva*.



**NAOROJI: PIONEER OF INDIAN NATIONALISM**  
Dinyar Patel  
Harvard, ₹699

## NEW ARRIVALS

**THE ROCK BABAS AND OTHER STORIES**  
Ameya Prabhu  
Westland, ₹399

*The Rock Babas and Other Stories* is a map of human fragilities and resilience that is as true in the Himalayas as it is in the state of Georgia. An ageing tycoon, Takahashi Watanabe, donates his fortune to charity when faced with a terminal illness, in an attempt to reconnect with his estranged daughter. Special Agent Jackson Holder, an African-American agent of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation overcomes racial biases to crack a homicide with domestic hate crimes undertones. Swiss Hotelier Helmut Kauffman's transforms under the tutelage of the eponymous 'rock babas', a group of monks playing rock and roll and living high up in the Himalayas. A deposed dictator in prison reflects on his life and times. Thought-provoking and mystic, profound and light of touch, caustic and comic, Ameya Prabhu's sparkling debut is an ode to the challenges life throws up and to the people who rise up to meet them.

**QUEEN OF MAHISHMATHI**  
Anand Neelakantan  
Westland, ₹499

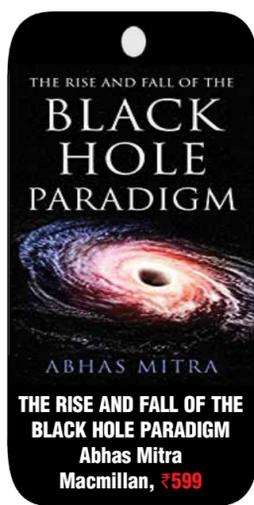
Sivagami's missteps have only deepened her determination to fulfill her father's wish and stop the despicable activities at Gauriparvat. And so she battles on. Unknown to her, however, Maharaja Somadeva's challengers have begun to close in on the king, and Sivagami finds herself suddenly at a disadvantage. With a player like Somadeva, though, the biggest mistake you can make is to not immediately checkmate and destroy. The game of chaturanga is not quite over. As Sivagami takes on the kingdom's enemies, guided by Somadeva, she finds in her own manoeuvres an echo of the man she has always detested. In her journey to becoming the queen, Sivagami must choose between love and ambition, principles and deviousness, selflessness and envy. What does she hold on to?

# De-mystifying the black hole paradigm

Mitra's book discusses critical issues on astrophysics and general relativity in layman's language, as also shares anecdotes on scientific intolerance, writes Dr Kanika Das

As a mathematical physicist and researcher in general relativity and cosmology, initially I was bit annoyed with the very title of this book, and I thought that Mitra was bragging, there could never be anything like a "fall" of the black hole paradigm. But as I finished through the book, I realised that even if we completely ignore the peer reviewed research by Mitra and his few American colleagues: The black hole paradigm has always been controversial as apart from Albert Einstein, almost two dozen general relativists who have argued that true mathematical black holes should not occur even within the context of classical general relativity.

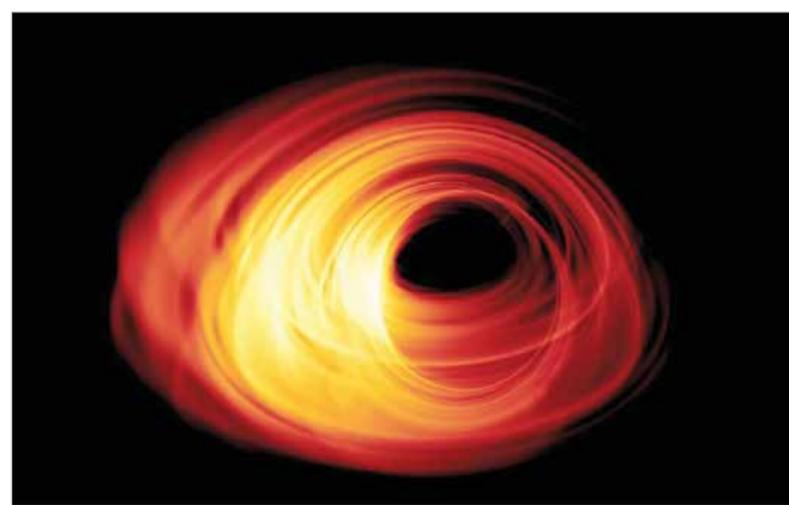
I was not aware that way back in 1969, the noted French relativist Luis Bel had shown that a true mathematical black hole, assumed to be a sphere, should actually behave like a point implying that its mass-energy is  $E=Mc^2=0$ . If this is true, the black hole paradigm certainly fell right in 1969 even though we mathematical physicists cannot accept such a tragic climb down. I was also unaware of a 1988 research paper by two famed Indian relativists Jayant Narlikar and Thanu Padmanabhan in which they had argued that the "problems related to the source (black holes) could be avoided if the event horizon did not form and that the universe



**THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BLACK HOLE PARADIGM**  
Abhas Mitra  
Macmillan, ₹599

only contained quasi-black holes." Mitra goes at great lengths to explain what these "quasi-black holes" could be. For most of the practical purposes, they pretend like true black holes and we certainly cannot rule out the fact the Event Horizon Telescope detected the shadow of a black hole pretender and not the same of a true black hole possessing an event horizon.

I also learnt that post the research of Mitra, in the past two decades, innumerable theoretical physicists have argued that the formation of true black holes may be inhibited by some quantum mechanical



or quantum gravity effects; and the black hole mimickers could result from such unknown mysterious quantum gravity effects. Mitra exerts that there is not a single research paper which has ever shown how massive stars composed of protons, neutrons, electrons and radiation can turn into an Exotic Compact Object comprising negative pressure dark energy bubble or seething ball of elementary strings.

On the other hand, Mitra emphasises that if formation of true black holes must be prevented, it must be due to some well known generic effect which can be equally effective and inevitable for incipient

black hole mimickers having even billions of solar masses. And the only such known generic effect is that, all kinds of light, heat and radiation must get trapped by the rapidly increasing gravity of the collapsing star as it would be about to become a true black hole. Mitra then argues that the outward radiation pressure of the trapped radiation must counteract the inward pull of gravity, and the massive star should turn into a quasi-static ball of fire supported entirely by its radiation pressure. Though this ball of fire is almost as compact as a mathematical black hole, it has no event horizon and hence keeps

on leaking bit of radiation. In this sense, this ultra-hot ball of radiation should keep on contracting eternally in order to achieve true black hole state  $E=Mc^2=0$  suggested by the Bel's 1969 paper. Mitra nicknamed such an ever contracting ball of fire as Eternally Collapsing Object (ECO). As a mathematical physicist, I do not understand all the finer points of this narrative but I rely on the fact the relevant papers have been published in reputed journals like Physical Review (D), New Astronomy, Monthly Notices Royal Astronomical Society, and Monthly Notices Royal Astronomical Society Letters.

Mitra and his American colleagues have argued that ECOs must be strongly magnetized and should be Magnetospheric ECOs or MECOS. It is heartening to see that, in 2006, Center for Astrophysics, Harvard, issued a long Press Release on a research claiming that the so-called black hole at the heart of a famous quasar should be a MECO. This press release admitted that the concept of MECO can be traced to the idea of ECO developed by the Indian astrophysicist Abhas Mitra in 1998. While as an Indian, I feel proud to see that an ivy league press release is related to an idea developed by a lone Indian battling innumerable odds both within his institution and outside world, my heart bled when I read that CFA later removed its own press release later for reasons best known to them.

This book not only discusses several critical issues on astrophysics and general relativity in a layman's language, but also reveals several anecdotes on scientific intolerance and herd mentality which try to ostracise a minion non-influential researcher who refuses to sing the mainstream narrative. A must read for not only students of physics but also for all professional astrophysicists and general relativists.

The reviewer is a professor in the Department of Mathematics, Gauhati University, India

# Pak falling into China's imperial design

Chinese President Xi Jinping is known for his assertiveness and aggression to install his country at the top in the global pecking order. He has started this long and arduous mission, with a usual clandestine Chinese vision, since his coming to power in 2012.

His gargantuan "China Dream" to rejuvenate the nation and the most ambitious "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) have together caused geopolitical concerns, particularly for Asian powers like India.

Undoubtedly, Xi could rightly be called as the reincarnation of late Chairman Mao Zedong. Xi has become the only Chinese leader who has accumulated so much power and position, either in the name of launching China as a global leader or curbing corruption and misgovernance both within and outside the Communist Party of China (CPC).

So today, what is fast unfolding in Pakistan's Gwadar Port, located in its western province of disturbed Balochistan, is just the tip of an iceberg, which is uncovered in front of the international community.

The very presence of China in this port city is absolutely decried by the locals and especially by the Baloch nationalists, who have already been fighting a long war with the federal Government of Pakistan, on various other issues.

