

OPINION 8
ONE NATION,
ONE ELECTION**WORLD 11**
AZERBAIJAN REPORTS ATTACK ON ITS
TROOPS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH**SPORT 14**
PAK AVOID FOLLOW ON
IN 1ST TEST AGAINST NZ

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY DECEMBER 29, 2020; PAGES 14 & 3



the pioneer

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**ADITI WRAPS
HEY SINAMIKA
SHOOT
13 VIVACITY**

CAPSULE

1K PAK GIRLS CONVERTED FORCIBLY EACH YEAR

Karachi: Neha loved the hymns that filled her church with music. But she lost the chance to sing them last year when, at the age of 14, she was forcibly converted from Christianity to Islam and married to a 45-year-old man with children twice her age. Neha is one of nearly 1,000 girls from religious minorities who are forced to convert to Islam in Pakistan each year.

CHINESE TEAM TRIES TO GET WEEKOFF FROM JAN 1

Kathmandu: A high-level Chinese delegation led by a vice minister of the Communist Party of China met top Nepal Communist Party leaders on Monday amid an intensified effort by Beijing to patch up differences between Nepal's feuding leaders.

MODI FLAGS OFF 100TH 'KISAN RAIL'

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Monday his Government has undertaken historic reforms in the farm sector to strengthen farmers. Flagging off the 100th "Kisan Rail" from Sangola in Maharashtra via video-conferencing, Modi said his Government's policies are clear and intentions transparent in reforming the agriculture sector.

U'KHAND HILL COPS TO GET WEEKOFF FROM JAN 1

Dehradun: Police constables in the hill districts — Pauri, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Rudrapur, Almora, Chamoli, Pithoragarh, Bageshwar and Champawat — of Uttarakhand will get "weekly rest" from January 1.

Farmers agree for talks tomorrow

Unions claim Govt unwilling to resolve issues as Centre plans to persuade kisan to call off stir

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Agreeing to discuss the four-point agenda of the farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture on Monday invited 40 protesting farmers' unions for the next round of talks on Wednesday to find a "logical solution" to the current impasse over the three new farm laws that has led to massive protests near Delhi's borders for the last one month.

This will be the sixth time that the Centre will be making an attempt to convince farmers to call off their month-long agitation. However, a joint front of farmer unions had proposed that the talks be held on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, reacting to the Government response, farmers' unions have agreed "in-principle" to a Government proposal for talks, but said the Centre should have spelt out the agenda of the meeting in its invite. Samyukt Kisan Morcha — an umbrella body of 40 unions protesting against the contentious legislations — said the farmers have agreed to go for the meeting on the date proposed by the Centre, while All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) has said the Centre has shown an unwillingness to resolve the issue.

"The Government has used vague and unspecific language, indicating its unwillingness to discuss the full agenda items proposed by farmers," the organisation said in a statement. It also said the Government is trying to find ways to blame farmers in order to cover up its consistent adamant stand of continuing with the three farm laws and Electricity Amendment Bill.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, however, said he is



BKU leader Rakesh Tikait and JAP leader Pappu Yadav (L) during farmers' ongoing agitation against the new farm laws at Ghazipur border on Monday

PTI

ingness to discuss the full agenda items proposed by farmers," the organisation said in a statement. It also said the Government is trying to find ways to blame farmers in order to cover up its consistent adamant stand of continuing with the three farm laws and Electricity Amendment Bill.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, however, said he is

hopeful to find an early solution to end the impasse. Speaking at a virtual event organised by Confederation of NGOs of Rural India (CNRI), he said a "wall of lies" has been spread in a "planned manner" among farmers against the new farm laws, but it will not last long and protesting peasants will soon realise the truth.

Earlier in a letter to the unions, Agriculture Secretary

Sanjay Agarwal noted that the farmers' groups had communicated their willingness to hold discussions with an open mind.

"The Government of India is also committed to logical solution of the relevant issues with an open mind and honest intentions," he said.

However, the Government letter does not specifically make reference to the farmers' key

Over 1,500 telecom towers in Punjab damaged by protesters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than 1,500 telecom towers in Punjab have been damaged by farmers protesting against the three farm laws, disrupting services in some pockets, sources said.

Power supply to towers that relay telecom signals was snapped and cables cut in several parts of the state as farmers vented their anger on the infrastructure owned by billionaire Mukesh Ambani's firm Jio as they saw him along with infrastructure tycoon Gautam Adani as major ben-



eficiaries of the new laws.

Neither Ambani's Reliance group nor Adani's companies are into the business of procuring foodgrains from farmers.

"Till yesterday, 1,411 towers were damaged and today the count has gone well past 1,500," a source with knowl-

edge of the matter said.

In Jalandhar, some bundles of Jio's fibre cable were also burnt. Jio has 9,000 plus towers in the state.

Another source said the most common way of damaging the telecom towers was to cut off the power supply.

In at least one case, the generator at a tower site was physically taken away and allegedly donated to a local gurudwara. Videos of Jio employees being threatened and made to flee have gone viral.

Continued on Page 11

Covid vaccine dry run begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday launched a two-day dry run for coronavirus vaccine programme in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat and Assam.

The focus of the dry run will be on management of possible adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) as well as on adherence and management of infection control practices at the session site to prevent disease transmission.

The mock drill is being carried out in Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh, in Rajkot and Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Ludhiana and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Sonitpur) in Punjab and Nalbari districts in Assam.

The Centre had asked each of the four States to plan the dry run in two districts and preferably in five different session-type settings — district hospital, community health centre (CHC) or primary health care centre (PHC), urban site, private health facility and rural outreach.

At least 125 intended beneficiaries each in four States who had registered on the Co-WIN App were sent SMSes informing them about the time and place of their "Covid-19 vaccination" under a mock-

Centre extends guidelines till Jan 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday extended the Covid-19 Pandemic Guidelines for Surveillance, Containment and Caution to January 31, asking States to keep vigil on the tackling of new variant of the virus in the United Kingdom.

The current guideline was issued up to December 31.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an order today to extend the earlier Guidelines for Surveillance to remain in force up to 31.01.2021. While there has

been a continuous decline in the active and new Covid-19 cases, there is need to maintain surveillance, containment and caution, keeping in view the surge in cases globally, and emergence of a new variant of the virus in the United Kingdom (UK)," said the Home Ministry in a statement.

The Ministry said containment zones should be demarcated carefully and prescribed containment measures must be strictly followed within these zones.

"Covid-appropriate behaviour promoted and strictly

enforced; and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prescribed in respect of various permitted activities followed scrupulously," said the MHA asking States to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prescribed by the Union Health Ministry.

In November, the MHA had said in addition to guidelines already in place since October, States and Union Territories, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions, such as a night curfew.

Continued on Page 11

drill and preparations made to administer the shots at designated centres.

It is being conducted to test the laid out mechanisms for Covid-19 vaccination in the States and provide insights into any gaps to be addressed before the commencement of the actual vaccination drive, according to officials.

They said the exercise tested the functionality of Co-WIN, which is an online platform for monitoring the delivery of Covid-19 vaccine, deployment of team members,

checking cold storage, transportation arrangements and other arrangements while following all necessary protocols.

It will also include testing of cold storage and transportation arrangements for Covid-19 vaccine and management of crowds at session sites with proper physical distancing, the Ministry said.

As per the checklist shared with the States by the Union Health Ministry, beneficiaries will be pre-identified and an SMS will be sent to them in advance with the name of the

vaccinator and the time of the immunisation.

Continued on Page 11

Uttarakhand CM Rawat admitted to AIIMS in Delhi

New Delhi: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, who had tested positive for Covid-19 and was hospitalised in Dehradun after developing fever, was admitted to AIIMS in Delhi on Monday.

Stamp of 'notoriety'

PNS ■ KANPUR

Till now, postal stamps were usually released for great leaders, statesmen and monuments but the head post office at Bara Chauraha in Kanpur Nagar has released postal stamps in the names of notorious dons Chhota Rajan and Munna Bajrangji of Purvanchal region.

With the issue coming to the notice of higher authorities, the post master general has suspended the postal assistant concerned and set up a probe against him.

The philately department at the head post office here is headed by Rajneesh Kumar who, on the applications received under the My Stamp Scheme, allowed the release of postal stamps.

Recently, 12 postal stamps worth Rs 5 each in the names of underworld dons Chhota Rajan and Munna Bajrangji of Purvanchal were released and this has now become a problem for the department.

Post Master General, Kanpur Region, VK Verma said it was a departmental lapse and suspended philately department incharge Rajneesh Kumar. A probe was also ordered in the matter.

Gehlot plans Jaipur conclave to reinstall Rahul as Cong chief

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress is likely to propose the name of Rahul Gandhi as its next party chief at a conclave being planned in Rajasthan by the end of January 2021.

AICC sources said Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is keen to hold the conclave in Jaipur or Udaipur and desires to stage manage Rahul's return as Congress president. Incidentally, during the last national conclave of the Congress in 2012 at Jaipur the Gandhi scion was appointed as national vice-president of the AICC.

Sources in the AICC said the Congress conclave will be held in January or February 2021 after the internal organisation polls being undertaken by the party's Central Election Committee in a phase-wise and virtual mode.

Gehlot has been in talks with

Rahul's office for the conclave with a proposal to hold the session either in Jaipur or Udaipur. The final decision on this will be taken after Rahul's return from abroad.

Sources said the proposal for the re-appointment of Rahul as Congress president will be put forth during the conclave even though Rahul has strictly said no to his comeback.

Rahul relinquished the presidency on moral grounds after the dismal performance of the party in Lok Sabha elections 2019.

"However, many feel that his statement that he is ready to do anything for the party at a meeting with senior leaders and Sonia Gandhi, has been assumed as his acceptance to take over as the Congress president. Hence the mood in the party is in that direction," said a senior leader.

Sonia has already declared that she will in no case continue to head

Continued on Page 11

साकार हुआ सपना घर हुआ अपना

मुख्यमंत्री आवास योजना-ग्रामीण

के अन्तर्गत

21,562 लाभार्थियों को आवास निर्माण की कुल लागत रु. 260.65 करोड़ के सापेक्ष प्रथम किश्त रु. 87 करोड़

का

ऑनलाइन हस्तांतरण

मुख्य अतिथि

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

राजेन्द्र प्रताप सिंह 'मोती सिंह'

मंत्री, ग्राम्य विकास एवं समग्र ग्राम विकास
उत्तर प्रदेश

आनन्द स्वरूप शुक्ल

राज्यमंत्री, संसदीय कार्य, ग्राम्य विकास
एवं समग्र ग्राम विकास, उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनांक : 29 दिसम्बर, 2020 | समय : अपराह्न 4:00 बजे | स्थान : 5, कालिदास मार्ग, लखनऊ

ग्राम्य विकास विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

टोल फ्री नं. - 1800-180-5999

Govt issues fresh guidelines for New Year celebration

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has issued fresh guidelines for New Year celebrations in its bid to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The New Year celebration programmes will be organised only after prior permission of the district magistrate and the district police chief concerned.

Before granting the permission, the district authorities will collect the personal details of the organisers and the expected number of the guests in the programme.

The government has asked the divisional commissioners, zonal ADGs, IGs, DIGs and police commissioners of Lucknow and Gautam Buddha Nagar not to lower the guard against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Secretary RK Tewari said a large number of people were likely to gather at different places for celebrating the New Year and there were apprehensions of spread of coronavirus. He said the organisers of the New Year celebration programmes would be apprised of the Covid protocol and they would be responsible for its compliance.

As per the guidelines, the number of guests in a big room or hall shall not be more than 50 per cent of the capacity or not more than 100 persons. If the programme is organised in an open space, then the number of persons should not be more than 40 per cent of the capacity. The persons participating in the programme will follow the Covid protocol like wearing masks, observing social distancing, thermal scanning of all visitors and sanitisation of the venue. The government has also directed the officials to ensure police patrolling around the venue of the New Year celebrations and constant vigil at the public places through CCTV cameras and drones.



NOTICE

Notify that we are now using our names with new spelling as Anshree Agarwal W/o Dhiruv Agarwal R/o 304, Arif Palace Court Apartment, Mall Avenue, Lucknow 226001, instead of our old names Anshi Agarwal W/o Dhiruv agarwal, for all purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my son's name from Kislav Yadav to Yash and correct DOB 13/05/2006 to be recorded in place of wrongly recorded DOB 15/10/2007 in service documents. Uday Pratap Singh S/o Sri Sahab Lal Singh 239 J.P Colony Govind Nagar Kanpur-208014

NOTICE

I, Army No-733891 A Nayab Subedar, V.K. Tripathi R/o Vill-Babhangawan, Post-Jhauara, Dist-Sultanpur, hereby declare that my daughter SHREYA'S DOB-01.11.2010 is registered in my service record which is wrong. Her corrected DOB is 01.11.2009. This should be read and written in future.

NOTICE

It is notified for the Information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Secondary Examination of year 2003 and Roll No. 6155104 Issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of candidate Eshani Singh full address 78, Patel Nagar Yojana, Indiranagar Lucknow 226016 Mob-7905421202

NOTICE

It is notified for the Information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Senior Secondary Examination of year 2003 and Roll No. 6239359 Issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of candidate Praveer Singh full address 78, Patel Nagar Yojana, Indiranagar Lucknow 226016 Mob-7905421202

Nodal officers deployed in all 75 districts of UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has deployed senior IAS officers as nodal officers for supervising development works, paddy procurement and management of cow sheds in each of the 75 districts of the state.

This is for the first time in the history of the state that the UP government has deputed senior IAS officers to each of the 75 districts for having first hand information about the development works and issues of the farmers like paddy procurement and sugarcane harvesting.

In some districts identified by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the nodal officers will camp there for three days and meet the common people and hear their grievances and also redress the grievances of the farmers on the spot.

Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture) Devesh Chaturvedi, who is in Shahjahanpur, inspected cow sheds and met farmers at the paddy procurement centres.

Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Rao was in Auraiya on Monday and he inspected the paddy procurement centres.

Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal was in Bareilly and he reviewed the preparations of the COVID-19 vaccination against coronavirus. He directed the

This is for the first time in the history of the state that the UP government has deputed senior IAS officers to each of the 75 districts for having first hand information about the development works and issues of the farmers like paddy procurement and sugarcane harvesting

officials to ensure collection of at least 3,000 samples of Covid test per day. He also organised a chaupal of the farmers at Bahedi town of Bareilly district.

The nodal officers in various districts visited the rural areas and paddy procurement centres and met the farmers to ascertain their grievances.

The government has also deputed senior police nodal officers in various districts, including Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar, for assessment of ground-level situation on various issues, including those being faced by protesting farmers.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said that the officers would submit detailed reports to the government by Tuesday.

According to official sources, the officers have been sent to assess the ground-level situation primarily of the farmers and to initiate a dialogue with them.

The move comes ahead of the scheduled talks between the Centre and the protesting

farmer leaders on Tuesday.

The nodal officers will represent the government and they will assess the ground-level situation and will also look into the various local issues related to farmers.

They will also initiate dialogue with the farmers and coordinate various activities.

The nodal officers, during the field visits, will also visit the cane purchase centres and enquire about the availability of water in irrigation canals and ascertain whether the water is reaching the tail end of the canal.

The officers have also been directed to review the availability of electricity in rural areas and small towns and to supervise the progress of the varasat campaign being run by the Revenue department.

Earlier in September, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had deputed special secretary-level officers as nodal officers in the districts which reported 100 or more COVID-19 cases per day to effectively contain the coronavirus outbreak.

40 ASHA workers held for taking gifts from illegal nursing home

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 40 ASHA workers were taken into custody for allegedly taking gifts from an illegally-run nursing home as an allurements for bringing expectant mothers there for the birth of their children, police said on Monday.

The Budaun administration had got information that ASHA workers were being distributed gifts as allurements by a nursing home operating illegally for bringing more expectant mothers there for delivery, District Magistrate Kumar Prashant said.

The illegally operating nursing home is allegedly being run by a Samajwadi Party leader wherein abortions were being done illegally. The district magistrate said the raid was conducted on Sunday night at the Ayesha Nursing Home situated at Nawada in the Civil Lines area.

Mismanagement was observed during the raid and ASHA workers were also being distributed gifts there. They were being told to bring as many delivery cases and patients to the nursing home as possible. Upon receiving information about ASHA workers getting gifts, the administration raided the place after constituting a team.

As many as 40 ASHA workers were



taken into custody from the spot.

The district magistrate said that proceedings for the dismissal of the ASHA workers were underway after registering cases against them.

Apart from this, departmental action will be recommended against all those officials of the Health department who are found involved in this case during the probe.

The nursing home has also been sealed and a case registered against its owners and the staff, according to the district magistrate.

Meanwhile, the Shahjahanpur police claimed to have got a big success when they arrested two charas (cannabis) smugglers

on Monday. It is reported that the smugglers were going to sell charas from Nepal when they were arrested by the police.

The police arrested the accused Sajid and Aneesh and seized 800 grams of charas from their possession, which is said to be worth around one crore rupees.

After the arrest, the police registered a case and sent both the accused to jail.

Superintendent of Police S Anand said that the cops from Katra police station had stopped a motorcycle on suspicion. During the search, 800 grams of charas was recovered from the two riders.

During questioning, the accused confessed that they bring charas from Nepal and sell it here.

AIMIM state chief booked for Covid protocol violation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as six identified persons, including All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) state president, and 70-80 unidentified people were booked for violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the

Criminal Procedure Code and the Covid protocol in Utraula Kotwali area of Balrampur, police said on Monday.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Radharaman Singh said that 70-80 unidentified people besides AIMIM's UP president Shaukat Ali, party candidate Abdul Mannan, dis-

trict president Nooruddin, Irfan, Shahid and hotel manager Mujib Khan, were booked under Section 144 of CrPC and for violation of the Covid protocol for gathering a crowd without permission at a hotel in Utraula Nagar.

The DSP said that in the name of holding a press confer-

ence, the AIMIM had gathered a huge crowd of party leaders and workers at a private hotel on Sunday without seeking permission for it.

As the matter of violation of the Covid protocol came to the fore during the crowd, legal action is being undertaken after registering a case.

Lallu stopped from garlanding Gandhi statue, sits on fast

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Kumar Lallu on Monday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party government in the state of preventing him from offering flowers on the Gandhi statue on Congress foundation day and started fasting with Congress workers.

Lallu sat on a fast with party workers at UP Congress headquarters in Mall Avenue. Lallu said that the Congress Sandesh Yatra was coming out of the state office and he had to garland the statue of Mahatma Gandhi but the police did not let him go.

In a tweet, Lallu said that he was going to pay floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on Congress Foundation Day but was stopped by the



government of Uttar Pradesh by applying police force.

Lucknow Deputy Commissioner of Police (Middle) Somen Verma said that they asked the UPCC president to go with two-four people and garland the Gandhi statue but he did not agree.

"Since crowd is not allowed due to Covid protocol and the High Court has also stayed it, the crowd was prevented from going," he said.

The UP Congress alleged that party workers headed by the state president were leaving the party headquarters for the Gandhi statue at Hazratganj when

the police blocked the road and the UPCC president was not allowed to leave.

It may be mentioned here that on Sunday, Lallu had accused the state government of suppressing the voice of truth and stopping the Congress movement in an undemocratic way.

"SINCE CROWD IS NOT ALLOWED DUE TO COVID PROTOCOL AND THE HIGH COURT HAS ALSO STAYED IT, THE CROWD WAS PREVENTED FROM GOING"

Graded reading books for primary students

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to enhance educational skills, the Basic Education department of Uttar Pradesh is providing graded reading books to more than 1.5 crore students studying in primary schools.

According to officials, the graded reading books will increase the students' ability to read and learn.

"The language of this book

has been kept very simple and it will enable children to learn easily," a senior official of the department said.

Apart from this, report cards of the students studying in primary and upper primary schools of the state will be shared with their parents.

The teacher will also share the students' information during the formal meetings with the parents in the school.

The Basic Education department had recently conducted the Supportive Aptitude Test (SAT) to enhance education skills in the students. In this, students were given grades from A to E. Special remedial classes would be held for the students who get D and E grades, the official said.

He further said that in order to provide better education to the students of the state-run schools, the state

"THE LANGUAGE OF THIS BOOK HAS BEEN KEPT VERY SIMPLE AND IT WILL ENABLE CHILDREN TO LEARN EASILY"

government was constantly making changes in the educa-

tion system. "On the direction of the government, the Basic Education department has introduced a system of real-time monitoring to check the progress of the students studying in primary and upper primary schools. This will identify the average students and separate classes will be conducted for them so that they can also achieve top positions in schools like other students," the official said.

SCHOOLSCAN

SCHOLARSHIP

Tanya Samyak, a meritorious student of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus I, has secured a scholarship of US\$ 1,46,000 for higher studies in the prestigious University of Evansville, USA. Besides, she has also been offered a scholarship of US\$ 92,000 by the University of Rhode Island and University of Iowa, USA, thus bringing laurels to the city's dint of her excellent academic record, hard work and talent.



Thirteen people were injured in the clash.

The injured were admitted to the government hospital.

FIRs have been lodged by both the groups.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Kalu Singh said that a dispute was going on between Malkhan and Asharam over molestation of a minor girl three months ago.

Some people started abusing Malkhan after drinking alcohol in Asharam's field on Sunday. When Malkhan's sons working in the adjacent field protested, the two groups clashed.

A heavy police force was deployed in the area to avert further clashes.

over molestation assumed a formidable form and left more than a dozen people injured.

It was reported that 13 people from the two sides were injured in the violent clash on Sunday in connection with a case of molestation of a minor girl in Emilia village under the Srinagar police station of the district.

Additional Superintendent of Police Rajendra Kumar Gautam said there was a violent clash on Sunday evening between two groups of Emilia village under Srinagar police station.

People from both the sides attacked each other with sharp-edged weapons and sticks.

One killed in clash between two groups

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 25-year-old man was shot dead and his brother seriously injured in a clash between two groups over a land dispute in Muzaffarnagar while over a dozen persons were injured in a separate clash over molestation in Mahoba.

According to reports from Muzaffarnagar, Circle Officer Ram Mohan Sharma disclosed that the deceased, Arjun, was posted as secretary in Kukra block. His brother, Inder, who suffered bullet injuries, was rushed to the district hospital in a serious condition, the CO said.

The clash took place on Sunday evening when the out-

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‘No threat of new coronavirus strain’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The threat of the new coronavirus strain from the UK in Lucknow is likely over as all the travellers from there have tested negative while the one who had gone missing was also located and tested, according to Additional CMO MK Singh. However, surveillance will still continue for the next 28 days.

“The person who had gone untraceable was not responding to phone calls, so we sent him an email and he sent us his address. Our teams went there and tested him. Thus all the travellers from the UK as well as their contacts have tested negative,” he said.

Singh said the 130 persons who came from the UK between November 23 and December 8 were being monitored but were unlikely to test positive as the incubation period of the virus had ended.

“Constant vigil at the airport is being maintained by our teams and those coming from outside are being tested. Testing is also underway at railway and bus stations as earlier,” he pointed out.

On Monday, Singh visited the district vaccine store to take stock of the preparations for Covid-19 immunisation. He expressed satisfaction with the arrangements. Singh said that preparations were already over

CM Yogi asks people to take precautions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to take every necessary steps required to control the spread of the coronavirus and also urged the people to take the precautions needed to stay safe.

Addressing a high-level unlock review meeting at his official residence here, Chief Minister Yogi directed the Covid hospitals to ensure arrangements of necessary

for the three-stage vaccination process and beneficiaries had been identified.

He said the containment activities were underway as usual and the number of patients had decreased considerably. “Now, there are not too many cases even in the areas which had maximum patients. The challenge right now is to reduce the cases in the district to the minimum,” he added.

On Monday, 213 persons

equipment required for testing the new strains of the novel coronavirus.

He also directed officials to increase the number of rapid antigen tests and to conduct the RT-PCR test at full capacity.

The chief minister said the recovery rate should be improved, especially in Lucknow. He said a strategy must be made to control the deadly virus and the treatment system in every district must be strengthened.

“Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)

should be actively operated at the district level. The district magistrates and chief medical officers must compulsorily hold a meeting every morning at the Covid hospital and at the ICCC every evening to review the situation and decide the strategy,” he said.

Directing officials to organise Arogya Mela with full preparations, the chief minister said that people should be made aware of malnutrition and informed about the precautionary measures against COVID-19.

Varanasi and 54 in Meerut, taking the UP tally to 5,82,920. There were 16 deaths in the state, including six in Lucknow, two each in Prayagraj & Varanasi, and one each in Ghaziabad, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Jalaun & Mainpuri.

In view of the new strains of coronavirus across the globe, the Microbiology department of KGMU is planning to begin genome sequencing soon. “This is the first time that we

will begin genome sequencing in our lab, because it is the need of the hour, looking into the mutated strains of coronavirus across the globe. We need to constantly monitor this virus and its genetic mutations,” head of the department Dr Amita Jain said.

She said they have the equipment required and were just trying to get hold of some reagents for the sequencing. Dr Jain pointed out that microbiology has emerged as an important area in Covid times. The lab has played an important role and tested more than nine lakh samples so far.

Meanwhile, head of the Plastic Surgery department of KGMU Dr Brijesh Mishra said they have been making contributions to the fight against coronavirus like other departments. “We are involved in general Covid duties and our residents, ward boys, nurses and sweepers are doing their duties in rotation. Also, whenever there are burn cases in Covid care, our doctors go to the Covid hospital to give their suggestions,” he said.

About the challenge, he said it lies in management of patients. “We provide supportive management till the patients test negative, and then we shift them to our department,” he said.



