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MUDDLING THROUGH

MONEY 10
WPI INFLATION FALLS FOR 3rd CONSECUTIVE MONTH

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TAKE THE UNCONVENTIONAL ROUTE

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MESSI CAN PLAY TILL 2025, SAYS GARCIA
14 SPORT

Gehlot gains upper hand, but situation shaky

Sachin Pilot sacked as Dy CM and removed as State Cong chief, 2 Ministers who joined him in his revolt against CM also dropped

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress Government in Rajasthan is on the brink just three months after the party lost Madhya Pradesh in a similar rebellion. Rebel leader Sachin Pilot was sacked as Deputy Chief Minister and removed as State party chief after he skipped a second meeting of MLAs despite the leadership reaching out to him several times. Two Ministers who have joined him in his revolt were also dropped.

Congress said Pilot was "ensnared" by the BJP to bring down the Ashok Gehlot Government. The BJP has demanded Gehlot to face floor test and senior BJP leader Om Mathur reached Jaipur to conduct a meeting of party leaders on Wednesday at 11 am in Jaipur. Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia will be present.

While sources indicated that Pilot may announce to launch a new political party on Wednesday, Om Mathur said he is welcome in the BJP making it first public invitation to Sachin Pilot amid the ongoing crisis in the Rajasthan Government.

The BJP leader also said that if Ashok Gehlot is claiming that he has the support of MLAs, he should go through the floor test and prove majority in the Rajasthan Assembly.



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot makes a victory sign before the media after calling on the Governor in Jaipur on Tuesday PTI

"Our doors are open for Sachin Pilot. Anyone who wishes to join the party and embrace its ideology, they are welcome. The BJP has become such a large party because people from different walks of life have joined us and believed in our ideology," Mathur said.

On being asked about Sachin Pilot's wishes to become the Rajasthan Chief Minister himself, Mathur said the Chief Minister is chosen by the party legislature.

He also said that the dispute between Sachin Pilot and Ashok Gehlot is an internal

matter of the Congress and went on to add that the party has not done right with a leader like Sachin Pilot.

The remarks by the top leader of Rajasthan BJP comes even as Congress decides to take disciplinary action against Sachin Pilot and his camp of MLAs who skipped the second Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting on Tuesday despite repeated calls by top leaders of the party.

Sources said Sachin Pilot has the support of 16 Congress MLAs and three independent legislators while Ashok Gehlot

has the support of 102 MLAs.

Gehlot, whose tally has slipped into the breakeven point held a Cabinet meeting late in the evening which saw the Congress left with 100 MLAs, the half-way mark in the 200-member Assembly, after three MLAs left his camp this morning.

Before Sachin Pilot's rebellion, the Congress had 107 MLAs besides the support of 13 independents and five members from smaller parties. That number has now come down to 90 Congress MLAs, seven independent members and three to

five from smaller parties.

Sachin Pilot has at least 20 MLAs on his side — 17 Congress and three independent legislators. The BJP, which has 73 MLAs, needs the support of another 35 to take power in Rajasthan.

One Congress ally, Bhartiya Tribal Party (BTP), which has two MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly, has withdrawn support to the Congress. One of its MLAs, Rajkumar Rao, posted a video alleging that the police had stopped him from leaving Jaipur and had taken his car keys thus he felt humiliation.

AICC sources said now Gehlot is banking on Sachin Pilot and other rebels being disqualified, which will bring down the half-way mark and fortify his numbers if he has to face a test of strength.

The Congress during the last two days made several attempt to reach out to Pilot but a decision to sack him from party posts was taken after a meeting between Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi with no signs of any overture by former party chief Rahul Gandhi.

Rahul did not make any attempts to even stop Jyotiraditya Scindia from leaving the Congress who was instrumental in toppling the Congress Government in

Pilot camp claims support of 20 MLAs, in touch with BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sachin to hold Press conference today at 10 am on future course of action

Determined to topple the Ashok Gehlot Government on a day when majority of Congress MLAs backed the incumbent Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the camp led rebel Congress leader Sachin Pilot has claimed to have support of 20 MLAs and is in touch with the BJP. Pilot will address a press conference on Wednesday.

A 10-second video has surfaced showing 16 MLAs sitting together in a circle. Pilot was not seen in the video tweeted by Rajasthan Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh with the caption "Family".

Sources close to the rebel leader say at least 20 MLAs are with him — 17 Congress and three independent legislators. Two of the Congress MLAs backing him are sacked Rajasthan Ministers. The BJP,



likely to share his future course of action on Wednesday when he will for the first time address the media after remaining incommunicado except for taking to Twitter to express his feelings on Tuesday by an one liner "truth can be disturbed but not defeated." Pilot also tweeted, "heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all those who have come out in my support today".

In his first reaction to his sacking, he said in a tweet, "Truth can be rattled but not defeated."

Pilot dropped his designations from his Twitter bio soon after he was sacked as Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan and Congress president in the State.

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Madhya Pradesh where the Congress had come to power after 15 years.

Pilot has denied that he is headed to the BJP though Congress sources asserted he was always in touch with the party. The party accused the BJP of setting up the Rajasthan Government crisis with help from rebel Pilot.

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SANJAY JHA SUSPENDED FROM CONG PARTY FOR 'ANTI-PARTY ACTIVITIES'

New Delhi: Congress leader and former spokesperson Sanjay Jha has been suspended for "anti-party activities and breach of discipline", Maharashtra Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat declared in a statement on Tuesday.

The entrepreneur-turned-politician's suspension from the Congress comes weeks after he wrote a newspaper article critical of the country's oldest political party. Soon after the article, he was suspended as party spokesperson.

India, China agree to hasten withdrawal from Pangong

Consensus on removing heavy weapons from 'friction' points, reducing troop strength

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With pullback progressing smoothly from most of the face-off sites at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, India and China on Tuesday agreed to further hasten the withdrawal from Pangong Tso (lake) besides removing heavy weapons from the "friction" points. The two sides also reaffirmed their resolve to keep all lines of communication open to address any issues in order to restore peace at the earliest.

These developments were the takeaways from the crucial Corps Commander-level talks between the two Armies at Chushul, Ladakh on Tuesday. The two commanders also agreed to meet again in the next few days to review the progress of disengagement besides thinning out of addi-



tional troops from the "friction" points, sources said here on Tuesday.

Giving details of the talks between Lt General Harinder Singh and Major General Liu Lin to discuss the second phase of disengagement, they said while there was a general

appreciation of the speed of withdrawal from three sites namely Galwan Valley, Gogra and Hot Springs, the two officials deliberated at length about the rather slow pullback at the Pangong Tso.

Incidentally, the first face-off culminating into fisticuffs between soldiers of the two Armies took place on May 5 on the Pangong lake. Since then, the two sides are in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation with China also pitching tents and building makeshift bunkers.

The two Armies started disengaging more than a week back as part of the first phase of de-escalation after talks between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Minister Wang Yi from the four stand-off points. While the pullback is more or less completed from the Galwan Valley, Gogra and Hot Springs, the Chinese are reluctant to speed up the process at the Pangong Tso, they said.

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Online classes: HRD Min caps screen time for students

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: The HRD Ministry on Tuesday announced guidelines for online classes by schools and recommended a cap on duration and the number of sessions in a day.

The guidelines have been framed by the Ministry, following concerns raised by parents about schools conducting online classes like regular schools, which has increased children's screen time after the Covid-19 pandemic mandated a shift from classroom teaching to online learning.

In the guideline called "Pragyata", the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has recommended that the duration for online classes for pre-primary students should not be for more than 30 minutes. For classes 1 to 8, the HRD Ministry has recommended two online sessions of up to 45 minutes each while for classes 9 to 12, four sessions of 30-45 minutes duration have been recommended.

Detailed report on P7

Iran drops India from Chabahar rail project over funding delay

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major loss of face for New Delhi, Iran has decided to move ahead with the construction of a railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan without any assistance from India due to a delay in funding.

India has been dropped from the strategic infrastructure project along the Iran-Afghanistan border four years after the project was finalised as part of a broader trilateral agreement.

The move comes as a major economic intelligence failure after the agencies here failed in generating inputs on biological intelligence (Tabligh Jamaat congregations in Malaysia defying Covid guidelines) besides political intelligence (lack of inputs on the introduction of six bills by European Parliament against CAA) and diplomatic intelligence negligence (introduction of a bill amending the map and including Indian territories



and subsequent passage by Nepalese Parliament).

The now aborted deal between India and Iran was inked in May 2016.

The development comes against the backdrop of China finalising a 25-year strategic partnership deal with Iran worth \$400 billion. The aggressive Chinese deal with Iran is also important as tension between New Delhi and Beijing is at an all-time high due to border stand-off between the two countries in Eastern Ladakh.

India has invested \$ 500 million in the Chabahar project in Iran, which will connect the country with Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. The first phase of the strategic project was inaugurated in December 2017.

Reports said the entire railway project would be completed by March 2022 and that Iranian railways will go ahead without India's assistance. Iran will now use about \$ 400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund.

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CAPSULE

DELETE FB ACCOUNT OR QUIT ARMY: HC TO LT COL

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday declined to grant any interim relief to a Lieutenant Colonel, who has challenged the Indian Army's recent policy banning armed forces personnel from using social networking platforms like Facebook and Instagram, saying he has to either abide by the mandate of the Army or put in his papers.

OPEN BOOK UG EXAMS FROM AUG 10: DU TO HC

New Delhi: Delhi University will hold final year undergraduate online Open Book Examinations (OBE) from August 10-31, the Delhi High Court was informed on Tuesday. The students left out of online exams will be given an opportunity to appear in physical examinations, to be held sometime in September.

VIKAS DUBEY ENCOUNTER: SC MAY CONSIDER PANEL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it may consider appointing a committee headed by a former judge to enquire into the encounters of gangster Vikas Dubey and his associates as well as the killing of eight policemen in Uttar Pradesh.

Bihar BJP infected by coronavirus, 24 test +ve at party HQ

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The virtual rallies unleashed by the BJP in Bihar since June under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic has affected party's Bihar unit with 24 of its leaders, including an organisational secretary, a general secretary and a vice-president, testing positive.

An estimated 75 BJP leaders and staff at the party headquarters have reportedly been found to be infected with the coronavirus. Reports suggest that the leaders could have assembled at one place from where they caught the dreaded infection.

Most of them were actively involved in organising the party's virtual rallies, including that of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The mass infection of BJP leaders could give the

party a rethink on the timing of holding the State election, scheduled in October-November this year.

Samples of more than 100 leaders and staff working at BJP HQ in Patna were collected on Monday.

However, Bihar BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal said, "Only 24 samples are positive. These reports are of preliminary rapid tests and we are still awaiting the results of the comprehensive QT-RPR. None of those who have tested positive are having any symptoms. Yet, by way of abundant caution, they have all quarantined themselves at home"

"Samples of 110 people were collected. These included not just party functionaries but all staff members hired for running errands," he said.

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Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 9,36,368
DEATHS: 24,314
RECOVERED: 5,93,013
ACTIVE: 3,18,652



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	2,67,665	10,695	1,49,007
Tamil Nadu	1,47,324	2,099	97,310
Delhi	1,15,346	3,446	93,236
Karnataka	44,077	846	17,391
Gujarat	43,723	2,070	30,555
Uttar Pradesh	39,724	983	24,981
Telangana	37,745	375	24,840
Andhra Pradesh	33,019	408	17,467
West Bengal	32,838	980	19,931
Rajasthan	25,571	524	19,169
Haryana	22,628	312	17,090
Madhya Pradesh	19,005	673	13,575
Bihar	18,853	143	13,019
Assam	17,808	51	12,174
Odisha	14,280	96	9,864
Jammu & Kashmir	11,173	195	6,223

Complete lockdown in Bihar from July 16 till month end

Patna: There will be a total lockdown in Bihar from July 16-31 to contain the spread of Covid-19, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi on Tuesday announced. On his official Twitter handle, Modi said the 15-day lockdown will remain in force at all municipal, district, sub-divisional and block headquarters level and that guidelines were being prepared. The move comes close on the heels of recent spike in positive cases which had necessitated lockdowns.

J&K BJP CHIEF COVID +VE; MADHAV, JITENDRA IN SELF-QUARANTINE

New Delhi: Union Minister Jitendra Singh and BJP general secretary Ram Madhav have gone into self-quarantine after party's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina, who had accompanied them to the residence of a slain party leader, tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday. "Have gone into self-quarantine with immediate effect, after receiving the news about corona positive test of J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina who had accompanied us from Srinagar to Bandipora on 12th July," Singh tweeted.

Seven states found lagging in WHO daily test norm

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

At least seven States, including populous one like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and West Bengal, are not conducting daily coronavirus tests as per the WHO parameters (140 people per day, per ten million), considered necessary to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus. The other violators are Jharkhand, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh.

Incidentally and alarmingly too, these are the States which have reported less number of cases compared to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra, which leads both the testing numbers and are Covid-19 cases.

"As per the WHO, if you're testing 140 people per day, per 10 lakh, that would be indicative of comprehensive testing," informed Union Health Ministry OSD Rajesh Bhushan at a presser here.



"We advise the States/UTs to increase testing to meet the WHO criteria," he said pointing out that increased testing means early identification and hence early treatment.

Bhushan further said the number of labs has increased. At the start of the pandemic, the country had 101 labs, but now it has 1,206 labs and 280 stations for rapid antigen tests. "We have been stressing on increasing testing and clinical management should be

ensured to save the lives. It is also important that house-to-house surveys are conducted for testing. The States need to focus on the containment zone, identify the cases and if needed take the patients to the care centers to avoid the spread of the disease," he said.

India, with over 9 lakh infections, is the third worst-hit country in the world after the United States (3,363,056) and Brazil (1,884,967).

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CM Yogi dedicates road projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stressing on the importance of road connectivity that could pave the way to prosperity, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday dedicated to people and laid foundation stones of eight road projects in the state.

These projects costing Rs 2,250 crore have been financed by the World Bank.

Out of these projects, five roads costing Rs 1,249 crore were dedicated to people and opened for the use of public while the foundation stones were laid for three other road projects worth over Rs 1,001 crore.

“Good roads are indicators of development and pave the way for future investments therefore the government is committed to providing good and quality roads to the people,” the CM said after dedicating the road projects digitally.

He said that as the good roads were an indicator of development and the BJP government was committed to providing pothole-free roads.

“The past governments in the state were identified for potholes on the roads and thus were called pothole governments because they did not care to maintain the quality of roads,” he said.

Yogi also said that during his over



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dedicating eight road projects in the state on Tuesday Pioneer

3-year rule, the government had linked all the tehsils with district headquarters by 4-lane roads. “This has speeded up commutation at the lower level and people are now happy because pucca roads now go up to their villages,” Yogi said.

“The state is waging a war against COVID-19 still the government is

keeping pace with the development projects. Power situation, law and order, health and education sectors are working efficiently and they reflect the government’s performance,” Yogi said.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, who is in-charge of PWD, appreciated the efforts of the

CM in the development of the roads.

“People will stand benefited from the projects which are being dedicated today,” he said.

The road projects are World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded with foreign banks giving 70 per cent loans and the state giving its share of 30 per cent.