Gwadar Port is a warm water deep seaport situated on the Arabian Sea. It is strategically located between South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, just outside the Strait of Hormuz. This critical port has been leased to China by the Pakistani Government for a period of 43 years i.e. up till 2059, starting from 2015.

As per Chinese media reports, the port was upgraded at a cost of \$1.62 billion. Most importantly, Gwadar is at

the vortex of \$50 billion (41 billion Euro), much talked about and controversial China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Further, the CPEC is an integral part of Xi's signature initiative of the BRI.

Gwadar Port came to light way back in the year 1954. During the regime of former President Pervez Musharraf, he launched the construction of the port in 2007, at a cost of \$248 million. However, in 2015, the port was made a part of the CPEC to connect western China and northern Pakistan. This port will also be a site for a floating liquefied natural gas as a part of the larger \$2.5 billion Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, connecting Gwadar with Nawabshah.

The CPEC is a 3,218 kilometre long route that is aimed to link Gwadar to Xinxiang Province in western China. And this corridor consists of highways, railways and gas pipelines that could trigger an economy of billion dollars once it is completed.

The Gwadar Special Economic Zone is built around an area of 2,292 acres near the Gwadar Port. The project of Gwadar Sea Port became operational on November 14, 2016 during the time of former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But it is worthwhile to see how this port area could serve China's long term strategic interests.

In a China Maritime Report on Gwadar, the port has been described as a "Strategic Strong point" in the Indian Ocean. The officials, military officers and civilian analysts of China typically employ the "Strategic Strongpoint" concept to describe certain strategically valuable foreign ports with terminals and commercial zones owned and operated by Chinese firms. The top Chinese policy-makers believe that Gwadar, an inchoate point in friendly Pakistan which may certainly support as a major platform for their countries



economic, diplomatic and military interactions around the northern Indian region.

China's strong presence in the Gwadar Port area and in the CPEC across the POK will boost Beijing's security and business interests in the long run. In reality, China has responded to America's grand Indo-Pacific strategy that has been long there in place in this zone, apart from its presence in Gwadar Port, Beijing has taken a number of crucial steps to develop its own network around the Indo-Pacific and specifically in the Indian Ocean Rim region. Further, the Indo-Pacific is a strategic area through which two-thirds of the global trade and 80 per cent of the Chinese oil passes. And the most important element in the Indo-Pacific is that all the countries such as India, China, Australia, Japan and the US which are zealously guarding their interests here geographically falls in the region only.

But now the fast-changing geopolitical scenario has made it so that India, Japan, Australia and the US are coming together

under the banner of the Quad Group to counter China in the Indo-Pacific. US President Donald Trump has pushed the Sino-US rivalry to all time high. And in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic and last American presidential poll, Trump has got another opportunity to brand China as its grand enemy in the globe. It is expected that even now, under the President-elect Jo Biden, the Sino-US relations may not return to normalcy. However, the Team Biden may easily stich up a working relationship between Washington and Beijing for sure.

These all will have serious impact on Beijing's future grand strategy towards expansionist game across the world, particularly along the BRI nations. With a belligerent US, a constant border clash with neighbouring India and massive disturbances constantly emerging from Hong Kong, Xinjiang, South China Sea and from Taiwan, Xi will be certainly bolstering his mission to reach out to countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal

and of course Pakistan. And herein, the developments in Gwadar Port will be very critical for China.

It is noted that Pakistan has been gradually moving into Chinese arms. This has happened both because of Trump's decision to cut all funding to that country and an army-backed Imran Khan Government's decision to play a junior partner role in China's BRI. Regional experts say that China is soon replacing America as its most important security partner and guarantor. What Beijing expects from Islamabad is an unhindered access to the Indian Ocean as the former is trying to encircle India from all corners. It is estimated that Chinese investment in Pakistan is going to cross \$46 billion by 2030. It is simply a serious course change for Pakistan as it is increasingly relying on China for its economic and military assistance instead of the US. This is a game-changing narrative in the power positioning on India's North-Western frontier.

The current Gwadar Fencing Project launched by the Pakistani Government around the CPEC corridor in the city is sending strong negative vibes to the locals. It is done under the supervision of the federal and provincial authorities. It is hoped that the fencing project, once completed will completely change the security dynamics of the port city. The Balochistan Provincial Government aims to fence off around 24 square kilometre area that is devoted to the building of the CPEC project. It is learnt that there will be only two entry points to the fenced parts of the city and nearly 500 surveillance cameras will be installed to monitor the movements of people in and around the project area. This will turn the city into a fortress, ironically to secure Chinese business and security interests, not to promote the welfare of the poor Baloch people.