Commuters stuck in a massive traffic jam in Hazratganj on Monday

Pioneer

Three arrested on charges of murder and vehicle theft

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police arrested three men on Monday on the charges of murdering a pick-up truck driver and robbing him of his vehicle. The arrest was made by a team of Vikasnagar police station. The police also recovered the pick-up van and an SUV used by the accused.

Those arrested were identified as Gosainganj residents Sriram Yadav (25), Suraj Kumar (21) and Rakesh Kumar (30) while the deceased as Jiyalal, a resident of Amethi. The trio were accused of killing the driver and had dumping the body into a canal before taking away his vehicle.

The police claimed that the accused confessed to their crime and efforts were on to recover the body from the

canal. According to the police, Jiyalal was driving back to Amethi from a vegetable market in Lucknow on December 23. He came across the accused near a roadside bar. The accused reportedly spiked Jiyalal's drinks and when he became unconscious, Sriram took him away in his vehicle. “The accused told us that Suraj strangled Jiyalal to death in the vehicle and dumped the body into the canal,” the police said.

Three days after the incident, owner of the pickup truck, Rizwan Ahmed of Amethi, had lodged a complaint of theft against Jiyalal at Aliganj police station. The police started looking for the driver and vehicle soon afterwards. On Monday, a Vikasnagar police team noticed the pick-up truck and stopped

it over suspicion. One of the accused was driving the truck while the other two were following him in an SUV. The accused reportedly confessed to the crime after being grilled by the police.

Meanwhile, thieves struck at a grocery shop in Gosainganj on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. Reports said that Mahendra Kumar of Gosainganj runs his shop in Goharilkalan area in the locality. He said he reached his shop around 1:30 am to check if it was safe and saw some persons loading goods in two different loaders. “As I raised an alarm, the miscreants sped off. I tried giving them a chase but failed to catch them. Later, I returned home and came to know that they had stolen goods from the shop,” he said.

State-of-the-art burn unit to come up at KGMU in Jan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A modern burn unit is expected to start functioning at KGMU in January next year. According to head of the Plastic Surgery department Dr Brijesh Mishra, most of the burn units are like burn wards, but the one coming up at KGMU will be more like a burn centre with all the ancillary services. “It will be a 27-bed ward with a separate reception area and emergency area for patients where they will be received, resuscitated and shifted to the wards or the ICU. It will have an ICU unit with a ventilator and a dialysis unit,” he said. He added that they would also have a skin bank.

Dr Mishra said there would be dedicated staff for the burn unit and ICU. “We will also have occupational therapy and physiotherapy units,” he said.

He added that the idea of establishing a burn unit was with the state government for the past 10 years and infra-

structure development was going in stages on since 2016.

Dr Mishra said that the Women and Child Welfare department had given them a grant of Rs 9.19 crore while the Central government Rs 2.07 crore under the National Programme for Burn Management.

He said that when they were nearing completion of the unit, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) approached them for an MoU with a grant of Rs 11 crore for upgradation of burn unit infrastructure. “A sum of Rs 20 crore has gone into the project which comes under the jurisdiction of the Plastic Surgery department of KGMU,” he pointed out.

Dr Mishra said they did not have a burn ward earlier and were not receiving burn patients. “Whenever a big accident occurred, we made temporary arrangements for treatment of the victims, and there was no proper burn ward,” he said.

He pointed out that causes are almost the same, including sporadic accidents, but the treatment modalities are becoming different.

“For the acid attack victims, the modalities which we have to reduce the severity of the burns include an oxygen therapy chamber, and we have an attached operation theatre so that we can operate upon these patients early, which is not possible otherwise. Management-wise, there are a lot of advances coming up in this area,” he said. He added that with the NTPC grant, they were trying to establish modern treatment facilities.

Dr Mishra said the manpower recruitment was going on and interviews were over for the burn unit. “The class III and class IV manpower is likely to come through the contractual drive. Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri is making a lot of efforts in this regard and we are trying our best to start the burn unit in January.

STF team nabs 20 for cow smuggling

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team of Special Task Force (STF) nabbed 20 persons for cow smuggling when they had assembled to purchase cows near a dhaba at Kisan Path under Chinhat police station area on Monday. Those arrested were identified as Rizwan aka Bhure, Shaunque, Mohammed Tauheed, Mohammed Khizr, Ashoob, Mohammed Nazakat, Atiq Ahmad, Naeem, Arif, Mohammed Owais, Mohammed Sadiq, Rohit, Mohammed Adil, Salim, Mohammed Ayub, Aslam, Fardeen, Mohammed Yusuf, Riaz and Farman.

The police recovered a truck, two SUVs, two cars, 11 mobile phones, three country-made pistols, 10 live cartridges, a country made-pistol, six number plates, Rs 83,500 in cash and other documents. Police said they got a tip-off about some men who had assembled near the dhaba for purchasing cows. The police said a team raided the



place and nabbed the accused.

In another case, a 19-year-old boy was found hanging from a tree in Kakori police station area on Monday. He was identified as Manoj Yadav of Halwapur village in the area. Reports said some villagers saw Manoj hanging from the tree in a mango grove and alerted the police around 4 pm.

During investigation, the police recovered empty liquor bottles, cigarette butts and empty pouches of paan masala. His family told the police that Manoj had purchased a new mobile phone last Friday and the same was missing. The police said Manoj committed suicide but failed to explain the reason.

Semester examinations commence at BBAU

Lucknow (PNS): Semester examinations at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University commenced on Monday. The exams are being conducted in both online and offline modes. BBAU spokesperson Rachna Gangwar said that students from Journalism and Mass Communication department appeared for the exams for ‘Public Relations and Corporate Communication’ through online medium.

The Biotechnology department conducted exam of Bioinformatics and Systems Biology online while at the Law department, the exams for BBA-LLB (semester III), Constitutional Law, BBA-LLB (Semester V), Civil Procedure Code, BBA-LLB (semester IX) and Legal Ethics were held offline in two sessions.

Exams for several other courses in other department were also conducted on Monday.

LDA to offer 20% discount on flats lying unsold

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Development Authority has decided to offer 20 percent concession on flats lying unsold for the past several years. Besides, 25 percent rebate will be offered to home-buyers making one-time payment. The sale will be on corporate basis through single-window system. The home-buyers will not be subjected to hardships in completing legal and other formalities, LDA's acting Vice-

Chairman Abhishek Prakash said on Monday.

He said besides concession on the purchase, the LDA administration will also provide other facilities to the buyers. All illegal occupants will be ousted and unauthorised structures in and around the premises will be removed before handing possession to the buyers. The parks lying in a shambles in the premises will also be redesigned. The authorities will do minor

repair and doors and windows will also be painted. All the formalities will be completed in the presence of revenue and district administration officials to ensure transparency and to keep tourists at bay. There are 4,200 flats in 30 housing schemes in different places across the city and the records of these properties are being scrutinised and upgraded. Nearly 40 percent of the work has been completed and the rest will be over soon.

City hotels plan family dinner on new year eve

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

City hotels are planning for family-centric gathering for new year. Queries have also started pouring in at the hotels with the new year round the corner. Spokesperson, Taj Mahal Hotel, Shababat Hussain the focus of celebrations is that families can gather, feel safe and usher in the new year together.

Director of Food and Beverages, Taj Mahal Hotel, Shantanu Chakraborty said that on December 31, they have an all-day dining at the Sahib Café and a gala buffet dinner, which is a combination of Indian, English, Chinese and continental cuisine. “The catch of the menu is chicken meatball soup and quesadillas. We craft the platter on the basis of high-selling items on the menu and in festive peri-

ods, it is generally seen that people do not opt for one dish but they go for variety. We also keep the season in mind,” he said.

“Lucknow's touch will be maintained with angara chicken tikka and galawati kebabs. For the vegetarians, there is ample choice such as paneer pudina tikka, rajma ki shammi, etc,” he said, adding that roast turkey with cranberry sauce is retained as a popular item Christmas onwards.

At Oudhiyana, he pointed out, that they have retained the flavours of Awadh complete with shorba, chana chaat in salads and other delightful attractions such as machhli anarkali, mutton boti kebab, paneer tikka, sarson gobbhi etc.

Shantanu said that the visitors will have the ambience of piano music in the back-

ground. “The bookings are still being made for the new year and we had a full house on Christmas,” he said. Yashi Mishra, spokesperson of a hotel in Gontinagar, said they are planning a simple family dinner for the new year. She said that cuisine will be an international spread with carving stations.

Yashi said they will have a kids special area marked out. “We will be having someone taking care of the kids. Also, we will be having movie nights and games for children with a kid-friendly buffet,” she said.

She added that they have been getting queries regarding the new year arrangements. “Most people are disappointed that there will be no DJ, but we want the ambience to be quiet this year with social distancing,” she added.

Anil Prakash to be conferred DSc degree at AKTU convocation

Lucknow (PNS): Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan Anil Prakash will be conferred DSc degree at the AKTU convocation to be held on January 16 next year. AKTU spokesperson Asheesh Mishra said permission has been taken for physical presence of the chief guest at the convocation. “The convocation is being held offline with limited gathering. Only medal winners and PhD awardees will be physically present on the occasion,” he said.

Meanwhile, 1,288 research papers have been published by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University in reputed journals in the year 2020. The research interest of teachers and researchers of AKTU has grown rapidly in the last few years. “It's magnitude can be witnessed from the fact that the university has registered an increase of 300 percent in research publications in quality journals.

केनरा बैंक

Canara Bank

सिंडिकेट Syndicate

Regional Office - HIG 1B, Chandra Vihar Lakhnupur, Kanpur - 208002, Ph.: 0512-2583225

SALE NOTICE OF MOVABLE PROPERTY THROUGH E-AUCTION

Notice is hereby given to the effect that movable properties described herein, taken possession under the hypothecation agreement dated 16.02.2016 will be sold through e-auction. E auction arranged by the service provider M/s CANBANK COMPUTER SERVICES Ltd., Mr Sathianathan K M/ Mr. Ramesh T H, Contact No. 09480691777/8880531165/080-23469661/62/64/65; Email ID: eauction@ccsl.co.in

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/ Total Liabilities, Branch	Details of Movable property	Reserve Price (Rs.)	Last date & Time of Receiving Offers Date & Time of E-Auction
			Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	
1.	Dilip Ray S/o Jai Kumar Ray C/o Usha Devi 6/31 Dada Nagar Labour Colony, Kanpur-208022 Branch: Shyam Nagar, Nagar Balance Amount: Rs. 5,94,516.82 + Interest due and other Expenses w.e.f. 30-09-2020	Make/Type- Tata Bolt XT Vehicle No.- UP78EU5010 Engine No.- 100A20000498513 Chassis No.- MAT611465EPN30852 Body- LMB Car	Rs. 30,000/- Rs. 3,000/-	28.01.2021 upto 5.00 pm 29.01.2021 Time 11.00 am to 12.00 pm (with unlimited extension of 5 min)

OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The vehicle will be sold in "AS IS WHERE IS AND AS IS WHAT IS" basis including encumbrances, if any. There is no encumbrance to the knowledge of the bank. a) Auction/ bidding shall be held at 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on 29.01.2021 at www.indianbankseuction.com b) The vehicle is in possession of canara bank KANPUR SHYAMNAGAR BRANCH can be inspected with Prior Appointment with Authorized Officer from 20.01.2021 to 28.01.2021 c) The vehicle will not be sold below the reserve price & the participating bidders may improve their offer further during auction process. d) EMD amount of 10% of the Reserve Price is to be deposited by way of Demand draft in favour of Canara Bank KANPUR SHYAM NAGARBRANCH payable at Kanpur OR shall be deposited through RTGS/NEFT/FUND TRANSFER to credit of A/c NO 4965296000001 IFSC CODE: CNRB0004964 on or before 28.01.2021 by 05:00 pm. e) after payment of the EMD amount, the intending bidders should submit a copy of the following documents/details on or before 28.01.2021 by 05:00 pm to Branch by hand or by email. a) Demand Draft/Pay order towards EMD amount. If paid through RTGS/NEFT, acknowledgement receipt thereof with UTR No. b) Photocopies of PAN Card, ID Proof and Address proof. However, successful bidder would have to produce these documents in original to the Bank at the time of making payment of balance amount of 25% of bid amount. c) Bidders Name. Contact No. Address. E Mail id. d) Bidders account details for on line refund of EMD. e) EMD deposited by unsuccessful bidder shall be refunded to them with in 2 days of finalization of sale. The EMD shall not carry any interest. f) Auction would commence at Reserve Price, as mentioned above. Bidder shall improve their offers in multiples of Rs. 1000/- The bidder who submits the highest bid (not below the Reserve price) on closure of auction shall be declared as successful bidder. Sale shall be confirmed in favour of the successful bidder. g) The successful bidder shall deposit 25 % of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on the sale being knocked down in his/her favour and the balance within 5 days from the date of confirmation of sale. If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price as stated above, the deposits made by him shall be forfeited without any notice and vehicle shall forthwith be put up for sale again. h) All charges for conveyance, stamp duty and registration etc, as applicable shall be borne by successful bidder only. i) Bank reserve the right to reject any or all the offers received without assigning any reason.

Date: 29.12.2020

Place: Kanpur

Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

Corona vaccination plans reviewed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) and Nodal Officer of the district Dr Devesh Chaturvedi reviewed the arrangements for prevention of COVID-19 and ongoing preparations for its proposed vaccination at a meeting with district and Health department officers at Circuit House here on Sunday evening. He was informed by the local Health department officials that all the arrangements for vaccination has been completed and for vaccination of government and private medical and paramedical staff in the first phase, 12,700 registrations have already been done as it is expected that the process of vaccination will be started in the first or second week of January next.

Health department officers also informed that the vaccine will be repeated twice per person and the second dose will be given 28 days after for the first one and all the vaccination teams have been trained. After vaccination, the person will be stopped for about 30 minutes for watch. Besides, the ACS was also apprised that there will also be proper arrangements for bio-medical waste disposal of vaccination and all records of vaccinated people would be feed on a portal and proper follow up would be done. They also informed that the mortality rate of corona has decreased and recently, mass corona tests were done during weddings, markets, Malls, three-wheelers, lodges etc and one per cent of positive



ACS Dr Devesh Chaturvedi reviewing preparations for corona vaccination in Varanasi on Sunday evening

Pioneer

cases were found. Now contract tracing of positive cases is still being carried apart from taking all the precautionary measures, they added. The meeting was attended by District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, Chief Medical Officer Dr VB Singh and others.

In yet another meeting, Dr Devesh Chaturvedi reviewed the progress made in paddy purchase in the district. He directed the officers concerned to procure all the paddy crops coming to the purchasing centres on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) so that the farmers can

get full benefits from the same. He said that the purchasing agency should deliver the paddy to the mills quickly after purchase and ensure payment to the farmers within the stipulated time period. 'Negligence will not be tolerated at any stage', he said, expressing dissatisfaction over the delay in payment by UP Agro and warned the departmental officers in this direction.

The ACS was informed that 25,000 metric tonnes of paddy has been procured so far, which is about 62 per cent of the target and this benefited 5,033 farmers by paying them

₹ 20.75 crore for their paddy. District incharges of various purchasing agencies including deputy RMOs were also present.

Meanwhile, District Marketing Officer Arun Kumar Tripathi said that two active purchasing agency marketing branch have been opened by closing nine NCCF centres in the district.

These centres have been opened at Cholapur (under Sadar Tehsil) and Arajilina (under Raja Talab tehsil) and Om Prakash Chandra and Dharmveer Singh will be their incharges respectively.

Dy CM reviews Magh Mela preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya held a review meeting of the preparations for the annual Magh Mela at the Circuit House on Monday. During this, he said that the devotees should not have any difficulty in commuting, so one pontoon bridge from Arail towards Sangam and another towards Phaphamau is constructed. This bridge will be constructed in addition to the five pontoon bridges currently being built. Due to the construction of these bridges, devotees will not have to deal with the jam on Naini and Phaphamau bridge.

Officials of the Public Works Department said that it is still time for the fair's bath festival. They will get these bridges built in time. At present, the work of Public Works Department has increased due to this directive. He said that the guideline of Corona should be strictly followed. Special care should be taken to ensure



that the corona infection does not spread in my area. He told the fair officer that the institutions which do not get land this time, should not be upset. They will be given land next year. This rule should be publicised so that people do not unnecessarily rush into the

fair.

In the meeting, the DM informed that the work of the fair is being done at a rapid pace. Additional labour is being done day and night. The fair will be set up before the first bathing festival falling on January 14.

After the Magh Mela meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya held a meeting with party bearers and activists at the Circuit House itself.

After this he visited Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati at his ashram Alopibagh.

52 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Corona infection figures are decreasing again. The Covid report of 52 persons, including three advocates, came positive in the last 24 hours.

At the same time, two people died during treatment. About 102 people beat Corona.

According to the Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, on Sunday, a total of

4,912 people were examined for a day. Of the total 52 positive cases, three lawyers, a teacher at Saidabad Primary School and a conductor posted at the roadway also tested positive for COVID-19.

So far, 371 people have lost their lives from Corona with the death of two infected in the district. At the same time a total of 28,279 people have been infected. On Sunday, 14 people were discharged from various Covid hospitals.

With this, 6,813 people have been discharged from hospitals so far. So far 20,392 people including 88 have beaten Corona in home isolation. The number of active patients in the district has come down to 703.

Task force block level training for corona vaccination was completed on Sunday. Preparations are now being finalised to build cold chains from headquarters level to vaccination centres. The Health

department has completed arrangements to maintain cold chains in the main vaccine store under the guide line of Covid vaccination.

With the vaccination centres, work is being done to finalise the arrangements for safe delivery of vaccines there. According to Nodal Covid Vaccine Dr Rahul Singh, the Covid vaccination and storage systems will be completed in three days. Now the preparations are at trial level.

ACS for promoting organic farming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture, Agricultural Education and Research, Agricultural Marketing, Foreign Trade and Export Promotion Department) and incharge officer of the district Dr Devesh Chaturvedi visited Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR) at Shahanshapur here on Monday. At a meeting held at IIVR auditorium, which was also attended by the officials of the departments of Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry, Dr Chaturvedi discussed how this institute can play an important role in

increasing the income of farmers as the demands for organic vegetables and fruits are going to increase.

Keeping this in mind, he directed Deputy Director (Agriculture) Smita Verma to prepare its plan and take steps to promote organic farming and its certification. 'After developing varieties of high yielding crops and vegetables, the farmers should be informed about their production, so that they can earn good income', said the ACS, adding that the IIVR can also play its important role in seed production and can become a seed hub. 'Subsidised seed packets should be distributed to the farmers

under the RKVY scheme so that it becomes popular among the farmers and maximum yields can be obtained', he said.

During the meeting, IIVR Director Dr Jagdish Singh informed about the research conducted in the field of vegetable production and marketing apart from future vegetable production through a power presentation.

He said that 2,756 farmers have been trained in the last three years and 41 varieties of vegetables have been developed in the last five years. Besides, as many as 43 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have

been signed with private companies, he added. District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma and other senior officers were also present. The programme was conducted by Dr Neeraj Singh while Dr PM Singh proposed the vote of thanks.

Later, the ACS visited a 300-capacity Gausshala near the institute where 280 stray animals were kept and asked about their care from the persons concerned.

He also inspected the biogas plant under construction near Gausshala where he inquired about supply of cow dung, preparation of bio gas and supply of biogas etc.

60 new Covid cases in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 60 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Monday, increasing the total number to 21,069. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 355. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 64 and 48 of them have been recovered from home isolation while 16 from the hospitals, increasing the number to 17,342 and 2,919 respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 20,261, leaving

453 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.16 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.68 per cent. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 39 positive patients were found out of 1,370 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,08,253 and the results of 2,210 are awaited. Out of them, 4,87,205 were negative while 21,048 positive. The total number of samples collected was 5,34,003. Earlier, two females aged 70 and 77 from Susuwahi and Pahadia respectively suc-

cumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of five new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,637 including 198 red zones. Six green zones have been converted into the red zones again. There are 2,439 green zones with nine 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 95 tests were found nega-

tive at SSPG Hospital Kabirchaura apart from 125 at District Women's Hospital, 29 at CHC Shiyapur, 42 at Vivekanand Hospital Bhelapur and 85 at SSH BHU. However, one out of 105 tests at LBS Hospital Ramnagar was found positive. Apart from this, all the 43 tests at Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station and 34 at Manduadih were found negative. Along with this, samples of 68 from SSH BHU, 102 from Women's Hospital, 17 from Vivekananda and 80 from LBS have been sent for RTPCR investigation.

DCC president taken into police custody

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Police on Monday took the president of the District Congress Committee (DCC) under their custody when he along with party leaders and workers tried taking out padyatra on the occasion of party Foundation Day. The party strongly condemned the police action and termed it as the crushing down of democracy. In the meantime, the chief of City Congress Committee (CCC) along with party activists took out the same from Bhadaur Chungi to Chitrnanjan Park but the police did not stop them.

The Congress Party leadership had announced to take out Congress Sandesh padyatra as assembly wise on the occasion of party installation day on Monday. As per earlier announcement, the president of DCC Rajeshwar Patel, vice-president Dr Jitendra Seth, and chairman of Ramnagar Palika Parishad Rekha Sharma gathered at party camp office in Chandpur along with party workers. When they tried tak-



Congress workers taking out procession on party's Foundation Day in Varanasi on Monday

Pioneer

ing out the padyatra, the police already present there, took Patel, Dr Jitendra and about four dozen party workers in their custody and took them to the Police Lines. When this news reached to other party leaders and workers, they reached the Police Lines and put up their strong protest against the police action. They termed the police action as the murder of democracy and said 'There is no democracy in the BJP-ruled state, they added demanding the immediate arrest of the party office-bearers and workers. The CO,

Bhulpur informed, that the Congress leaders and workers had no permission to take out the padyatra from the district administration as the section 144 of the Cr PC is in effect in the district and thus they were taken into custody for the violation of this section.

Meanwhile, the chief of CCC Raghvendra Chaubey, general secretary Manish Chaubey, former DCC president Pranatanth Sharma along with party workers in scores took out padyatra from Bhadaur Chungi to Chitrnanjan Park and the police allowed them for the

same. Chaubey informed that the party has decided to get the party policies and ideologies reach to the common men and thus the Congress Sandesh padyatra was taken out in the areas of City South assembly constituency. They flayed the government at Centre for adopting an attitude of dictatorship on the matter of farmers and said, that is why, it is rigid and not repealing the black three farm laws which is against the farmers interest. The farmers are agitating at the borders of national capital for the last one months in this chilly cold but the government has shown insensitiveness to their demands, they blamed adding, the party is with the farmers. The senior party leaders were also honoured occasion. Among those present on the occasion were Durga Prasad Gupta, Vijay Shankar Mehta, Manish Moralia, Sunil Kapoor, Poonam Kuddu, Sayyed Hasan Ansari.

The DCC president Patel and others were later released from Police Lines on personal bond.

Women today are quite strong mentally: Neelima Katiyar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Different initiatives have been taken with full commitment for women empowerment, with the result women are rubbing shoulders with men, still a lot has to be done, said the UP State Minister for Higher Education Neelima Katiyar while addressing the valedictory session of a week-long birth anniversary celebrations of Atal Behari Vajpayee at UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University.

The minister said that women today are quite strong mentally and the wall between men and women have been broken to provide equal opportunities to girls who are doing very well in academic fields and also at different competitive examinations.

She said that India had been worshipping 'Ardhanarishwar' since Vedic period, and now the time has come to see women at an equal platform. She also spoke about Mission Shakti and Janani Suraksha Diwas, observed on the 9th of every month to good health for the women who are victims of malnutrition and anemia.

The Vice-Chancellor Prof Kameshwar Nath Singh, who presided over the function, said that his university has adopted villages where free education is provided to girl students.

CRACKDOWN ON HOOKAH BARS: Prayagraj police have launched a crackdown on hookah bars. The Allahabad High Court has put a ban on such bars and parlors, but there are hookah bar are



UP State Minister for Higher Education Neelima Katiyar addressing the valedictory session of birth anniversary celebrations of Atal Behari Vajpayee at UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University

Pioneer

still operating in the city and surrounding areas, and are involved in making drugs available to the customers, and providing them space for many other illegal activities.

Two hookah parlors had been raided in Civil Lines area during the past two days while another was raided in Jhusi on Monday. The hookah bar owners and the customers are being arrested, while the female customers have been sent home after warning and informing their parents.

At some places hookah bars are being used as narcotics hub and also as flesh trade centres. The district police has decided not to spare any such hookah bar in Prayagraj, and have started taking stern action after getting any such information.

3 SHUATS STUDENTS

TO SHARE VIEWS IN YOUTH PARLIAMENT: Three girl students of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) are all set to share their views in district level Youth Parliament. Youth Parliament Festival 2021 is being organised by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, National Service Scheme and Nehru Youth Centre. In this event, students have been invited to discuss various important topics. Three students were selected, based on their performance in a virtual conference conducted by SHUATS NSS. These students will put their views in the district level Youth Parliament.

There was a panel of three judges for the selection of students in the virtual conference, which included Mudita

Srivastava, Dr Deepak Kumar Bose and Satyam Kumar Kesari. In the virtual meeting, three girls Adiba Fatima, Shoaiba and Samroz were selected to participate in the Youth Parliament.

Satyam Kumar Kesari said that Adiba and Shoaiba will share their views on the National Education Policy, while Samroz will speak on zero budget natural farming boon for farmers in District Youth Parliament.

Coordinator Dr Rohit Lal said that this Youth Parliament will strengthen the roots of democracy, inculcate healthy habits of discipline, tolerance of the view of others and to enable the student community to know about practices and procedures of the Parliament.