Ganga E-way to be completed by 2025

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 602-km Ganga expressway project, conceived over a decade ago during the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party regime and having faced myriad hurdles primarily due to environmental concerns, has got a new lease of life with the UP government setting the target for its completion in 2025.

The expressway, said to be the second-largest expressway in the country after the 701-km-long Samruddhi Expressway linking Nagpur with Mumbai; would connect Meerut on the western fringes of the state with Prayagraj on the east.

The expressway would pass through 13 districts and provide connectivity to major industrial cities, including Meerut, Ghaziabad, Hapur, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Pratapgarh, and Prayagraj.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked the UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UIPEIDA) to consider linking the proposed expressway to Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Lok Sabha constituency.

A second phase of the project has been mooted, which would extend the expressway to Ballia, close to Bihar border. In case the roughly 300-km extension plan materialises, the Ganga Expressway will become the longest expressway in the country, around 900-km-long, connecting eastern Uttar Pradesh to the National Capital through a string of expressways.

The first phase of the six-lane expressway (expandable to eight lanes) would cover approximately 555 villages of central and western Uttar Pradesh, which is a hub of agricultural and industrial activity. The UIPEIDA, the nodal agency for the project, has estimated Rs 23,436.88 crore as construction cost. With land acquisition costing another Rs 10,000 crore, the overall project cost has been pegged at Rs 39,298 crore.

According to UIPEIDA, the dream project would reduce travel time between Delhi and Prayagraj from the present 10-11 hours to 6-7 hours.

The Ganga Expressway would ensure fast-paced economic development, which the state has long desired. As soon as the financial closure of the project is achieved, the work on the express-

way will start. The foundation stone of the project is likely to be laid in Diwali and the construction work is likely to commence by the end of this year.

The project would be divided into 12 packages for simultaneous development by concessionaires, who would be selected through a competitive bidding process. The detailed project report is ready and will be placed soon before the state Cabinet for approval. The land acquisition process, too, shall start soon.

The expressway would have 292 underpasses, eight RoBs, 10 flyovers, 19 interchanges and 137 bridges.

First proposed by the Mayawati government in 2007, the then 1,047-km-long project got stalled when the Allahabad High Court quashed the environmental clearance granted to it in 2009, holding that the alignment of the proposed expressway was too close to the Ganga and would damage its flood plains.

Learning from that experience, the Yogi Adityanath government has reworked the alignment and decided to build the expressway 10 km away from the river-bank.

Criminals running organised syndicates from jails: AKY

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that criminals patronised by the ruling party leaders were running organised syndicates from streets to jails.

In a statement issued here, Yadav said that criminals were being given protection in the Bharatiya Janata Party rule. He said a racket of prisoners giving commission to bring money in the prison in Siddharthnagar district jail had been exposed. He said the power had gone to the head of the BJP leaders and had made them arrogant and they were flouting law with impunity. “The ‘jungle raj’ in the BJP rule is becoming a nightmare for girls as a minor was raped and her body was hanged at a boarding school in Noida. Her last rites were performed without informing the family,” Akhilesh Yadav said, adding that in a similar incident, two sons of a police inspector raped a girl along with friends in Prayagraj.

Akhilesh Yadav said that the BJP government had failed to work with a positive attitude for the safety, employment and future of the people during the coronavirus crisis.

The SP chief said a youth consumed poison in Gorakhpur’s Sahjanwan area on Sunday while a woman committed suicide in Badhanjanj in Gorakhpur and 11 people lost their lives within a week there.

“Four members of a family were found dead in the Kotwali Nagar area in Barabanki on Tuesday, he added. Akhilesh said that the police force should be strengthened to prevent crimes.

Meanwhile, SP workers in Budaun district



on Tuesday demanded action against a man for making indecent comments against party president Akhilesh Yadav. A delegation led by Sahaswan MLA Omkar Singh Yadav met the Senior Superintendent of Police and handed over a memorandum demanding stern action against Dr Akshay Kumar Singh for making indecent comments against Akhilesh Yadav on Twitter.

The SP workers alleged that Dr Akshay Kumar Singh, resident of Sikri village in Faizganj Behta area of Budaun, made indecent comments using insulting language about Akhilesh Yadav’s Twitter handle account.

The SP MLA said that these indecent comments had hurt the sentiments of the general public and SP workers.

“The accused should be booked under Indian Penal Code sections 499/500, 504 and Section 66 of the IT Act and sent to jail or the SP workers will be forced to protest on the streets,” he said.

Cleanliness, sanitation to help in controlling coronavirus: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asserted that cleanliness and sanitation will not only control the COVID-19 but also help in wiping out other communicable diseases and the weekly closure of markets on Saturdays and Sundays was part of this endeavour.

Presiding over a high-level Unlock meeting at his official residence here on Tuesday, the chief minister laid stress on the efficiency of surveillance teams in controlling the coronavirus spread. He also directed officials to ensure that the surveillance teams had pulse oximeters, infra-red thermometers and sanitiser with them.

“It is necessary to keep medical screening teams, surveillance mechanisms and ambulance services active to control death rate,” the chief minister said, adding that there should be a constant effort to create awareness among the people about COVID-19.

“The awareness campaign should underline the necessity of use of masks and maintaining social distancing,” he added.

The chief minister directed officials to maintain

arrangements at Covid and non-Covid hospitals. He said the doctors and nursing staff should take regular rounds of wards while the paramedics should monitor the condition of patients.

He said there should be adequate availability of oxygen in all the hospitals, medical colleges and medical institutes, including Covid and non-Covid hospitals.

Directing officials to ensure proper arrangements of fire safety at all levels in the hospitals, the chief minister asked chief medical officers to monitor the functioning of the hospitals in their districts on a regular basis.

The chief minister asked officials to remain alert of flood control measures. He said the embankments should be repaired on priority and flood relief camps prepared in advance. He also issued directive for effective action to control the attack of locusts. He also asked officials to maintain sanitation in cow shelters and ensure supply of fodder.

Those present in the meeting included Medical Education Minister Suresh

Khanna, Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh, Minister of State for Health Atul Garg, Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner Alok Tandon, Agriculture Production Commissioner Alok Sinha, Additional Chief Secretary (Home and Information) Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance) Sanjeev Mittal, Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) Renuka Kumar, Director General of Police HC Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary (Medical Education) Rajneesh Dube, Additional Chief Secretary (Rural Development and Panchayati Raj) Manoj Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture) Devesh Chaturvedi, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister SP Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary (MSME) Navneet Sehgal, Principal Secretary (Animal Husbandry) Bhuvnesh Kumar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sanjay Prasad, Secretary to Chief Minister Alok Kumar, Director Information Shishir and other senior officers.

CLASSIFIEDS NOTICE

NOTICE In my daughter's school document, my name is wrongly written as Shanaaz Ali. My correct name is Shahnaaz Bano. Kindly correct my name in my daughter's educational documents as Shahnaaz Bano. Shahnaaz Bano W/o Mehmood Ali, R/o 452/232/22, Pajava, Thakurganj, Lucknow.

NOTICE I, Suleman Ali S/o Mohd. Usman R/o 96/15 Yateem Khana Road Colonel Ganj Kanpur My Passport No. J3308541 Wrong Mention my father name Usman Ali in passport. The Correct name is Mohd. Usman while same person this is true declaration in my identity & with id.

NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the sale deed dated 23-04-1968 executed by Mohd. Sameed S/o Late Nawab Ali and Smt. Alimun Nisha w/o Mohd. Sameed herself and as guardian of Mohammad Razi, Mohammad Naki, Mohammad Rafi, Mohammad Rayaz, Mohammad Sayraz all minor sons of Mohammad Sameed and Mohammad Wasi S/o Mohammad Sameed and Firoz Begum and Shamim Baroo D/o Mohammad Sameed in favour of Kamal Kumari W/o Mangala Prasad regarding the sale of H.No. S. 3/129A, Area 1534.26 sqft, situated at Mohalla-Dethori Mahal, Orderly Bazar, Varanasi duly registered with Sub-Registrar office Varanasi in Book No. 1, Vol No. 4161 on pages 291/295 as document No. 3270 dated on 23-04-1968 has been lost away. If any person have any information or objection regarding this sale deed please inform on Mob. 9451528526 and Contact at address given below within 15 days. Harish Chandra Rai, Adv., Chamber No. 110, Benaras Bar New Building, Civil Court, Varanasi

Bikru ambush: One more held, two looted rifles recovered

Kanpur (PNS): The police on Tuesday arrested Shashi Kant alias Sonu Pandey, another criminal wanted in connection with the Bikru village carnage, and recovered the looted Insas and AK-47 rifles and live cartridges from him.

Sonu's father Prem Kumar Pandey was killed in an encounter with police a few days ago.

Addressing media persons here on Tuesday, ADG (Law & Order) Prashant Kumar said the looted rifles were recovered from the houses of Shashi Kant (Insas with 20 cartridges) and the slain gangster Vikas Dubey (AK-47 with 17 cartridges).

Shashi Kant was carrying a reward of Rs 50,000 on his arrest, he added.

It may be recalled that during the Bikru ambush in which eight police personnel were killed in the early hours of July 3, these rifles were looted from the cops by the aides of slain gangster Vikas Dubey.

Of the 21 criminals named in the FIR, police have already initiated action against 12 of them. The ADG said after the killing of eight policemen and looting of firearms from them, separate police teams were deputed to recover the missing Insas and AK-47 rifles.



ADG (Law & Order) Prashant Kumar addressing media persons along with Insas and AK-47 rifles recovered from the Bikru carnage accused

These firearms were recovered from Bikru village late Monday night.

The ADG said of the 21 accused named in the FIR, police had arrested four of them, including Shyamu Bajpai, Jahan Yadav, Daya Shanker Agnihotri

and Shashi Kant while six criminals, including key accused Vikas Dubey, Rajaram, Atul Dubey, Amar Dubey, Prabhat Mishra and Pravin Dubey had been killed in police encounter. He said 12 criminals were still absconding and raids were on to nab them also.

The ADG said seven criminals had been arrested under Section 120B of the IPC and two sent to jail under Section 216. He said the two aides of Vikas Dubey arrested in Thane (Maharashtra) were being brought to Uttar Pradesh on remand for initiating action against them.

He said the investigations into Bikru carnage were being carried out by the SIT and Judicial Commission simultaneously. He added that Chaubepr SO Vinay Tewari and beat incharge KK Sharma had already been sent to jail for their involvement in the case.

Daya Shanker Agnihotri alias Guddan and Sonu Tewari arrested by the Mumbai ATS have confessed their involvement in Bikru carnage and evidences against them are being collected in Bikru.

Besides, investigations against Jai Vajpayee, a close aide of Vikas Dubey, are also being carried out by ED, the ADG added.

Saints from Ayodhya contest Nepal PM Oli's claims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and saints from Ayodhya have contested the claims of Nepalese Prime Minister KP Oli that Lord Ram belongs to Nepal, saying that “Oli has gone insane” and has no idea of what he is saying, and demanded apology from him.

“Though Nepal is a Hindu country but since the Communist Party has taken over the reins they are doing everything to insult the Hindu religion. Every religious and mythological book as well as Historians say that Lord Ram was born in Ayodhya and people know where Ayodhya is,” Mahant Raju Das of Hanuman Garhi temple said and sought an apology from the Nepal

Parhamansacharya of Tapasvi Ji ki Chhavi too condemned the statement of Nepal’s prime minister. “I challenge Nepalese PM to prove his claims. The Ramayana clearly describes where the Saryu river flows and there is ample evidence of Lord Ram’s birth here. It seems that the communist PM is following the path of extremists by giving such statements just to please China and Pakistan,” he alleged.

Ram Temple Trust member Mahant Dinendra Das said, “Lord Ram was born here. He was born in Ayodhya near Saryu river. It is a popular belief that he belongs to Ayodhya. It is true that Sitaji (Lord Ram’s consort) was from Nepal, but to claim that Lord

Ram was Nepali is wrong. I condemn Oli’s statement.”

“There is a line in our religious books, ‘Jiske uttar disha me Saryu pravahit hoti hai, who Ayodhya hai’ (The place from where Saryu river flows in the north is Ayodhya) and there is no Saryu river in Nepal, how can he claim that Ram belongs to Nepal?” he added.

UP’s Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya in a couple of tweets on Tuesday said that Nepal was earlier a part of Aryavrat rule and Oli should have known it.

“The statement of Nepal PM is an insult to the people of India and it shows the mental derangement of the Nepal PM,” he further said.

Working president of VHP, advocate Alok Kumar said that

Bhagawan Shri Ram and Bhagawan Pashupati Nath were the bounding force of Indo-Nepal religious, cultural and spiritual relations.

VHP working president said that Hindu scriptures, janshruti, customs, traditions and history had no different view about Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya being the birth place of Lord Ram.

He said the Shri Ram Baraat proceeds to Janakpuri from Ayodhya every year and it is difficult to misguide people on this issue.

“Oli seems to have given the statement regarding Ayodhya and Shri Ram under pressure of a foreign power. It is an unsuccessful attempt to break the unbreakable ties between the religious Hindu communities of both the coun-

tries,” Kumar said.

On Monday, Nepal’s PM had said that Ayodhya, the ancient city believed by millions of Hindus to be the birthplace of Lord Ram, was actually a small village near Kathmandu.

“We still believe we gave Sita to Prince Ram but we gave the prince too, from Ayodhya, not India. Ayodhya is a village a little west of Birgunj, a district in Nepal that is around 135 km from capital Kathmandu,” Oli said.

Prime Minister Oli’s contentious remarks come amid a row between the two countries over a revised political map that sees Nepal claim Indian territory, the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and the Kalapani areas.

Indian Bank ZONAL OFFICE: LUCKNOW Notice Inviting Tenders For Leasing of Office Premises

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226 010

KANPUR PLASTIPACK LTD Regd. Office-D-19-20, Panki Industrial Area, Kanpur-208 022

NOTICE Pursuant to Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015, notice is hereby given, that a meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, the 29th day of July, 2020 at 12:00 Noon at the A-1/A-2, Panki Industrial Area, Kanpur-208022 unit of the Company to, inter-alia, consider, approve and take on record Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter ended 30th June, 2020.

प्रमुख पत्र कार्यालय निदेशक, भूभाग जल विभाग, उ०प्र०, नवाँ ताल, इन्दिरा भवन, अशोक मार्ग, लखनऊ।

Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute Of Medical Sciences Raebareilly Road, Lucknow-226014 (INDIA)

Walk-in interview for the post of Research Associate Applications are invited for the post of Research Associate (01) in the WHO Polio project. The advertisement is as follows: Project Title: "Isolation and detection of Polio virus from stool samples" Posts and Essential Qualifications as follows: Sl. No.: 01, Name of Post: Research Associate, Number of Post: 01, Salary/Remuneration: Rs. 31,897/- per month (Fixed), Essential Qualifications: M.Sc. in Life Science/Microbiology/Molecular Virology. Experience: Two Years of Research experience in Cell Culture/Virology. Knowledge of computer will be preferred. The post is entirely temporary and the appointment will be only for the project duration. Interested candidates along with documents are required to appear for a walk-in-interview on 27.07.2020 at 11.00 AM in the Department of Microbiology, 2nd Floor, C-Block, Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Raebareilly Road, Lucknow-226014. No separate call letters will be issued and also no TA/DA will be admissible. The Director reserves the right to cancel the advertisement without assigning any reason. Advt. No. R/08/2020-21 Dr.Ujjala Ghoshal Principal Investigator and Head Department of Microbiology SGGIMS, Lucknow

152 more diagnosed with Covid-19

Health dept mulls lockdown in areas with max containment zones

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 152 persons tested positive for coronavirus in the city on Tuesday while three patients succumbed at KGMU. In the state, 1656 patients tested positive, including 167 in Noida and 182 in Ghaziabad, taking the tally to 39,578.