The primary objective of fencing is to safeguard the project from the Baloch nationalists who has been voicing concerns against Chinese grand

strategy from the beginning. Again, this new design of security network might force many locals to relocate from the port area.

Now the raging argument in Balochistan is that why Islamabad is allowing Beijing to make one of its provinces a Chinese colony? Is that so that the Imran Government is intentionally pushing its belligerent province of Balochistan to the debt-trap of China? It is true that with strong Chinese presence in the port city, Pakistan will be assured that for the coming 43 years (lease time period of the port), there will some signs of development in the most neglected region of the country. Despite being the most resourceful province of the country, Islamabad has simply ignored the concerns of the Baloch people for decades since independence. Today, Balochistan is recorded as a law and order problem in the lexicon of Pakistan's establishment. And it is the responsibility of the country's "Deep State" i.e. the Army to oversee, manage and put down the flames of civil unrest in this part of Pakistan. The successive civilian administrations in Islamabad have directly ignored the local demands for which a constant rage against the federal Government has grown over the years.

Above all, when China has landed up in Gwadar Port, one of crucial cities of the province, the locals see no end of their longstanding problems. Rather, with increasing fortification of the city, will certainly create an atmosphere of fear and alienation among the people of the port city in particular and the Baloch in general.

Truly speaking, it is a disturbing signal. Very soon, Pakistan will realise how it will turn out to be a new protectorate zone of China.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

**The fencing of the Gwadar Port city is irrefutable evidence of Pakistan dancing to Beijing's tune to safeguard its economic interests. It is a disturbing signal for the locals. Very soon, Pakistan will realise how it has turned into a new protectorate zone of China**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Trump's impact on federal courts to last for decades

On this, even US President Donald Trump's most fevered critics agree: he has left a deep imprint on the federal courts that will outlast his one term in office for decades to come.

He used the promise of conservative judicial appointments to win over Republican skeptics as a candidate. Then as President, he relied on outside conservative legal organisations and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to employ an assembly line-like precision to install more than 230 judges on the federal bench, including the three newest justices of the Supreme Court. Trump never tired of boasting about it.

Indeed, undeterred by Democratic criticism, the Senate was still confirming judges more than a month after Trump lost his reelection bid to Joe Biden.

"Trump has basically done more than any President has done in a single term since (President Jimmy) Carter to put his stamp on the judiciary," said Jonathan Adler, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland, Ohio, adding that Congress created around 150 new judgeships during Carter's presidency.

The impact will be enduring. Among the Trump-appointed judges, who hold lifetime positions, several are still in their 30s. The three Supreme Court picks could still be on the court at the 21st century's midpoint, 30 years from now.

Beyond the Supreme Court, 30 per cent of the judges on the nation's court of appeals, where all but a handful of cases reach their end, were appointed by Trump.

However, numbers don't tell the entire story. The real

measure of what Trump has been able to do will be revealed in countless court decisions in the years to come on abortion, guns, religious rights and a host of other culture wars issues.

When it came to the President's own legal challenges of the election results, however, judges who have him to thank for their position rebuffed his claims. But in many other important ways, his success with judicial appointments already is paying dividends for conservatives.

When the Supreme Court blocked New York from enforcing certain limits on attendance at churches and synagogues in areas designated as hard hit by Covid-19, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, the newest member of the court, cast the decisive fifth vote. Previously, the court had allowed restrictions on religious services over the dissent of four justices, including the other two Trump nominees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

Five Trump appointees were in the majority of the 6-4 decision by the full 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals in September that made it harder for felons in Florida to regain the right to vote. The Atlanta-based court had a majority of Democratic-appointed judges when Trump took office.

Last month, Judges Britt Grant and Barbara Lagoa, both named by Trump, formed the majority on a three-judge 11th circuit panel that struck down local Florida bans on therapy that seeks to change the sexual orientation of LGBTQ minors. Other appeals courts around the country have upheld the conversion therapy bans.

In one early look at Trump's appointees to federal trial courts, political science



In this Feb 5, 2019 file photo, US Supreme Court Associate Justices Neil Gorsuch, left, and Brett Kavanaugh watch as President Donald Trump arrives to give his State of the Union address to a joint session on Congress at the Capitol in Washington

professors Kenneth Manning, Robert Carp and Lisa Holmes compared their decisions with more than 1,17,000 opinions published dating back to 1932.