SAMPURNANAND'S BIRTH ANNIV TO BE CELEBRATED: Kayasth Samaj will celebrate birth anniversary of the former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Dr Sampurnanand on January 1, 2021 in a big way to mobilise the Kayasth residents towards active participation in politics.

At a meeting held in Allahpur at the residence of Praveen Srivastava the above decision was taken in view of making the Kayasth community politically strong.

Speaking on the occasion Deepak Srivastava said that the younger generation of community is totally unaware of the contributions of stalwarts of the Kayasth community— Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Dr Sampurnanand and so on.

Second dose of Covid vaccine vital: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra said that as per the guidelines of the government, the micro-plan for the COVID-19 vaccination drive had been launched and advised all the persons who were vaccinated to get the repeat dose administered after 28 days or else the vaccine would be ineffective and could give rise to future complications.

He said every person had to take care that he or she was vaccinated for the second time exactly after 28 days. The CMO said the COVID-19 vaccine had two doses and the second was to be administered after 28 days and it could not be delayed at any cost. He said the doctors' team and the paramedics had been directed to ensure that once they vaccinated a person they

should counsel him or her to get vaccinated after for the second dose after 28 days. He said the doctors would inform a person which vaccine was being administered to him or her and allay all doubts in the mind of the person being vaccinated while also apprising him or her of the possibility of reaction. The CMO said the person to be vaccinated would be informed through SMS about

the place, time and vaccination spot where the vaccine and its repeat dose would be administered. Dr Mishra said there should be no carelessness or laxity and people should continue to wear masks, use sanitiser and ensure social distancing. He said washing hands thoroughly with soap was something which should be made part of the life and done as frequently as possible.

Chronic respiratory diseases responsible for 10.9% deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Airways diseases expert Dr Rakesh Srivastava from Lucknow said chronic respiratory diseases were responsible for 10.9 per cent of the total deaths and 6.4 per cent of the total globally recognised disease burden estimate calculated on the basis of the number of productive life years cut short by disease in India.

Addressing the inaugural session of the recent combined ENT, paediatric, pulmonary, anaesthesia, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) meet at Regency Healthcare here, Dr Srivastava said the medical professionals were presently limited in their abilities to diagnose, monitor disease status and manage chronic airway disease.

He said conventional lung function measure often poorly reflected patient symptoms or was insensitive to changes, particularly in the small airways where a disease may originate or manifest.

He added that the novel pulmonary function tests were becoming available and they helped the doctors to improve, characterise and understand chronic airway disease, and their translation and adoption from the research arena which would potentially enable individualised patient care.

Dr Srivastava said India had to bear the burden of both communicable and non-communicable diseases simultaneously and the recent Global Burden of Disease (GBD) survey data showed that both acute and chronic respiratory diseases were prevalent in sub-



Director, Regency Healthcare, Dr Rashmi Kapoor and Dr Rakesh Srivastava addressing presspersons.

Pioneer

stantial number in India.

He said these chronic respiratory diseases, especially asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), were of particular importance for having wide variations in morbidity and mortality in various Indian states.

Dr Srivastava said that the actual practice patterns and socio-economic impact of these common respiratory ailments need to be known. He said the impact of seasonal trends in occurrence or exacerbation of these diseases was yet not known.

Dr Srivastava said the field of respiratory epidemiology was relatively new as compared to its some more popular counterparts, for example, cardiovascular and cancer epidemiologies.

He said obstructive lung diseases were major contributors to adverse respiratory health status of a country, and control of these diseases was of paramount importance for any health care system. He said extraordinary efforts need to be undertaken in order to control these problems and thus bringing

all the pulmonary diseases and related departments under one roof was the need of the hour.

Addressing the session, Regency Healthcare director and paediatrician, Dr Rashmi Kapoor, said the rise in lung related diseases was a major cause of concern and needed all the lung related departments to combine to provide effective treatment.

She one area which also should be brought under this roof was ENT. She said the nose served three primary functions: to warm, humidify and filter air as it passed into the body. She said breathing problems may impact one or multiple of these functions.

She added that the spread of communicable diseases had emerged as a major challenge before the world. She said people crowded together at vulnerable places were exposed to outbreaks of respiratory illnesses like influenza, and the germs spread very rapidly in these settings and may have important health consequences for people.

Dr Kapoor added that

many germs that caused respiratory (breathing) diseases were spread by droplets that emerged from coughing and sneezing and these germs usually spread from person to person when the uninfected persons were in close contact with a sick person and in some cases people may become infected by touching something with these germs on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

She said in general, the best way to help prevent spread of respiratory germs was to avoid contact with droplets or secretions of saliva, mucus and tears and so one should minimise close contact with persons having symptoms of respiratory illness.

Regency Healthcare director Dr Atul Kapoor said Regency was a forerunner in providing latest treatment, best diagnostics and every treatment under one roof. He said its endeavour would be to ensure that India became the best medical tourism destination in the world.

Several other doctors were present in the session.

BSc student held for duping youth

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A joint team of Military Intelligence and Special Task Force (STF) arrested a BSc student who duped innocent youths on pretext of providing them jobs in the Army.

The team recovered three fake appointment letters, Army rubber stamps, mobile phone and an ATM card from him.

Raids were on to nab other members of the gang Addressing media persons, Superintendent of Police (North) Raj Kumar Agarwal said Deepak Kumar Rathaur of Sitapur had lodged a report with the Cantonment police here that Abhay Kumar Soni of Azad Nagar Khadri, Fazullaganj, Lucknow had duped him after promising to facilitate a job in Army for him.

He alleged that after depositing money in Abhay's bank account and failing to get a job, he had informed the Military Intelligence unit which, along with the STF, immediately carried out investigations.

The SP (East) said on Friday night, when the accused called a youth to collect his appointment letter near Army Canteen No 10 under Cantonment police station, the team arrested him.

The accused was handed over to the Cantonment police on Sunday.

Station House Officer Adesh Chandra said the accused, Abhay Kumar Soni, used to make innocent youths his victim through Facebook. After getting the money deposited in his bank account, he used to deliver fake appointment letters to them.

The accused was sent to jail.

The SHO said so far Abhay had duped over a dozen youths. He would usually deliver the fake appointment letters for job in Kanpur and Fatehgarh Army Canteens to youths who deposited Rs.2-2.50 lakh in his account.

However, the victim did not mention in his FIR the amount he deposited in the bank account of the accused.

The SHO said after collecting the call details and bank statement of the accused, his account would be frozen and complaints received from any other victim would also be included in the case.

The SHO said police would soon arrest the Lucknow-based person who was expert in preparing fake appointment letters for the accused.

Gang committing thefts in wedding functions busted

KANPUR (PNS): The Bithoor police have busted a gang that stole cash and valuables from marriage functions with the arrest of a youth from Dhruv Nagar on Sunday.

He was identified as Nikhil, son of Rakesh. Addressing media persons, Kalyanpur Circle Officer Ashok Singh said after theft of a bag containing cash and jewellery from a marriage function in Smriti Green Marriage Lawns of Singhpur (Bithoor) on November 27, investigations were carried out by SHO Kaushlendra Pratap and with the help of electronic surveillance, he succeeded in arresting the accused.

Earlier, on the basis of suspicious phone numbers filtered through the mobile towers, the SHO and his team visited Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh) and reached up to the village of the accused.

As the accused was stated to be residing in Bithoor police station area in Kanpur, the SHO returned and caught him.

The Kalyanpur CO said a minor girl who was caught red-handed committing theft in a guest house of Bithoor in November was found to be a member of the gang.

After her arrest, Nikhil had gone underground. Since then, in a bid to get the girl released from police custody, Nikhil had stayed back in the city and was arrested on Sunday/.

The CO suspected the involvement of this gang in the thefts committed in marriage functions held in Barra, Chakeri, etc.

He said the other members of the gang would be arrested soon.

Open gym inaugurated at rly stadium

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Under the aegis of the North Eastern Railway Sports Association (NERSA) 'Fit India Cyclothon' was organised at Syed Modi Railway Stadium here on Sunday during which the General Manager of North Eastern Railway (NER) and patron of NERSA, Vinay Kumar Tripathi, was the chief guest. Chairperson of North Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (NERWWO) Meena Tripathi flagged off the 'Fit India Cyclothon'. It was led by GM Vinay Kumar Tripathi. Earlier GM Vinay Kumar Tripathi and chairperson/NERWWO Meena Tripathi inaugurated the newly-established open gym at Syed Modi railway stadium premises. On the occasion GM said this cyclothon with the aim of keeping the citizens healthy is being organised by the Government of India from December 7 to 31 at the national level. He said in general we have to stay fit and morning time was good for fitness. People above 40 years of age should pay special attention to fitness, he added. "By looking at the participants in the cyclothon, it seems that our officers and staff are very energetic," the GM said. While congratulating for open gym Tripathi said that it could be put to good use. Congratulating NERSA for this



event, he said in the coming days its achievements will increase significantly. GM Vinay Kumar Tripathi and chairperson/NERWWO Meena Tripathi saw the fitness machines like arm press, second arm press, horizontal bar, etc installed in the open gym. Chief Rolling Stock Engineer and President, NERSA, Yogesh Mohan, while proposing the vote of thanks said that all players and coaches

present there had made commendable contribution in making the programme successful. While conducting the programme Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) and secretary, NERSA, Pankaj Kumar Singh said that for protection from Covid-19 the Government of India has been running the Fit India Cyclothon programme all over the country whose slogan is 'Fitness Ka Dose Aadha Ghanta Roz' by adopting which we can keep ourselves fit. On the occasion AGM Amit Kumar Agarwal, senior Deputy GM Amitabh Ojha, PCME Arvind Kumar Pandey, PCOM Anil Kumar Singh, Principal Chief Commercial Manager SC Prasad, Principal Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Anil Kumar Mishra, NERWWO members, senior railway officers, employees, sportspersons and sports lovers were present.

Official reviews works

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Secretary for Urban Development and officer incharge of the district nominated by the government Anurag Yadav directed the officials concerned to control law and order at any cost and give an impetus to departmental works in the interest of beneficiaries. Such direction was given by the officer at a meeting of district level officials at Collectorate on Sunday. Reviewing the developmental works the officer took the executive engineer Suraj Dam Division to task for failing to provide factual information about the dam. He directed the Irrigation department to keep all information about dams and run canals as per the demand of farmers. About procurement of paddy the officer was appraised by DyRMO that total 88,662 MT purchase was done as which was 34 per cent of the target. The officer made it clear that the dues of farmers should be cleared within 72 hours of the delivery at purchase centre. Reviewing the



Nagar Palikas he asked the officials concerned to make them ODF and keep an eye on residents across the banks of river to ensure that no defecation was done. He directed to ensure that the towns were clean. The

CMO informed the officer that all preparations had been done to keep Corona vaccine safely along with the vaccination strategy. All officers were directed to dispose of complaints regarding the CM portal on priority. The meeting was attended by all district level officers, including DM Sushil Kumar Patel and SP Ajay Kumar Singh.

ARRESTED: The Adalhaat police a rape accused recently. He had entered the victim's house and raped her as there was no one there. The victim had lodged a case at police station on December 8 and the police started the investigation. On being tipped off by an informer the police nabbed the accused, Surendra Bahadur and after completing the legal formalities sent him to jail.

Gkp-LTT puja spl timing changed from Jan 1

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration has extended the run of following special trains for the convenience of people. Changes have been made in their timings and stoppages from January 1 next year. Their coach composition will remain as before. All coaches will be of reserved category and passengers will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said.

GKP-LTT PUJA SPL: The 05018 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) daily puja special train will be run till March 31 next year. From January 1 as per the changed timing and stoppages the 05018 Gorakhpur-LTT puja special will daily leave Gorakhpur at 05.45 hrs, Chauri Chaura at 06.22 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 06.48 hrs, Bhatni at 07.11 hrs, Salempur at 07.27 hrs, Lar Road at 07.40 hrs, Belthara Road at 07.56 hrs, Indara at 08.21 hrs, Mau Jn at 08.40 hrs, Dulpahar, 09.13 hrs, Jakhnian at 09.26 hrs, Sadat at 09.40 hrs, Aunrihar to 10.00 hrs, Varanasi City at 10.50 hrs, Varanasi at 11.20 hrs, Chakhandi to 11.41 hrs, Sewapuri at 11.49 hrs, Kapeseti at 11.58 hrs, Parsipur at 12.07 hrs, Bhadohi at 12.17 hrs, Mondhi at 12.29 hrs, Suriyawan at 12.38 hrs, Sarai Kansari at 12.49 hrs, Janghai at 13.20 hrs, Ugrasenpur at 13.41 hrs, Phulpur at 13.51 hrs, Sarai Chandi at 14.03 hrs, Phaphamau at 15.05 hrs, Prayag at 15.22 hrs, Prayagraj Jn at 16.10 hrs, Naini at 16.31 hrs, Shankargarh at 17.11 hrs, Manikpur at 18.25 hrs, Satna at 19.40 hrs, Maihar at 21.10 hrs, Katni at 21.00 hrs, Sihora Road at 21.45 hrs, Jabalpur at 22.20 hrs, Madan Mahal at 22.30 hrs, Shridham at 23.10 hrs, Narsinghpur at 23.50 hrs, Kareli on second day at 00.10 hrs, Gadawara at 00.50 hrs, Pipariya at 01.20 hrs, Sohagpur at 01.40 hrs, Itarsi at 03.50 hrs, Banapura at 04.18 hrs, Timarni at 04.50 hrs, Harda at 05.05 hrs, Khirkiya at 06.10 hrs, Talvadia at 07.05 hrs, Khandwa at 07.40 hrs, Burhanpur at 08.30 hrs, Raver at 08.48 hrs, Bhusaval at 09.35 hrs, Jalgaon at 10.05 hrs, Pachora at 10.35 hrs, Chalisgaon at 11.10 hrs, Manmad at 12.20 hrs, Lasalgaon at 12.40 hrs, Nashik Road at 13.25 hrs, Kalyan at 16.20 hrs, Thane at 16.45 hrs and reach LTT at 17:15 hrs. The 05017 LTT - Gorakhpur daily puja special train will run till April 2. From January 1 as per the changed timing and stoppage it leave will LTT daily at 06.35 hrs, Thane at 07.00 hrs., Kalyan at 07.20 hrs, Nashik Road at 10.00 hrs, Lasalgaon at 10.40 hrs, Manmad at 11.15 hrs, Chalisgaon at 11.55 hrs, Pachora at 12.35 hrs, Jalgaon at 13.10 hrs, Bhusaval at 14.05 hrs, Raver at 14.35 hrs, Burhanpur at 14.50 hrs, Khandwa at 16.40 hrs, Talvadiya at 17.01 hrs, Khirkiya at 18.28 hrs, Harda at 19.20 hrs, Timarni at 19.36 hrs, Banapura at 20.00 hrs, Itarsi at 20.50 hrs, Sohagpur at 21.40 hrs, Pipariya at 21.55 hrs, Gadawara at 22.30 hrs, Kareli at 22.55 hrs, Narsinghpur at 23.10 hrs, Shridham at 23.35 hrs, Madan Mahal on second day at 00.10 hrs, Jabalpur at 00.40 hrs, Sihora Road at 01.20 hrs, Katni at 02.25 hrs, Maihar at 03.10 hrs, Satna at 03.55 hrs, Manikpur at 05.30 hrs, Shankargarh at 06.21 hrs, Naini at 07.16 hrs, Prayagraj at 08.15 hrs, Prayag at 08.40 hrs, Phaphamau at 08.54 hrs, Sarai Chandi at 09.09 hrs, Phulpur at 09.21 hrs, Ugrasenpur at 09.39 hrs, Janghai at 10.08 hrs, Sarai Kansari at 10.24 hrs, Suriyawan at 10.35 hrs, Mondhi at 10.43 hrs, Bhadohi at 10.58 hrs,

Parsipur at 11.18 hrs, Kapseti at 11.55 hrs, Sewapuri at 12.13 hrs, Varanasi at 13.10 hrs, Varanasi City at 13.28 hrs, Aunrihar at 13.58 hrs, Sadat at 14.18 hrs, Jakhnian at 14.32 hrs, Dullahapur at 14.45 hrs, Mau at 15.25 hrs, Indara at 15.37 hrs, Belthara Road at 16.10 hrs, Lar Road at 16:26 hrs, Salempur at 16.39 hrs., Bhatni at 17.00 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 17.21 hrs, Chauri Chara at 17.50 hrs and reach Gorakhpur at 18.40 hrs.

GKP-CSMT PUJA SPECIAL: The 02597 Gorakhpur-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT-Mumbai) weekly puja special train will be run till March 30 next year. From January 1, 2021, as per changed timing and stoppages the train will on every Tuesday leave Gorakhpur at 08.30 hrs, Khalilabad at 09.10 hrs, Basti at 09.39 hrs, Gonda at 11.05 hrs, Lucknow at 13.35 hrs, Kanpur Central at 15.15 hrs, Orai at 16.42 hrs, Jhansi at 18.53 hrs, Bhopal at 23.55 hrs, Itarsi at 00.45 hrs, Bhusaval at 05.05 hrs, Kalyan at 11.00 hrs and will arrive at CSMT (Mumbai) at 12:20 hrs. 02598 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-Gorakhpur (Mumbai) Weekly Puja Special train will be run till 31 March 2021. On the other hand, the 02598 CSMT-Gorakhpur (Mumbai) weekly puja special train will run till March 31. From January 1 as per changed timing and stoppages it will leave Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) every Wednesday at 13.30 hrs, Kalyan at 14.25 hrs, Bhusaval at 20.25 hrs, Itarsi at 23.41 hrs, on second day Bhopal at 01.05 hrs, Jhansi at 07.00 hrs, Orai at 08.15 hrs, Kanpur Central at 11.35 hrs, Lucknow at 13.15 hrs, Gonda at 15.35 hrs, Basti at 16.53 hrs, and Khalilabad at 17.27 hrs will arrive at Gorakhpur at 18.20 hrs.

Chhapra-Delhi puja spl to run till March 27

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers has extended the run of the following special trains. From January 1, 2021, changes have been made in their timings. Their coach structure will remain as before. The 05115 Chhapra-Delhi weekly puja special has been extended till March 27 next year and changes have been made in its timing and stoppages. As per the changed timing and stoppages from January 1, the 05115 Chhapra-Delhi puja special will leave Chhapra every Saturday at 11.20 hrs, Ballia at 13.00 hrs, Yusufpur at

13.40 hrs, Ghazipur City at 14.20 hrs, Aunrihar at 14.58 hrs, Dobhi at 15.16 hrs, Kerakat at 15.26 hrs, Jaunpur at 16.40 hrs, Shahganj at 17.12 hrs, Akbarpur at 17.54 hrs, Faizabad at 19.10 hrs, Lucknow (NR) at 22:45 hrs, the second day Hardoi at 00.58 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 02.53 hrs, Aonla at 04.40 hrs, Chandausi at 06.05 hrs, Moradabad at 07.35 hrs, Amroha at 08.35 hrs, Hapur at 09.36 hrs, Ghaziabad at 10.27 hrs, Delhi Shahadra at 10.51 hrs and will arrive at Delhi at 11.20 hrs. The 05116 Delhi-Chhapra weekly puja special train will be run till March 28, 2021, and changes have been made in its timings and stoppages. As per the changed timing and stop-

page from January 1 the 05116 Delhi-Chhapra puja special will on every Sunday leave Delhi at 14.00 hrs, Delhi Shahadra at 14.16 hrs, Ghaziabad at 14.52 hrs, Hapur at 15.30 hrs, Amroha at 16.30 hrs, Moradabad at 17.30 hrs, Chandausi at 19.00 hrs, Aonla at 19.55 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 22.40 hrs, Hardoi at 23.32 hrs, Lucknow (NR) on the second day at 01.20 hrs, Faizabad at 04.40 hrs, Akbarpur at 06.15 hrs, Shahganj at 07.08 hrs, Jaunpur at 08.30 hrs, Kerakat at 08.56 hrs, Dobhi at 09.09 hrs, Aunrihar at 09.35 hrs, Ghazipur City at 10.37 hrs, Yusufpur at 10.57 hrs, Ballia at 11.57 hrs and reach Chhapra at 13.20 hrs.

Blood donation beneficial for donors as well: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra said that blood donation was very important and essential because it saved precious lives.

Inaugurating a blood donation camp organised by Kanchanlata Memorial Service Organisation in association with LLR Blood Bank, Dr Mishra said blood donation was one of the noblest donations and every healthy person should donate blood at least three to four times in a year.

He said blood donation not only saved human lives but also freed the donor of several health related issues as well.

The CMO said the role of blood transfusion services in the times of COVID-19 depended on the type, potential of community spread and risk of transfusion transmissibility.

He said there were more than 3,000 decentralised blood banks all over the country and the major challenges to blood transfusion services were recruitment of healthy blood donors, follow-up of the donors and the patients, inventory management, staff safety and adequacy for emergency work and consumable management.

Dr Mishra said blood transfusion services should have a strategic plan to respond

to challenges generated during a pandemic and focus on shortage, wastage and supply of blood and components in a cost-effective manner.

He said the role of blood transfusion services in a pandemic depended on the type of pandemic, potentiality of community spread, risk of transfusion transmissibility and cost-effectiveness of blood safety interventions.

The CMO said in the current times, with modern diagnostics, the blood donated by one donor could save at least three lives. He said the myth that blood donation could cause weakness and health problem was baseless as it

helped a person to replenish the blood with new blood cells which were good for the donor's health.

Dr Mishra said the major benefits of blood donation were that it reduced stress, improved emotional well-being, benefited physical health, rid one of negative feelings, provided a sense of belonging and reduced isolation. He added that donating blood regularly lowered iron stores, and this reduced the risk of heart attack as high body iron stores were believed to increase the risk of heart attack.

He said regular blood donations were thought to lower blood pressure.

a code sent to one's smartphone, or biometrics using one's fingerprint, face, or retina.

He said it was a multi-factor authentication (MFA) and a security process that cross-verified users with two different forms of identification.

Tandon said used on top of the regular user name/password verification, 2FA bolstered security by making it more difficult for intruders to gain unauthorised access, even if a perpetrator got past the first authentication step.

He said this was commonly employed in online banking websites, social media platforms and e-commerce sites as a way to harden access controls to the more sensitive areas of a web application.

Tandon further said that the two-factor authentication also enabled businesses and public institutions to be more

productive and efficient, allowing employees to perform remote tasks with far less security concerns.

He said MFA identification could be categorised into three types, first was knowledge factors (something the user knows) like email addresses, user name-password combinations, answers to security questions, and the CVV on the back of a credit card.

He said the second was possession factor (something the user owns) as this authentication type included a mobile phone, SUB token and a card reader and the third was inherence factor and this authentication type pertained to unique physical attributes that were inherent to a single person, such as fingerprint readers, retinal scans and voice recognition.

Tandon said the 2FA usually depended on services or

hardware provided by third parties like mobile service provider issuing verification codes via text message and this created a dependency issue, as the enterprise had no means of controlling these external services should a malfunction occur.

He added that these two-factor authentication could help applications counter social engineering attacks, like phishing and spear phishing, which attempted to dupe a user into revealing sensitive data, including their user name and password.

He said even in the event of a successful attack, a perpetrator would still need the additional form of identification required by a 2FA solution.

The welcome address was delivered by principal Vanita Mehrotra.

Many teachers took part in the session.



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CORRIGENDUM No.-3

Corrigendum Publish Date: 24.12.2020, 18:23
Tender No.:ELCORE-OHE-EPC-09A-Mod-0 (Open Tender)
Closing Date/Time: 19.01.2021, 15:00

Name of Work:EPC Tender: Request for Proposal For Electrification of Railway Lines in Birur (Excl.)–Taluppa (Incl.), Chikbanavar (Excl.)–Hassen (Excl.), Chikmagalur (Incl.)–Kaddur (Incl.) and Hospet (Excl.)–Swamihalli (Incl.) Sections of South Western Railway On Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) Mode. [Bid/Package No. EPC-09A-Mod-0].

NIT Header:

Field Name	Existing Value	Modified Value
Tender Closing Date Time	12.01.2021 15.00	19.01.2021 15.00
Bidding Start Date	29.12.2020	05.01.2021

The complete information of above Tender are seen on website www.ireps.gov.in.