According to CMO Dr Narendra Agarwal, the fresh cases included 12 from Gomti Nagar, 11 each from 'Dial 102' & Indira Nagar, 10 from Aliganj, eight from Ganeshpur, four each from Thakurganj & LDA, six each from Aminabad, Jankipuram and Alambagh, five each from Chowk & Rae Bareilly road, three each from Omaxe Residency, Mansagar, Mahanagar, Hazratganj and Nishatganj, two each from Rakabganj, Vrindavan Yojana, Omaxe City, Balaganj, Hasanganj, Krishnanagar, Sarojininarayan and Mohanlalganj, and one each from Rajajipuram, Daliganj, Talkatora, Aishbagh, Yasinganj, Vikasnagar, Amausi, Mashakganj, Rajendranagar, Sharananagar, Golaganj, Niralanagar, Khadra, Sarojini Naidu Marg, Telibagh, Purana Hyderabad and Narhi.

KGMU media spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh said that a 50-year-old patient from Aminabad, who was admitted on July 7, died on Tuesday. "He died of cardiopulmonary arrest. He was also suffering from diabetes and had kidney problems," Dr Singh said. A 61-year-old patient from Aliganj, who was admitted on July 12, also died on Tuesday.

Dr Singh said the third casualty was a 60-year-old man from Khairabad (Sultanpur) who was admitted on July 13. "He was suffering from diabetes and died of acute respiratory distress syndrome," he added.

Dr Singh said two junior residents of Radiodiagnosis department of KGMU also tested positive so six of his colleagues and a junior resident



Sample being collected for Covid-19 testing at Civil Hospital on Tuesday

Pioneer

were quarantined. He added that two staff nurses, one technician, one ward boy and one safai worker also tested positive and were admitted to the isolation ward.

As many as 54 more areas were made containment zones while 18 were removed. Samples of 828 persons were collected and sent to KGMU for testing.

In the state, 1656 patients tested positive, including 167 in Noida and 182 in Ghaziabad, taking the tally to 39,578. Besides, 28 persons died in the state, including four in Kanpur, three each in Lucknow & Jhansi, two each in Meerut, Noida, Sambhal, Prayagraj, and Mathura, and one each in Agra, Ferozabad, Varanasi, Rampur, Shamli, Shahjahanpur, Pratapgarh and Sonbhadra, taking the toll to 983. Meanwhile, 778 patients recovered in the state, taking the figure to 24,981.

Meanwhile, the Health department is mulling complete lockdown in areas which have the maximum number of containment zones. CMO Dr

Narendra Agarwal said some of the areas with maximum number of containment zones are Ghazipur, Indira Nagar and Krishnanagar. He said they have suggested this to the district administration.

"We have already divided the city into sensitive and very sensitive zones for effective containment of coronavirus infection and waiting for a government order to this effect. We are also stepping up the antigen testing under door-to-door surveillance. Only 6-7 persons have tested positive for coronavirus out of the 250-300 samples which are collected every day," he said.

Meanwhile, chief development officer Manish Bansal said that with the increasing number of cases, they have set up an integrated control room for Covid-19 patient management and it became functional at the zila panchayat office in Kaiserbagh on Tuesday.

"This control room will do all the coordination, right from the time patients test positive by contacting them to managing the transport required for

shifting them from their residence to Covid facilities in the district. Recently, there was some delay in the shifting of the patients from their homes to the hospitals. To prevent a repeat of this, we are starting this service," she said.

Bansal said they have increased the number of personnel doing contact surveillance at the CMO office and have roped in more than 25 teams from the Education department for the purpose.

"The number of patients has been on the rise since July 2 and there was a backlog in contact tracing which was being carried out. Now, we are doing the tracing very quickly and ensuring that all the contacts are traced," he said. He added that each team would consist of a person from the Education department and one supporting staff. He said the key to containing the virus lies in contact tracing and they were making sure that it was done quickly and properly.

Regarding the increasing number of people thronging markets with some having a

CIMAP to join NBRI team for sample testing

Lucknow (PNS): As many as 15 members of CIMAP are waiting for biosafety committee's nod to join the NBRI team for testing of samples at the BSL lab of NBRI. Media spokesperson, CIMAP, Manoj Semwal said they proposed to set up a lab for Covid-19 testing facilities at the institute but CSIR suggested that they join the already available facilities.

Meanwhile, in the 'Salute to Covid warriors' programme, organised by Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, 30 corona warriors were felicitated, including those from Covid hospital, microbiology lab and employees from dialysis unit. The programme also witnessed the presence of members from Aligarh Muslim University Alumni Association who donated 90 anti-fogging glasses, 150 safety kits and 4,500 surgical masks. Director Dr Nuzhat Husain said it was a way in which they could thank the employees of the hospital to help combat coronavirus. Media spokesperson Dr Srikesh Singh said the Covid control room became functional at the non-Covid hospital from Tuesday. He said that the function of the control is to streamline the patients who are visiting the hospital for treatment so as to control the unnecessary movement of patients. He said the number of patients admitted to the Covid hospital had increased to 89.

complete disregard to social distancing and other necessary precautions, he said teams were slapping fines on such people on a daily basis.

However, he said if the situation worsens, they may close down the markets completely.

Govt issues new guidelines for weekend restrictions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Changing the guidelines for the weekend restrictions, the Uttar Pradesh government has allowed plying of inter-state UPSRTC buses during this restriction period starting from Friday night to early Monday morning but government offices will remain closed on Saturday.

Chief Secretary RK Tiwari said here on Tuesday that the government offices all over the state would remain closed on Saturday, barring emergency services and banks. Earlier, the government had announced that government offices would open on Saturdays with 50 per cent staff and they would close only on second Saturdays as is the norm. In the changed guidelines, the state-run offices will also remain closed on Saturday and Sundays.

The new guidelines however are silent on private offices.

The government has also allowed inter-district UPSRTC buses services and commuta-



tion on national and state highways during the restrictions.

Tiwari said that all markets, including haats in the rural and urban areas across the state, would remain closed from 10 pm on Friday to 5 am on Monday and the local transport, including inter-city bus services would also remain off the road during this period.

"Emergency services like hospitals, medicine shops, home delivery of essential goods would function normally and employees engaged in the duty will be allowed to travel by

showing their identity cards," he said. The chief secretary said the new guidelines were issued to ensure that markets could be sanitised during this restriction period. The new guidelines say that the government has exempted big construction works, whether government or private, from the purview of the restrictions. However, industrial units in rural areas would function normally but in the urban areas, only those factories would be allowed to run that have a continuous process of production.



Governor Anandiben Patel handed over 10,000 face masks and 1,000 sanitisers to Lucknow Drug and Chemist Association to be distributed among those in need

Pioneer

AKTU develops low-cost robot for Covid-19 screening

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

AKTU has developed a low-cost robot for Covid-19 screening. Anuj Kumar Sharma at the Centre for Advanced Studies and a team from Ambalika Institute of Management and Technology (Alok Mishra, Shekhar Tandon and Shivam Tandon) have developed the robot which completely automates the Covid-19 screening procedure. Media spokesperson Asheesh Mishra said maintaining safe distance, the robot measures and records the body temperature and further asks a few questions regarding Covid-19 symptoms. It detects any symptoms during the screening process or if the body temperature of a person is high, it denies their entry to the campus, otherwise it prints a gate pass.

"It not only minimises human-to-human interaction in the screening process but also maintains the record for every person who went under the screening process in the past so that one can monitor any significant temperature or symptom changes in them with the passage of time," Mishra said.

He added that the team

was working on the next intelligent version of the robot where it would not only be able to interact in a much fluent and better way but also be able to sanitise a person before and after starting the screening process.

The technical university has developed a rapid currency sanitising machine to help contain coronavirus spread.

"Sanitising the currency has been a big challenge so far. Existing currency sanitising machines are not that efficient because all of them are based on the UV disinfectant which takes at least 200 seconds to sanitise a paper, which is a very slow process, especially in case of bank currency sanitisation. The purpose of this machine is sanitisation of currency rapidly with counting and the rate of sanitisation is 200 notes per minute," he said.

The machine is equipped with C-type UV lights using 5-micron aerosols to sanitise the notes and it works on 180-250V AC. It starts sanitising with note counting automatically and has a robust design made of stainless steel of 304 grade. It has an external attachment that can be attached to any type of currency counting machine.

Woman found murdered, husband under scanner

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 30-year-old woman was found murdered inside her flat in Chinhat under mysterious circumstances on Tuesday. Police suspected her husband to have played a role in her murder and said domestic issue could have led to the incident.

As per reports, Divya Singh was found dead inside her flat (No. 104) in tower-6 of Goel Heights by her husband Akhand Pratap Singh of Gonda around 11 am. Singh told the police that he left the flat to purchase paan masala from a nearby shop. He said when he returned, he found Divya's body lying dead under the bed with articles lying

strewn across the floor. On being informed, a police team reached the scene. They said prima facie, there was no loot. The police discredited Singh's claim that someone killed Divya during loot and suspected his involvement in the murder. As the news reached senior officers, DCP Somen Burma, ACP (Vibhuti Khand) Swatantra Singh and inspector (Chinhat) Kshitij Tripathi rushed to the scene.

The police said Divya was also a native of Gonda and she married Singh in 2015. The couple had a son from the marriage. The police said Divya had marks of strangulation around her neck and it seemed that she

was choked to death. The police scanned CCTV footage but did not find movement of any outsider. The investigating team found Singh's statement to be incoherent and he was detained for further interrogation.

Preliminary probe revealed that Singh is presently working as a contractor in Saubhagya Yojana, meant to provide electricity connection to the poor. He had borrowed money from different persons and was under constant pressure from moneylenders. It further surfaced that the couple used to have verbal spats over the issue off and on. Sources said the police detained Singh and were interrogating him.

2 shops, as many houses burgled

Lucknow (PNS): Thieves struck at two houses and as many shops while attempted to burgle another shop in different areas of the city, exposing the tall claims of police regarding regular patrolling. Thieves made off with ornaments and other valuables from a house in PGI police station area some time on Monday night. Ravi Prakash of Vrindavan Yojana said he, along with his family, had gone to his elder brother's house in Gomti Nagar just before the 55-hour lockdown on Friday. "I returned

home on Tuesday and found the house burgled. The thieves decamped with ornaments and costly bathroom fittings," he told the police.

In another incident, thieves made off with Rs 12,000 from a grocer's shop in Telibagh under PGI police station area on Monday night. The shop owner, Prahlad of Sadar Bazaar locality, said he found the shutter jacked-up on Tuesday morning. The police said they were scanning CCTV footage even as a case was registered in this con-

nection. Meanwhile, thieves stole cash from two shops and attempted theft at another shop in Alambagh and Krishna Nagar on Monday night. The shops burgled are owned by Arun Kumar (medical store at Tedhipulia), Ajay (mobile store) and Surendra Singh (grocery shop) in Krishna Nagar. The thieves made off with Rs 7,000 from Arun's shop and Rs 8,000 from Ajay's shop. However, they could not steal anything from Surendra's shop as his brother woke up just in the nick of time.

Investigations are underway and we have yet to ascertain the motive for attack. A case has been registered in this connection," DCP (Central) Dinesh Singh said. Kaliya had lodged a case against jailed don and former MP Dhananjay Singh and 4-5 unidentified miscreants, accusing them of orchestrating his murder plan. He stated that the jailed don had threatened him on 4-5 occasions in the past and asked him to quit taking railway contracts.

Sources said the names of some railway officials, who are said to have a close proximity with Kaliya as well as with Dhananjay Singh, have surfaced during initial probe.

"Kaliya had a verbal spat

Police groping in dark in Alambagh shooting incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police are groping in the dark about the motive for attack on a railway contractor Surendra Kaliya, whose SUV was peppered with bullets by 4-5 miscreants outside a hospital in Alambagh on Monday evening. Kaliya's driver-cum-private security guard had suffered injuries in the leg and was admitted to KGMU Trauma Centre. The police also failed to find a clue about the accused who used automatic weapons to attack Kaliya.

"Investigations are underway and we have yet to ascertain the motive for attack. A case has been registered in this connection," DCP (Central) Dinesh Singh said. Kaliya had lodged a case against jailed don and former MP Dhananjay Singh and 4-5 unidentified miscreants, accusing them of orchestrating his murder plan. He stated that the jailed don had threatened him on 4-5 occasions in the past and asked him to quit taking railway contracts.

Sources said the names of some railway officials, who are said to have a close proximity with Kaliya as well as with Dhananjay Singh, have surfaced during initial probe.

"Kaliya had a verbal spat

with a railway official over allotment of a railway tender recently," the sources said. They said the police suspected that Dhananjay Singh planned the attack on Kaliya to send across a message to railway contractors that he (Dhananjay) still rules the roost," the sources said. The sources said Kaliya claimed that the attackers used automatic weapons. "A few of the ganglords in UP have these kinds of weapons. If the claims of Kaliya are genuine, it is a worrying aspect," the sources said.

They said that such weapons had been used by ganglords in sensational murder incidents in the past. "If Kaliya's claims are found to be true, automatic weapons have been used in Lucknow after nearly two decades," they pointed out.

On the condition of anonymity, a senior official said the police were finding out how Kaliya escaped unhurt while his private security guard Roopram Yadav suffered injuries. "The shots were fired from all sides. The attackers also fired at the bonnet of the SUV, probably with an aim to blow it up," he said. On Tuesday, the police scanned CCTV footage to trace the miscreants but did not get any success.

City records 33.8mm rainfall

Lucknow (PNS): Rains lashed the city on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday and the state capital received 33.8mm rainfall. Met director JP Gupta said that the rains were caused by the troughline of monsoon passing close to Lucknow. On Tuesday, Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature at 33.4 degree Celsius while the minimum at 22.7 degree Celsius. The rains were followed by clear skies. The forecast for Lucknow is partly cloudy skies with rain and thundershowers likely in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperature is expected to be around 34 degree Celsius and 22 degree Celsius, respectively. Rains and thundershowers are likely at many places over east UP and at a few places over west UP. There is a warning of thunderstorm accompanied by rains at isolated places over the state.

Meanwhile, responding to a Twitter complaint regarding waterlogging, mayor Sanyukta Bhatia reached Thakurganj area to resolve the problem.

"I found that there was no waterlogging in that area and somebody had posted an old picture. This is a low-lying area and faces this problem. It would require a big project to ensure that water does not stagnate in the area. I have asked people to write about the issue and I will forward the same to the Irrigation department," she said.