"Trump has appointed judges who exhibit a distinct decision-making pattern that is, on the whole, significantly more conservative than previous Presidents," the political scientists concluded in an October 2020 working paper.

The one constant of the past four years — through impeachment, the coronavirus pandemic and Trump's election loss — has been his nomination of and Senate confirmation of judges.

The President has had several partners in the judicial effort, but none more important than McConnell, who takes particular pride in reshaping the Supreme Court.

"I think it's far and away the most consequential thing I've ever been involved in," the 78-year-old McConnell said in an interview. "And it's the most long-lasting accomplishment of the current adminis-

tration, by far."

They might not have called it a partnership at the time, but their mutually reinforcing work began even before Trump's election in 2016.

Trump used the issue of the federal judiciary to win trust with voters who might have questions about the conservative credentials of a billionaire real estate developer who had once supported abortion rights and did not have a track record in politics.

He put in writing a list of potential nominees, provided by the conservative Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation, he would select from in filling a Supreme Court vacancy.

Kellyanne Conway, who served as his campaign manager in 2016, said it was a move that people who had been in office for years and wanted to ascend to the presidency "didn't have the courage to do, which is name names."

As it happens, there was a high court opening at the time, following the death of Justice

Antonin Scalia in February.

Enter McConnell. The Republican blocked President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland, refusing so much as a hearing for the respected appeals court judge whom Republicans had previously identified as a high court nominee they could support.

It was a gamble at a time when Trump's electoral prospects seemed dim, but it paid off with his stunning victory over Hillary Clinton.

And the high court seat wasn't the only one waiting to be filled when Trump took office in January 2017. One hundred four judgeships were open after Republicans used their Senate majority to grind the nomination process to a near halt in Obama's final two years in office. Only 28.6 per cent of his nominees were confirmed in that stretch.

The pace quickened almost immediately. Republicans moved with an urgency on confirmations that hasn't let up. In Trump's first two years, they pushed through 30 appellate court judges and 53 district court nominees. It was the highest number of appellate court confirmations in a two-year period since Ronald Reagan and nearly double the number that Obama secured in his first two years.

McConnell and top Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee eliminated rules that had allowed the Opposition party to delay confirmations, most notably requiring just a simple majority, instead of 60 votes, to move Supreme Court nominees. Democrats, bitter over the stalled Garland nomination, otherwise would have blocked Gorsuch's confirmation in April 2017.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, D-RI, a member

of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a sharp Trump critic, said Trump's judicial legacy "is a lot less about what he's done than what he's allowed others to do in his name."

Whitehouse said Trump essentially "outsourced" judicial nominations to McConnell and the Federalist Society, specifically the group's leader Leonard Leo and former White House counsel Don McGahn, a Federalist Society member who made judicial nominations a top priority.

At the same time, the Federalist Society and other conservative groups, including the Judicial Crisis Network and Americans for Prosperity, have taken millions of dollars in anonymous donations and waged public and behind-the-scenes campaigns for right-wing judges, Whitehouse said.

Trump "opened the channel for special-interest interference in judicial selection. That I think is very novel and obviously lends itself to corruption," Whitehouse said. "Right-wing forces have for decades sought the kind of influence in judicial nominations that the Trump administration outright gave them."

McConnell scoffed at the criticism. "The reason a lot of them belong to the Federalist Society is because that is sort of the core mission of the Federalist Society — to get the courts back to doing what they're supposed to do and not legislate from the bench," he said.

On the campaign trail and at White House events, Trump would often cite his record on judicial appointments as an example of accomplishment, while ignoring the obstructions that occurred during the Obama years.

"You know, when I got in,

we had over 100 federal judges that weren't appointed. Now, I don't know why Obama left that. It was like a big, beautiful present to all of us. Why the hell did he leave that? Maybe he got complacent," Trump boasted at one point, omitting the essential fact that McConnell had blocked Obama's nominees.

The high court vacancy at the start of Trump's term was, in essence, a gift from McConnell. Justice Anthony Kennedy's decision to retire in 2018 allowed Trump to replace the court's swing justice with the more conservative Kavanaugh, who survived his own bruising confirmation hearings that included allegations he sexually assaulted a woman when they were both in high school decades ago. Kavanaugh denied the claims.

Less than two months before the 2020 election, Trump was handed another opening with the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Trump and Senate Republicans didn't hesitate. He nominated Barrett even before Ginsburg was buried at Arlington National Cemetery and McConnell ensured the confirmation was done before the election.