No. PR/626/2020
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विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात CIN:U31200UP2003SGC027460
दिवस:- 28.12.2020


अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विवरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुमती व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है. निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

क्र० सं०	अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं०	विवरण
1.	92 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-रनियाँ के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र रनियाँ, न्यू रनियाँ एवं न्यू बारा के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।
2.	93 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-रनियाँ के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र रायपुर एवं मूसानगर के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।
3.	94 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-रूरा के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र रूरा एवं बनौपारा के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।
4.	95 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-रूरा के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र डेरापुर टाउन एवं डेरापुर ग्रामीण के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।
5.	96 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-जैनपुर के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र जैनपुर, बारा एवं कुम्भी के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।
6.	97 / वि०वि०मं०का० दे० / 2020-21	उपखण्ड-जैनपुर के अन्तर्गत 33 / 11 के०बी० विद्युत उपकेन्द्र सरवानखेड़ा एवं गजनेर के अधीन आवेदित संयोजन को ऊर्जीकृत करने का कार्य।

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात

राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये



दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०
विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर CIN:U31200UP2003SGC027460
दिवस:- 28.12.2020

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विवरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुमती व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है. निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना एवं ई-निविदा में यदि कोई संशोधन अथवा निविदा खुलने की तिथि में विस्तार होता है तो इसकी सूचना ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

क्र० सं०	अतिअल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं०	विवरण
1.	120 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-प्रथम, कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-प्रथम, कानपुर के अधीन ड्रपट पोर्टल पर आवेदित विद्युत संयोजन पर सिंगल फेज मीटर स्थापना करने का कार्य।
2.	121 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-प्रथम, कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-द्वितीय, नर्वेल के अधीन ड्रपट पोर्टल पर आवेदित विद्युत संयोजन पर सिंगल फेज मीटर स्थापना करने का कार्य।
3.	122 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-प्रथम, कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-तृतीय, सरसोल के अधीन ड्रपट पोर्टल पर आवेदित विद्युत संयोजन पर सिंगल फेज मीटर स्थापना करने का कार्य।
4.	123 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-प्रथम, कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत सोमाय योजना के अधीन विद्युत संयोजन अनुमूलत करने का कार्य।
5.	124 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-द्वितीय, चौबेपुर के अन्तर्गत सोमाय योजना के अधीन विद्युत संयोजन अनुमूलत करने का कार्य।
6.	125 / वि०वि०मं०का० / 2020-21	विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-तृतीय, घाटमपुर के अन्तर्गत सोमाय योजना के अधीन विद्युत संयोजन अनुमूलत करने का कार्य।

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर

राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये



विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु एक अदद मज्गांचल विद्युत वितरण अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध निगम लि०, लखीमपुर कराने का कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹००

अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा विद्युत वितरण 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य मण्डल, लखीमपुर के अन्तर्गत ₹० 1180.00 मात्र। **6-निविदा सं०** निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अनुमती **148 / वि०वि०मं०ला० / 2020-21** निविदाकारों से दो अलग-अलग भागों विद्युत वितरण खण्ड गोला खीरी के में निविदाएं ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से उपखण्ड तृतीय गोला (रहरिया) के अति अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रित कार्यालय सम्बन्धी दैनिक कार्यों के की जाती है, विवरण निम्नवत है- सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु एक अदद निविदा जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध एवं समय 04.01.2021 समय 13.00 कराने का कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० बजे निविदा के भाग-1 खोलने की 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० तिथि एवं समय 04.01.2021 समय 14. 1180.00 मात्र। **7-निविदा सं० 00** बजे **1-निविदा सं० 143 / वि०. 149 / वि०वि०मं०ला० / 2020-21** निविदाकारों से दो अलग-अलग भागों विद्युत वितरण खण्ड गोला खीरी के में खण्ड-प्रथम, लखीमपुर के क्षेत्राधीन कार्यालय सम्बन्धी दैनिक कार्यों के उपखण्ड-प्रथम लखीमपुर, दैनिक सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु एक अदद कार्यों के सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु 01 अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध अदद अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर कराने का कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० उपलब्ध कराने का कार्य। धरोहर 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० धनराशि ₹० 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा 1180.00 मात्र। **8-निविदा सं०** प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० 1180.00 मात्र। **150 / वि०वि०मं०ला० / 2020-21** **2-निविदा सं० 144 / वि०वि०मं०** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड गोला खीरी के **ला० / 2020-21** विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड प्रथम एवं द्वितीय के मण्डल, लखीमपुर के क्षेत्राधीन विद्युत कार्यालय सम्बन्धी दैनिक कार्यों के वितरण खण्ड-द्वितीय, लखीमपुर के सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु दो अदद अनुमती दैनिक कार्यों के सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध कराने का 01 अदद अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० 3200.00 उपलब्ध कराने का कार्य। धरोहर मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० 1180. धनराशि ₹० 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा 00 मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र उत्तर प्रदेश प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० 1180.00 मात्र। सरकार की ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट **3-निविदा सं० 145 / वि०वि०मं०** <https://etender.up.nic.in> से **ला० / 2020-21** विद्युत वितरण डाउनलोड / देखे जा सकते हैं। मण्डल, लखीमपुर के क्षेत्राधीन विद्युत निविदा के प्रथम भाग में निम्नलिखित वितरण खण्ड-निघानस, दैनिक कार्यों अमिलेख सिर्फ ऑनलाइन जमा करने के सुचारु सम्पादन हेतु 01 अदद होंगे। उपरोक्त कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा अनुमती कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध आमंत्रित की गयी है, जिसे कराने का कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर 1600.00 मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य दिनांक 28.12.2020 को प्रकाशित ₹० 1180.00 मात्र। **4-निविदा सं०** किया गया है। निविदा कार्य की कुल **146 / वि०वि० मं०ला० / 2020-21** मात्र, निविदा विशिष्टीकरण व अन्य विद्युत वितरण मण्डल लखीमपुर के नियम एवं शर्तों ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर अन्तर्गत उप निरीक्षक पुलिस प्रवर्तन उपलब्ध है। अधोहस्ताक्षरी को बिना दल, लखीमपुर खीरी के कार्यालय कारण बताये निविदा निरस्त करने का सम्बन्धी दैनिक कार्यों के सुचारु अधिकार होगा। निर्धारित तिथि के सम्पादन हेतु एक अदद अनुमती विस्तार तथा शुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित कम्प्यूटर आपरेटर उपलब्ध कराने का सूचना यदि कोई होगी तो केवल कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० 1600.00 वेबसाइट पर डाली जाएगी। अतः सचय मात्र। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹० 1180. को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त 00 मात्र। **5-निविदा सं० 147 / वि०. वेबसाइट** को नियमित देखें। **अधीक्षक वि०मं०ला० / 2020-21** विद्युत वितरण **अभियन्ता, वितरण मण्डल लखीमपुर** खण्ड-प्रथम लखीमपुर खीरी के पत्रांक-2174 दिनांक- 28.12.2020 कार्यालय सम्बन्धी दैनिक कार्यों के "राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचाये"।

Strengthening organisational challenge for new JD(U) boss

IAN S ■ PATNA

With the ruling Janata Dal (United) going through a crisis in Bihar, the reins of the party have been entrusted to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's most trusted aide and former Indian Administrative Service officer RCP Singh.

How well would Singh play the role of the JD(U)'s Big Boss, only time will tell. But it is believed that strengthening the organisational structure and expanding the party to other States will be a major challenge for Singh.

Nitish Kumar has been the universally accepted and towering leader in the JD(U). In such a situation, there are serious apprehensions whether Singh will be able to create his own image as an acceptable leader of the party. There are many strong leaders in the party who have the capability to take

over the leadership reins. Will they accept Singh as their leader, is a question being asked.

The JDU, which was the largest party in Bihar, could only achieve the third position in the recently concluded Assembly polls. Singh had earlier earned praise for the role he played in the expansion and strengthening of the party.

In the JD(U)'s National Executive meeting, the party had indicated that it no longer wants to be strong only in Bihar and passed a proposal regarding the JD(U)'s expansion to other states on similar lines as in Bihar.

Former Bihar minister and Legislative Councillor Neeraj Kumar said, "Singh has been associated with the JDU for a long time and has played an important role in the organisation. His administrative experience and communication

The JDU, which was the largest party in Bihar, could only achieve the third position in the recently concluded Assembly polls. Singh had earlier earned praise for the role he played in the expansion and strengthening of the party

skills will prove to be very useful in the organisational development of the JD(U).

A senior JDU leader said it was becoming quite a daunting challenge for Nitish Kumar to handle the dual responsibility of Chief Minister as well as party President. Change was considered necessary to give an opportunity to new generation leaders and to enmerge the party workers so entrusting the responsibility of leading the party was given to Singh.

Even when George Fernandes and Sharad Yadav were president of the JDU

Nitish Kumar remained the most visible face of the party. Party leaders said that Kumar had taken the party to new heights.

From the start, Singh was seen as the successor of Nitish Kumar. Singh comes from the Kurmi caste and is one of Kumar's most trusted aides.

It is also considered a challenge for Singh to keep in step with the other political outfits who are part of the NDA alliance in Bihar. Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Modi said that under Singh's leadership the BJP-JDU political relations and alliance will be further strengthened.

Congratulatory messages have been pouring in after Singh became the party's National President, but it remains to be seen how he would deal with the upcoming challenges.

Pak’s plot to target religious places foiled

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With the arrest of another OGW belonging to the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terror outfit, the joint team of security forces in Jammu & Kashmir have unearthed a sinister plot of Pakistan based handlers to target famous religious places and disturb peace in the region.

In the last four days, joint teams of security forces have averted three major terror strikes with the arrest of six terrorists and their associates and recovery of arms and ammunition.

According to the preliminary reports, handlers sitting across Pakistan were directing these OGW's to carry out terror strikes especially on famous religious places in order to dis-

turb peace in the communal-

ly sensitive Jammu region.

According to a statement issued by the office of Inspector General of Police, Jammu range on Monday, "Police in Jammu district arrested one person linked with the proscribed terrorist organization LeT who was tasked by the handlers from across the border to carry out grenade blasts in the city at NHW bye pass road last evening".

Police have identified the arrested person as Mohammad Ashraf S/O Ghulam Din R/O Lar, Mahore, Reasi A/P Peerbagh colony, Sunjawan, Jammu. Two hand grenades were recovered from his possession.

Official sources claimed the handler across the border was in contact with more ter-

ror operatives. Jammu police have launched a massive manhunt to track down their footprints to avert any other strike.

This is the second terror module linked with LeT which has been busted by the Jammu police in the past one week. A similar module linked with TRF (LeT) was busted earlier in which 02 persons namely Raees Ahmad Dar S/O Ghulam Hassan Dar R/O Churath, Devsar, Qazigund and Sabzar Ahmad Sheikh S/o Ghulam Ahmad Sheikh R/o Ashmuji, Kulgam were arrested with one Ak series rifle, one pistol, two magazines of AK rifle, 60 rounds of AK rifle and 15 rounds of pistol.

Another module was busted in Poonch on Sunday with the arrest of three militants of the newly floated JK Ghaznavi Force in Mendhar area who

were planning to target religious places of minorities starting with the famous temple of Ari. Six grenades have so far been recovered from their possession. Apart from three arrests, two more persons have been detained for questioning. SSP Poonch Ramesh Angral said that the arrested militants were planning to carry out a grenade attack on a religious place at Ari in Mendhar at the behest of their Pakistani handler to disturb peace and communal amity in the district.

Some videos regarding tactics of grenade lobbying were also found in the mobile phones of the accused. SSP Poonch added that it is a major success for security forces as a major terror plot of militant strikes and inciting communal violence has been averted in Poonch.

SII launches most affordable pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday announced the launch of the world's most affordable pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) in India that aims to provides protection against 10 variants of pneumococcus bacteria causing pneumonia, meningitis, ear, and blood infections in children.

SII, which is the world's largest vaccine maker by volume, has priced the PCV branded as Pneumasil at \$3 per dose for public market, and little over \$10 per dose for private market. In India, three doses are required for the full PCV vaccination.

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is imported and sold in India by Pfizer and GSK. While the Pfizer vaccine Prevenar 13 is sold at Rs 3,801 per dose, GSK vaccine Synflorix is sold at Rs 2,195 per dose, making them the costliest vaccine in the child immunisation schedule.

Prevenar 13 provides protection against 13 variants of pneumococcus bacteria compared to 10 of Synflorix.

The high cost of the vaccine had the Indian government delay the inclusion of PCV in the universal immunisation programme (UIP), meant to vaccinate children free of cost. The launch of SII's affordable PCV will allow the Indian gov-

ernment to introduce this vaccine as part of UIP. Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer of SII, said the company had a capacity to produce 100 million doses of PCV per annum. The company has begun shipping the vaccine to UNICEF, for supplying to child immunisation programmes in various low and middle income countries. The PCV has been prequalified by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Poonawalla said India too is in the process of placing order for 20 million-30 million doses of the vaccine and that it would help it to prevent 50-60 percent of infant deaths in next two to three years depending on the coverage.

Rural India, kisan firmly standing with Modi: BJP



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the month-long and ongoing farmers' agitation on the outskirts of Delhi, the BJP on Monday cited BJP's win in the Bihar Assembly poll, 11 State by-elections and 8 local bodies polls to claim that "rural India", including "kisan", is firmly "standing" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Kashmir ho ya Gauhati, apna desh apni maati...", declared Union Minister Smriti Irani as sought to project recent poll victories of the BJP as an endorsement of farm reforms carried out by the Modi-government about six-month ago.

The minister said the outcome of elections, held between September and December, are an indication that Modi and the BJP have been able to secure the trust of the people.

She said since the laws were passed opposition was

creating misinformation that people were not happy and expressing their anguish.

Addressin a press conference here Irani said support for the news laws and the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which was carried out simultaneously with the Modi Government's development agenda has played a key role in scripting the party's performance.

"Ever since the agriculture reform bills have been passed in Parliament the opposition parties have been trying to create misinformation that the people in rural areas are unhappy with the Union government. But the democratic process shows the truth ...how in the rural areas whether it is farmers or ordinary people, especially women have shown their faith in PM Modi and the BJP," said the union minister.

Irani said since September 27, 2020 and till December 22, the BJP won the Bihar assem-

bly elections, by polls in 11 state; and eight local body elections.

The Minister who is also an MP from Amethi, UP, said as against BJP which got overwhelming support , Congress collected a duck in some of these states.

"Unki party ka haal unke niyrtman adhyaksh ki hi tarah hain", she quipped taking a dig at Rahul Gandhi who lost his 2019 Lok Sabha poll to her from Amethi.

Farmers are demanding roll-back of three farm laws which they apprehend would handover farm marketing to the big corporates and phase-out Minimum Support Price and the "Mandi system". The government is firm on not scrapping new laws saying reforms in farm sector are long overdue and need to be done for modernisation and increasing income of the farmers.

The stand-off is on despite six rounds of negotiations.

Act of cowardice: Sanjay Raut on ED’s notice to wife in PMC Bank scam

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoned his wife Varsha to appear before it in connection with the PMC Bank scam on December 29, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Monday hit out at the BJP for its "act of cowardice" which reflected its "frustration" against him for his role in MVA Government's formation in the State and charged that through the ED, it was targetting the ruling alliance leaders for the past one year.

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

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

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

Alluding to the "blatant misuse" of the Central investigating agencies against its political rivals, Raut said: "During the past one year, our leaders like Sharad Pawar, Eknath Khadse and Pratap Sarnaik got notices from the ED. Now I am being discussed in connection with the summons issued to my wife".

Raut's wife Varsha will appear before the ED on Tuesday. The ED is understood to be investigating alleged financial transactions between Varsha Raut and Pravin Raut, who is under arrest in the PMC Bank case.

"The ED wanted some papers and we have submitted them in time," Raut said, even as he dismissed the notices as "pieces of paper, nothing else".

Mamata’s padyatra in Bolpur today

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Little more than a week after Home Minister Amit Shah's grand roadshow at Bolpur, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is all set to take out her own "padyatra" along the same route on Tuesday.

Though the road show is seen as an answer to Shah's rally the main theme of the of Tuesday's march have been based on the songs of Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore who founded Shantiniketan at Bolpur then a small tribal hamlet.

Several artists from various districts of Bengal will participate in the roadshow and perform Rabindra Sangeet, sources said.

Meanwhile in a related development Banerjee on Monday said that the State Public Works Department

(PWD) would take back the control of a road near the Visva Bharati University campus.

The 2.9 km long road connecting two campuses of the centrally controlled university -- Santiniketan and Sriniketan – was handed over to the university in 2017.

The decision was taken after reports that the University authorities had made the road out of bounds for the general public. The Chief Minister who was at Bolpur on Monday said "there are many complaints from local people that they are not being allowed to use the road and it was causing inconvenience. So, the PWD will now take control of it".

The decision is seen as a part of the ongoing Centre-State (read BJP-TMC conflict in the run up to 2021 Bengal Assembly elections.




यू० पी० प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि०
(उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम)
कार्यालय: महाप्रबन्धक जोन-7, यू.पी. प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि०, लखनऊ
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पत्रांक: 1261 / पीसीसीएल० / महाप्रोजेन-7 / ई-टेंडर दिनांक: 28.12.2020

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

जनपद गोण्डा के घाघरा नदी पर स्थित सकरौर बिखारीपुर तटबन्ध की सुरक्षा हेतु घोड़हन-एली सरसीला के पास ड्रेजिंग एवं चैनैलाइजेशन के कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय की अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना-**08/UPPCL/GM-7/E-TENDER/2020-21** दिनांक **28.12.2020** द्वारा ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है। यह निविदा वेबसाइट <http://www.etender.up.nic.in> के पोर्टल पर दिनांक 07.01.2021 से दिनांक 15.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड / अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 15.01.2021 को अपरान्ह 1.00 बजे तक सबमिट / जमा किया जा सकता है। टेक्निकल बिड उसी दिन अपरान्ह 2.00 बजे अधोहस्ताक्षरी के उपरोक्त कार्यालय में खोली जानी प्रस्तावित है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण एवं शर्तें इत्यादि कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट www.upprojects.org पर देखी जा सकती है।

महाप्रबन्धक जोन-7
यूपी०पीसीसीएल०, लखनऊ



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ


E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 20/65 Dt. 28.12.2020

On behalf of the President of India, **The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 Certified unit)** invites the following E-Procurement Tenders.

S.N.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1	40201087	Tetrafluoro Ethylene Tape	158909 Mtrs	14.01.2021
2	30202621 B	Coupler Body with Shank Wear Plate	1300 Nos.	27.01.2021

Note: 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement Tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website alongwith Class-III Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightaway ignored and shall not be considered. 1461/20 FA

f North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in **North Central Railway@CPRONCR**



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: BOLANGIR

Procurement Notice

1.	Name of work	: Periodical Maintenance of 5 years completed PM
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Japan, South Korea and the UAE are the only other Asian nations who have been conferred with a couple of Blue Flag beaches.

Blue Flag certification is a globally recognised eco-label

The Government had on September 18 recommended these eight beaches for the coveted international eco-label. India began its humble journey in 2018 for development of pilot beaches (one each in coastal states/UTs) and presented the first set of eight beaches for the certification for the ensuing tourist season 2020.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The loan account of the accused firm became NPA and the Bank alleged in its complaint that the accused firm and its directors besides unknown public servants cheated the bank to the tune of ₹236.74

It also allegedly diverted funds from the textiles division to the PEB (Pre Engineering Buildings) division.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion, the All India Congress Committee urged members to organise 'Tiranga Yatra' and other

She, however, avoided questions pertaining to his

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal accused the BJP of “indulging in low-level politics” and hitting out at Rahul Gandhi “because they want to target only one leader”. “Rahul Gandhi has gone to see his grandmother. Is it wrong? Everybody has the right to undertake personal visits,” he said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

“NCDC Nodal Unit will maintain a database of all samples of the new variants (of public health significance). The data will be epidemiologically analysed, interpreted

Top regional genome sequencing labs are — CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in Delhi, CSIR Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad, DBT National Institute of Biomedical Genomics near Kolkata, DBT-Institute of Life Sciences in Bhubaneswar, DBT InSTEM/NCBS in Bengaluru, DBT-Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and

Ten regional genome sequencing laboratories spread across the country will cater to the nearest states, which will send five per cent of the positive samples to these labs for genome sequencing. The viral genome sequencing data generated by regional genome sequencing laboratories will be sent to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi for collation and integration.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

“In case the advocate representing the cause of the accused, for one reason or the other was not available, it was open to the court to appoint an amicus curiae to assist the court but the cause in any case ought not to be allowed to go unrepresented,” the bench, also comprising Justices Vineet

"In the circumstances, we have no other alternative but to set-aside the judgment passed by the high court and to restore criminal appeal...to the file of

One of the convicts had died during pendency of his appeal before the high court and proceedings related to him were abated.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI


The facility of postal ballots was extended to citizens above the age of 80 years and persons with disability.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Both nations have a convergence of

Incidentally, the Army Chief's visit to South Korea comes two weeks after concluding a six-day crucial tour of the United Arab Emirates(UAE) and Saudi Arabia that reflected India's growing

Meanwhile, in Seoul, Naravane will meet the country's minister for national defence, army chief and chairman of joint chiefs of staff. The Army chief will also meet South Korea's minister of defence acquisition planning administration (DAPA).



केनरा बैंक

सिंडिकेट Syndicate

Canara Bank

Sale Notice

of Immovable Properties
through e-auction

Regional Office - HIG 1B, Chandra Vihar Lakhnapur, Kanpur - 208002, Ph.: 0512-2583225

AUCTION SALE NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES UNDER RULES 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002

Notice is hereby given to the effect that the immovable properties described herein, taken possession under the provisions of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, will be sold through e-auction on the following terms & conditions.

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/balance amount/Branch	Details of Immovable property	Reserve Price (Rs.) Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Last date & Time of Receiving Offers Date & Time of E-Auction
1.	Borrower: M/s KGN Traders, Vankharia near BSNL Tower Fatehgarh Farrukhabad. Sri Asgar Mansoori S/o Mr. Alam Sher, R/o Vankharia near BSNL Tower Fatehgarh Farrukhabad. SURITY: 1. Shri Alam Sher Mansoori S/o Late Shri Shahuddin Mansoori 2. Mr. Asad Ahmad S/o Late Sri Shahbuddin Mansoori, R/o Vankharia near BSNL Tower Fatehgarh Farrukhabad Branch : Farrukhabad (E SYN) Balance Amount: Rs. 22,57,416.00 as on 24.12.2020	1. UREM of land and building situated at no. 195/14, Pargana- Pahada Tehsil- Sadar, Moh/Vill- Kurta, District Farrukhabad owned by Sri Alam Sher Mansoori S/o Sri Alam Sher, an measuring area of 80.91 Sq meter and Bounded as under:- East:- Boundry Kutra Colony, West :- Plot Rajendra Prasad, North:- Road (Kutcheri Road), South:- Kutra Colony 2. UREM of land and building situated at gata no.195 (code no.0222) Pargana- Pahada Tehsil- Sadar, Moh/Vill-Kurta, District Farrukhabad owned by Sri Alam Sher Mansoori S/o Sri Alam Sher, an measuring Area of 56.63 Sq Meter and Bounded as under:- East:- Boundry Kutra Colony, West :- Plot Alam Sher, North:- Road, South:- Kutra Colony 3. UREM Of Land And Building Situated At Gata No.195/v Code No.0222) In Pargana- Pahada Tehsil-sadar, Moh/vill-kurta, District Farrukhabad Owned By Sri Asad Ahmad S/o Late Shri Shahbuddin Mansoori , an Measuring Area Of 56.63 Sq Meter And Bounded As Under:- East:- Plot Alam Sher, West :- Arajai Shambhu Janardan Etc., North:- Road South:- Kutra Colony	Rs. 21,06,700/- Rs. 2,10,670/-	28.01.2021 upto 5.00 pm 29.01.2021 Time 11.30 am to 12.30 pm (with unlimited extension of 5 min)

OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

The property/ies will be sold in "AS IS WHERE IS" condition, including encumbrances if any. There are no encumbrances to the knowledge of the Bank **a)** Auction/bidding shall be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website www.indianbanksaleauction.com Bidders are advised to go through the website for detailed terms before taking part in the e-auction sale proceedings. **b)** The property can be inspected, with Prior Appointment with Authorised Officer, from 20.01.2021 to 28.01.2021. **c)** The property will be sold for the price which is more than the Reserve Price and the participating bidders may improve their offer further during auction process. **d)** EMD amount of 10% of the Reserve Price is to be deposited by way of Demand draft in favour of Authorized Officer, Canara Bank, Farrukhabad (E SYN) Branch or shall be deposited through RTGS/NEFT/Fund Transfer to credit of account of Canara Bank, Farrukhabad (E SYN) Branch, A/c No 86653170000020 IFSC Code: SYNB0008665, Authorized Officer, Canara Bank, Farrukhabad (E SYN) Branch on or before 28.01.2021 upto 05:00pm. **e)** Intending bidders shall hold a valid digital signature certificate and e-mail address. For details with regard to digital signature please contact the service provider **M/s CANBAN COMPUTER SERVICES LTD., Mr. Sathianathan K M/ Mr. Ramesh T H, Contact No. 0948069177/ 8880531165/080 -23469661/ 62/64/65; Email Id: auction@ccsl.co.in.** **f)** After payment of the EMD amount, the intending bidders should submit a copy of the following documents/details on or before 28.01.2021 upto 05:00pm, to Canara Bank, Farrukhabad (E SYN) branch by hand or by email. **i)** Demand Draft/Pay order towards EMD amount. **ii)** If paid through RTGS/NEFT, acknowledgement receipt thereof with UTR no. **ii)** Photocopies of PAN Card, ID Proof and Address proof. However, successful bidder would have to produce these documents in original to the Bank at the time of making payment of balance amount of 25% of bid amount. **iii)** Bidders Name, Contact No., Address, E Mail Id. **iv)** Bidders A/c details for online refund of EMD. **g)** The intending bidders should register their names at portal www.indianbanksaleauction.com and get their User ID and password free of cost. Prospective bidder may avail online bidding on e-auction from the service provider **M/s CANBAN COMPUTER SERVICES Ltd., Mr. Sathianathan K M/ Mr. Ramesh T H, Contact No. 0948069177/ 8880531165/080 -23469661/ 62/64/65; Email Id: auction@ccsl.co.in** **h)** EMD deposited by the unsuccessful bidder shall be refunded to them. The EMD shall not carry any interest. **i)** Auction would commence at Reserve Price, as mentioned above. Bidders shall improve their offers in multiples of Rs10000 as incremental value. The bidder who submits the highest bid (above the Reserve price) on closure of "Online" auction shall be declared as successful bidder. Sale shall be confirmed in favour of the successful bidder, subject to confirmation of the same by the secured creditor. **j)** The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on declaring him/her as the successful bidder and the balance within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale by the secured creditor. If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price, the deposit made by him shall be forfeited by the Authorised Officer without any notice and property shall forthwith be put up for sale again. **k)** For sale proceeds of Rs. 50 (Rupees Fifty) lacs and above, the successful bidder will have to deduct TDS at the rate 1% on the Sale proceeds and submit the original receipt of TDS certificate to the Bank. **l)** All charges for conveyance, stamp duty/GST registration charges etc., as applicable shall be borne by the successful bidder only. **m)** Authorised Officer reserves the right to postpone/cancel or vary the terms and conditions of the e-auction without assigning any reason thereof. **n)** In case there are bidders who do not have access to the internet but interested in participating the e-auction, they can approach concerned Circle office or Etawah, Dibrugarh, Akbarpur branch who, as a facilitating centre, shall make necessary arrangements. **o)** For further details contact Farrukhabad (E SYN) Branch (Ph. No. 9415550159) e-mail id- cb18665@canarabank.com, or the service provider **M/s CANBAN COMPUTER SERVICES Ltd., Mr. Sathianathan K M/ Mr. Ramesh T H, Contact No. 0948069177/ 8880531165/080 -23469661/ 62/64/65; Email Id: auction@ccsl.co.in.**