Institute of Wildlife to carry out sarus census

Lucknow (PNS): The Institute of Wildlife, Lucknow University, under a project of the Forest department, will carry out a sarus census in the state and also prepare a sarus atlas. Giving this information, coordinator of the institute Amita Kanaujia said the sarus atlas would be prepared on GPS data.

She said census would be carried out in the month of August this year. "We have charted out 15 divisions and all the 58 districts coming under these divisions will be covered," she said. She added that before the census was carried out, they would be organising a state-level workshop for the

forest personnel of UP from July 17 to 31 for the preparation of the sarus atlas.

The online workshop will be inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University and PCCF, Forest. The objectives of sponsoring the training workshop are to upgrade knowledge and skills of the forest personnel and provide maximum possible inputs on the topics and themes, including emerging trends at national and global levels. The aim is to elicit suggestions through brainstorming sessions and sharing of experiences which could be useful in policy formulation by the government.

17-yr-old girl found hanging at uncle's house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 17-year-old girl staying at her uncle's house in Thakurganj was found hanging in the kitchen on Tuesday. Police ruled out foul play and said further probe was underway. As per reports, Shaeba had been staying at Duda Colony in the house of her uncle (husband of her father's sister) Sarfaraz for the last two months. Her father is a labourer. On Tuesday, Sarfaraz's family found Shaeba hanging from the ceiling in the kitchen with a dupatta tied around her neck. They called the police and a team reached the scene. The police said the girl ended

her life but failed to explain the reason. The body was sent for autopsy and further investigation was underway.

In another incident, a teenager was found hanging at his house in Jankipuram on Tuesday. Police said he committed suicide but failed to explain why he took the extreme step. As per reports, Akash Rawat aka Raj (18) of Sector-J was an ice-cream vendor. He was all alone in his house when he ended his life. His father Ramraj Rawat told the police that his wife, along with the daughter, had gone to her parents' house while he was with Akash.

According to Ramraj, he

left the house for some work while Akash stayed back. Around noon, Akash's maternal uncle visited the house and found the doors locked from inside. He gave calls to Akash but the latter did not get respond following which he called Ramraj. Later, they broke open the doors, only to find Akash hanging from the ceiling with a scarf tied around his neck. On being informed, police reached the scene and sent the body for autopsy. The police no suicide note was recovered from the house.

Meanwhile, a 60-year-old man was fatally knocked down by an unidentified speeding vehicle outside Rajdhani

Hospital in PGI police station area on Tuesday morning. The police succeeded in identifying the body as that of Ramchandra Yadav of Rajni Khand in Ashiyana. The police also traced his family and contacted his son Deepak Yadav. "Deepak told us that Ramchandra had been suffering from some mental disease for the last 20-25 years and he used to roam around in the locality. The police said Ramchandra was hit by some speeding vehicle and he died on the spot. The police said they were yet to verify if Ramchandra was undergoing treatment for his mental illness.

Girl takes ill at friend's house, dies at hospital

Lucknow (PNS): A girl pursuing diploma in Physiotherapy took ill at her friend's house in Madaion on Monday evening and later died due to excessive bleeding at KGMU Trauma Centre on Monday night. Police said they were interrogating the friend of the deceased while the body had been sent for autopsy.

As per reports, the girl was staying with her elder sister in Chowk to pursue the diploma. Around 11 am, she got a call from her friend, who lives in Keshav Nagar locality in Madaion, and left for latter's house. She called her sister and

informed her that she had reached the house of her friend. Around 6:30 pm, her sister called her but her phone was not reachable.

"She had told me that she would be back in a few minutes. Around 7 pm, I got a call from her friend who told me that she was bleeding profusely and was being taken to a hospital. She was referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre, where she succumbed after a while," her sister said. A spokesman said that the deceased's friend was being interrogated. He said autopsy would ascertain the cause of death.

Mid-day meal suspension hits dairy industry hard

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Following the lockdown, four-month-long closure of state-run primary and upper primary schools, expected to be extended further, has hit the dairy industry hard as mid-day meal is not served in schools.

The poultry industry in UP lost a big chunk of market due to the closure of restaurants, roadside eateries and stalls at railway platforms for the last four months. Though egg is not served in UP, it is a staple diet in eastern and southern states. The poultry industry has been hit as the supplies to hotels and eateries have dried up.

As many as 1.83 crore children in primary schools and 39 lakh children in upper primary schools are covered by the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme in UP. While the conditional reopening of hotels and restaurants has so far provided little respite to the sector with the majority of people shying away from public places owing to safety concerns, the suspension of the MDM scheme continues to haunt the dairy units. Across India, more than 100 million students and 1.1 million schools are covered under the MDM scheme with the Centre and the states incurring expenditure in a ratio of 60:40, respectively.

The states allocate huge sums for the MDM scheme. Uttar Pradesh has allocated about Rs 2,500 crore for mid-day meals during the current 2020-21 financial year, an increase of 25 per cent over 2019-20. This shows the potential financial loss to the food supply chains after

the scheme was went astray due to Covid lockdown.

Although eggs are served in the southern and some eastern states under MDM scheme, milk is a staple diet in the majority of states running the flagship scheme, which is aimed at providing proper nutrition to the school going children, most of whom belong to the economically weaker sections of society. About a dozen states have included eggs in the MDM menu viz. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Kerala, Jharkhand, Tripura etc.

"The poultry players are counting the losses, and there are bleak chances of any revival in 2020. Similarly, the dairy has become a losing proposition to the farmers since people are avoiding buying 'mithai' (sweets) from shops," said an official of a dairy engaged in supplying milk to primary schools.

Due to the lockdown, the poultry units have suffered huge losses due to the sudden dip in demand and closure of hotels and restaurants. This effectively disrupted the entire production and supply chains. Unless there is a robust and sustained uptick in demand, any revival in the domestic poultry space is going to be an uphill task. In fact, poultry was the first sector to be hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, even before the lockdown was imposed in March 2020, when the consumption of chicken and eggs had slumped over health considerations following the outbreak of the disease in China. There is no improvement in the situation so far.

Barabanki trader ends life with wife, kids

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Within a fortnight of suicide by five members of a businessman's family in Barabanki, another trader along with his wife and two children ended their lives in the city. Their bodies were found hanging in their house in City Kotwali area on Tuesday.

Superintendent of Police in Barabanki, Dr Arvind Chaturvedi, said the bodies of the four members of a family hailing from Ballia, who were living in a rented accommodation in Awas Vikas Colony in City Kotwali

area were found hanging. He said the deceased include a couple and their two children.

The house owner, Yogendra Singh, informed the police about the incident after the milkman saw the bodies hanging early Tuesday morning.

He said that Ballia resident Lalit Kishore Gaud (40) was living with his family in the Awas Vikas Colony house on rent. After working at several places, he had started working in unit making a LED bulbs in Lucknow and also had some partnership in it.

Sources said that Lalit had some dispute with the owner of the LED making unit. His body was found hanging along with other members of his family on Tuesday morning.

On getting information, police reached the spot. The deceased were identified as Lalit Kishore Gaud, his wife Preeti (35), two sons Prem (12) and Arpit (8).

The SP said that in a suicide note left behind by Lalit, he mentioned about property dispute within the family. He was involved in a property dispute with his brother who lives in Mau dis-

trict. The bodies were sent for post-mortem and police are investigating all his disputes to find out the main reason that forced Gaud to commit suicide along with his family members.

Meanwhile, the alleged inaction of the Kheri police in a rape case forced the Dalit victim to end her life.

Mintu aka Rasheed, a resident of Kotwali area in Kheri, had allegedly lured a 19-year-old girl living in his locality into sexual relationship by giving assurance of marrying her. When the girl asked Rasheed to marry her,

he refused. In the meantime, the girl became pregnant and Rasheed asked her to get the pregnancy terminated, once again assuring her that he would marry her.

Finding herself ditched by Rasheed, the girl lodged a report of rape against him on June 20 and also named his family members. The police subsequently arrested Rasheed but took no action against others.

The victim's parents alleged that soon after Rasheed's arrest, his brothers and other family members started threatening them to withdraw the case or face the

consequences, including death of the entire family. The parents said they informed the local police about the threats but no action was taken.

Depressed with the regular threats, the girl wrote a suicide note and ended her life in the wee hours of Monday by hanging herself from the ceiling.

Soon after finding the suicide note in which the girl mentioned about the police inaction, the cops swung into action and had arrested three brothers of Rasheed and his father. Further investigations are on.

Minor abused, killed in Bareilly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bareilly was rocked by a sexual abuse and murder of a 4-year-old boy while three killings were reported from Meerut, Hardoi and Sultanpur on Tuesday.

According to a report from Bareilly, the father of a boy alleged that one Premal, hailing from Mahadiya in Bisharaganj, stayed in his house on Sunday. He said Premal was a neighbour of his brother-in-law so they allowed him to stay in the house for the night. He said on Monday morning, Premal had breakfast and later took his 4-year-old son on the pretext of buying toffees for him. He said that when Premal did not return till afternoon, they suspected foul play and launched a search for the boy but failed to locate him and then informed the local police about the disappearance of his son and Premal. His brother-in-law also went to Premal's house but found it locked.

Finally, after a night-long search, the body of the boy was found lying in the bushes in the jungle of Shivnagar in the early hours of Tuesday. The victim had no clothes on and his vest was tied around his neck, suggesting that he was strangled to death. Injuries on the body also suggested that he was sexually assaulted.

SSP of Bareilly Shailesh Pandey, who reached the spot with forensic team, said that a hunt was launched for the accused and he would be arrested soon.

Meanwhile, in Meerut, an Irrigation department employee was shot dead in Khurd hamlet of Kankarkhera in Meerut on Tuesday morning. Raju 27, a resident of Jebri hamlet of Kankarkhera, was married just a few months back.

CITYBRIEFS



CMS STUDENTS FELICITATED

The 25 meritorious students of City Montessori School, who secured 99% to 99.75% marks in ISC (Class XII) and ICSE (Class X) examinations, were awarded with a cash prize of Rs 26 lakh at the Gomti Nagar Campus I auditorium. Sumit Kumar Tripathi was awarded a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh while his mother Gayatri Tripathi was weighed with fruits & flowers and father Sanjay Kumar Tripathi and teacher-guardian honoured with shawls. The other students were awarded Rs 1 lakh each and their parents and teachers/guardians were also honoured.

RARE ORCHID IN DUDHWA

The Forest department has discovered a rare orchid called ground orchid (Eulophia obtusa) in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Forest officials said it is on the red list of IUCN which makes it a critically endangered species. According to a senior forest official, old records show that it was present in India and Nepal though the contemporary records have no mention. After the discovery, the field director was contacted by Mohammed Shareef Hussain from Bangladesh University. He said there is no record of the fruit of the plant and if they can get a picture of the fruit, it would be a great achievement.

FROM PAGE 1

GEHLOT GAINS UPPER HAND...

Union Jal Shakti Minister and senior BJP leader from Rajasthan Gajendra Singh Shekhawat dropped broad hints that Pilot may fly to saffron camp. "Any leader with a mass base who wishes to join the BJP should be welcomed," he said hours after Congress removed pilot as Deputy Chief Minister and president of Rajasthan Congress.

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and ex-Union Minister Uma Bharti has attributed Pilot's rebellion to "humiliation" within the Congress.

"Sachin is son of late Congress leader Rajesh pilot so I know that his family has self-respect. I can understand he must have been facing humiliation for the last one and half-years," said Bharti who has been handed over "political Sanyas" by the Modi-Shah dispensation.

"He (Rahul Gandhi) insults and humiliates young leaders due to envy... he is unable to tolerate brilliant young leaders. So these young leaders are left with no option but to confront and fight," she said.

Since the Congress took power in Rajasthan in 2018, Gehlot and Sachin Pilot have not been on good terms and the feud often reached the party high command. The feud peaked when Pilot was asked to answer questions in an investigation into an alleged attempt to destabilise the State Government ahead of last month's Rajya Sabha elections.

PILOT CLAIMS SUPPORT OF 20 MLAS ...

His nameplate was also removed from the State Congress headquarters in Jaipur and replaced by the new State Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra.

Pilot's loyalists Vishvender Singh and Ramesh Meena were also removed from their posts of Cabinet Ministers.

Ever since he opened a rebellion last weekend, Pilot has remained indifferent to the party leadership's overtures while the Congress alleged that he was in touch with the BJP and conspiring to topple the Congress Government.

The Congress has blamed the BJP for engineering the fall of Congress Governments in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh after creating revolt and resort politics and horse trading.

After so much mudslinging Pilot is now left to exit the Congress and either float a new party or join the BJP.

A senior Congress leader said that it will not be easy for Pilot to get the Chief Minister's

chair in Rajasthan because the BJP heavyweight former CM Vasundhara Raje Scindia was unlikely to give up her claim to the post.

The BJP has talked about a floor test, claiming that the Ashok Gehlot Government has lost its majority.

"Pilot can't go back to Congress now. All that remains now is for him to make it official by stating that he is exiting the Congress. He will hold a Press conference at 10 am tomorrow," a close aide of Pilot said.

Several young leaders, former and present of Congress, like Jyotiraditya Scindia, Jitin Prasad, Milin Deora, Priya Dutt have expressed their dismay the kind of fate Pilot has met in the grand old party. Earlier even the senior leaders like Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi too expressed their disappointment over the party leadership on the way situation is being handled that witnessed an unfortunate exit of Scindia and now Pilot on same path.

"We have given Sachin Pilot many opportunities. He has been an MP and MoS and a State party president. I am sad that Sachin Pilot and some of his colleagues have fallen for a trap laid by the BJP. This is unacceptable," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said.

IRAN DROPS INDIA FROM CHABAHAR RAIL PROJECT

Last week, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami inaugurated the track-laying process for the 628 km Chabahar-Zahedan line. The railway line will be subsequently extended to Zaranj across the border in Afghanistan.

Estimates here also suggest the various oil and infrastructure projects be executed by the Chinese companies as a part of the deal with Iran will be secured by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The deal with Beijing will also help China connect with the Gwadar port in Pakistan and enhance its strategic reach and influence in the region.

On Tuesday, Congress hit out at the Centre terming the fallout of the strategic deal a big loss for the country.

"India dropped from Chabahar Port deal. This is the diplomacy of the Modi government that won laurels even without getting the work done, China worked quietly but gave them a better deal. Big loss for India. But you can't ask questions!" senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi said in a tweet

SEVEN STATES LAGGING IN WHO

DAILY TEST NORM

However, Bhushan assured that there has been a progressive decline in daily growth rate of new Covid-19 cases and that the total recovered cases are about 1.8 times the number of active cases.

"It also said the fatality rate is 2.6 per cent and it is rapidly coming down," he said.

The current situation is that there are 657 cases per million population in India, compared to 1,638 in the rest of the world. Death per million population in India is 17.2, compared to 73 in the rest of the world. The maximum deaths per million population is 660 in the UK, he added.

The daily growth rate of new cases has reduced from over 35 per cent around March 22 to 3.24 per cent on July 12, he said.