The Senate has continued confirming Trump nominees even after his defeat for reelection, breaking a norm that has stood since 1900 with one exception, said Russell Wheeler, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution. Federal prosecutor Thomas Kirsch was confirmed as Barrett's replacement on the federal appeals court based in Chicago on December 15, on a mostly party-line vote.

The exception was the Senate's bipartisan acceptance in 1980 of a former Senate staff member as a federal appeals

court judge. That nominee was Stephen Breyer, now a Supreme Court justice.

Along with the question of legacy is whether Trump's record on judges spurs major changes to the judiciary.

Wheeler, at Brookings, said one of the most striking features of the teamwork of Trump and McConnell is that they acted as though they had the support of most Americans. They did not, he said.

"My main beef with this current group is that there's just no mandate to turn the judiciary so far to the right," Wheeler said. "Trump lost the popular vote massively in 2016, but nevertheless has behaved as if he had a mandate to reshape the federal judiciary at the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals level and I think that's just unfounded."

Liberal groups already have been pushing for changes at the highest level, including expansion of the Supreme Court and term limits for justices. The political prospects for both ideas are uncertain, at best. But there's less doubt from any vantage point about what Trump has wrought.

The US "will be living with the legacy of Donald Trump for decades to come as a result of his judicial appointments," said Brian Fallon, executive director of Demand Justice, a liberal advocacy group. People who accepted judicial appointments from Trump will "wear the moniker of 'Trump judge' for the rest of their lives," Fallon said.

Not so, in Conway's view. "It will be one of the most lasting pieces of his legacy, distinguished and durable," she said.

(Mark Sherman, Kevin Freking and Matthew Daly contributed for the article for the Associated Press)



ONE IS NEVER AFRAID OF THE UNKNOWN; ONE IS AFRAID OF THE KNOWN COMING TO AN END — JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

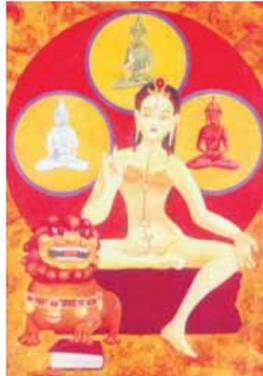
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week do not suppress your emotions as it will negatively impact your health. You need to be careful about how, when, and where you vent your emotional reactions. Anything that reduces your stress level will be helpful now, it could be a five-minute walk. Keep a positive outlook and stay calm and connected. Overall, life is good. On the career front, tension is foreseen. If experiencing stress, then talking to a friend or a work colleague will prove to be helpful. Those trying for a job change this is the right time. Only making plans will not help, you need to get up and execute them. This week you may get the position you were aiming for a long time. It is a very positive time for you and an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships of all kinds.

**Lucky number 21**  
**Lucky colour** Magenta  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Don't try to deal with the problems alone. Sharing them with someone would help you offload your stress. Take good care of yourself and family. You have a nurturing and generous personality. Do not compromise on health. You need to bring balance between your work and personal relations. Career-wise, you are confused about whether to leave the present job or start a business. Those opting for career may not have a clear vision as to what they really want in the future. Constant changing of field is a sign of instability and often gets you nowhere. Explore your interest and potentials. In your love life, think with your cool mind than with the raging heart. Singles, it's not the time to take a hasty decision. Judge the person and take your own time.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour** Golden  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You will be optimistic and experience a wave of positivity and creativity within. This would reflect in your personality. It is an excellent time to flaunt your charm and enjoy personal development. The sense of vitality and peace in mind will make you efficient. On the career front, you are confident and ready to face any challenges. You will earn accolades for your performance. Those in politics will have a good time. Implementation of their views is likely. Now is the time for success through efforts. On the personal front, mind, heart and emotions are going in different ways. This is a highly emotional time in love relationships. Situations can quickly become heated. Take a break and treat your lover like a friend. Don't be in a hurry to end or to begin a relationship.

**Lucky number 11**  
**Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Monday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You will be determined and believe in yourself and your talents. You will strive for a healthy life. It's time to imagine how totally different and wonderful things can be. On the career front, you are positive and will try to bring love and compassion in your work. This week you are highly intuitive and people will be amazed to see this side of yours. This is a time to focus on your goals and targets. Avoid being sensitive and emotional as it will not sort out any problem. Be firm and determined. Those in business need to be careful in financial deals. Relationship wise, there are chances of fake love, be cautious. Those in committed relationships may face confusions, therefore, clear the doubts and avoid misunderstandings.