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION / CAUTION

Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Canara Bank nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder or vendor in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements/alternatives such as back-up, power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Date: 29.12.2020

Place: Farrukhabad

Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

The new warriors

2020 turned man into superman. Helming the frontline were our inspirational doctors and healthcare workers



It is said that *Marvel Comics* was working on creating a new superhero team called *New Warriors* when COVID-19 hit the world and ended the Hollywoodian magic spinner's dream. But without the pandemic, would man have discovered that superman was within him? Or that no martial valour could make up for the healer's miracle that just about saved the human race from giving up hope? For fighting the Coronavirus, which has mutated with Frankensteinish zest, was no less than war. And the doctors, nurses and healthcare workers who gave back countless lives, weren't ever trained for a global war of this nature. These dedicated and selfless professionals were undoubtedly the new warriors this year, ceaselessly fighting a still unknown enemy, dying at the frontline and getting back up, living to fight another day. Yet their story was never as lionised as that of legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan contracting and recovering from COVID-19. We still not do full justice to the doctors, rarely talking about the long hours they continue to put in to revive the sick or forget that while we rebel against COVID fatigue, they cannot even afford to slip up for even a moment as the virus recoups and attacks in waves. The doctors have no time to regroup; they carry on with extreme grace under pressure and with depleting numbers as many of their own fall along the way. And with a healthcare system that infrastructurally offers little backup, the doctors have only showed rare courage under fire. Their stories are an embodiment of humanism in cynical times. Some of them have worked non-stop for weeks on end, some have never seen family for months while others have not stopped reporting for critical care despite having co-morbidities themselves. Doctor-nurse parents have still not hugged their children almost a year after the pandemic as they have not been let off their rotational COVID rosters. Worse, overstressed and overworked, most continue to work at almost 50 per cent pay cuts as a lull in admissions has forced big hospitals to cut costs. And in a gross travesty of justice, healthcare professionals, who died in the line of duty, have left behind kin who are running from pillar to post to get the compensation promised to them under the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan package. The wife of a Chandigarh-based doctor, who succumbed to the deadly disease, committed suicide as she was driven to penury and no relief came to her even six months after the compensation was promised to her. And how did the society repay its debt? By shunning doctors in their neighbourhoods as potential carriers of infection, denying rentals and looking at them with suspicion. Yet for all the doctors' discontent and agitations that the media reports, there is their reassuring companionship and commitment that every COVID survivor acknowledges. Sadly, only the affected could see them for what they were. It is, therefore, disconcerting that nobody bothered to champion the concerns of our distressed healthcare givers, who should be our national heroes. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has been crusading that all doctors who had died, almost 400 at last count, should be given martyrs' status. But the Government appeared insensitive when Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey told Parliament that no data about dead healthcare workers was maintained at the Central level as health is a State subject. Are we as a nation abdicating our conscience? For, if the IMA is to be believed, no nation has lost as many doctors and healthcare workers as India. It has even quantified their threat levels, saying: "Doctors suffer four times the mortality of ordinary citizens and private practitioners suffer eight times the mortality on the same scale. To feign that this information doesn't merit the attention of the nation is abominable."

But they have been an inspiration to ordinary Indians. Consider the funeral service workers who ensured the dignity of the dead and gave solace to families who were robbed of their last farewell. Remember the essential service providers who made the pain of the lockdown bearable, rushing supplies in the middle of curfews and sealed borders. Spare a thought for the bankers who enabled seamless processes and online transactions. Or those who spearheaded the digital revolution and created a parallel universe for us to retain our sanity and the human connect, if not touch. And a word for the policeman, who apart from wielding *lathis* to manifest the extra powers he had been invested with during the crisis, did turn into the neighbourhood friend. S/he would check on old people, ensure deliveries to the recipients in containment zones and generally see to it that all were secure and safe. Perhaps these people inspired common Indians to turn into Samaritans themselves. There are countless stories of groups helping returnee migrants with food and supplies, community endeavours of feeding the sick and the quarantined and, most significantly, individuals sharing their resources despite little earnings and joblessness. Interestingly, people watched the original TV adaptation of *Ramayana* with great passion through the lockdown when even Bollywood failed to think of new diversions. In retrospect, could people have been affected by the Hanuman syndrome, the character underrated most of the time under the luminescent glow of divinity but crossing all limits to deliver what is needed, without being asked? The word Hanuman means killing the "*maan*" or ego. In times that tested us, a few of us rose to the occasion. And became Corona warriors!

Don't drink, stay warm

Why is the Indian Meteorological Department advising North Indians to not drink? Well, there is some actual science to it



It is the season of festive cheer! As we bid adieu to one of the worst years in recent memory, we should ideally do so with a peg of rum. But the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) is advising North Indians in particular to not drink at all in the cold weather as the plains experience the coldest winter in almost a decade. This is not some crazy precursor to prohibitionism, but based on actual scientific fact. While the story of Swiss ski rescuers with St Bernard dogs with a small case of brandy or cognac on their collars is true, the fact is that alcohol dilates the capillaries in the body. While that does help in getting some warmth into your fingers and toes, it is actually counter-productive as it takes away heat from the core of your body. If you remember your secondary school biology, you will know that the core of the body is what has to retain temperature so that your organs can function normally; lose too much core temperature and, no matter how warm your fingers, hypothermia will set in and your body will slowly shut down. So, yes, the advice to steer clear of too much alcohol, or alcohol altogether, is based on facts. And, of course, since drinking is in essence a social activity, drinking less also means that you socialise less, which is not a bad thing especially in these unsafe times of Corona outbreak.

Sure, that does not mean that you can't enjoy a glass of warm rum toddy but if you do drink make sure that you keep yourself warm and do not indulge in drunken bravado where you take your jacket or sweater off. It is predicted to be very cold in the coming weeks, and several places in North India are already reeling under minimum temperatures below the 5°C-mark. In such harsh conditions, keeping the body warm is essential. Wear warm clothes, drink warm tea and coffee or, better still, hot chocolate besides ensuring that you take your vitamins through the plentiful winter fruits and juices. Remembering your basic biology is important; yes, this has been a bad year thanks to the Coronavirus but you should not let the year end with you being cold and miserable. Stay safe, stay warm and stay healthy into 2021.

One nation, one election

The EC may be ready for simultaneous polls but the Govt itself is indecisive about it, knowing the difficulties of handling hung Assemblies simultaneously



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Replying to a private news channel's query on "one nation, one election", Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora pithily said that the Election Commission was ready for it if the legislature (Parliament) carries out the necessary (constitutional) amendments. The Election Commission was not authorised to decide on it, he clarified.

The amendments that the CEC was referring to were perhaps Article 83 (2) and 172 of the Constitution of India which pertain to durations of the House of People and State Assemblies, respectively. At present, they enjoy a term of "five years from the date appointed for its first meeting". At any given time, different State Assemblies would be in different stages of their life cycle. No elected Government would voluntarily like to give up the term even a day earlier than is absolutely necessary. However, at present, the President of India under Article 85 (2) (b) can dissolve the Lok Sabha. The Governor of a State, under Article 174 (2) (b), can dissolve a legislative Assembly.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea of simultaneous elections is apparently more comprehensive. The BJP's election manifesto, "*Sankalp Patra-2019*", pitches for simultaneous elections to Parliament, State Assemblies and local bodies with a view to "reducing expenditure, ensure efficient utilisation of the Government's resources and security forces, and effective policy planning". The manifesto states that the BJP will try to build consensus on this issue with all political parties. However, no attempt at "consensus building" appears to have been undertaken by it so far.

The Election Commission of India's authority to conduct elections extends over the House of People (the Lok Sabha), Council of States (the Rajya Sabha), State legislative Assemblies, legislative Councils, the President and the Vice-President of India and so on. It has been constituted under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. The offices of the Chief Electoral Officers in all States and Union Territories are part of the Election Commission. The election to local bodies like *panchayats* and municipal corporations/municipalities, on the other hand, are conducted by the State Election Commissions constituted under Article 243K. Moreover,



panchayats and municipalities also enjoy five-year duration under Articles 243 E and 243 U, respectively, of the Constitution of India. However, there are no clear-cut constitutional provisions to dissolve these local bodies prematurely.

In 2015, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee of Personnel, Public, Law and Justice had examined the issue of "Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to the House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies". From Report No.79 of the Standing Committee — tabled in both Houses of Parliament — on December 17, 2015, it appears that political parties were divided on the subject. In their written submissions, the AIADMK, DMDK, Asom Gana Parishad, the Indian Union Muslim League and the Shiromani Akali Dal supported the idea, though with certain riders. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress, Trinamool Congress, the NCP, the CPI and the AIMIM opposed the idea as impractical.

The first general elections to the Lok Sabha and to the State Assemblies were held simultaneously in 1952. The practice continued in three subsequent elections in 1957, 1962 and 1967. However, the synchrony got disturbed due to the premature dissolution to some legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969. Later, the term

of the Fifth Lok Sabha was extended until 1977 under Article 352. Thereafter, the Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Lok Sabha were dissolved prematurely. On numerous occasions, various States went under the President's rule under Article 356, and came out of it at different times through fresh legislative elections.

The committee found that seven out of 16 Lok Sabhas elected in 1969, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1996, 1998 and 1999 witnessed premature dissolution. The Anti-Defection Act, 1985, that prevented switchover by breakaway factions in case the Government loses majority, has a direct bearing upon the term of the legislature.

Putting the clock back to 1952 might not be easy. But a more important question is, how desirable would it be? The proposal comes with attendant logistical and expenditure challenges. In terms of numbers, the Election Commission of India has Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines in excess to the number required for the Lok Sabha elections. In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha (vide unstarred question 1911 dated July 3, 2019), Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad informed the House that 14.88 lakh Ballot Units and 11.3 lakh Control Units (constituting an EVM) and 11.59 lakh VVPAT machines were used in the 2019

general elections. The Election Commission has 23.3 lakh Ballot Units, 16.35 lakh Control Units and 17.4 lakh VVPAT machines, including those blocked in election petition cases. A majority of these were procured over the preceding three years. In reply to another question (vide unstarred question 5198 dated July 24, 2019), the Minister replied that the Election Commission had procured 13.95 lakh Ballot Units and 10.55 Control Units between 2016 and 2019 at an estimated cost of ₹2056.20 crore (excluding taxes and transport).

The Election Commission knows the template of handling simultaneous elections. The 2019 general elections were held simultaneously along with elections to four legislative Assemblies like Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Odisha. However, the Election Commission's inventory of EVMs and VVPAT machines, though in excess to the requirement for general elections, might be quite insufficient for holding simultaneous elections all over India. The older EVMs, which have outlived their lifespan, have to be retired and replaced. This would mean (a) significant enhancement, if not doubling, in the number of EVMs and VVPAT machines available; (b) augmenting storage facilities for these during elections (strong rooms) and permanently (warehouses).

The Standing Committee

concluded that simultaneous elections are not feasible in the near future. However, citing that under Sections 14 and 15 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Election Commission can notify elections to the Lok Sabha and State legislative Assemblies six months prior to the end of their natural term, it suggested holding elections in two phases. It implied that elections to some legislative Assemblies could be held along with the Lok Sabha polls, and others in the mid-term of the Lok Sabha. The Standing Committee recommended the plan to be initiated with effect from November 2016. The Government sat over the report for more than two years before sending it to the Law Commission. The Law Commission's report has not been finalised as of date. In fact, after the 21st Law Commission's tenure ended on August 31, 2018, there is no clarity about the Law Commission itself. This has recently resulted in a public interest litigation being filed in the Supreme Court.

At present, "one nation, one election" seems more of a rhetoric than a resolution. Even the ruling party knows well that it would be difficult to tackle the situation if simultaneous elections result in hung Assemblies in four or five States simultaneously.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

The first Metro was started with Atalji's efforts. In 2014, only five cities had Metro services. By 2025, we will take it to more than 25 cities.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi



The Opposition has united to rescue Pakistan from the inefficient PTI Government. The people of Pakistan must similarly unite to save the country.

PPP chairperson
—Bilawal Bhutto



I read an article about Lal Bihari Mritak years ago and I was touched. I researched about him and felt that his story deserved to be told. I wanted to do that myself.

Actor and filmmaker
—Satish Kaushik



The reason players opt for a review is because they're unhappy with the on-field umpire's decision. The DRS system needs to be thoroughly looked into by the ICC.

Former India skipper
—Sunil Gavaskar



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blot on Kerala's name

Sir — It is really shocking that in an alleged honour killing case, a young man was murdered by his wife's relatives in Kerala, and what makes it more horrendous is that this crime took place in a State known for its literacy rate and progressive nature. A similar incident had occurred a year ago in the State which boasts of gender and social equality and is well known for its political and social consciousness.

Kerala is the birthplace of one of the greatest reformists our nation has seen — Sree Narayana Gurudev, who devoted his entire life for the uplift of the downtrodden and put an end to casteism and communalism during the early period of the last century and paved the way for a highly literate, enlightened and progressive society which later became a role model for the nation.

Such shameful incidents tarnish the good reputation of the State and its people whose progressive thinking, passion for universal literacy and robust public healthcare system have always earned wide praise.

M Pradyu Kannur

SC order favouring flat buyers is welcome

The recent verdict by the Supreme Court in favour of apartment buyers is a welcome development. Apart from the builders to pay to the buyers an annual interest on the flat's cost for the period of delay in its delivery, in addition to the meagre monthly per square foot penalty mentioned in the apartment buyers' agreement, there are many other factors that should be settled in favour of buyers.

The factors needed to be addressed imperatively include that the pricing should be on the basis of carpet area and not built-up or super built-up area. Even though RERA has ordered this, there is no transparency. The carpet area should strictly be 25 per cent lower than the super built-up area. The builders must disclose the carpet area and loading factors of all the units on their websites as well as on the brochures.

There should be no permission granted for any change in the layout once the initial plan is exhibited to the buyers. The soil quality and topography of the land on which the houses are constructed have to be disclosed to the buyers. Nationalised banks should list the builders with a bad reputation and exhibit the same on their web-

Be truly self-reliant

Sir — India is the second most populated country in the world with nearly 1.35 billion people. Not only after the lockdown but before that too, India was a wholesale market of unemployed youth.

This sorry state clearly begs the question, which type of self-reliant India do we wish for

if the country with the highest percentage of youth is unable to direct them and offer them employment? It seems surprising that the results of an election pop up everywhere but the results of competitive exams hardly make it to the news. The promises of employment seem to be made just for adding beauty to manifestoes or for the

sake of making announcements.

The unemployment scenario is getting worse. If India gets to use her own youth's brainpower, that would be the true definition of becoming self-reliant rather than using the technologies of other countries and calling it developed and digital India.

Aman Jaiswal Delhi



sites, saying that they do not offer loans for purchasing units from these builders.

Additional expenses such as GST, stamp duty, home loan processing fee, registration charges and all other charges should be disclosed by the builders. A certificate should be issued by the builders that they are following the National Green Tribunal's regulations as well as ensuring that the buildings are at least 100 metres away from water bodies and high tension wires.

Vijay Kumar HK Raichur

Indo-UK cooperation

Sir — United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister Boris Johnson, by accepting India's invite to be the chief guest at the next Republic Day parade in New Delhi, has pleased a host of nations, and rubbed a few the wrong way.

That it would be his first official tour abroad after exiting the European Union indicates the importance attached by him to the Indo-UK cooperation. Both nations are traditionally bound together through areas of common interest. Mutual trust has always been the glue that has firmly held together the two countries.

An early harvest deal and a free trade agreement are expected to be inked by Johnson and PM Narendra Modi. The "Enhanced Trade Partnership" is all set to see the light of the day as also a decade-long roadmap between the two countries. After the pandemic, India and the UK seem committed to reinvigorating the badly affected economy through each other's largesse.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Many challenges lie ahead

By and large, 2021 is expected to be a mixed bag with some good and some bad news, not only for India but also for the world



KALYANI SHANKAR

The famous French astrologer, physician and prophet Nostradamus had predicted that 2021 would be catastrophic, as the pandemic would rage on, though many optimists expect it to be better than 2020. When the contagion hit the world, it was most unexpected and many countries, even in the developed world, were unprepared to face the pandemic. One year down the line, governments around the world and the people, too, are much better prepared to face the continued onslaught of the COVID-19 outbreak. Fortunately, some countries, including India, have come up with vaccines to combat the virus. Nostradamus had predicted that the world economy would collapse and "the rich would die many times." Importantly, the work from home culture will continue in the new year too. It will be a year of challenges, particularly for governments. The biggest challenge for the Narendra Modi Government would be dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. It will not be easy to ensure that the 1.3 billion people of the country get the vaccine in time. Particularly as India lacks the cold chain infrastructure to keep the vaccine effective and safe for users. This gap has to be bridged urgently. Even though the COVID warriors have done an excellent job till now despite many constraints, they will face many more challenges in the times to come.

The second challenge is to find more money to deal with the Coronavirus in the 2021 Budget as there is an urgent need to improve healthcare facilities, particularly in rural areas.

The third challenge is the sliding economy. Many economists predict that 2021 will be a bad year not only for India but also for the entire world. The Economist Intelligence Unit predicts that fiscal conditions are likely to be weak in India in 2021 owing to the strains faced by the banking sector. This will lead the economy to register a double-dip recession. The Reserve Bank of India had also projected that the Gross Domestic Product would contract by 9.5 per cent in the current financial year amid disruptions caused by the pandemic and it may turn positive in the last quarter (January to March).

Even though credit rating agency Moody's had said that "India's credit profile is increasingly constrained by low growth, a high debt burden and a weak financial system", it expects India's economic growth to rebound to 10.6 per cent in the fiscal year 2021-22 on a strong base effect.

The fourth challenge is to find jobs for the millions who lost their livelihoods due to the extended lockdown. Added to that is the migrant labour issue as many of those who walked back home after the lockdown are yet to come back to the cities. The fifth challenge is to tackle the growing farmers' unrest. Thousands of farmers from about 11 States have marched to Delhi and are protesting since November 26. Modi is facing his biggest challenge from the farmers' lobby that wants the Centre to repeal the three farm laws passed by Parliament. Politically, the BJP-led NDA will be in a much stronger position in Parliament. It will provide the BJP the leeway to further its political agenda with greater manoeuvrability and attempt more reforms. However, while such reforms will support medium-to-long-term growth, in the short term weak economic conditions and tensions might continue.

A major political challenge will be the Assembly polls scheduled in five States amid the pandemic. The poll-bound States include Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry. Essentially it is the fight between the BJP and the regional satraps. The stakes are high for both, the regional satraps and the BJP which wants to capture West Bengal and expand in the South by improving its position in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Naturally, there will be political regroupings. The polls will decide the fate of the new entrant superstar Rajinikanth in Tamil Nadu. It will decide the fate of the Congress too, whether it will improve or slide down even further in political relevance in the country.

As for foreign policy, Nostradamus predicted that in 2021 there would be a possibility of creating a union between India, China, Britain and Russia. As it is, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India as the Republic Day chief guest in January. But most visits of foreign dignitaries have been stopped as the new norm is virtual meetings. Despite that, the new year might see fresh strategic tie-ups and trade challenges emerging. New Delhi will continue its diplomatic engagements with more vigour.

Engagement with big and small powers will continue in 2021 despite COVID. Indo-US relations will continue to be warm as the new Joe Biden Administration is expected to be friendly to India. The US President-elect might ease visa regulations as he had promised that before the presidential elections. Biden might also address trade-related issues. The diplomatic strength at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations is being enhanced as India readies to sit in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member this year. India will launch year-long celebrations from August 2021 to commemorate 75 years of Independence with a slew of programmes to showcase development, governance, technology, reform, progress and policy over the years. By and large, 2021 is expected to be a mixed bag with some good and some bad news, not only for India but also for the world.

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

THE BJP SAYS THAT FARMERS WILL BE ABLE TO SELL THE CROP OUTSIDE THE MARKET. BUT OUTSIDE IT IS SOLD AT HALF THE PRICE. HOW IS THIS A BENEFIT?

—DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
ARVIND KEJRIWAL

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



COME TO MY OFFICIAL RESIDENCE AND I WILL EXPLAIN THE FARM LAWS TO YOU. LET'S DO CONSTRUCTIVE POLITICS FOR FARMERS' BENEFIT.

—BJP MP
MANOJ TIWARI

Many a slip...

It is natural to expect an economic rebound in FY 2021-22. But it is vital to take a pragmatic view based on an objective assessment of how the situation unfolds on ground zero



UTTAM GUPTA

The green shoots seen in October, in particular the rise in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) by 3.6 per cent, have prompted agencies to revise their growth assessment for the current financial year (FY) from the minus 9.5-10.5 per cent projected earlier to minus 7.5-8.5 per cent, now. For the FY 2021-22, when the impact of the virus is expected to subside to a large extent due to the availability of the vaccine, it is only natural to expect an economic rebound. However, it is necessary to take a pragmatic view based on an objective assessment of how the situation unfolds on ground zero.

To begin with, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth had already started sliding from the third quarter (Q3) of the FY 2018-19 and continued all through the FY 2019-20, culminating in a low of three per cent during its last quarter ending March 31. During the whole of 2019-20, the growth plummeted to a decade low of 4.2 per cent, down from an average 7.5 per cent recorded in the previous five years.

A nationwide lockdown in March dwelt a body blow by bringing most of the economic activities to a grinding halt. As a result, there was a precipitous decline in GDP growth by 24 per cent during Q1 of the current FY ending June 30. The slide continued during Q2 ending on September 30, though the deceleration was modest at 7.5 per cent (courtesy the graded exit from the hard lockdown).

However, the crucial point is that even if growth rebounds to the seven per cent-10 per cent range, the resultant GDP would have merely recuperated to the 2019-20 level or about ₹14,50,000 crore or \$2.1 trillion. The Union Budget for 2020-21 was prepared with an overarching focus on making India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25, a target that Prime Minister Narendra Modi set at the start of his second inning in May 2019.

To reach there, the economy needed to grow close to 20 per cent per annum consistently over a period of five years — a rate never seen before even in a single year. It was totally unrealistic. Now, with the setback of 2019-20 and 2020-21 and India likely to remain stuck at \$2.1 trillion during 2021-22, the target of \$5 trillion by 2024-25 is unrealistic. For now, we need to analyse the reason behind the slowdown during these two years apart from the COVID-19 impact. The two determinants of growth are demand (this includes private consumption, Government demand and exports) and investment.

During 2019-20, thanks to the massive loss of jobs and declining incomes, even as private consumption suffered, an increase in Government spending failed to offset this loss. A number of fiscal measures announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in August/September 2019 (steep reduction in corporate tax, tax refund to exporters, sops for the real estate sector, support to housing finance companies and so on) besides monetary policy support, including reduction in the repo rate by 1.35 per cent, failed to provide the required demand boost.

During 2020-21, both the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Centre unleashed their firepower to counter the effect of the virus. While the former cut the repo rate again by 1.15 per cent and injected mammoth liquidity close to ₹8,00,000 crore besides granting a six-month moratorium on repayment of banks loans, the latter came up with stimulus packages announced by Sitharaman in three tranches in May, October

“GOING FORWARD, A BIG PUSH TO GROWTH DURING 2021-22 COULD BE HIT BY CONTINUING VULNERABILITIES OF BANKS AND NBFCs, OVERLEVERAGED AGENCIES IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY OF INDIA AND THE INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT LONG-PENDING REFORMS”



and November. These packages *inter alia* targeted MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), NBFCs, power distribution companies (PDCs), migrant labour, agricultural credit, the lower middle class, agriculture infrastructure and farm reforms, structural reforms in coal, minerals, civil aviation, defence, fertilisers and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), health and the State Governments' resources and public sector reforms. Together with the RBI's support, including on-tap Targeted Long Term Repo Operations (TLTROs) of ₹1,00,000 crore announced on October 11, these add to a grand total of nearly ₹30 lakh crore or 15 per cent of the GDP.

This is in addition to the demand boosters announced in the Budget presented on February 1. Those included *inter alia* changes in personal income tax to leave more money in the hands of individual assesses, abolition of Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT), concessions for MSMEs (including innovative steps for timely payment of their dues and increase in financing especially through "invoice financing"), start-ups, exporters and the real estate sector.

Given the canvas of the reforms/measures and the "seemingly" large quantum of money promised for all affected segments, it is only natural to expect a rebound of the economy after the impact of the pandemic is reduced and eventually dissipated. However, it is necessary to make an objective assessment of how many of the above policy announcements and measures have been operationalised on ground zero.