Goa tops the testing rate list at 1,058 followed by Delhi (978), Tripura (642), Tamil Nadu (563), Jammu and Kashmir (540) and Puducherry (511). The other states which are near to the 420 test rate criteria are Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Kerala among others from the Northeastern States.

Eighty-six per cent of the total cases are confined to 10 States. Two of these have 50 per cent of these cases - Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu - and eight other States have 36 per cent cases, said the official.

BIHAR BJP INFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS, 24 TEST POSITIVE

Bihar BJP general secretary Devesh Kumar, State general secretary (organisation) Nagendra, State vice-presidents Radhan Mohan Sharma and Rajesh Sharma are among the leaders found to be infected with the virus.

The party office complex situated on the Bir Chand Patel Marg is being sanitised.

Ignoring health concerns arising out of surge in coronavirus cases in the State, BJP had launched its poll campaign in June with the virtual rally of Shah who addressed it from Delhi and for which the party had made elaborate arrangements in the State. Subsequently, party continued with the spate of virtual rallies in the State as eyebrows were raised by political opponents as well as health experts.

The Congress had accused the BJP of using money power for politics at a time when the country is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and termed Shah's "virtual rally" an insult to the people of Bihar.

Congress leader and former Union Minister Akhilesh Prasad Singh had then said Shah held the rally with politics in mind at a time when people of Bihar are dying of coronavirus infections and many have been left stranded in various parts of the country.

He claimed that BJP spent around Rs 100 crore on the virtual rally and that around one lakh mobile phones were distributed among the people.

INDIA, CHINA TO HASTEN WITHDRAWAL

The Indian side insisted that the Chinese remove its troops from the ridge line of the lake besides fast interceptor boats for patrolling in the lake. While the Chinese have started dismantling its tents and bunkers from portions of the Pangong Tso, the pace of pull back is not the same as on the other three sites, sources said.

The two commanders expressed the hope that by the time the next round of talks next week, the Chinese will have returned to their side of the Pangong Tso, officials said. This lake was a witness to a similar face-off in 2017 resulting in a brawl.

The Indian side also reiterated its stand on "total restoration" of status quo ante in all areas of eastern Ladakh prior to May 5 when the standoff began following a clash between the troops of the two countries in Pangong Tso, they said.

As part of a mutually agreed decision, the two sides created a minimum buffer zone of three kilometers in most of the friction points where they were locked in a standoff. These agreements to mutually pullback were thrashed out during three prior rounds of talks between the two commanders last month on June 6, 22 and 30. In the last meeting, both sides agreed on an "expeditious, phased and stepwise" de-escalation as a "priority" to end the standoff.

The first round was held on June 6 during which both sides finalised an agreement to disengage gradually from all the standoff points beginning with Galwan Valley. However, the situation deteriorated following the clashes there on June 15 as the two sides significantly bolstered their deployments in most areas along the LAC.

Tension escalated manifold after the violent clashes in Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details.

Following this incident, the Armed forces including the Army and IAF substantially increased their strength all along the 4,000 km LAC stretching from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

While the Army has deployed thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the border, the IAF has also moved air defense systems as well as a sizeable number of its frontline combat jets and attack helicopters to several key airbases.

RAJASTHAN STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Head Office, Parivahan Marg, Chomu House, Jaipur
NIT For Deployment, Operate and Maintain the Passenger Announcement System
Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC), Jaipur invite bids from eligible bidders who have necessary qualifications and experience to carry out the work of Deployment, Operate and Maintain the Passenger Announcement System at Bus-Stands in a time bound manner. Details of this tender notifications and eligibility criteria can be seen in the NIT exhibited on website https://eproc.rajsasthan.gov.in or www.sppp.rajsasthan.gov.in and our website www.rsrtc.rajsasthan.gov.in from 7th July 2020, the bidders who are interested in bidding can download the RFP from aforesaid website from 7th July 2020 onward.
Raj. Samwadi/C2162/2020-21 वि. सं. 33/2020-21 Executive Director (Traffic)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
Corrigendum No. 30204221B 1st Corrigendum Date: 14.07.2020
On behalf of the President of India, PCMM, North Central Railway, Allahabad is issued a following corrigendum for change in inspection clause and positioning tender closing date against EPFS Tender No. 30204221B published against EPFS Tender Notice No. EPFS-20/33 dated 23.06.2020 against R/O No. 688/20(S) dt. 26.06.2020

Sr.	Tender No.	Particular	From	To
01.	30204221B	Inspection Clause	RDSO	RITES
02.		Opening Date	23.07.2020	30.07.2020

Other Terms & Conditions of Tender remains unchanged. 769/20(P)
North central railway www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPONCR

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण खण्ड, लो.नि.वि., अम्बेडकरनगर
पञ्जाक-836/9ए-निविदा ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक-07.07.2020
उत्तर प्रदेश लोक निर्माण विभाग में ए. बी. सी. सी. श्रेणी के पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से उनकी पंजीकरण में अंतिम सीमा के अनुरोध निर्माण कार्य हेतु आनलाईन निविदाये राज्य सूचना केंद्र (NIC) की वेबसाइट http://e.tender.up.nic.in के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्य से संबंधित निविदा का विवरण एवं प्राप्त उक्त वेबसाइट पर डाउनलोड हेतु उपलब्ध रहेगा।

क्र.सं.	कार्य का नाम	आनलाईन निविदा अपलोड करने की तिथि व समय	आनलाईन निविदा खोलने की तिथि व समय
1	वीपीओआईपीओ अतिथि के जनपद अम्बेडकरनगर में आगमन पर बेहोस्टिंग, पफवात, विद्युत व्यवस्था, साउण्ड सिस्टम एवं मंच साज-सज्जा आदि से संबंधित आपूर्ति का कार्य।	24.07.2020 समय 12.30 बजे से 30.07.2020 समय 12.30 बजे तक	30.07.2020 समय 4.30 बजे
2	वीपीओआईपीओ अतिथि के जनपद अम्बेडकरनगर में आगमन पर हेलेमेट एवं अन्य विविध कार्य।	24.07.2020 समय 12.30 बजे से 30.07.2020 समय 12.30 बजे तक	30.07.2020 समय 4.30 बजे

उक्त कार्य हेतु वस्तु निविदादाताओं से अनुरोध है कि वे नियमित रूप से उक्त वेबसाइट का अवलोकन करते रहे क्योंकि समय-समय पर निविदा के संबंध में कोई परिवर्तन अथवा अतिरिक्त सूचना शुद्धि पत्र के रूप में वेबसाइट पर ही उपलब्ध कराई जायेगी।
उपरोक्त 153366, दिनांक-13.07.2020 अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्यापन वेबसाइट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। निर्माण खण्ड, लो.नि.वि. अम्बेडकरनगर

जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, जोन-7, इंदिरा नगर, लखनऊ
प.सं.-184/एलजेएस/ईई-7 अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना दिनांक-14.07.2020
जलकल विभाग में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से नीचे दिये गये विवरण के अनुरूप कार्य कराने हेतु निविदायें दिनांक 21.07.2020 के सायंकाल 4:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र किसी भी कार्य दिवस में दिनांक 21.07.2020 को 1:00 बजे तक निविदा मूल्य का नगद भुगतान कैश काउन्टर पर करके निविदा प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। भरी हुई सील निविदायें उसी दिन अघोस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में सायंकाल 3:30 बजे तक निविदा बाक्स में प्राप्त की जायेगी। निविदा बाक्स से प्राप्त सभी निविदायें उपस्थित निविदादाताओं के सम्मक्ष सायं 4:00 बजे खोली जायेंगी।

क्र.सं.	कार्य का विवरण	निविदा का मूल्य	धरोहर धनराशि
1.	जोन-7 इंदिरा नगर के अन्तर्गत शिवपुरी मोड़ गीता जनरल स्टोर के निकट 200 एम.एम. व्यास राईजिंग मेन डी0आई0 पाइप लाइन लीकेज एवं श्री राम शंकर के मकान के पास शिवपुरी कमाता में 160 एम0एम0 डायी की पी0वी0सी0 पाइप लाइन लीकेज मरम्मत का कार्य।	150.00	2300.00
2.	जोन-7 इंदिरा नगर के अन्तर्गत श्री एस0के0 कपूर भवन सं0 सी 130 के पास 200 एम0एम0 डायी की डी0आई0 पाइप लाइन लीकेज मरम्मत का कार्य।	150.00	2700.00
3.	जोन-7 इंदिरा नगर के अन्तर्गत डी ब्लाक स्थित सी0डब्लू0आर0 पर 350 एम0एम0 डायी का स्लूस वाल्व लगाने का कार्य।	150.00	5000.00

नियम एवं शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में दी गई हैं, जिन्हें देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत जानकारी अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-7 के कार्यालय में सम्पर्क कर किसी भी कार्य दिवस में प्राप्त की जा सकती है। निविदा बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोस्ताक्षरी/महाप्रबन्धक में निहित है।
अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-7 जलकल विभाग

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT
IDENTIFICATION NO: RWS&S DIVN., PURI - 08 OF 2020-21
!! (06752) 251276 Fax - (06752) 251276 E-mail - eerwss_puri@nic.in
O-156 The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate price bids through e-procurement in double cover system according to the norms of e-procurement system, in on-line mode from eligible contractors.

Sl. No.	Nature of work:	Rural Piped Water Supply
1.	No. of works:	01(One)
2.	Estimated Cost:	Rs 404.79 lakhs (app.)
3.	Time for completion:	12 (Twelve) Months
4.	Cost of bidding document:	Rs. 10000/-
5.	Class of Contractors eligible:	A & Special
6.	Availability of bids on-line:	From 17 hour of 14.07.2020 to 17.00 hours of 05.08.2020
7.	Last date and time for seeking clarification:	17.00 hours of 29.07.2020
8.	Date & time of opening of technical bids:	On dt 06.08.2020 at 11.00 Hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri (All documents should be submitted in online only. No original documents should be dropped in dropping box before opening of technical bid in Division Office).
9.	Date and time of opening of financial bids:	To be decided.

Further details can be seen from the website https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Sd/-
OIPR-25017/1/0003/2021 Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri

48 new COVID-19 patients found

Varanasi inching close to 1K-mark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After crossing 900-mark, Varanasi is inching close to 1K-mark. As many as 48 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Tuesday, increasing the total number to 936. The number had crossed 900-mark by 11 am when in the morning 13 patients were found. According to Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh, during the day as the follow-up reports of 22 patients were found negative they have been discharged from the hospitals. With this, the total number of patients who have been recovered has increased to 474, leaving 434 active patients.

He further informed that earlier one male private school teacher and a resident of Siddharth Santushti Apartment, Ganeshdham Colony (Lanka) died during treatment. He was suffering from COVID-19 with diabetes mellitus and hypertension. It was the 28th death in the district. There were 415 hotspots in the district by Monday as with the inclusion of 15 new



Security at hotspot Brahmanand Colony (Durgakund) in Varanasi on Tuesday

hotspots, the number of red zones has increased to 211. There were 262 active hotspots which included 51 orange zones. The rest of 153 have become green zones.

Meanwhile, after imposing several restrictions, the local administration has taken action against 12 persons, sending them for paid quarantine as they were found violating the COVID-19 norms. Besides, 112 people were challaned under the Motor Vehicles

(Amendment) Act-2019 while 454 under various sections of Uttar Pradesh Public Health and Epidemic Control Ordinance-2020. In view of big spike in the corona cases, District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma directed the magistrates and police officers to take action against those unnecessary moving on the roads during restrictions time between 5 pm and 6 am by sending them to the temporary jail for a week. He also

instructed the officers to send those to paid quarantine centres who are found violating COVID-19 guidelines. He asked the concerned officers to ensure closure of business establishments by 4 pm.

Earlier, according to the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amit Pathak, as many as 40 persons have been arrested under Section 151 CrPC on Monday while action was taken against 580 under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act. During checking at 14 border points and 49 police barriers, 2091 vehicles were challaned and seven seized. ₹ 1.43 lakh were realised from 173 vehicles. Since the imposing of lockdown, 296 FIRs have been lodged against 684 persons; 3923 were arrested under Section 151 of CrPC while action was taken against 5151 under Section 188 or Section 51 of Disaster Management Act.

Besides, so far 1,35,553 vehicles were challaned and 1,145 were seized. Besides, ₹ 71,900 were realised from 593 persons who were moving on the roads without wearing masks.

24 test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

As many as 24 persons tested positive for COVID-19 late on Monday night. Of the total infected patients, 20 coronavirus-infected patients are from the city. While four are from rural areas. It also includes the health worker of SRN Hospital.

Residents of Teliarganj, Rajroopur, Katghar, Dhumanganj, Mutthiganj, Lukerganj, Beniganj, Khuldabad, Rajrupur, Ahiyapur, Jamirnagar, Karelabagh, Malviya Nagar, Mutthiganj, Golmandi Chowk, Bhavapur and Karbala have been found infected. The nodal officer informed that the infected patients had been admitted to COVID Hospital. Also, inquiries will be made about people coming in contact with them.

Meanwhile, Special Secretary Prakash Bindu and District Magistrate Bhanu Chandra Goswami arrived on Monday to inspect the private ward and newly-constructed super speciality centre of Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital here on Tuesday. They instructed the staff to pay special attention to the diet of the corona patients. Quality food should be served to them.

The DM inquired about the accommodation arrangements for the patient's family. He also inspected the rooms where a stay has been arranged



Road blocked after a corona positive case was found Daraganj area in Prayagraj

for the family of the patient suffering from COVID-19. The DM said that any kind of negligence will not be excusable. If any kind of negligence is found then action will be taken against the concerned officials.

During the inspection, the DM expressed displeasure over seeing the grass growing on the SRN campus. He immediately directed the officers present to get grass cut at the earliest. Principal of the Medical College, Dr SP Singh, Superintendent Dr AK Srivastava, Deputy Superintendent Gautam Tripathi, Nodal Officer Dr Sujit Kumar Verma, Dr SB Yadav and others were present on this occasion.

Meanwhile, the test report of four members of the same family living near Triveni Bandh came positive on Monday. When the Health

department team reached their home to take them all, the family members claimed that the reports of all are negative, so why will they be going to the hospital? Family members were referring to testing made through the antigen kit, in which all were negative.

Actually one member of the family was a corona positive. So samples of all the members were sent to the Medical College for testing. On the other hand, the family members went to the nearest centre and got their corona tested with the antigen kit, in which all of them came negative.

All four members were found positive when the report of the medical college lab came in the night. On the second day, when the Health department team arrived at their house to pick up the four

patients, the family started referring to the antigen kit. They said that their sampling was taken four days ago and all of them came negative in the report made by antigen kit on Monday. Hence, they were quite reluctant to go to hospital. However, after much effort put in by the health staff, all the members of the family were taken to the hospital.

It may be pointed out here that till late Monday, reports of 687 samples have come negative while 24 new positive cases have been reported in the Prayagraj. All of them are residents of different places in the city. After receiving 24 new positive cases, the number of corona patients in the district has increased to 647. On Monday, ten infected patients of corona recovered completely. According to CMO Dr GS Bajpai, 42 patients admitted in L1 COVID Hospital Kotwa, Bani, 73 patients in L2 COVID Hospital Tej Bahadur Sapru (Beli) while 80 patients were admitted to L3 COVID Hospital SRN and 17 corona patients had been admitted in Railway Hospital. Similarly, samples for 282 prospective patients were taken from different places on Tuesday.