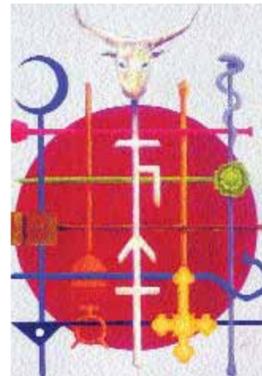
**Lucky number 9**  
**Lucky colour** Orange  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you need to balance your health efforts with your personal and professional responsibilities. Prioritise your own life and take rest to heal yourself. If you put yourself last on the list of things, your health situation will suffer. Career-wise, those looking for a job may have to wait for some more time. This week you may find failure. Don't dwell on failures and reward yourself for your successes. Accept that everyone has limits and cannot succeed at everything. This is the time to reflect on what you have achieved. Those who are already committed don't hesitate to speak your mind to your partner. You stand with pride and express your feelings. This is the time when you can strengthen your bonding with your loved one.

**Lucky number 22**  
**Lucky colour** Red  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

A break from your daily routine is the need of the hour. You need to slow down and relax. There is no point in pushing yourself when you are tired. It may cause illness and injury. Meditation will recharge your energy. Take a short break. It will do wonders for your physical and mental well-being. On the career front, investment done in the past will come to fruition this week. You will reap what you have sown. You are in your senior's good book and soon there will be rewards. Have patience. On the personal front, you may seem confused. Those who are looking for love, need to analyse their emotional issues and try to sort them out. Your relationship will move into an easier and more balanced phase when you are sure of yourself.

**Lucky number 6**  
**Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week you need to manage your stress level to stay in good health. Face the problems that come your way and don't try to avoid them. Ensure you get enough rest and don't indulge in wasteful practices. If you require healing, ask for it on both at literal and spiritual levels. On the career front, people may not understand or support your new ideas or proposals. But if you know that you are right, proceed with it. You are enthusiastic, full of energy and want to put out your best, but others are not taking it positively. Leave your simplicity behind, be smart and expressive. Most other things are manageable and you are likely to handle them well. On the relationship front, love at first sight or one-sided love may only prove as a waste of time.

**Lucky number 3**  
**Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week focus on balancing your *chakras* or your body, mind, and spirit. You should pay good attention to all three. Meditation, *Pranayam* and walk amidst nature would work wonderfully well. The benefits are far greater than any effort you put out. On the work front, networking with new people would prove beneficial. This is the time to make new business deals, sign on projects and assignments. Your work will be recognised and appreciated. Stars favour your creativity. Those in service can expect a raise/promotion. On the personal front, new ideas and plans will help you to renew your relations with the loved ones. Love is in the air and you are in full mood to express your feelings to the one you like. Singles may have an opportunity to meet their sweetheart.

**Lucky number 19**  
**Lucky colour** Sky Blue  
**Lucky day** Friday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you may change your mind radically about something. Listen to your health expert. Those suffering from serious ailments need to be under observation. Make sure you have a healthy diet and adequate sleep. Avoid stimulating substances as much as possible. On the work front, be quick with decisions. Make sure your intelligence and logic are used for the good cause. Don't waste your time in conflicts. For some of you travelling long-distance for business, matters is on the cards. There is hope and happiness at the emotional level, along with a new sense of security, protection and recovery. This week you will enjoy the warmth, affection and togetherness with the old friend/lover.

**Lucky number 10**  
**Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week you need to control the childlike side of yourself. Listen to your body. Over-eating as well as starving are bad for health. Bringing balance in food habits not only helps you to maintain your weight but gives you a confident mind-set. You are likely to feel calm, poised and vibrant. Results in competitive exams may not be encouraging. On the work front, don't have high expectations, as your stars are not favourable. You may face conflicts and confrontations, which may cause you to lose your calm. It is advised to follow the discipline and rules of the organisation, else be ready to face some displeasure by your seniors. Love and emotions will take a back seat. You may prefer isolation than being with the wrong crowd or partner.

**Lucky number 18**  
**Lucky colour** Green  
**Lucky day** Friday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Stay away from tension, worry and depression as it would take a toll on your health. Learn to say no. Conscious relaxation is important for your body and mind and it will help you to deal with the stress. On the career front, you will be appreciated for your skills. Your communication will be good. Those in their own business may acquire a secure position in terms of wealth, property and position. This is the right time to invest in property. Those in service are likely to get supported by their seniors and bosses which will prove a stepping stone in your career. On the personal front, you will reflect charm and positivity and will win the heart of your partner. A new beginning of a relationship and higher expectations are on the card.