First, in several areas, the Government has merely camouflaged expenses on existing schemes under the

stimulus package. For instance, ₹75,000 crore under PM-KISAN, ₹90,000 crore to PDCs to enable them to clear their pending dues to power generators, ₹65,000 crore to clear pending subsidy dues to fertiliser manufacturers and so on. Second, of the total package of ₹30,00,000 crore, the actual outgo by way of budgetary support is just about ₹4,00,000 crore. Out of this, a major slice of ₹1,50,000 crore is for providing free food — five kg per person per month to over 80 crore people covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and one kg pulse per household to 16 crore households. Being help in kind, it does not put cash in the hands of beneficiaries; hence it does not boost demand.

Third, an overwhelming share of the stimulus is in the form of loan from banks and Financial Institutions (FIs). For instance, ₹3,00,000 crore to MSMEs or identified stressed sectors under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), loan of ₹75,000 crore loan to NBFCs, housing finance companies (HFCs), microfinance institutions (MFIs), ₹30,000 crore additional emergency working capital (upfront) to farmers for crop loans from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and so on.

The impact thereof is only to the extent these facilities are actually availed of. Here, one is reminded of the proverb "there's many a slip between the cup and the lip." Look at these numbers: Under the ECLGS, ₹3,00,000 crore was intended to be loaned to eight million MSMEs. Against this, only about ₹1,50,000 crore has been given to four million such enterprises. Fourth, the Government is betting big on investment in infrastructure. Of the ₹100 lakh crore proposed over the next five years, 39 per cent has

to come from the Centre and States each (balance 22 per cent by the private sector). This translates to ₹8,00,000 crore annually by the Centre and State each. But there is no blueprint on how these resources will be garnered. Even so, given the current financial health of banks with ballooning non-performing assets, they don't have the wherewithal for financing on this scale.

Put shortly, there is too much focus on packaging but too little from the Government by way of budgetary support. On the other hand, even as the RBI has pumped too much money into the loan tap, with the fundamentals of demand being weak, there are not many takers. Loan sanctions and disbursements have also been affected due to inherent weaknesses of NBFCs (they are mostly into giving loans to MSMEs and individuals). Some of the big ones such as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited, Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited and so on, have gone bust.

Going forward, a big push to growth during 2021-22 could be hit by continuing vulnerabilities of banks and NBFCs, overleveraged agencies implementing projects such as the National Highway Authority of India and the inability of the Government to implement long-pending reforms. This would include failure to implement land and farm reforms, the inability to make direct benefit transfers of fertiliser and power subsidy, enforcement of contracts, elimination of bureaucratic red tape, removing bottlenecks in transportation and clearances at the ports and so on. So, while we must be optimistic about the coming year, we have to be realistic, too.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

The media must become the voice of the people again

The Fourth Estate in India must attack feudal forces like casteism, communalism, religious bigotry and attempts to polarise society



MARKANDEY KATJU

Today a large part of the Indian media has lost its voice and the trust of the people, too. It has become a "godli media." Instead of being the Fourth Estate and serving the Indian people, it has largely become part of the First Estate, as stated by eminent journalist and Magsaysay Award winner Ravish Kumar. This brings us to the key question: What is the role of the media?

This was explained by Justice Hugo Black of the US Supreme Court in *The New York Times* vs. US, 1971 (the Pentagon Papers case) in

these stirring words: "In the First Amendment, the Founding Fathers gave the free Press the protection it must have to fulfil its essential role in our democracy. The Press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government's power to censor the Press was abolished so that the Press would remain forever free to censure the Government. The Press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of the Government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained Press can effectively expose deception in Government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free Press is the duty to prevent any part of the Government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell. In my view, far from deserving condemnation for their courageous reporting, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other newspapers should be commended for serving the purpose that the

Founding Fathers saw so clearly. In revealing the workings of the Government that led to the Vietnam war, the newspapers nobly did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do."

Historically, the media arose in England and France in the 17th and 18th centuries as an organ of the people against feudal oppression. At that time all the organs of power were in the hands of the feudal authorities (kings, aristocrats and so on). Hence, the people had to create new organs which would represent their interests and the media (apart from the Parliament), was one of these new organs. In Europe and America, it represented the voice of the future, in contrast to the old, feudal organs which wanted to preserve the *status quo*.

Great writers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas Paine and so on used the media (which was then only print media and that, too, not in the form of regular newspapers but pamphlets and leaflets) to com-

bat feudalism, religious bigotry and superstitions.

Thus, the media was of great help in transforming European society from the feudal to the modern age. India's national aim is to transform itself from an underdeveloped to a highly developed and highly industrialised country. If we don't do so, we will remain condemned to massive poverty, record unemployment, appalling level of child malnourishment, almost total lack of proper healthcare and good education for the masses, among other things.

Our media must play an important role in this historical transformation, as the European media did. But for that it must stop behaving like a mouthpiece and serve the governed, not the governors (as Justice Black said in his judgment). The Indian media must attack feudal forces like casteism and communalism, condemn religious bigotry and attempts to polarise our society. It must promote scientific ideas,

social harmony and the unity of our people. It should stop diverting attention from real issues and focusing on relative non-issues like the lives of film stars and cricketers (e.g. the suicide of Sushant Singh Rajput, allegations made by Kangana Ranaut, Kareena Kapoor's second pregnancy and Virat Kohli's decision to take paternity leave and so on), petty politics, astrology, among others, and instead focus on the real issues, which are mainly socio-economic. This includes the problems of unemployment, malnourishment, lack of healthcare, price rise, the agrarian crisis and so on.

For years, the Indian media turned a Nelson's eye to the large number of farmers' suicides in our country, until a brave journalist, P Sainath, revealed the sad truth through his persistent reporting. It was only then that the rest of the media began reporting the agrarian distress in the country.

Some years ago, a fashion show was held in Mumbai during the

Lakmé Fashion Week in which the models wore cotton outfits. This event was covered by over 500 fashion/lifestyle journalists while the farmers who produced that cotton were committing suicide just an hour's flight away, in Vidarbha. No one covered those suicides except for a few local journalists.

Many TV anchors forget their journalistic ethics and just indulge in propaganda. To give an example, some time ago an organisation called the Tablighi Jamaat was lambasted by the media as spreaders of the Coronavirus. They were even given despicable names like "Corona jihadis" and "Corona bombs." I made a personal investigation into this and found that the allegations against the Tablighi Jamaat were false. The Tablighi Jamaat is a religious organisation which meets at its *Markaz* in Delhi once or twice a year, where Muslims come from several countries. This year, too, many people came from Indonesia, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, the United

Arab Emirates and so on. Some of them were apparently infected with the virus, without being aware of it. But to say that they knowingly brought the disease with them to spread it in India, as propagated by certain sections of the media, was patently false (as indeed the court has now found).

Another example of the partisan behaviour of the "godli media" is the way they have characterised the ongoing farmers' agitation as a movement of Khalistanis, Pakistanis, Maoists and anti-nationals. Countless examples of this kind of biased reporting can be given.

One can only hope that the Indian media will some day get over its sorry plight and emerge as a champion of the people instead of being, to use US President Donald Trump's words, "an enemy of the people." Only then will it earn the people's respect.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.)

Stock markets scale new heights on US stimulus dose, Brexit deal

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Extending gains for the fourth straight session, key stock indices Sensex and Nifty raced to new peaks on Monday in line with broad-based rally in global equities as investors cheered a USD 2.3 trillion US stimulus package and last-minute Brexit deal.

The benchmark index Sensex settled up by 380.21 points or 0.81 per cent at its all-time closing high of 47,353.75. The index also scaled its fresh record intra-day peak of 47,406.72 on the back of gains in banking and energy stocks. The NSE Nifty ended

123.95 points or 0.90 per cent up at new closing high of 13,873.20. It also touched its all-time intra-day high of 13,885.30.

On the Sensex chart, Titan, SBI, L&T, IndusInd Bank, Ultratech Cement, HDFC Bank, and Asian Paints were top gainers.

Reliance Industries, Kotak Bank, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel and ONGC were among the losers.

While, HUL, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy and Bajaj FinServ closed with losses. Of the Sensex constituents, 26 stocks settled with gains and 4 with losses.

In the previous trading day

on Thursday, the 30-share Sensex had surged 529.36 points or 1.14 per cent to close at 46,973.54. The broader NSE Nifty had zoomed 148.15 points or 1.09 per cent to 13,749.25. Markets were closed on Friday on account of Christmas.

“Indian market started on an upbeat note in the final week of the year owing to positive global cues. The global market cheered the news of the USD 2.3 trillion pandemic stimulus announced in the US and the historic post-Brexit trade deal struck between the UK and EU,” Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial services, said.

US President Donald Trump has signed into law a massive USD 2.3 trillion spending bill that includes a USD 900 billion coronavirus relief package, averting a government shutdown and extending coronavirus aid to millions suffering from the economic impact of the pandemic.

Trump initially had refused to approve the legislation for days after receiving it. He had called the bill “a disgrace”.

The advancement of rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in India too uplifted domestic sentiments, lead-

ing to positive momentum across all the sectors.

“We can expect the momentum to be maintained as investors are focusing more on the positive side of these events and are not worried about the peak valuations and lockdowns triggered by the new strain of virus,” Nair said.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, realty rose by 2.65 per cent, metal by 2.25 per cent, consumer durables by 2.19 per cent, industrials by 1.76 per cent and banks by 1.5 per cent.

Broader small cap, mid cap and large cap indices outperformed the benchmark index Sensex, rising by up to 1.49 per

cent. “Domestic equities remained upbeat and gained sharply led by strong rebound in financials and cyclical sectors.

Satisfactory progress on vaccination rollout globally, Brexit trade deal and president Trump signing pandemic relief bill in the USA bolstered investors’ confidence globally,” Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities said.

Among Nifty constituents, 41 stocks advanced while nine dropped. Tata Motors, JSW Steel, Titan and SBI were among top Nifty gainers, whereas Shree Cement, Sun Pharma, Cipla and Britannia

₹ rises 6 paise to 73.49 against US \$ amid stocks rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 6 paise to close at 73.49 against the US dollar on Monday, following a rally in stock markets and weakness in the American currency. The sustained foreign fund inflows also supported the rupee, traders said.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.52 against the US dollar and

witnessed an intra-day high of 73.47 and a low of 73.61. The local unit finally settled at 73.49 against the American currency, registering a rise of 6 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 73.55 against the US dollar. Forex and equity markets were closed on Friday for Christmas. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.25 per cent to 89.99.

Centre releases ₹6K cr loan to States to meet GST compensation shortfall

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has released the ninth weekly instalment of ₹6,000 crore to the States to meet the GST compensation shortfall.

Out of this, an amount of ₹5,16.60 crore has been released to 23 States and an amount of ₹483.40 crore has been released to the three Union Territories (UT) with Legislative Assembly (Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and

Puducherry) who are members of the GST Council. The remaining 5 states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim -- do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation.

The government had set up a special borrowing window in October 2020 to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs 1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST. The borrowings are being

done through this window by the Centre on behalf of the states and UTs. The borrowings have been done in 9 rounds. The amount borrowed so far was released to the States on October 23, November 2, November 9, November 23, December 1, December 7, December 14, December 21 and December 28.

The amount released this week was the 9th instalment of such funds provided to the states.

Pandemic-hit Govt finances gets ‘crude’ rescue, oil import bill to fall

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

At least in the oil sector, a global health emergency caused by coronavirus is coming to India’s advantage. While the relatively lower global prices helped the government boost its revenues by increasing duty on auto fuels, the demand squeeze due to the pandemic and softer crude prices could help it further by sharply reducing the import bill that may fall to decade-low levels of \$60 billion in FY21.

In value terms, the April-June oil imports stood at \$32.4 billion, down 53.44 per cent in the dollar terms from \$69.6 billion in April-November of FY20. With international crude prices hovering lower than the levels prevailing in December last year by almost \$15 a barrel and average crude prices in January-March period expected to remain at the same levels of the previous fiscal, India’s import bill could fall below \$60 billion in FY21, the lowest level in last decade.

Telcos expect Govt to take immediate steps to resolve industry woes, AGR definition: COAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom service providers expect the Government to take immediate steps to resolve the issues of the sector which has played the role of an enabler for other key industry verticals and supported 30-35 per cent of GDP during the COVID-19 crisis, industry body COAI said.

COAI Director General Lt Gen SP Kochhar told PTI that the telecom sector needs to make huge investment in infra-

structure and needs regulatory support, review of the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) definition, GST exemption on AGR dues, promises made in National Digital Communications Policy 2018 for ease of doing business etc. “Telecom is not a vertical industry in itself; rather it is an enabler of horizontal growth across industries, be it manufacturing, e-commerce, health-care, education, and so on. Thus, the concerns affecting the telecom industry become

the concerns of these industries, and so the issues of telecom need to be addressed as an issue affecting the overall economy of the country, so it should be given priority,” Kochhar said. “Telecom has enabled 30-35 per cent of the GDP in the COVID-19 lockdown, other than the present 6 per cent direct contribution to the GDP. This is significant considering the fact that overall, 54 per cent of India’s GDP comes from the services sector,” Kochhar said.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	13,815.15	13,885.30	13,811.55	13,873.20	123.95	
JSWSTEEL	369.7	389	368.8	387.6	21.35	
TATAMOTORS	178.85	187.4	179	186	10.05	
SRIN	268.75	276	268	275.75	8.9	
TITAN	1,503.30	1,547.65	1,496.15	1,544.00	48.1	
SRIIFE	882.9	904.5	877.5	901.95	28.05	
HDFCLIFE	681.85	680	657.7	678	20.75	
IT	1,275.00	1,291.00	1,266.50	1,290.00	27.8	
GAIL	121.15	123.15	120.55	122.75	2.6	
INDUSINDBK	855	871	853	870.15	17.7	
ULTRACEMCO	5,055.40	5,160.00	5,055.40	5,140.00	96.25	
TATASTEEL	628.25	635.35	626.6	634	11.7	
IOC	91	92	90.9	91.85	1.6	
KOTAKBANK	1,963.00	1,996.10	1,962.10	1,992.80	32.2	
GRASIM	901.2	912.35	897.1	910	12.85	
BPCL	380	384.5	378.5	382.8	5.25	
ASIANPAINT	2,654.25	2,689.50	2,629.55	2,684.00	35.75	
ICICIBANK	515.9	521.2	513.6	520.5	6.95	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3,388.00	3,422.00	3,374.00	3,420.00	45.25	
HDFCBANK	1,405.00	1,421.00	1,404.00	1,415.80	18.7	
HINDALCO	239.15	241.15	237.7	240.1	3.15	
HDFC	2,467.00	2,485.00	2,436.60	2,485.00	29.85	
AXISBANK	614	620.8	614	612.75	7.05	
ADANI-PORTS	480	492.95	480	484	5.45	
COALINDIA	139.9	139.9	137.2	137.6	1.35	
UPL	452.05	457.5	451.05	453.65	4.25	
ONGC	94	95.15	93.3	93.95	0.8	
BHARTIARTL	520.1	527	516.6	521.5	4.2	
TCS	2,911.00	2,949.70	2,902.00	2,932.10	22.75	
EICHERMOT	24,400.00	24,109.95	24,255.5	24,529.5	16.2	
NTPC	100.85	101.55	100	100.6	0.65	
POWERGRID	190.2	192.33	190	191	1	
MARUTI	7,465.00	7,543.00	7,454.00	7,484.00	37.95	
ITC	209	210.2	207.85	209.6	1	
RELIANCE	2,006.70	2,018.00	1,995.30	2,022.00	7.85	
HCLTECH	925	927.95	913.5	922.7	3.35	
DIVISLAB	3,760.00	3,783.35	3,738.00	3,761.60	12	
INFY	1,238.45	1,248.00	1,236.00	1,239.45	3.4	
HEROMOTOCO	3,096.00	3,124.00	3,075.00	3,081.00	7.9	
BAFINANCE	51,849.00	52,448.00	51,755.00	51,980.00	13.1	
WIPRO	348.5	356.4	348	353	0.8	
NESTLEIND	18,844.00	18,844.00	18,820.00	18,830.00	33.65	
TECHM	947.25	956.45	944.25	947.4	0.15	
M&M	715.4	718.8	707.3	710.7	-0.2	
DREDDY	52,881.5	52,355.00	51,870.00	51,980.00	-3.8	
BAJAJFINSV	9,064.65	9,115.00	8,965.00	8,986.70	-5.85	
BRITANNIA	3,635.00	3,646.15	3,598.00	3,606.30	-11.95	
SHREECEM	24,000.00	24,039.95	23,571.05	23,740.00	-81.75	
CIPLA	87.76	89.39	82.52	82.95	-3.25	
SUNPHARMA	599	599.45	584.55	587.9	-2.55	
HINDUNILVR	2,405.00	2,417.40	2,376.05	2,391.95	-10.3	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	32,261.90	32,408.50	32,230.75	32,351.05	282.5	
MOTHERSUMI	155.9	161	155.1	160.55	6.5	
UBL	1,132.35	1,168.80	1,129.10	1,166.30	39.9	
PNB	31.85	32.9	31.5	32.5	1.05	
MUTHOOTFIN	1,199.00	1,223.00	1,188.95	1,222.25	34.3	
DLF	231	239	230.7	232.25	61.5	
BANKBARODA	61.5	62.95	61.25	62.5	1.65	
INDIGO	1,655.00	1,714.35	1,655.00	1,687.00	43.2	
NMDC	114.2	117	113.14	116.25	2.9	
PEL	1,415.00	1,478.75	1,410.15	1,439.85	33.25	
PFEC	115	117.65	114.45	116.8	2.65	
PETRONET	248.6	252.15	247.2	251.75	5.65	
DABUR	514.55	526.9	514	526	11.45	
BANDHANBNK	402	407.5	398.65	406.5	8.35	
MCDOWELL-N	571	580.8	570.5	580	10.65	
ADANTRANS	471	485.15	470.1	485.5	7.4	
SIEMENS	1,532.50	1,578.00	1,520.10	1,576.40	25.65	
PIDILITIND	1,740.00	1,769.00	1,748.05	1,755.95	24.1	
BERGEPAINT	734.7	743	727.35	741	9.95	
MARICO	404.4	408.15	401.1	406.25	4.95	
GODREJCP	724.7	739.6	719.8	729.75	8.75	
BOSCHLTD	12,808.00	12,806.40	12,750.00	12,839.00	152.7	
ICICIGI	1,496.80	1,516.00	1,491.00	1,501.75	17.7	
HAVELLS	898	911.25	893.05	905	9.1	
COLPAL	1,572.00	1,587.00	1,560.60	1,584.55	15.7	
ICICIPRULI	499.8	504.5	491.25	500	3.85	
HINDPETRO	214.4	216.25	213.75	215.1	1.45	
ACC	1,614.00	1,625.75	1,600.00	1,624.50	9.85	
LUPIN	990	990	975.2	981.9	5.7	
SBICARD	840	844.2	837.3	839.9	4.7	
BAJAJHLDNG	3,110.00	3,125.65	3,080.00	3,090.05	17	
LTI	3,640.00	3,673.90	3,581.00	3,645.00	19.4	
TATACONSUM	607.7	613.95	599.2	604.1	3.1	
GICRE	141.7	141	140.6	141.7	0.65	
DMART	2,685.95	2,698.95	2,655.00	2,684.00	10.9	
IGL	491.35	493.65	486	490.5	1.35	
NAUKRI	4,650.00	4,684.80	4,617.45	4,635.50	12.15	
CONCOR	394.75	397.5	391.2	393.05	0.85	
ALKEM	2,948.00	2,958.95	2,886.10	2,920.00	4	
AMBAJUCEM	247	247.85	244.7	247	0.3	
TORNTPHARM	2,798.85	2,856.55	2,771.95	2,788.00	2.65	
HDFCAMP	2,924.00	2,933.95	2,881.00	2,894.00	2.55	
HINDZINC	244.5	246	240.2	241.85	0.2	
AUROPHARMA	919.8	921	904	908.65	-0.35	
ADANI-GREEN	1,036.20	1,044.85	1,025.65	1,035.00	-1.2	
ABROTINDIA	15,843.65	15,940.00	15,657.95	15,700.00	-27.4	
PGHH	11,250.95	11,900.00	10,743.35	11,038.50	-48.45	
OFSS	3,230.00	3,245.00	3,160.45	3,196.55	-23.45	
CADILAHQ	496.45	499.25	484	484.85	-4.65	
INDUSTOWER	241	241	235.4	236.05	-3.05	
BIOCON	468.9	477.5	463	465.2	-16.75	

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
IDEA	10.18	10.56	10.15	10.38
TATAMOTORS	180	187.45	179	186.3
RELIANCE	2004.1	2024.9	1995.6	2003.25
HDFC	2468	2485	2436.55	2473.15
JKCEMENT	1915	1927.3	1897.8	1905
GODREJIND	422.05	450	422.05	444.35
ICICIBANK	516.45	521.15	514.05	520.2
SBIN	268.25	275.85	268.25	275.15
AXISBANK	612.55	620.8	612.55	617.55
FSL	93.1	110.25	93.1	109.2
SAIL	60.8	65	60.8	63.95
PNB	31.95	32.9	31.5	32.45
INFY	1237.35	1248	1236.15	1240.1
HDFCBANK	1404.45	1421.15	1404	1412.9
IBULHSGFIN	206	218.4	205.5	216.8
DLF	235	239	230.9	232.75
VEDL	162.6	165.35	158.5	163.75
ITC	208.7	210.5	207.85	209.5
HDFCLIFE	662.95	679.8	657.3	678.5
PEL	1415	1478	1410.5	1447.15
HCLTECH	925.1	927.5	913.35	921
TCS	2912.85	2944.9	2902.3	2928.25
BAJAJFINANCE	5187.95	5299.8	5181.6	5203.6
TATASTEEL	629.5	635.35	626.6	632.8
ADANIENR	473.95	507.05	473	490.8
MARUTI	7470	7540	7455	7480.3
SCTRANSFIN	1000	1029.75	998.85	1016.35
KOTAKBANK	1960	1995.95	1960	1987.1
M&M	712.65	718.85	707.4	711.6
SUNPHARMA	596	595.5	584.8	587.55
TATAELXSI	1782	1899.8	1762	1838.8
FEDERALBNK	65.5	67.65	65.5	67.35
GODREJPROP	1379.4	1446.65	1375.8	1425.95
BHARTIARTL	520	526.95	516.9	521.55
LT	1270.25	1291	1267	1289.1
ADANIPORTS	480.05	492.85	480.05	483.75
DRREDDY	5205.2	5234.9	5187.45	5205.75
WIPAC	383.3	386.3	382	382.85
BIOCON	464.6	477.15	463.05	465.8
AUROPHARMA	919.95	921	903.95	907.95
INDUSINDBM	863	870.95	854.6	866.75
ONGC	94	95.15	93.3	93.8
CIPLA	836	838.95	825.35	830

Each year 1,000 Pak girls forcibly converted to Islam

Karachi: Neha loved the hymns that filled her church with music. But she lost the chance to sing them last year when, at the age of 14, she was forcibly converted from Christianity to Islam and married to a 45-year-old man with children twice her age.

She tells her story in a voice so low it occasionally fades away. She all but disappears as she wraps a blue scarf tightly around her face and head. Neha's husband is in jail now facing charges of rape for the underage marriage, but she is in hiding, afraid after security guards confiscated a pistol from his brother in court.

"He brought the gun to shoot me," said Neha, whose last name The Associated Press is not using for her safety.

Neha is one of nearly 1,000 girls from religious minorities who are forced to convert to Islam in Pakistan each year, largely to pave the way for marriages that are under the legal age and non-consensual.

Human rights activists say the practice has accelerated during lockdowns against the coronavirus, when girls are out of school and more visible, bride traffickers are more active on the Internet and families are more in debt.

The US State Department this month declared Pakistan "a country of particular concern" for violations of religious freedoms — a designation the Pakistani government rejects. The declaration was based in part on an appraisal by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom that underage girls in the minority Hindu, Christian, and Sikh communities were "kidnapped for forced conversion to Islam... forcibly married and subjected to rape."

While most of the converted girls are impoverished Hindus from southern Sindh province, two new cases involving Christians, including Neha's, have roiled the country in recent months.

The girls generally are kidnapped by complicit acquaintances or relatives or men looking for brides. Sometimes they are taken by powerful landlords as payment for outstanding debts by their farm-hand parents, and police often look the other way. Once converted, the girls are quickly married off, often to older men or to their abductors, according to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Forced conversions thrive unchecked on a money-mak-

ing web that involves Islamic clerics who solemnise the marriages, magistrates who legalise the unions and corrupt local police who aid the culprits by refusing to investigate or sabotaging investigations, say child protection activists.

One activist, Jibran Nasir, called the network a "mafia" that preys on non-Muslim girls because they are the most vulnerable and the easiest targets "for older men with pedophilia urges." The goal is to secure virginal brides rather than to seek new converts to Islam.

Minorities make up just 3.6 percent of Pakistan's 220 million people and often are the target of discrimination. Those who report forced conversions, for example, can be targeted with charges of blasphemy.

In the feudal Kashmore region of southern Sindh province, 13-year-old Sonia Kumari was kidnapped, and a day later police told her parents she had converted from Hinduism to Islam. Her mother pleaded for her return in a video widely viewed on the internet: "For the sake of God, the Quran, whatever you believe, please return my daughter, she was forcibly taken from our home." **AP**

UK: Brexit break from EU faces bumpy moments despite deal

AP ■ LONDON

First came the Brexit trade deal. Now comes the red tape.

Four days after sealing a free trade agreement with the European Union, the British government warned businesses to get ready for disruptions and "bumpy moments" when the new rules take effect on Thursday night.

Businesses were scrambling Monday to digest the details and implications of the 1,240-page deal sealed by the EU and the UK on Christmas Eve.

The UK left the EU almost a year ago, but remained within the bloc's economic embrace during a transition period that ends at midnight Brussels time — 11 pm in London — on December 31.