So far, a total of 647 corona-infected patients have been found in the district. Of them, 386 corona infected have fully recovered after treatment. Currently, the city has 239 active patients. And a total 22 corona patients have died so far.

10 patients discharged from DLW Hosp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Rare happiness was seen on the faces of doctors, paramedical staff and corona patients as on Tuesday, 10 patients have been discharged from DLW Hospital, which was converted into COVID-19 Level-1 hospital recently with the continuous rise in cases in the city. Amidst the cheering, the patients came out of the hospital and went to their home for further quarantine as per directives. On the occasion, Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr Devesh Kumar, Chief Security Officer Mahesh Kumar, Additional Chief Medical Superintendent Dr Sunil Kumar, Divisional Medical Officer Dr SK Maurya and others were present at the gate.



Corona patients being discharged from DLW Hospital in Varanasi on Tuesday

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh COVID Monitoring Team comprising health experts, joint director (Malaria) and Prof Anupam Bakhalu of King George Medical University

(KGMU) inspected DLW Hospital. They saw the facilities being given to the patients and inspected drinking water and food supply to patients, availability of oxygen and ven-

tilators, cleanliness and biomedical disposal system. The team members praised the hospital. The team members also expressed their happiness over the supply of packed water bottles and supply of food and other articles through remote-controlled trolley, MEDBOT, developed by the Loco Division of DLW during the lockdown period.

Earlier, as many as 14 patients were discharged as their follow-up reports were found negative. Out of these patients, nine were discharged from ESIC Hospital (L-1) and five from Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital (L-2). Out of these patients, seven were from Lanka areas while two each from Sigra, Luxa and Cantt. and one from Bhelupur police station areas.

HC directs govt to chalk out plan on physical distancing implementation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Expressing concern over non-adherence to social distancing and rising cases of corona in the state, the Allahabad High Court has directed the state government to chalk out a plan to see how the concept of physical distancing is implemented in letter and spirit. 'We would not hesitate in suggesting that incarceration and high fines be thought of', the court added.

'Somehow because of the Unlock-2, our people have got a wrong impression that they can now freely mix with each other and move around. Keeping this in mind, we had on March 25, 2020 directed the state government through the Director General of Police (DGP) to make the wearing of masks compulsory. We had also directed that Mohalla Committees to be more cautious and vigilant and to report about persons in the Mohalla who were showing symptoms like influenza', the court observed.

Hearing a PIL seeking betterment of corona patients at quarantine centres, a division bench comprising Justice Siddhartha Varma and Justice Ajit Kumar observed, 'We cannot understand why the

Uttar Pradesh Epidemic Disease Covid-19 Regulations, 2020 is not being implemented properly which clearly envisages action under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. Also we cannot understand why Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), which we are told is in force, is not being used.'

Passing these directives, the court said that this exercise would have to be undertaken compulsorily as we found that the COVID-19 infection had been still there and that the people of our state were somehow not getting sensitive to the concept of physical distancing.

The court directed the Registrar General of this court to forward a copy of this order today to the Chief Secretary of the state, all the other concerned Principal Secretaries and all other teams, which are formulating ways and methods to fight the pandemic so that they may come up with a definite plan which may enforce physical distancing. The court fixed July 20, 2020 for the next hearing of the matter.

The court further directed that a definite plan may be chalked out by the state government with regard to making available corona treatment in private nursing homes. The

court passed this order after the Additional Advocate General, representing the state government, informed the court that no definite plan had yet been chalked out in this regard.

The court expected the citizens of the state that they would not only maintain physical distancing but would also help the administration by providing information about persons who come from out of state and were not observing physical distancing and were not quarantining themselves.

Passing the above directives, the court observed, 'Lockdown for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 virus was clamped on March 25, 2020. Thereafter, when in view of the experts the economy could be opened up, it was decided that in a phased manner economic and other activities would be revived. The government, therefore, came up with the concept of "Unlock-1" and "Unlock-2". Though we see that the economy is reviving, we are also seeing from the various news reports that the infection of COVID-19 virus is speedily rising. This probably is because of the fact that the denizens of the state of Uttar Pradesh do not understand the concept of "Unlock-2". By

Unlock-2, the experts of the government had meant that even though economic and other activities would open up, people would have to be more careful. They would have to observe physical distancing in letter and spirit and also would have to stick to various precautions; namely, frequent washing of hands, wearing of masks and maintaining of regular hygiene.

HC CLOSED: The Allahabad High Court is closed for two days for sanitisation work by the order of the Chief Justice. The cases listed for hearing on July 14, and 15 will be listed again for hearing on July 17 and July 20, respectively.

There will be no sitting of court on July 14 and 15, in the High Court at Allahabad only for effective and proper sanitisation of the High Court premises to check the spread of coronavirus. In a notification, the Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court Govind Mathur said that for effective and proper sanitisation of High Court premises, there shall be no sitting of courts on July 14 and 15, in the High Court at Allahabad only. The cases, which have been fixed for July 14 and 15 shall be taken up on July 17 and 20, respectively, added notification.

Recovery rate falls below 60 per cent in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Despite all the restrictions and weekend lockdown, the continuous increase in active cases has worried the district and health authorities in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) comprising 10 districts of three divisions. After a long time, the recovery rate in the region has fallen below 60 per cent. It was recorded at 59.88 per cent on Monday as out of total 3,959 cases, only 2,371 have been discharged from the hospitals. The best recovery rate was seen in Ghazipur as out of 416 cases, 362 (87.01%) have been recovered, while the worst is in Sonbhadra where there is a minimum number of cases as it just crossed the three-figure mark. Out of 103

cases in the district, 48 (46.60%) have been discharged.

In Varanasi, which saw the maximum cases as it has inched close to touch 1K-mark has already crossed 900-mark on Tuesday morning with the detection of 13 new cases. Till Monday, there were 888 cases and out of them 452 (50.90%) have been recovered. In the trans-Ganga district of Chandauli, the recovery percentage is 52.30 % as out of 293 cases, 153 have been discharged from the hospitals. In Ballia, which saw continuous spike in recent days, the recovery percentage is 50 as out of 418 cases, 209 have been recovered. Ballia is one of the three districts after Sonbhadra and Chandauli which saw its first cases very

late in comparison to other districts of the region but it has crossed 400-mark quickly.

After Varanasi, the second highest corona cases are in Jaunpur where the recovery rate is comparatively well and it is 60.43 %. Out of 730 cases, 509 have been recovered. After a recent spike in cases, the recovery rate in Mau has also fallen fast as it was 46.92% as out of 260 cases, 122 have been recovered. Azamgarh, which saw its first case very earlier after Varanasi, has seen some improvement in overall scenario as the recovery rate there is 66.39%. Out of 369 cases, 245 have been discharged from the hospital. In Mirzapur, the recovery rate is

51.17 % as out of 256 cases, 131 have been recovered while in Bhadohi, recovery rate is 61.94 % as out of 293 cases, 140 have been discharged.

During the last 24 hours by Monday, the region has seen an increase of 144 COVID-19 positive cases as the total number has increased from 3,815 to 3,959 as the number of active cases has jumped up from 1,469 to 1,514. With the increase in 45 cases, the percentage of active cases has increased further to 38.24 percent while mortality rate has declined to 1.86 per cent with 74 deaths. Just a week ago, in this region the recovery percentage was 63.73 per cent while active patients were 34.18 % while mortality rate was 2.08%.

Directive to suspend village secy

VARANASI (PNS): The District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma on Tuesday directed for putting secretary of Saiji village in Aarajjilne development block under suspension and issuing showcause notice against the concerned veterinary officer for keeping cows in cow shelter without khandaja and shed.

The DM convened a meeting at his camp office here to review the condition of cowshelters. In fact the DM had directed secretaries of villages of all the blocks for getting the cow-shelter constructed at each village in order to comply with the order for the same issued by the state government.

In the meeting, when the DM became aware about cows kept in cow-shelter of Saiji village in deplorable condition as the khandaja of it has so far not been laid and also shed has not been erected, he took a serious note of it and directed for putting secretary of village under suspension and issuing showcause notice against the concerned veterinary officer for

this gross negligence. He also directed for ensuring the construction of khandanja and erection of shed of the cow shelter in a week.

On the information that the construction work of cow shelter has not been completed even till now, the DM took the chief veterinary officer to task and directed for issuing chargesheet against secretaries and also issuing showcause notice against block development officers for such gross negligence. The DM also directed for issuing chargesheet against the project managers of the Processing and Cold Storages Federation (PACSFED) Limited for this negligence. On being informed that the employees have so far not been appointed to care cows in cow shelters and also the arrangement has so far not been made to dispose of the bodies of dead cows of shelters, the DM directed for issuing showcause notice against the concerned officer of Zila Panchayat. The DM asked for discharging the work to dispose

of the dead bodies of cows in a week. Sharma also directed for issuing showcause notice against the concerned animal husbandry officer for not keeping stray animals, roaming freely in the areas falling in the jurisdiction of municipal corporation, in Kanji House and asked for ensuring the construction of Kanji House in each block. On the information about laxity shown in growing fodder in cow shelter, the DM directed for starting process in this direction in a week.

GUARD SUCCUMBS TO INJURIES: The guard of transport area in Chandpur industrial estate, who had been attacked, succumbed to his critical injuries during the treatment on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the body of a minor was found at Domri village in Ram Nagar.

It may be noted here that the guard identified as Akbar Ali, resident of Jakhini, had been deputed at transport area in industrial estate under the Manduadih police station by a security agency. It was said that

one Lal Yadav reached the transport area in inebriated state at night on Monday and broke the glasses of many vehicles parked there. When the guard raised an objection he made an attack on his head with bricks and escaped from the scene leaving him with serious injuries. He lost his consciousness because of excess bleeding and the police rushed him to nearby private hospital after being informed by the family members. On Tuesday morning, he succumbed to his serious injuries during the treatment. On the basis of a complaint lodged by the family members, the police lodged FIR against Lalu and raided some places to nab him but to no avail. Meanwhile, the sensation prevailed at Domri village, under the Ram Nagar police station on Tuesday morning when the body of a minor was found at a vacant house.

The minor was identified as Krishna Seth (10) of Bhojpur, under the Mughalsarai police station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Divisional Commissioner R Ramesh Kumar presided over a meeting held at Triveni Sabhagar on Tuesday to review the progress in COVID-19. Expressing his annoyance over the slow progress of sampling in Fatehpur, he directed the Additional Director (Health) to issue a showcause notice to the district surveillance officer and direct him to explain in writing the reasons for slow progress of sampling work. He further directed that the testing work should be done at the block and tehsil level in Fatehpur district.

He said that Asha workers should be deployed to visit each and every home and take sampling of every person. He said that those who were found with Covid symptoms should be brought to the primary health centre for further testing.

The Commissioner has asked all the chief medical officers to direct the supervisors to strictly adhere to guidelines of the government with respect to sampling and testing of Covid patients. He further directed that pulse oximeter and thermal scale should be

made available to all Asha workers. Safety of each and every person is our primary duty and we should not be lacking behind in the discharge of our responsibilities.

The Commissioner has directed the chief medical officers to establish samitis at the block, tehsil and mohalla level to make the people aware of the dangers of Covid and the steps they should follow to keep the disease at bay. He said that the awareness should be created for wearing masks and washing hands at short intervals.

The Commissioner has directed the Additional Director (Health) to keep him well informed about the progress in COVID-19 and the measures that are being taken for the safety and health of the people. He also directed all the district magistrates for proper cleanliness and sanitisation of government buildings.

ATIQUÉ'S HENCHMEN TO BE SENT TO OTHER JAILS: Keeping the security of Naini Jail in mind, about a dozen henchmen of Atique who are lodged in Naini Central Jail will also be sent to other jails. Former MP Atique Ahmed's henchmen are also serving sentence in Naini

Central Jail. Top officials are churning over the issue.

The exercise has intensified after Atique's brother, former MLA Ashraf was sent to Bareilly Jail. A list of criminals will be sent to the government. After getting permission from there, they will be shifted to different jails of the state.

When former MP Atique Ahmed was kept in Naini jail, recommendation was made for Atique to be shifted to another prison due to his security. Other jails of the state were also not considered safe for Atique. Hence the former MP was sent to Gujarat jail. Meanwhile, many henchmen of Atique were arrested by the police and sent to Naini jail.

A week ago, the police also arrested Ashraf, the younger brother of former MLA and former MP Atique Ahmed, who was absconding for several years. Ashraf was also sent to Naini jail. Atique Ahmed's henchmen became active as soon as Ashraf was sent to Naini jail. Therefore, Ashraf was sent to Bareilly jail on Saturday.

Now, planning is also being afoot about a dozen gangsters of the former MP lodged in Naini jail to be sent to other

jails. Although its report has not yet been sent to the government, the authorities are also churning over the issue. It may be pointed out here that a few months ago, two goons of former MP were sent to other jails of the state.

PUBLIC TOILETS: The Divisional Commissioner R Ramesh Kumar, at a meeting held here has directed district panchayat raj officers to ensure completion of all public toilets in the villages. Expressing his annoyance over the slow progress of work, he directed the deputy director panchayat to stop the salaries of all the ADO panchayat who has till so far failed to decide the place for the construction of public toilets. The Commissioner has directed the district panchayat raj officers to ensure construction of public toilets at the earliest. Expressing his annoyance over the slow progress of work in Pratapgarh district, he directed the district panchayat raj officer to ensure completion of the same at the earliest.

He directed the deputy director panchayat to keep a close watch on the progress regarding construction of public toilets and monitor the same.



Municipal Commissioner Akshay Tripathi inspecting the place for zone wise transfer station for solid waste management on Tuesday

Pioneer

MSME struggling to 'unlock' lockdown disruptions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Assistant Joint Director, MSME, Kanpur, DK Singh, said the micro, small and medium enterprises were struggling to cope with the declining revenues and capacity utilisation due to the lockdown necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing a virtual meeting on Tuesday, Singh said in view of the spread of coronavirus and lockdown continuing in most parts of the country, the MSMEs, after going through an existential crisis during the lockdown, were now facing resource crunch.

He said a survey of small and medium firms in manufacturing showed that only 7 per cent were able to survive and apart from cash crunch the major crisis was lack of labour availability.

Singh said in Uttar Pradesh most of the micro enterprises were not registered and the big reason for this was that they were just too small. He said even goods and services tax

(GST) had its threshold and most micro enterprises did not qualify and this apparent invisibility tended to work for enterprises as well as against them. He said being out of the formal network, such enterprises did not have to maintain accounts, pay taxes or adhere to regulatory norms etc. He said this brought down their costs.

Singh said another major hurdle facing the MSMEs was lack of financing. He said the fact was that most of the MSME funding came from informal sources and this fact was crucial because it explained why the Reserve Bank of India's effort to push more liquidity towards the MSMEs had had a limited impact.