**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week you are overworked and exhausted. Reduce the intake of nicotine or caffeine as it is harmful. Take time out for yourself. Your health will show a positive change. Observe the situations that stress you and how you should deal with them in the future. Learning rituals from the past will deepen your spiritual understanding and practice and help you to bring balance. Career-wise, your focus on finances will keep you busy. Getting pending things accomplished is on the cards. Keep a check on verbal communication. Choose your words wisely otherwise you may face a hostile situation. On the relationship front, those in a committed relationship may work towards taking the relationship to the next level. Singles may find someone.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour** Blue  
**Lucky day** Thursday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Let guru be your guide

Picking up threads from the previous issue, let us first have a look into the construct and chemistry of mind. For, it defines and drives through the functional mandate of a being. There are three functional tools of mind — *Buddhi*, *Ahamkara* and *Manasa*. They don't have separate identity by themselves. They are rather interwoven into an integrated mechanism, all working in support of each other.

Coming to individual attributes of the three, *Buddhi* is the faculty of discriminate intelligence. It lets you dispassionately analyse the issues in hand, and arrive at the right judgment to pick up the right lead. But *Buddhi* doesn't play out involuntarily. It has to be consciously invoked by *Ahamkara*. With its inbuilt sense of 'I' consciousness, *Ahamkara* mandates how to go about in life. And *Manasa*, acting from the front acts two ways. It translates the indwelling desire trends into action. Also, it gathers outer field data. In both cases, *Ahamkara* is supposed to engage *Buddhi* for due diligence before taking any call. The irony, however, is that often *Ahamkara* takes the inputs on their face value, when *Manasa* would react and respond on

instinctive judgment ending, which carries equal probability of ending up either way — rewarding or frustrating.

Now, coming to the chemistry of mind. Mind takes off on the thought feeds in store — the Karmic carryover from the past. Mind does also respond to external promptings and influences. In both cases, *Ahamkara* is supposed to engage *Buddhi* for due diligence before allowing them a field play. The paradox, however, is that for those living unmindfully, often *Ahamkara* takes the thought feeds on their face value, when it doesn't feel the necessity of due diligence. It, thus, comes out that we fail to use our empowerment tools optimally, and when we fail, we try to find escape in our destiny.

It may be pertinent to add here that in store thought feeds in mind, precondition our minds. They bind you to its inherent tendencies one is born with — desire trends, virtues and attributes, likes and dislikes, prejudices and obsessions, habits and attitudes. That restricts our scope of vision to a limited mind-space having in store only the thought feeds carried over from the past. We, thus look at issues in hand within the scope of a



limited window frame, usually not open to look beyond for a reality check or explore a better option available. Such minds are seldom receptive to fresh educative inputs.

Another aspect of mind is that unthinkingly it continuously keeps breeding thoughts, a good majority of them inconsequential, some of them even negative. And mind keeps randomly flirting with them like a monkey in the wild, playfully jumping from one branch of tree to the other. That further clutters our minds so much that it doesn't leave scope to process an issue in hand or any fresh thought objectively, and with obvious consequences. Consequently, mind becomes so complexed that it can't see simple truths lying in front. It keeps moving round and round, but truth eludes its attention. Remember, you cognise only such things where you pay attention. That makes it incumbent upon us to first come out of the limitations of mind, if at all wish to improve our lot. But habits die hard. Even if you become aware of your inherent tendencies either through self-reflection, which we are capable of, or by whatever means, it is ordinarily difficult to come out of their bind. They involun-

tarily keep playing out.

Here comes the role of a Guru. He doesn't play a magic wand. Having himself addressed his limitations, and expanded his vision, he would know how to lead you through towards a better tomorrow. He first makes you aware of your latent potential, which though immense, remains untapped. He, thus, first encourages you to get better empowered. The way forward is to train your mind to access its full landscape, where after it knows no limits, as it looks at issues in hand with an open mind, without any limitations whatsoever to pick up the right lead. To make it happen, the Guru first puts you through a process to clear off the clutters of mind. Sufficient mind-space thus becomes available to absorb fresh educative inputs. Second, he make aware of your inherent limitations and the way to address them. He then offers lessons in realities of life, which when absorbed in the deep realms of mind, finds reflection in your usual conduct. You are thus geared up to rewrite your own destiny.

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