The agreement, hammered out after nine months of tense negotiations, will ensure Britain and the 27-nation bloc can continue to trade in goods without tariffs or quotas.

That should help protect the 660 USD 894 billion in annual trade between the two sides, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that rely on it.

But the end to Britain's membership in the EU's vast single market and customs union will still bring inconvenience and new expenses for both individuals and businesses - from the need for tourists to have travel insurance to the millions of new customs declarations that firms will have to fill out.

"Businesses will need to make sure that they're ready for new customs procedures and we as individuals will need to make sure that our passports are up to date because they need to have at least six months before expiry on them in order to be able to travel abroad," said Michael Gove, the British Cabinet minister in charge of Brexit preparations.

"I'm sure there will be bumpy moments but we are there in order to try to do everything we can to smooth the path," he told the BBC.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government argues that any short-term disruption from Brexit will be worth it, because the UK will now be free to set its own rules and strike new trade deals around the world. **AP**

Saudi womens rights activist sentenced to 6-years prison

Dubai: One of Saudi Arabias most prominent womens rights activists was sentenced on Monday to nearly six years in prison under a vague and broadly-worded law aimed at combating terrorism, according to state-linked media.

Loujain al-Hathloul's case, and her imprisonment for the past two and a half years, have drawn criticism from rights groups, members of the U.S. Congress and European Union lawmakers.

Al-Hathloul was among a handful of Saudi women who openly called for the right to drive before it was granted in 2018 and for the removal of male guardianship laws that had long stifled womens freedom of movement and ability

to travel abroad.

State-linked Saudi news outlet Sabq reported that al-Hathloul was found guilty by the kingdoms anti-terrorism court on charges including agitating for change, pursuing a foreign agenda, using the internet to harm public order and cooperating with individuals and entities that have committed crimes according to anti-terror laws. She has 30 days to appeal the verdict.

A rights group called "Prisoners of Conscience" that focuses on Saudi political detainees said that al-Hathloul could be released as early as the end of March 2021 based on time served. She has been imprisoned since May 2018 and 34 months of her sentence

will be suspended.

The judge ordered her to serve five years and eight months in prison for violating anti-terrorism laws, according to Sabq, which said its reporter was allowed inside the courtroom during Mondays session.

Sabq reported that the judge said the defendant had confessed to committing the crimes and that her confessions were made voluntarily and without coercion. The judge said the verdict was issued in the presence of the prosecutor, the defendant, a representative from the Governments Human Rights Commission and a handful of select local media representatives. **AP**

Trump signs Covid relief, Govt-funding measure

West Palm Beach: President Donald Trump has signed a \$900 billion pandemic relief package that will deliver long-sought cash to businesses and individuals.

It also averts a Government shutdown.

Trump announced the signing in a statement on Sunday night.

The massive bill includes \$1.4 trillion to fund government agencies through September and contains other end-of-session priorities such as money for cash-starved transit systems and an increase in food stamp benefits.

Democrats are promising more aid to come once President-elect Joe Biden takes office, but Republicans are signalling a wait-and-see approach. **AP**

Chinese citizen scribe jailed for 4 years for Wuhan virus reports

AFF ■ SHANGHAI

A Chinese citizen journalist was jailed for four years Monday for her reporting from Wuhan as the Covid-19 outbreak unfurled, her lawyer said, almost a year after details of an "unknown viral pneumonia" surfaced in the central China city.

Zhang Zhan, a former lawyer, was sentenced at a brief hearing in a Shanghai court for allegedly "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" during her reporting in the chaotic initial stages of the outbreak.

Her live reports and essays were shared on social media platforms in February, grabbing the attention of authorities, who have punished eight virus whistleblowers so far as they defang criticism of the

government's response to the outbreak.

Beijing has congratulated itself for "extraordinary" success in controlling the virus inside its borders, with an economy on the rebound while much of the rest of the world stutters through painful lockdowns and surging caseloads a year on from the start of the pandemic in Wuhan.

Controlling the information flow during an unprecedented global health crisis has been pivotal in allowing China's communist authorities to reframe the narrative in their favour, with President Xi Jinping being garlanded for his leadership by the country's ruling party.

But that has come at a serious cost to anyone who has picked holes in the official storyline.

Darfur clashes kill 15 amid calls for peacekeepers to stay

Cairo: Tribal clashes in Sudan's troubled Darfur region have killed at least 15 people in recent days, forcing authorities to deploy more troops, the state-run news agency reported.

The violence came as thousands of displaced people protested against a decision by the U.N. Security Council to end the mandate of a U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur and replace it with a smaller political mission.

The clashes over the weekend in the town of Gereida in South Darfur province pitted the Fallata tribe against the Arab Masalit. The unrest poses a challenge to authorities in the capital, Khartoum, who are trying to end the country's long-running rebellions as part of a fragile transition to democracy following last year's overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir.

Al-Bashir waged a scorched-earth campaign

against rebels in Darfur in the early 2000s. Some 300,000 people were killed and 2.7 million were forcibly displaced. The International Criminal Court later charged al-Bashir and others with genocide and crimes against humanity.

The latest violence comes amid tensions between military and civilian authorities, who are sharing power in a transitional government. Civilian leaders are demanding greater control and oversight over the military's

economic assets, built up over decades of internal conflicts.

The violence was linked to a dispute over a water source, Omar al-Malek, a local leader, was quoted as saying by the state-run SUNA news agency late Sunday. It said the Fallata retaliated after two of its tribesmen were slain, killing at least 13 members of the Masalit and wounding at least 34 others.

Mahdi Musa, the governor of South Darfur, said authorities have deployed troops to

help detain those implicated in the fighting.

"The era of reconciliation conferences is over, and the era of enforcing the law has come," he was quoted as saying by SUNA. He was referring to recent negotiations to settle the dispute. The clashes came after the UN Security Council voted unanimously last week not to extend the mandate of the joint mission, known as UNAMID, when it runs out on Dec. 31. **AP**

Azerbaijan reports attack on its troops in Nagorno-Karabakh

Moscow: Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said on Monday its army units have been attacked by "an illegal Armenian armed group" in Nagorno-Karabakh, killing one Azerbaijani serviceman and wounding another.

The ministry said the attack took place in the Khojavend region on Sunday afternoon and was thwarted, leaving all six attackers dead.

The statement comes just

hours after the Armenian Defense Ministry denied media reports of fighting in the neighboring Hadrut region and said the ethnic Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh were "strictly observing" the cease-fire.

Neither Armenian or Nagorno-Karabakh officials have so far commented on Azerbaijan's statement.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but was

under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. That war left Nagorno-Karabakh itself and substantial surrounding territory in Armenian hands.

Heavy fighting erupted in late September in the biggest escalation of the decades-old conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, killing more than 5,600 people on both sides. **AP**

Attacks across Afghan kill 4

Kabul: At least four people were killed in separate attacks across Afghanistan on Monday, officials said, raising further concerns about the fate of peace talks that have been suspended until at least next month.

No one claimed responsibility for the attacks, and a local Islamic State affiliate opposed to the peace process has continued to regularly target civilians and Afghan security forces. The IS militants have even clashed with the larger and more well-established Taliban.

The Taliban have halted their attacks on US and international forces but continue to target Afghan security forces even as the insurgents have held talks this year with the US-backed government.

The Taliban attacked a police district headquarters in the western Farah province early Monday, killing one policeman and wounding three others, according to Mohibullah Mohib, a spokesman for the provincial police chief.

Chinese delegation meets top NCP leaders Prachanda, Madhav Nepal



is believed to be China's desperate attempt to avert a vertical split in the NCP, on Monday

met Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who claims control over the ruling party after removing Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli from the posts of the party's parliamentary leader and chair. The possibility of bringing the two factions of the NCP together and Nepal-China cooperation figured during the talks, The Kathmandu Post reported, quoting Prachanda's secretariat. **PTI**

FROM PAGE 1

GEHLOT PLANS JAIPUR CONCLAVE TO REINSTALL RAHUL AS CONG CHIEF

the party which she agreed to continue as interim in August for only six months, party leader said.

Rahul said he is "ready to work for the party as all desire" in the meeting on December 19 with Congress "dissenters" who had written a letter criticising the leadership and calling for an overhaul earlier this year.

The comment was greeted by applause from all present, including the rebels, and since then reinforcing the talk about the 50-year-old returning as Congress president in the New Year.

Congress leaders said "no one was critical of Rahul" at the meeting and the rebels "supported him". AICC chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala too had said "99.9 per cent" leaders in the Congress wanted Rahul to lead the party again but the final decision was his.

CENTRE EXTENDS GUIDELINES TILL JAN 31

However, the MHA has said State Governments shall not impose any local lockdown outside the containment zones, without prior consultation with the Union Government.

The Government has advised vulnerable persons, i.e., persons above 65 years of age, persons with co-morbidities, pregnant women, and children below the age of 10 years, to stay at home, except for meeting essential requirements and for health purposes.

COVID VACCINE DRY RUN BEGINS

After the vaccination, they will be under observation for the next 30 minutes to address any adverse event.

A report on the dry run listing the issues involved is to be submitted by the States to the Union Health Ministry besides the State Task Force for necessary action.

This will also provide hands-on experience to programme managers at various levels.

An important focus of the dry run will be on management of any possible adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) as well as on adherence and management of infection control practices at the session site to prevent disease transmission, it has said.

"The Central Government is gearing up for the rollout of Covid-19 vaccine across the country. As the vaccine administrators will play an important role in the immunisation process, training of trainers and those who shall administer the vaccine has been taken up across various States," the Health Ministry had said, while announcing the mock drill.

To strengthen the human resource for the vaccine introduction and rollout, detailed training modules have been developed for different categories of vaccine handlers and administrators, including medical officers, vaccinators cold chain handlers, ASHA coordinators and all others involved in the implementation process at different levels.

To facilitate redressal of queries on Covid-19 vaccination and Co-WIN portal, national and State helpline capacity has also been strengthened.

The National Expert Group on

Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 (NEGVAC) has recommended three prioritised population groups including, healthcare workers (about 1 crore), frontline workers (about 2 crore), and prioritised age group (about 27 crore).

OVER 1,500 TELECOM TOWERS IN PUNJAB DAMAGED BY PROTESTERS

The attacks have impacted telecom services and operators are struggling to maintain services in absence of action by law enforcement agencies, the source said.

The Punjab chief minister had on Friday appealed to protesting farmers to not cause inconvenience to the general public with such actions and continue to exercise the same restraint as they had shown over the past several months of their agitation.

Sources said state police have so far not acted against those damaging telecom towers and even FIRs have not been registered in most cases.

According to the Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA), a registered body of telecom infrastructure providers, at least 1,600 towers have been vandalised. These include common access infrastructure as well. Hundreds of farmers have been protesting at Delhi borders for over a month now against the three farm laws which they see would use in end to minimum support price (MSP) based procurement of farm produce like wheat and paddy.

The government has denied the apprehensions, saying MSP will continue and the new laws only provide farmers an alternative market to sell their produce.

Only Tibetans can pick next Dalai, US Act preempts China

PTI ■ WASHINGTON/BEIJING

US President Donald Trump has signed into law a Bill that reaffirms the right of Tibetans to choose a successor to the Dalai Lama and calls for establishing an American consulate in Tibet, prompting China to warn that the Act will seriously disrupt and hurt bilateral relations.

The Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 modifies and re-authorises various programmes and provisions related to Tibet. Trump signed the Act on Sunday as part of the massive \$2.3 trillion package for the year-end bill to provide long-delayed coronavirus relief.

Reacting to Trump's move to sign the Government spending bill that includes provisions about Taiwan and Tibet, China on Monday expressed firm opposition to it.

The act will seriously disrupt and hurt China-US relations, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a media briefing in Beijing.

The Chinese Government firm-

ly resolves to safeguard national sovereignty and security, and strongly urges the US to stop using Tibet-related and Taiwan-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs, Zhao said. The US Senate last week unanimously passed the bill despite China's protest.

It authorises assistance to non-governmental organisations in support of Tibetan communities in Tibet; places restrictions on new Chinese consulates in the United States until a US consulate has been established in Lhasa, Tibet.

The law now authorises the Office of the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues and expands the office's duties to include additional tasks, such as pursuing international coalitions to ensure that the next Dalai Lama is appointed solely by the Tibetan Buddhist faith community.

It also directs the Secretary of State not to open a new Chinese consulate in the US unless China allows the opening of an American consulate in Lhasa.

It is the policy of the US to take

all appropriate measures to hold accountable senior officials of the Chinese Government or the Chinese Communist Party who directly interfere with the identification and installation of the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism, the successor to the 14th Dalai Lama.

Beijing views the 14th Dalai Lama as a "separatist" working to split Tibet from China.

Some of the prominent measures approved by the US Congress include imposing sanctions on Chinese officials, including travel restrictions.

Noting that the 14th Dalai Lama advocates the Middle Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for the six million Tibetans in Tibet, the new law says that the Dalai Lama has overseen a process of democratisation within the Tibetan polity and devolved his political responsibilities to the elected 23 representatives of the Tibetan people in exile in 2011.

The Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 approves USD 1 million

per annum for the Special US Coordinator on Tibet, USD 675,000 towards scholarship provisions, USD 575,000 for scholar exchange initiatives, USD8 million for the Tibetan Autonomous Regio and Communities in China, USD 6 million for Tibetans living in India, USD3 million for Tibetan governance. Expressing concern over the exploitation of natural resources of Tibet, in particular water, the new law seeks to pursue collaborative efforts with Chinese and international scientific institutions, to monitor the environment on the Tibetan Plateau, including glacial retreat, temperature rise, and carbon levels, to promote a greater understanding of the effects on permafrost, the river flows, grasslands and desertification and the monsoon cycle.

The China-US relations reached the worst phase this year with sharpening disputes between the two countries over human rights, the coronavirus pandemic, trade, technology, Taiwan and a host of other issues. **PTI**

Firefighting on to keep BJP-ADMK pact intact

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI



A day after an AIADMK MP openly snubbed the BJP saying that either it should accept the chief ministerial candidature of Edappadi Palaniswami (EPS) for the 2021 Assembly election or go its own way, a major firefighting operation has started at the highest level in Chennai to resuscitate the sinking partnership from a possible disaster.

The CM met Tamil Nadu BJP president L Murugan on Monday following intervention by Union Minister for Power Piyush Goyal, according to a source close to Murugan.

Though Murugan did not disclose what transpired in the meeting, the Chief Minister is believed to have told him not to take seriously the MP's warning to the BJP to the heart.

"Murugan said that it was for BJP national president JP Nadda to endorse the chief ministerial candidate's name because the AIADMK

was part of the NDA alliance," said Murugan's close aide.

Narayanan Tirupathi, BJP's senior spokesman feigned ignorance about the meeting between EPS and Murugan. "All I could say right now is that the AIADMK and the BJP are constituents of the NDA. There is no possibility of any kind of breaking of the alliance as on today," said Narayanan.

He also pointed out that it was Murugan who first congratulated Palaniswamy when the executive committee of the AIADMK declared the latter as the CM candidate.

The reception accorded by the AIADMK Government to Home

Minister Amit Shah when he visited Chennai last month is still fresh in public memory. The Chief Minister and his deputy O Panneerselvam along with senior Government officials were at Chennai airport to receive and see off Shah during the latter's visit to the State in November.

"The BJP had not approached the AIADMK for any favours. It was during an official function in Chennai attended by the Home Minister that Panneerselvam and Palaniswami declared that AIADMK would continue its alliance with the Hindutva party. Nothing has changed since then," said Narayanan.

DOCYARD

DR HP BHARATHI

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

JINDAL NATURECURE INSTITUTE



Don't be so sensitive



When cells of the body do not respond appropriately to the hormone insulin, resulting in non-utilisation of glucose from the blood for energy, it is labeled as insulin resistance. This leads to Type-II Diabetes, prediabetes and gestational Diabetes. Obesity, Inactive lifestyle, and high carbohydrates diet are the leading causes of insulin resistance.

Fortunately, there is a lot one can do to decrease insulin resistance. Lifestyle interventions are more effective in reducing insulin resistance and the risk of Diabetes compared to pharmacological interventions. Let us take a look at some tips to help the body deal with insulin resistance.

Lose bodyweight: Losing bodyweight can help lower insulin resistance. The smaller the fat cells, the more sensitive they are to insulin and the body has to manufacture less insulin to shuttle glucose to the cells. It saves the pancreas from fatigue and lowers the insulin levels in the blood, which significantly reduces the health risks. According to a study published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, losing over 5 per cent of body weight reduced the risk of Type-II Diabetes by up to 60 per cent for three years.

Lose belly fat: Excess fat in the belly also referred to as visceral fat, reduces insulin sensitivity, and is mainly responsible for promoting insulin resistance in the liver and muscles. Several studies point to a correlation between excess belly fat and low insulin sensitivity. Unfortunately, there are no proven ways to target fat in the abdominal area in an effort to decrease it. However, if one keeps a check on the overall body weight, the visceral fat in the belly will be under control as well.

Increase fiber intake: Increased fiber intake is linked to a decreased risk of diabetes, heart diseases, and cancer. Broadly speaking, fiber is categorised as soluble or insoluble. Most food items contain a combination of different types of fibers. Insoluble fiber is a bulking agent that helps prevent constipation. Soluble fiber helps lower the level of blood cholesterol and promoting satiety. Studies have found a link between the intake of soluble fiber and improved insulin sensitivity. Soluble fiber feeds the gut-friendly bacteria and keeps one healthy. Foods rich in soluble fiber include oatmeal, legumes, flaxseeds, brussels, sprouts, and oranges.

Keep a check on mental stress: Mental stress affects the body adversely. Chronic mental stress can upset the blood sugar levels and increase insulin resistance, as the body activates the fight or flight response to acute mental stress. This stimulates the production of cortisol and glucagon. Glucagon breaks down stored glycogen, and the sugar is then released into the bloodstream, pushing up the levels of blood sugar. Studies indicate that high levels of stress hormones can reduce insulin sensitivity. Yoga practice is very effective in combating mental stress. If one is a beginner to yoga practice, make sure to practice under the guidance of a trained instructor before the postures are mastered.

Ensure adequate sleep: Insufficient sleep is linked to a number of health issues, including weight gain, heart diseases, compromised immune response, insulin resistance and Type-II Diabetes. Deep sleep, which is the most restorative stage of sleep, plays a major role in the regulation of blood sugar levels and maintenance of insulin sensitivity. Getting adequate sleep also helps regulate hormones that stimulate the appetite and also reduces the risk of metabolic dysfunction. Ensure to get at least eight hours of sleep every night to maintain good health. It is highly advisable to avoid exposure to blue light — light from electronic devices — for at least half an hour before one goes to sleep.

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WARMFOODS

PEANUTS: Peanuts, also known as groundnuts, are a rich source of nutrients like magnesium; Vitamin E, copper, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, calcium, arginine and many others.

Several studies suggest that peanuts can help lessen the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Antioxidants, on the hand, help to protect the body from oxidative stress, which occurs in cases of various cancers and diseases.

Peanuts are also an extremely high source of plant protein and medical practitioners have advised that it

should be incorporated in the diet for children, vegetarians, and protein deficient people. Peanuts provide our body with essential Vitamins, which helps in regulating metabolism, converting fat and carbohydrates into energy, and facilitating bone and tissue formation. Eating nuts has been associated with plenty of health benefits — from increased cognitive function to protection from Alzheimers and lower risk of mortality and developing chronic diseases like respiratory disease, neurodegenerative disease, Diabetes and cancer



IT UP

The year was all about eating healthy and working on one's fitness. DR PRAVEEN JHA lists the trends in diet that were on people's to-do list

The year 2020 changed several aspects of our life as the COVID-19 virus unleashed its wrath all over the world. One of the biggest considerations was what we eat, as the pandemic helped to re-focus our attention on the health risks associated with a poor, unhealthy diet. With people spending more time indoors, it was inevitable to cut down on bad eating habits and focus on a healthy diet to achieve optimal fitness. So, here we take a look at the diet trends that took the front seat in 2020.

THE KETOGENIC DIET

The keto diet emphasises proteins and fats and limits the intake of carbohydrates so that the body burns fats rather than carbohydrates. Similar to other low-carb diet trends like the Atkins diet, the keto diet necessitates maintaining a ratio of 4:1 by weight of fat to combined protein and carbohydrates. This type of diet excludes high-carb foods like sugars, grain, pasta and bread along with starchy vegetables and fruits. Instead, it focuses on increasing consumption of dairy and nuts which are healthy fats.

INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent fasting can be considered as a nutritional regime rather than a conventional diet system. However, it is presently the most popular fitness and health trend in the world. People around the globe are accepting it as a part of their lifestyle to improve their health and lose weight. It is basically a fasting pattern that observes certain periods of eating and fasting. The most widely adopted is the 16:8 method where a person can eat for 8 hours and the remaining 16 hours is the fasting period. Such a nutritional regime can help



INTERMITTENT FASTING CAN BE CONSIDERED AS A NUTRITIONAL REGIME RATHER THAN A CONVENTIONAL DIET SYSTEM. HOWEVER, IT IS AT PRESENT, THE MOST POPULAR FITNESS AND HEALTH TREND GLOBALLY

reduce inflammation, body weight and also reduces cholesterol levels.

THE PALEO DIET

Paleo diet is also known by the name 'Caveman Diet' focuses on consuming foods similar to a manner consumed by primitive people in the Paleolithic era. In practise, a paleo diet refrains from processed foods that can cause serious health issues like diabetes, heart problems and obesity. The diet advises people to stick to locally sourced products like fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts and seeds that result in a diet with high fibre and protein. The diet also recommends to stay away from wheat products, dairy, legumes, potatoes along with salt and sugar.

VEGAN DIET

Veganism is a way of living that aims to exclude every form of animal cruelty and exploitation, be it for food or any other purpose. As a result, people adhering to a vegan diet avoid all types of products that are derived from animals like eggs, dairy products and meat, but consume all types of vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, legumes and grains. People who stick to a vegan diet tend to be thinner with lower Body Mass Index. Several studies have shown that vegans benefit from a lower risk of Diabetes.

When it comes to diet, it is important to understand that no 'one cap suits all'. Every individual has different dietary requirements, which is why it is always a good idea to make an educated decision by researching, learning about the different diet types and taking the help of a professional if required.

The writer is DM Gastroenterology, Regency Superspeciality Hospital

WONDER SPICES DO THE TRICK



People with weak immunity are likely to catch viral infections like flu and cold easily.

SHREYANSH JAIN lists herbs that work wonders

Winters have arrived in full swing, and while some people are relishing the cold temperatures, others are experiencing a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and constant sniffing by falling prey to viral infections. As per Ayurveda, the science of healing, *kapha doshas* are responsible for regulating the respiratory system of the body, whereas *vata doshas* pertain to manage the overall immunity, *ojas*. Generally, people with weak immunity are likely to catch viral infections. So, if you are looking for a potent solution to prevent or ward off dreading flu or cold, give a bolster to your immunity with the following homemade ayurvedic remedies.

Tulsi: *Tulsi*, also known as the "Mother nature of medicines" is enriched with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that help to prevent common colds and infections. Consuming *tulsi* leaves every day increases the production of antibodies and strengthens overall immunity. Relieving the airways and lowering down the body temperature, *tulsi* leaves are effective in curing cold, cough, and viral fever. To attain the maximum benefits of "The Queen of herbs", you can chew four-five *tulsi* leaves first thing in the morning, create a concoction with *tulsi*, ginger, and peppercorns, or add a few *tulsi* leaves in hot tea.

Honey: Loaded with antimicrobial properties, delicious honey does not only taste heavenly but also helps a sore throat. Honey provides respite from nasal and throat congestion by loosening the thick mucus and helps you to cough it out. Taking a teaspoon of honey every day boosts metabolism, improves digestion, and builds immunity. If you are suffering from a bad cold and cough, mix equal parts of honey and ginger juice and take the mixture once in the morning and before going to bed.

Giloy: Also known as *amrita* or *guduchi* in the native language, the heart-shaped spice, *giloy* works wonders to ward off cold and cough. *Giloy* is a natural immunity booster with rich antioxidant properties, which shields the body against foreign pathogens into the body. The *giloy* extract flushes out toxins from the body and balances *kapha doshas* thus, reduces frequent coughs, sniffing, sore throat as well as fever. You can either consume a teaspoon of *giloy* juice or take a *giloy* tablet with warm water.

Ashwagandha: One of the most relied upon herbs in Ayurvedic medicine, *ashwagandha*, is a powerful remedy in bolstering immunity. The super herb consists of umpteen number of active ingredients, which are beneficial for various bodily functions and managing *doshas*. The roots of *Ashwagandha* have potent diuretic, antioxidant, and analgesic properties, that help to fight infections and control symptoms of cold, cough, and viral bugs. The sedative attribute of *ashwagandha* also helps to deal with fatigue and chronic stress that generally accompany viral infections.

Ginger: An inexpensive and pungent spice, ginger has remained an all-time favourite home remedy for Indians to cure cold and cough. The anti-inflammatory gingerols present in it help to relieve sore throat and destroy rhinovirus, the pathogen responsible for cold. You can drink two to three cups of ginger tea to warm up on a cold winter day and keep the body healthy.

The writer is CEO, Medy365.com

DadiKaKehna

Work from home has both pros and cons with backache being a part and parcel of it. ROSHANI DEVI shares easy home remedies that can eliminate the pain



While working from home has eliminated the need of waking up early in the morning to dress up for office and also the time wasted in travelling to the office due to traffic jams, it has also brought with it a whole lot of other problems, including back pain.

Here are a few things one can do to treat and prevent it. Take break at regular intervals. Sitting for long hours can take a toll on your spine health. Don't forget to stand up and walk a few steps and/or stretch for a

few minutes. This will help in relaxing the muscles.