He added that the key reason why banks dither from extending loans to MSMEs was the high ratio of bad loans. He said another equally important factor was the delay in payments to MSMEs by their buyers, including the government, or GST refunds etc.

Singh said MSMEs were faced by other challenges as well. He said though the bank dues had been deferred, the immediate challenge of MSMEs was to pay their statutory dues, wages and pressing creditors.

He said they were set to face an acute cash crunch due to a sharp fall in business and operational challenges with low or zero manpower over the next few weeks since migrant workers had already gone to their respective hometowns. He said currently it appears that the labourers would not dare to venture out fearing the similar backlash in future.

He said the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had sought additional ad hoc sanction of working capital of up to 25 per cent of sanctioned limit to help the cash-starved MSMEs.

He said the industry body also suggested setting up of a special MSME Factoring Fund to enable MSMEs to discount their bills to approved retailers in 15 days and permitting

retailers to pay in 120 days. He suggested that the government should create a corpus to help MSMEs pay wages.

Singh said MSMEs would look forward towards the government to allow payment of GST arrears in instalments along with the current due, with a six-month moratorium without cancelling the GST registration. He said they would also demand penalty and interest waived for the delayed payment.

Singh said MSME loan portfolios of non-banking financial companies may see a significant increase in delinquency levels and added that the risk of delinquencies also existed for financiers offering unsecured loans to SMEs who typically relied on the assessment of the estimated cash flows with high yield. He said lockdowns, disruptions in supply chain and impact of large industries loans would increase immediate delinquencies in this segment.

The vote of thanks was proposed by GS Srivastava.

Man alleges Barra cops' nexus with abductors of his son

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Barra police has come under the scanner with a man alleging a nexus between the cops posted there and the abductors of his son.

He said at the instance of Barra cops, he had paid a ransom of ₹ 30 lakh but neither his son returned home nor any action was initiated against the abductors so far.

The victim met Senior Superintendent of Police Dinesh Kumar P in this regard on Tuesday and the district police chief assured him of early recovery of his son.

It may be recalled that Chaman Singh's son Sandeep, a resident of Barra, is missing since June 22.

Chaman Singh said the marriage of his daughter was fixed with Rahul Yadav of Barra but after they learnt



Chaman Singh of Barra along with family members visits SSP office on Tuesday to complain about dubious role of Barra police.

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that he was addicted to liquor, they cancelled the marriage. He alleged that thereafter, Rahul Yadav started threatening him and his family members with dire consequences on phone.

According to Singh, on

June 22, his son Sandeep went to a pathological lab where he works but did not return home. He lodged a report with the police about the abduction of Sandeep, and told the cops about his suspicion of Rahul Yadav's involve-

ment in it. Thereafter, the abductor demanded ₹ 30 lakh ransom for the release of Sandeep.

Chaman Singh said at the instance of Barra police, he paid ₹ 30 lakh to the abductors by selling out his house. He said on Monday night, the bag containing ₹ 30 lakh was thrown on the railway track under the Gujaini highway flyover as per police advice but by the time the cops reached there, the abductors had escaped with the bag.

Singh alleged that his advice to fix a tracking device in the bag was turned down by the police.

Superintendent of Police (South) Aparna Gupta said the victim's allegation of paying ₹30 lakh ransom was baseless and she was investigating the case with the help of surveillance team and claimed that Sandeep would be recovered soon.

DM felicitates Jaipuria student

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate BR Tiwari felicitated Ishita, a student of Seth Anandram Public School, who on passing her ICSE X exams had donated a sum of Rs 1,100 to district administration for helping the needy at this crucial time.

The district magistrate invited the student to his camp office and felicitated her.

He said it was not only the elders who could donate at this crucial juncture but even students could donate their pocket money for the noble cause as it would save lives at this hour of crisis.

Dr Tiwari said the student's gesture clearly displayed her love for nation and patriotism.

He said although the amount may be small but the gesture of the little girl was far bigger than the others.

He said such students were



District Magistrate, City, Dr BR Tiwari felicitates Ishita a student of Jaipuria School on Tuesday

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the future of a bright India as they not only had compassion for others but were great patriot and possessed a desire to do something for the country.

Dr Tiwari said the credit for Ishita's gesture also went to the school which had groomed the students with nationalism. He said many people were

coming forward with donations for the suffering humanity but the little girl's effort was something exclusive and worth appreciating.

97 test positive in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported its highest single-day spike in coronavirus cases as 97 people tested positive in the past 24 hours.

Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Shukla said that for the first time 97 coronavirus positive cases were detected between Monday evening and Tuesday evening taking the total count to 1,932.

He said 23 COVID-19 patients were discharged and the count of cured persons had reached 1155 and now there were 685 active cases in the city.

He said with two more deaths in the city, the death toll stood at 92 on Tuesday evening.

He said 1,245 samples were collected in the city, including 670 from surveillance and 342 other samples.

Muslims urge admin to allow goats in city for Bakrid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Muslim elders of the city have appealed to the district administration to grant permission to bring in goats for Eid ul Azaha and also allow the goatherds mainly from the rural areas to enter into the city limits with their goats.

The elders also appealed to the entire Muslim community to offer the Bakrid namaz at their respective homes maintaining strict social distancing.

They said as it was unilaterally decided to keep all the religious places closed till July 31, the Muslim community would strictly follow the coronavirus pandemic protocol.

The meeting was chaired by Shahar Qazi Maulana Alam Reza Noori, who had invited various community members to issue guidelines for the Eid ul Azaha celebrations.

He said in case the district administration allowed the namaz on that day, then it would be welcome but otherwise the status quo would be maintained.

Maulana Noori said all the sacrificial goats need to be sacrificed in open places with proper social distancing and sporting mask as well. He said the rule for washing hands with soaps and use of sanitisers would be essential.

Skeleton found on the roadside in Sachendi

KANPUR (PNS): Panic prevailed in Sachendi police station area when villagers found a human skeleton buried on the roadside near a country-made liquor shop on Srinagar-Kotra Marg on Tuesday morning.

The skeleton was visible as the heavy downpour had removed the mud covering it.

The station officer of Sachendi said some clothes and shoes were also recovered near the skeleton. The Aadhaar card recovered from the clothes is in the name of Ram Kumar Singh, son of Randhir Singh, resident of Kotra village (Sajeti). The skeleton was sent for autopsy.

Villagers suspect that after killing a man, the body was buried here. As the mud covering the body was washed away in the heavy downpour, the skeleton became visible.

The villagers stumbled on the skeleton when they saw a horde of stray dogs and other animals around the spot and went there to find out the reason.

SINDHI SAMAJ: The Jhulelal Mandir Trust, Gujani has appealed to the community members that in view of the Chaliha Mahotsav to begin from July 16, they should worship in their respective homes. Official spokesperson for the community, Prakash Panjwani, said people who did not possess the Sacred Picture of Bhagwan Jhulelal could approach the Trust members and by submitting the photo copy of their Aadhaar card obtain the picture. He said in the temple 40 days' Sewadars would be held.

38-yr-old man murdered

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

Bachcha Yadav (38), son of BDevidayal, was murdered in Baldev ka Purwa village under Fatehganj police station on Monday. The police had registered a case against an unidentified person under Section 302 of the IPC. On getting information ASP Banda Mahendra Pratap Singh, CO Atarra Siyaram, SO Fatehganj Radheybabu and SO Badausa Nareesh Kumar Prajapati inspected the spot and sent the body of the deceased for the post-mortem examination. SO Fatehganj Radheybabu said that the body of the deceased

was recovered from a deserted place about 500 metres away from his house. The father of the deceased had lodged an FIR under Section 302 of the IPC. SO said that he had alleged that his son was killed by his rival belonging to Chhataini village. SO said that matter would be investigated and action would be taken against the guilty.

SUICIDE: Chhaya (23) wife of Ankit Pandey, committed suicide with the help of a saree from the ceiling of her house in Umari village under Baberu Kotwali on Monday. She was taken to CHC Baberu where the doctors declared her dead. Police sent her body

for the post-mortem examination. Her family had alleged that Chhaya was killed for dowry and demanded action against her husband and other family members. ASP Mahendra Singh Chauhan said that the allegations levelled by them would be investigated after getting the post-mortem examination report. Meanwhile Rinki (25) committed suicide with the help of a rope in Dadamau village under Pailani police station on Monday. SO Pailani Baljeet Singh said that the body had been sent for the post-mortem examination. SO said that the cause of suicide could not be ascertained.

Students prove their mettle

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

The meritorious students of Sunbeam School, Mughalsara, once again proved their mettle with their outstanding performance in class XII examination of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) whose results were declared on Monday. Arya Verma, a student of science group, who secured 98.4 per cent marks bagged the first place in the district. Apart from her Shreya got 97.6 per

cent marks, Hrithik Gupta with 96.8 per cent marks, Utkarshini got 96.6 per cent marks, Rajat Agarhari 96.4 per



cent, Akash Verma and Tanishka 96 per cent, Anshika Raghuvanshi, Saurabh and Maryam jointly scored 95.6 per cent and Nikhil scored 95.4 per

cent and got a place in the merit list. As many as 40 students secured more than 90 per cent marks. School director Shweta Kanudia and principal CK Palit expressed happiness and satisfaction over the results, congratulated the successful students and wished them a bright and prosperous future. Vice-principal, Smriti Khanna, vice-principal (Academic) Ram Pratap Singh, examination incharge, Sanjeev Bhushan Sinha, and several teachers were present on the occasion.

RPS students pass with flying colours

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAUIN

The students of Ramshree Public School (RPS) passed with flying colours. The CBSE class XII examination results were announced on Monday. Principal Anurag Julius Massey giving details said that Prateek, who got 96.8 per cent (pc) marks, secured the first position in school. Besides Praveen Kumar Srivastava got 93.8 pc marks, Saumya Saini 93.6 pc, Hardik 93 pc, Lav Tiwari 90.2

pc, Sugat Raj 89 pc, Vansh Sachdev 89 pc, Deepak Chauhan 88.4 pc, Rakhi Patel 87.2 pc, Rishabh Patel 86.8 pc, Rishabh Choudhary 86.2 pc, Brij Mohan 85.2 pc, Sakshi Verma 84.8 pc, Yash Goswami 84.2 pc, Amit Kumar 84 pc, Srjal Rajpoot 82.8 pc, Sandesh Gupta 82.4 pc, Saksham Pandey 82.2 pc, Rishabh Singh 82 pc, Yashvendra 81.2 pc, Rishabh Raj 81 pc, Gaurav Tiwari 80.4 pc, Astha Niranjani 80.4 pc and Nikhil Yadav 80 pc. He also

shared the details of subject-wise toppers. Praveen Srivastav got 98 marks in mathematics and Prateek got 99 marks in biology. Meanwhile patron Ramshree Public School Pradeep Nigotia greeted the meritorious scholars. Chairman Achal Nigotia, Meeta Khanna, Gajendra Pratap Singh, Imranullah, Manmohan Gaurav, Deepak, Janmejay, Shakir, Praveen Parmar, Pooja Dixit, Ankit, Rohit, Shyamji and other staff members were also present.

School felicitates meritorious students

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAUIN

BKD Aldrich Public School felicitated meritorious students after the declaration of CBSE class XII examination results. Chairman Ajay Itondia garlanded the students and wished them a bright future. He said that out of the 202 enrolled students, 45 of them got more than 90 per cent (pc) marks, 78 students got between 80 and 90 per cent marks and 59 of them got between 70 and 80 pc marks. All the enrolled students

secured good marks. He said that Aryan Dev was the topper of the school with 96.6 per cent marks while Riya Singh got 95.6 per cent, Yug Agarwal 95.8 per cent, Poorvi Gupta 95.4 per cent, Manav Singh 95 per cent, Harsh Ruisiya 95 per cent, Shweta Singh 94.2 pc, Anshika Agarwal 94.2 pc, Manas Paliwal 94.2 pc, Sumit Kumar 94.2 pc, Harshit Gupta 94 pc, Tanushka Gupta 93.2 pc, Manshi Mishra 93.6 pc, Vikas Purohit 93.6 pc, Arjun Gupta 93.6 pc, Shrashti Patel 93.6 pc, Karunendra 93

pc, Ashutosh Tiwari 92.8 pc, Sanskar Verma 92.6 pc, Vaibhav Shukla 92.6 pc, Rishabh Mishra 92.6 pc, Siddharth Chaudhary 92.4 pc, Ritik Srivastav 92.4 pc and Jai Khare 92.2 per cent. Meanwhile Director Anand Ituria , vice-principal, Ashish Tiwari, Pushottam Purwar, KK Chaturvedi, Govind Singh, Devesh Pathak, Diksha Doorwar, Mahesh Kushwaha, Mahendra Bajpai, Shivam Gupta, Mahi Verma and Upendra Singh were also present.

Trial run of dumpers flagged off

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Chairman Coal India Limited (CIL) Pramod Agrawal flagged off the trial run of two 190 tonne dumpers and a front-end loader in Nigahi OCP of Northern Coalfields Limited, Singrauli, through video conferencing on Monday. In the online flag-off ceremony Chairman Pramod Agrawal congratulated NCL for the successful trial run of these dumpers and

applauded its production performance amid Covid-19 triggered lockdown. Functional directors of Coal India, CVO CIL from Kolkata HQ, CMD NCL and functional director from NCL HQ, CVO NCL and other dignitaries were connected in the online trial run. On the occasion CMD NCL Prabhat Kumar Sinha assured Chairman CIL that NCL would meet its target along with battling Covid-19. A high stripping ratio in NCL opencast coal mines

requires it to handle and remove the large volume of material for the extraction of coal. Heavy equipment such as dragline, shovel and dumpers has been deployed in NCL mines for such operations. To accomplish the above mega task the company has introduced these high-capacity dumpers which are loaded with advanced safety features like auto fire suppression system, audiovisual reversing alarm, anti-collision device, auto dipping system.

'Ensure door-to-door garbage collection'

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Preeti Shukla has asked the officials to achieve the target fixed by the government regarding schemes of priority within the deadline. Such instructions were given by her during divisional meeting to review development works through video conferencing at NIC Mirzapur on Monday. The DC issued show-cause notice to the AD, Basic Education, for his absence. She made it clear that no laxity would be tolerated at all in schemes kept on priority by the government. She expressed her discontentment with BSA Sonbhadra for failing to provide any information regarding free books. BSA Bhadohi said that against the availability of 8,67,000 books 2,58,000 had been distributed. The DC was also apprised that free shoes, socks and school bags had been not been made available to the district. During review of the forest department the DC was apprised by the chief conservator that the department had achieved 105 per cent target regarding plantation. The DC directed the officer to save the forest land from encroachers and if any of it had been encroached then a drive should be launched for freeing it with the help of the Revenue department and the administration. Reviewing the other points of priority the DC directed the officials related with AMRUT scheme to ensure that during the work no street was blocked due to debris. She asked the Nagar Palika officials to ensure door-to-door garbage collection. The officials of Electricity department were directed to replace the faulty transformers without delay and ensure availability of electricity for irrigation as per schedule. The CMO apprised the DC that for the past two months the fund for ASHAs had not been disbursed. The meeting was attended DM Sushil Kumar Patel, CDO Avinash Singh, joint development commissioner, Navneet Kumar and other divisional officers.