Posture is key. Avoid being in a comfortable position while working on laptops. Instead sit with your spine straight.

Use a heating pad. One can use a heating pad to relieve the lower back pain. Do it daily. Get enough sleep. Lack of adequate sleep can worsen the pain.

Hence, it is advisable to have a quality sleep for eight hours. Your pillow and mattress also has a role to play. So, make sure you have the right one.



The triple threat

New research has revealed the adverse impact of air pollution on Diabetics and the likelihood of pollution leading to COVID-19 infection in such patients, says DR MANOJ CHAWLA

Pandemics have been a recurring challenge since medieval times, but the scale and global impact of COVID-19 is truly unprecedented. It is mainly a respiratory infection which can lead to severe complications such as cardiac problems, septic shocks, liver and kidney failures, etc. Thus, people with pre-existing health conditions, such as Diabetes, are at a higher risk of developing severe illness with COVID-19. While this risk was identified quite early, new research has brought to light the adverse impact of air pollution on Diabetics and the likelihood of the pollution leading to COVID-19 infection in such people.

Highly polluted areas are known to amplify the severity of respiratory illnesses and infections. Hence, air pollution can be a core cause of worry in the war against COVID-19. One of the key



strategies in combating this contagion has been to boost the immunity of the people affected or at risk, and that's where diabetes becomes a comorbid condition. Poor glycemic control in people with diabetes brings down immunity, making people with the condition more vulnerable to infections. In many cases, the infection also aids secondary issues, such as bacterial infection of the lungs,

etc. Thus, it becomes a lot more difficult for people with diabetes to keep themselves safe from COVID-19 infection when air pollution levels become severe. The recent surge in air pollution and COVID-19 cases in Delhi could also be attributed to this nexus between poor air quality, weak immunity and respiratory infections.

It is, therefore, extremely important for people with diabetes to understand this correlation between these three menaces. One should avoid venturing outdoors on days with poor air quality to reduce the risk. It is also imperative to lead a healthy lifestyle that involves eating a balanced diet, regular physical activity and staying away from habits such as smoking and drinking.

The writer is by Dr Manoj Chawla, Director and Consultant Diabetologist at Lina Diabetes Care & Mumbai Diabetes Research Centre

INBRIEF

Alma, one of the top five global leaders of energy-based medical and aesthetic solutions, today announced the launch of renowned European skin-remodeling brand, Profhilo, in India, offering a new breakthrough approach in skin anti-ageing. Profhilo, developed by the international pharma company, IBSA, created a new concept of 'Bioremodeling' in the dermal injectables industry, offering an overarching approach to skin ageing, beyond currently available solutions.

As we age, production of collagen and elastin, the proteins responsible for skin elasticity and firmness, slows down, resulting in skin laxity and sagging skin. Profhilo delivers a high concentration of pure Hyaluronic acid to different layers of the skin, promoting the multilevel and dynamic remodeling of extracellular matrix in terms of elasticity and support, while maintaining the viability of fibroblast, keratinocytes, and adipocytes to provide deep hydration and rejuvenation of the skin tissue. With 64 MG of hyaluronic acid per syringe, Profhilo delivers the highest concentration of this compound to the skin as compared to other HA-based treatments.

Trend Slazer

'Female actors need to be respected'

Actor **MANOJ BAJPAYEE** feels it is time for female actors to get respect for their talent, and says even the male counterparts are also looking for a situation where everybody gets what they deserve.

"It's a time for female actors to get and be respected for what they are and what they can deliver," Manoj said.

"This is something that only they were looking for but we as male counterparts were also looking for a situation like this where everybody is getting what they deserve," he added.



'The work that BAFTA plans to do in India with Breakthrough stretches far beyond Bollywood.'

BAFTA and I share the passion for discovering and nurturing new talent and this association with them is a natural fit because of our shared vision. This initiative will look for talent across the Indian film, game and television industries.'

—AR Rahman

Actor **ADITI RAO HYDARI** has wrapped up shooting for her forthcoming film *Hey Sinamika*, co-starring **Dulquer Salmaan** and **Kajal Aggarwal**.



Aditi posted a picture that features her with the film's director Brindha Gopal. In the image, the actor and the filmmaker looks at a screen. She wrote, "There is a reason everyone loves master Brinda so much. Choreographer, director, daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother... and most importantly all heart with super human efficiency (she will not leave you till she gets her shot! Thank you for being you & choosing me."

Gal: Chris brings out the best in me

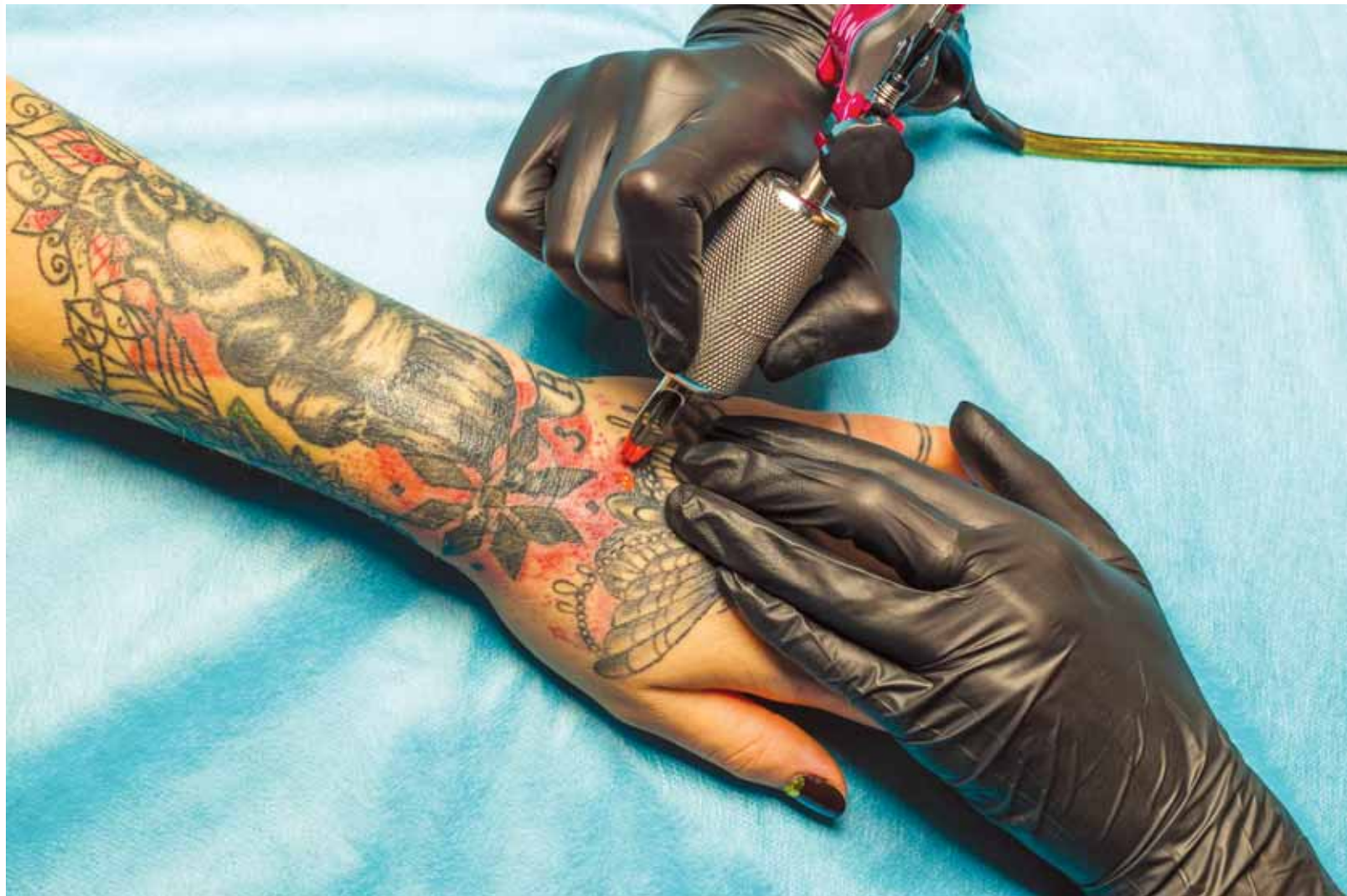
Hollywood star **GAL GADOT** enjoyed working with **Chris Pine**, and says he is a great partner.

The actor got a chance to work with Pine again in

Wonder Woman 1984, sequel to the Patty Jenkins-directed 2017 DC hit, *Wonder Woman*.

"I loved the fact that Patty and (writer) Geoff Johns found a way to bring him back — which we can't talk about — but it made me really happy," she said.

"Chris was an integral part of the success of the first film. He's a great partner. He is fun to work with. We always laugh together, and he brings the best out of me in many ways," added Gadot.



Ink your style

Here are a few tattoo and piercing trends that are likely to emerge in 2021.

By TEAM VIVA

Even though it has been a challenging year for various sectors, including the tattoo industry, we have seen a fair share of tattoo trends this time. As minimalistic trends were on the rise, we could see the micro pieces of ink popped up everywhere. Right from the neck tattoos to matching pieces shared among friends, there were plenty of options to take inspiration from. Just like tattoos, we also saw some piercing trends. While some people choose makeup or outfit as a means of expressing their style, some prefer to do this through various accessories — and ear piercings are one of the most visible ways to do so.

Next year — 2021 — is upon us, and there are various emerging tattoo and piercing trends to try this year. Here's



a list to choose from:

REALISTIC

These tattoos are characterised by maximising the life-like quality of anything we see in the world — monuments, animals, flowers etc. It can also be categorised as a "3D" tattoo with accurate representations of real-life

imagery.

It is important to note that a realism tattoo done by an inexperienced artist or someone who isn't trained in that particular style can be a disaster. But if done right, it will surely make you stand out. Tattoo expert, Lokesh Verma, founder of Devilz Tattoo, is known for his coloured realism and portraits style

of tattooing that is mastered by only a few people across the world.

STERNUM

Also known as chest tattoo, these tattoos are considered among one of the best chest tattoos for women because it looks great aesthetically and gives a feminine feel.

"People are crazy over these charming sternum tattoos; it is done over an intimate place which means it's not for everyone to see all the time. The under breast area is a sensitive spot, closer to your bones so you can definitely expect this one to hurt. The amount of pain will also depend on the kind of design and style you have chosen and the kind of artist you are with. So, go for a rather simple design if you are a first timer," says celebrity tattoo artist, Vikas Malani, co-founder, BodyCanvas Tattoos.

SOUNDWAVE/TALKING

A new, revolutionary way to immortalise voices or your favourite tune through body art is the futuristic, latest invention in the world of tattooing. "Soundwave tattoos are a new technology and it's really cool. You can have the messages or sound of your special one and hear it anytime you want. This is more like a coded message which no one else can know, but whenever you feel like hearing their sound you can just scan the tattoo and playback," says Lokesh Verma, who is known for pioneering soundwave audible tattoos in India.

Here is how it works: Record an audio clip between five to 30 seconds of your loved ones and send it to your tat-

too studio. They will create a soundwave of that audio clip and ink it on your skin permanently which you can playback by scanning it with your mobile phone whenever you want to hear their precious voice.

So, if you want to tattoo the soundwave of your baby's first words, a message from your partner or the voice message in memory of your late grandparent/loved one, then go for this tattoo.

ARMBAND

These are for people who want bold tattoos. While they are mostly popular among men, it has also gained a lot of female attention nowadays. Armbands are usually like a bracelet usually done on arms as the name itself suggests. They can be of different types — solid black or with a theme like tribal, mandala, polynesian, nature-related or space-related. These tattoos can look very cool and aesthetically pleasing without taking up too much space on the forearm or bicep.

PORTRAIT

These are mostly rendered in a realistic style that portrays head shot of a person. Portrait tattoos are usually for tattoo lovers who want to memorialise an important figure or person. They typically represent something or someone extremely meaningful — could be of a loved one who recently passed away, a newly born baby, a pet or your favourite musician.

MINIMAL

"Less is more" is the word on the street. Too much makeup, too many accessories, loud clothing, etc. is no more in trend and might lose anyone's attention. People simply don't have any clue where to look first. The same applies to tattoos. Often, it's the dainty tattoos that have a huge influence on your style. Want to convey across a powerful message in a subtle way? Then small tattoos characterised with clean lines are the way to go.

Miniscule tattoos are one kind of tattoos that are super discreet, incredibly detailed, pretty and aren't likely to date. That is why the millennials, especially women still haven't grown tired of the tiny trend.

SMILEY & INDUSTRIAL PIERCING

A piercing through the upper lip frenulum is sometimes called a "smiley," because it is usually only visible when smiling. Similarly, the lower lip frenulum piercing is sometimes referred to as a "frowny." Originally called an "Upper Lip Frenulum Piercing," people soon began calling it a "scrumptur."

Vikas says, "Since ages, piercings have always been in trend but the style changes over the period of time. Smiley piercings have managed to become one of the hottest piercing trends of the year. Due to its increase in popularity and demand, the youngsters have been very open to getting a smiley piercing; mostly because of its location."

An industrial piercing also called as scaffold piercing or construction piercing, is any two pierced holes connected with a single straight piece of jewellery or a bar, however, it typically refers to a double perforation of the upper ear cartilage specifically and looks like a connecting bridge. This is one of the unique ear piercings and most trending too.



Find the connect

A new study Amazon Alexa reveals how social media brands need to tap Gen Z in 2021

Move over millennials as Gen Z is becoming a more important target audience for social media marketing as they enter adulthood, according to a new study by Amazon Alexa.

While 68 per cent of Gen Zers "expect brands to contribute to society," 71 per cent of Gen Zers say they want ads to have more diversity.

"That means your social media channels should display what your brand is doing in that respect," said Kim Kosaka, Director of Marketing at Alexa, detailing the social media trends that will rule 2021.

Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 is considered a Millennial, and anyone born from 1997 onward is part of a new generation called Z.

COVID-19 has drastically changed the way people utilise social media. "With a 74 per cent rise in social media marketing spend during the pandemic, marketers are investing more money in social media marketing. They expect to spend the same, if not more, in the coming year," Kosaka said in a blog post.

One of the most unique things

about Gen Z is their world outlook — they often see themselves as global citizens.

Gen Zers care about what's going on in the world because they're more connected to it than any other generation before them.

As the aptly nicknamed "iGeneration," they're the first generation to have grown up with smartphones and social media easily at their disposal, Kosaka noted.

"Generally speaking, Gen Zers want to see brands that care about equality and the environment, and need those values prominently displayed on social media in order for them to engage."

Another key piece of the social media puzzle for Gen Z is giving them options. "Younger generations are constantly toggling between

different apps and social media channels. It's your job to make sure you're right there with them when they decide to make the jump from Instagram to TikTok," she emphasised.

Speaking of TikTok, the video-sharing social network has become one of the most successful social media channels during the pandemic.

TikTok saw nearly 100 per cent growth in the United States in 2019, and the average time spent on TikTok per user in the US in September 2019 was nearly 500 minutes. "TikTok has also continued to produce a number of viral videos over the course of the pandemic," said Kosaka.

On average, TikTok ads clock in at around \$10 per 1,000 impressions

(CPM) vs Instagram, which only has a CPM of about \$8.

"People are using social media to connect with more brands from home and shopping from their laptops and phones. The role of influencers in that sales process has been amplified by the pandemic," she observed.

Social media influencers are also becoming increasingly important in relaying health messages to younger audiences during the pandemic.

"The UK government hired influencers to help relay COVID-19 safety messages to young people using the platform. This trend will likely continue in 2021 as the pandemic continues to be part of our everyday lives," she added.

—IANS

Irrfan's last film to release in 2021



The Song of Scorpions, the last film of late actor Irrfan Khan, will release on the big screen in early 2021.

Directed by Anup Singh, the drama revolves around an independent young tribal woman, who tries to overcome a brutal betrayal so as to find her voice. Irrfan, who passed away in April this year, will be seen in the role of a camel trader.

Also featuring Waheeda Rehman and Iranian star Golshifteh Farahani, the film had its world premiere at the 70th Locarno Film Festival in 2017.

"*The Song of Scorpions* is a special story and it is truly an honour for us to present Irrfan Khan's final performance in it. We will be offering this film to the audiences as a tribute to the beloved star of the Indian cinema," said

Abhishek Pathak of Panorama Spotlight, one of the producers of the film.

"We feel blessed that we are the chosen ones to present this gem to the world," said Gyan Sharma of producers 70 MM Talkies.

Irrfan breathed his last on April 29 at the age of 54. He was admitted to Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital due to a colon infection. However, he succumbed to his ailment.

The actor was still under treatment for colon cancer when he returned to the acting world with his last release, *Angrezi Medium*, a follow-up to his 2017 hit, *Hindi Medium*. He was away from the big screen since the release of *Karwaan* in 2018, the year he was diagnosed with the disease.

—IANS

India close in on series-parity

Bowlers leave Aussies reeling at 133/6 in second innings after taking 131-run lead

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India marched towards a dominant series-levelling victory after their formidable bowlers scythed through the Australian batting, relentlessly pressing home the advantage of a sizeable first-innings lead on the third day of the second Test, here on Monday.

Australia were wobbling at 133 for six at stumps on the third day of the Boxing Day Test at the magnificent Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Aiming to exorcise the ghosts of being bowled out for a lowest ever 36 in the series-opener, the visitors had put up 326 on the board for a 131-run lead in reply to Australia's first-innings total of 195 all out.

Australia were ahead by only two runs at close of play.

"This game is not over yet, we still have to get four more wickets," India skipper Ajinkya Rahane, whose hundred on the second day set the tone for the side, said at the end of day's play.

"Credit to the bowlers, they bowled in the right areas," he added. Seeking to wipe out the deficit, Australia began their second innings on a disastrous note as Joe Burns (4) not only got out for a poor score, but also wasted a review after pacer Umesh Yadav (1/5) opened him up with the one that swung away very late.

Introduced early into the attack, seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (1/46) once again showed his class when he bamboozled Marnus



Indian players walk from the field at the close of play on day three of the second cricket test between India and Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground

Labuschagne (28 off 49 balls) with a slider that went straight with the angle.

Ashwin let one slide across and with the batsman looking to defend. The ball went the other way and took an outside edge on its way to Rahane at first slip.

Matthew Wade (27 batting, 89 balls) and Steve Smith (6 batting, 20 balls) survived the remaining overs prior to the tea break, which they took at 65 for two. At that break, the hosts trailed India by 66 runs.

More misery awaited Australia in the final session when they lost four wickets for the addition of 68 runs, taking India closer to an equaliser in the four-match series after the humiliating defeat in the opener at Adelaide Oval.

Smith's horror run in the series continued as he was

bowled by Jasprit Bumrah (1/34) round his legs when the ball clipped the bails of the off-stump after the batsman had shuffled too much. Wade, looking the best among Australian batsmen, was trapped in front of the wicket by Ravindra Jadeja (2/25) at 98 for four. And while the

score remained the same, Australia lost another wicket in Travis Head a couple of overs later. There was no encore of skipper Tim Paine's battling knock in the first Test as he was caught behind off the bowling of Jadeja. Australia could have been seven down had Pant held

2nd Test. Day 4
Live from 5:00am IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

on to a Pat Cummins edge off Ashwin.

However, India too have a cause for concern as Umesh hobbled off the field after suffering a calf injury in the innings' eighth over.

Bowling his fourth over, the pacer had complained of pain in his calf and had been taken for scans after being assessed by the BCCI medical team.

Earlier, riding captain Ajinkya Rahane's classy hundred and Ravindra Jadeja's 15th half-century, India managed enough runs on the board to put Australia under pressure despite losing their five remaining wickets for only 49 runs after resuming the day on 277 for five.

Jadeja (57) added 123 runs for the sixth wicket with skipper Rahane, whose vigil came to an when he was run out, his first in Tests, after making a classy 112 with the help of 12 boundaries in 223 balls.

Kohli named ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade

PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Virat Kohli on Monday headlined the ICC top honours for the decade, winning the Sir Garfield Sobers award for the best male cricketer of the past 10 years.

Kohli was also picked for the ODI Cricketer of the Decade award.

Former India skipper M S Dhoni won the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade, chosen by fans for his gesture of calling back England batsman Ian Bell after a bizarre run out in the Nottingham Test in 2011.

The International Cricket Council made the announcements via Twitter, bestowing the top honours on Kohli, who scored 66 out of his 70 international hundreds, in the 'ICC Awards' period.

In the same period, he was also the batsman with most fifties (94), most runs (20396) besides having the maximum average (56.97) among players with 70 plus innings.

Overall, the 32-year-old has amassed 12040 runs in ODIs, 7318 runs in Tests and 2928 runs in T20Is, averaging more



series in Australia in 2018," said Kohli in a statement.

On Sunday, Kohli was the lone player to be named in teams of the decade across formats and was named captain of the Test all-stars.

On being also named the ODI Cricketer of the Decade, Kohli added: "ODI cricket is something that I took to very early. I came to the ODI team first and then, I made my Test debut a couple of years later.

"So, I got the understanding of my game pretty soon, pretty early. And as I mentioned before, my only intention and mindset was to make winning contributions for the team and I just tried to do every game that I play.

than 50 across formats. Kohli was also part of the World Cup-winning India squad in 2011, something he will cherish for life.

"Firstly, it's a great honour for me to receive this award. The moments I hold closest to my heart in the last decade definitely has to be the World Cup win in 2011, the Champions Trophy win in 2013 and winning the

and numbers along the journey at all and those things just become the by-product of what you do on the field and those for me, just end up being milestones that you cross on the way to the path to victory." For the ODI honour, Kohli was the only player with 10,000 plus runs in the ICC Awards period including 39 hundreds and 48 fifties at an average of 61.83.

Still feel the hundred at Lord's is my best: Rahane

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Ajinkya Rahane produced a master-class after taking over the reins at a low point for his team but when it comes to his best knock, the stand-in India skipper Monday placed his century at Lord's ahead of the latest effort, against Australia.

Rahane's classy 112 paved the way for India taking a substantial 131-run first innings lead in the ongoing second Test against Australia, who were in all sorts of trouble at the close of play on the third day.

"It was really special. Getting a century always is. Still feel that my hundred against England at Lord's is my best," Rahane said after the day's play. The unassuming Indian entered the Lord's Honours Board when he struck an elegant 103 off 154 balls during the Indian team's tour of England in 2014.

Leading the side just days after a humiliating defeat in the series-opener at Adelaide Oval, Rahane earned praise from the cricket fraternity for the manner in which he handled his bowlers and his field placements at Melbourne.

"Captaincy is all about backing your instinct. You've got to back your gut feeling. Credit to the bowlers, they bowled in the

right areas," he added.

After his effort with the bat, his bowlers put India in sight of a series-levelling win by reducing Australia to 133 for six in



their second innings.

Asked about the match, he preferred to stay cautious.

"This game is not over yet, still have to get four more wickets."

Leading the team in the absence of Virat Kohli, Rahane came into the match after losing seasoned pacer Mohammed Shami and he was also held responsible for running out Kohli in Adelaide. However, on Monday it was Rahane who found himself at the receiving end after what seemed like a needless call by Ravindra Jadeja, which led to his dismissal.

It's just been very poor batting so far from Australia: Ponting

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

There were no demons in the MCG pitch but very very poor batting by the Australian batsmen, said the legendary Ricky Ponting, lashing out at the home batters for playing rash shots against the Indian bowlers in the second Test.

India are marching towards a dominant series-levelling victory after reducing Australia to 133 for six at stumps on the third day. The hosts are ahead by just two runs with only four wickets in hand, going into the penultimate day. And Ponting minced no words in criticising the Australian batsmen.

"You can't blame the pitch. The pitch has been absolutely perfect today. It's a little bit of spin, yes, but you'd expect that. Day three of a Test Match. Very little on offer for the fast bowlers, but it's just been poor batting. Very, very poor batting so far," Ponting was quoted as saying by Seven. The former skipper believes the Australians were not proactive enough against the Indian bowlers in this match.


"It's been one of the reasons, I think, that they've

eventually got themselves out, playing rash shots. They haven't been able to tick the scoreboard over on a regular enough basis. Pressure builds. When pressure builds, bad shots come," Ponting said.

"I talked about it in first innings as well particularly with the way they played Ravi Ashwin. They weren't proactive against him. Yes, it's been good bowling, but sometimes against the best bowlers you have to take more risks as a batsman. For the sheer fact they're not going to bowl bad balls." He went on to praise the display of the Indian bowling attack.

"The lesser skilled bowlers you can sit on all day because you know you're going to one or two scoring opportunities an over, but Bumrah, Ashwin, Jadeja, even Siraj to a certain degree in this game, they don't make many mistakes. "They've actually forced the Australian batsman into making mistakes. When you're just sitting there waiting for good bowlers to make mistakes, you're basically are a sitting duck," Ponting said.

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Dedication to the Nation of New Khurja - New Bhaupur Section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

Inauguration of Operation Control Centre at Prayagraj

Flagging Off of Long Haul (1.5 km) Goods Trains from New Bhaupur & New Khurja

by
Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
(through video conferencing)



➔ In the august presence of ➔

Anandiben Patel
Governor, Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Piyush Goyal
Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India

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SALIENT FEATURES

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- With the new corridor, the average speed of goods trains will increase from the existing 25-30 kmph to 60-70 kmph.
- It will significantly enhance the transportation of freight items like coal, iron & steel, petroleum products, food grains, etc. from Northern India to Eastern and North-eastern regions.
- With the new section, the farmers of Aligarh, Khurja, Firozabad, Agra and Bhaupur will get access to pan-India markets.
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- It is one of the biggest control centres in the world and is equipped with state-of-the-art technology.
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