Four arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Four accused were held in connection with the incident in which a pick-up was looted from the Sherpur Chamarah four lane under Majnu outpost under the Chiluatal police station on June 10 night. They were arrested with a pick-up and a motorcycle from the Fertiliser Road near Vishwa Bharati School. **INSPECTION:** SP (South) Vipul Kumar Srivastava conducted the half-yearly inspection of Badhalganj police station on Monday afternoon. On the occasion he found that the phone at the police station was out of order.

One killed in mishap

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

One person died when a motorcycle fell into a ditch in Vishunpura village under the Jamalpur police station. Three youths were going to Ramanagar from Chakia when their bike fell into a ditch near Vishunpura village. The locals rescued the victims and brought them to the hospital where the doctor declared one of them as brought dead and two others were referred to trauma centre. The deceased was identified as Sunil Sonkar (35) of Bheekampur, Chakia, Chandauli.

FINE REALISED

Mirzapur police realised ₹1,09,100 as fine from 376 people for violating Covid-19 norms on Monday.

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Too many countries in wrong direction: WHO



Centre raises corona fund in view of rising cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic which has infected over nine lakh people across the country, the Union Health Ministry has revised its fund requirements to ₹6.04 lakh crore during 2021-2026 as it identified new areas for support which include urban health, essential medicines, Diplomat of National Board (DNB) courses and post-Coronavirus health sector.

The Ministry has submitted a revised proposal for fund requirement to the Finance Commission from the earlier demand of ₹4.99-lakh crore.

After a meeting with the 15th Finance Commission, the Ministry in a statement said it will require ₹6.04 lakh crore to fund healthcare during the five-year award period 2022-2026, to support new areas including post-Covid health sector reforms. The estimate increased by ₹1.05 lakh crore from the earlier requirement of ₹4.99 lakh crore.

The Commission held a meeting with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and

senior officials of the ministry on revising the State-specific proposals of the ministry in light of the Covid-19 experience. "Looking at the peculiar state of the pandemic, the commission's final report will have a separate chapter on health," said Chairman of the Commission, NK Singh.

The ministry pointed out that currently 35 percent of the public health expenditure is done by the Centre and 65 percent by the state governments. "The pandemic has established the importance of the need to strengthen the public health sector, surveillance and public health management, preventive and promotive health care with special focus on urban health." The ministry also felt that there was a need to increase the allocation of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on a year to year basis, the statement said.

The meeting was held to discuss the specific issues of revising the State-specific proposals of the ministry in light of the Covid-19 experience, exploring the possibility of backloading in the light of fis-

cal strain and consideration of the suggestions of the High-Level Group of the 15th Finance Commission on health, the statement said.

The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 targets include increasing public health expenditure to 2.5 percent of the GDP in a progressive manner by 2025. Primary Health Expenditure to be 2/3rd of the total health expenditure and increase state sector health spending to more than 8 percent of their budget by 2020.

The Commission agreed that there was a need to increase public sector health outlay and also to develop a professional cadre of health workers, the statement added.

For performance based incentives, the Ministry has proposed a composite health index to encourage States to improve performance on a year-on-year basis. It should have a weightage of 20 percent in the performance linked pool.

It also sought State specific funds for setting up medical colleges attached with district hospitals.

Covid-19 pandemic may lead to surge in HIV, TB, malaria deaths: Lancet study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Disruption in health services due to deadly Covid-19 pandemic will have a ripple effect causing a surge in HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria deaths over the next five years in some low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), a study published in the Lancet Global Health journal has warned.

Some LMICs could see HIV, TB, and malaria deaths increase by as much as 10 percent, 20 percent, and 36 percent respectively over the next five years due to services diversion to the ongoing outbreak and its response.

Modelling the public health impact of virus infection on HIV, TB, and malaria in LMICs over the next 5 years, researchers estimate the substantial disruptions by overwhelming already fragile health systems, or through response measures limiting routine programme activities and care-seeking, and interrupting medical supply chains.

"But maintaining core services for HIV, TB, and malaria—specifically access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), timely TB diagnosis and treatment, and early resumption of the distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs) and antimalarial treatment—could largely mitigate the broader health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," researchers said.

However, the authors caution that predicting the true impact of the ongoing pan-

demical and its response on other diseases is fraught with difficulty, especially when so much remains unknown about the virus and the extent to which other disease programmes may be disrupted, and how this might impact population health.

Malaria deaths worldwide have reduced by half since 2000, but progress has stalled as mosquitoes and parasites gain resistance to treatment. Around

"The pandemic and actions taken in response to it could undo the some of the advances made against major diseases such as HIV, TB, and malaria over the past two decades, compounding the burden caused by the pandemic directly," said Professor Timothy Hallett from Imperial College London, UK, who co-led the research. "In countries with a high malaria burden and large HIV and TB epidemics, even short-term disruptions could have devastating consequences for the millions of people who depend on programmes to control and treat these diseases. However, the knock-on impact of the pandemic could be largely avoided by maintaining core services and continuing preventative measures."

He said, "Our findings underscore the extraordinarily difficult decisions facing policy makers. Well managed, long-term suppression measures could avert the most COVID-19 deaths. But if these interventions are not well managed, they could cause people to stay away

from hospitals and clinics and force public health programmes to be cancelled, leading to a large spike in deaths from other major infectious diseases that had been coming under control."

The greatest impact on HIV is projected to be from interruption to the supply and administering of ART, which may occur during times of high health system demand. The researchers suggest that offering individuals receiving ART multi-month prescriptions or home delivery could ensure they can access treatment even in periods of highest health system demand.

For TB, the greatest impact is predicted to be from reductions in timely diagnosis and treatment of new cases, which could result from long periods of COVID-19 containment measures limiting access to services.

The model predicts that the greatest impact on malaria burden could result from interruption of planned net campaigns, which usually take place every 3 years. In the worst case, with COVID-19 disruptions coinciding with the malaria transmission season and planned LLIN distribution, malaria deaths could increase by 36% over the next 5 years—equivalent to 474 additional malaria deaths per million population in 2020-2024," said co-lead author Dr Alexandra Hogan from Imperial College London, UK.

US, Brazil, India remain worst affected with coronavirus infection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the number of coronavirus cases around the world increased by a million in just five days, the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that the pandemic is worsening globally and that "there will be no return to the old normal for the foreseeable future as COVID-19 cases globally going past the 13 million figure. Without taking any names, WHO said "too many countries are headed in the wrong direction" with the pandemic and some were not taking the proper steps to curb infections. The United States, Brazil and India remain the worst-affected of virus infections. WHO, in its latest briefing also said that it won't be wise to expect a vaccine to solve our problems.

Speaking at a virtual briefing in Geneva, WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, "Let me be blunt, too many countries are headed in the wrong direc-

tion, the virus remains public enemy number one." "If basics are not followed, the only way this pandemic is going to go," Tedros said. "It is going to get worse and worse and worse. But it does not have to be this way," he warned asserting "there will be no return to the old normal for the foreseeable future... There is a lot to be concerned about."

Meanwhile, two WHO experts were in China for a mission to trace the origin of the pandemic. In a related development, representatives of 10 Tibetan associations met with the WHO and the United Nations (UN) officials in Delhi and submitted a memorandum, demanding a transparent investigation into the source of the infection. The Tibetan representatives demanded that China should make a public announcement that the scientists are studying the virus to comply with a WHO resolution to identify the zoonotic source of the virus and not so, at the invi-

itation of the Chinese Government.

The virus was first detected in central China's city of Wuhan late last year. Beijing had been reluctant to allow a probe but relented after scores of countries called on the WHO to conduct a thorough

investigation.

Deaths from the virus have been rising in the U.S., especially in the South and West, though they are still well below the numbers reached in April, according to a recent Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins

University.

As per WHO data, there are 12,929,306 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 569,738 deaths across world. USA has 67.80 lakh coronavirus infection cases, followed by Brazil 18.64 lakh and India 9.30 lakh cases so far.

HRD norm for online classes: Max 30 min for preprimary, 90 min for I-VIII, 3 hrs for seniors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With concerns being raised by parents about schools conducting online classes like in normal times, the Union HRD Ministry on Tuesday recommended a cap on the duration and the number of sessions in a day for students, extending not beyond a total of 180 minutes and not more than four sessions a day.

As per the guidelines, for classes 1 to 8, the HRD Ministry has recommended two online sessions of up to 45 minutes each and for classes 9 to 12, it is four sessions of 30-45 minutes duration. And the duration for online classes for pre-primary students should not be for more than 30 minutes.

The HRD Ministry has made the recommendations in the guidelines called "Pragyata".

Parents have been complaining about schools resorting to increase in children's screen time after the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shift from classroom teaching to online learning as schools continue to remain shut for over four months.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has led to closure of schools and has impacted over 240 million children of the country who are enrolled in schools. Extended school closures may cause loss of learning. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, schools will not only have to remodel and reimagine the way teaching and learning

have happened so far, but will also need to introduce a suitable method of delivering quality education through a healthy mix of schooling at home and schooling at school," HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said.

He said that the guidelines have been made with a focus on online education for students who are at home. "The guidelines have been developed from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online, blended, digital education for students who are presently at home due to the lockdown."

These guidelines on digital education provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward online education to enhance the quality of education," Nishank added.

PLFI terror funding: NIA arrests one

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a PLFI Terror Funding case accused from Jharkhand. The People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) is a banned Naxal outfit.

On Monday, the NIA arrested the accused Fuleswar Gope, 44, a resident of village Palkot Road, Shanti Nagar, District Gumla, Jharkhand.

This case arose out of Crime No.67/2016 of Police Station Bero, Ranchi that was registered under relevant sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and various sections of the Indian Penal Code besides provisions of Criminal Law Amendment Act and pertains to seizure of ₹ 25.38 lacs, belonging to Dinesh Gope, Chief of PLFI. The money was seized by the police

just before being deposited in SBI, Branch Bero, Ranchi on November 10, 2016 by the associates of Dinesh Gope.

The State police had arrested four accused persons on November 10, 2016 and the chargesheet was filed January 9, 2017.

After taking up the probe of the case on January 19, 2018, NIA arrested six more accused persons involved in the case, conducted searches and seized properties worth ₹90 lacs and other incriminating documents.

The bail of four accused persons was also cancelled and the first supplementary chargesheet in the case was filed on October 21, 2019 against ten arrested accused persons and one absconding accused person Dinesh Gope.

During further investigation, Hira Devi and Sakuntala Kumari, both wives of Dinesh

Gope were arrested on January 30, 2020 and two associates of Dinesh Gope-Jaiprakash Singh Bhuiya and Amit Deswal were arrested on March 2, 2020.

Investigation also revealed that Fuleswar Gope had conspired with Hira Devi and formed a dubious company namely, Shiv Shaktisamridhi Infra Pvt. Ltd. in partnership with Hira Devi (first wife of Dinesh Gope), for channelizing the extorted levy amount into legitimate means by depositing it in the bank account of the said dubious company, the agency said.

Shiv Shaktisamridhi Infra Pvt. Ltd, became a front company to legitimise levy amounts collected by Dinesh Gope and to invest the same in properties. The profit earned by the said company was intended to be used for furtherance of terrorist activities of PLFI.

Vikas Dubey encounter: UP to file status report, SC to hear pleas on July 20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Government told the Supreme Court Tuesday it would file a status report detailing the steps taken by the authorities on encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and his associates.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said it may consider appointing a committee headed by a former judge to probe the encounters of Dubey and his aides as also the killing of eight Uttar Pradesh policemen by the gangster.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, told the bench that he would file the status report by

July 16. The apex court said it would hear on July 20 the pleas seeking court-monitored probe into the encounters of Dubey and his associates.

Eight policemen, including DSP Devendra Mishra, were ambushed in Bikru village in Chaubeypur area of Kanpur where they were going to arrest Dubey and fell to bullets fired from rooftops shortly after midnight on July 3.

Dubey was killed in an encounter on the morning of July 10 when a police vehicle carrying him from Ujjain to Kanpur met with an accident and he tried to escape from the spot in Bhauti area, the police had said.

'Employee Welfare Scheme' launched in honour of late Arun Jaitley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday launched its "Employee Welfare Scheme", named after former Finance Minister and BJP stalwart late Arun Jaitley.

Jaitley's wife, Sangeeta Jaitley, has donated the family pension for the betterment of the Group C employees of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The scheme will be called 'Arun Jaitley Financial Assistance for Group C employees' scheme.

Children of the Group C employees will be rewarded with this welfare scheme, providing them three scholarships for higher technical/professional education in the fields of Engineering, Medicine and MCA/MBA/LLB. Along with this, families of Group C employees will be supported with a financial cover in case of

death and medical emergency. The family pension of Arun Jaitley at the present rates comes to over ₹3 lakh annually and his wife, Sangeeta Jaitley has already transferred the amount to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat for the period after Jaitley's death last year.

The family had refused to accept the former finance minister's due pension last year on the grounds of Jaitley's "philanthropist past".

In a letter written to the chairman of the Rajya Sabha and also marked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following the death of Arun Jaitley, Sangeeta Jaitley had asked that the pension due be offered to Class IV Rajya Sabha staff.

According to the Salary and Allowances of Members of Parliament Act, a former MP is entitled to a minimum pension

of ₹20,000 per month and an additional pension of ₹1,500 per month for every year served as member of either House for a period exceeding five years.

Jaitley has been a Rajya Sabha member since 1999 which qualified him to receive an additional ₹22,500 per month. The total monthly pension entitled to Arun Jaitley would have been around ₹47,500.

However, Family pension to spouse or dependent of a member or ex-MP is equal to 50 per cent of the pension otherwise sanctioned to such departed member/ex-MP. Thus, Arun Jaitley's family was eligible to get about ₹25,000 per month or ₹3 lakh per annum as pension.

The BJP stalwart breathed his last on August 24, 2019, at AIIMS after suffering from a prolonged illness.

Twitter row between Priyanka, Union Minister

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A Twitter row erupted between Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Union Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday over the Lodhi Estate bungalow. Dismissing claims that she had requested for an extension of the tenure beyond August 1 to vacate her government bungalow, Priyanka clarified that she would be vacating her government accommodation by August 1. This prompted the union minister Hardeep Singh Puri to counter her by stating that a "powerful Congress leader, a political advisor, had indeed made such a request on her behalf."

In a response to a news report, Priyanka tagged the news reporter and tweeted, "This is FAKE NEWS. I have not made any such request to the government. As per the eviction letter handed to me on the 1st of July, I will be vacating the government accommodation at 35 Lodhi Estate by the 1st of August". The news report claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has agreed to a request to allow Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to retain the 35, Lodhi Estate Bungalow for some time. The report also claimed that "when the matter [of Priyanka's bungalow] was brought to Modi's notice, he said that her request most certainly be accepted".

The MoHUA had served an eviction notice to Priyanka to vacate her 35 Lodhi Estate bungalow she had been staying in since 1997 on the grounds that she was no longer eligible for a bungalow after her security cover was downgraded last year.

Puri retorted: "Facts speak for themselves! A powerful Congress leader with much clout in the Party called me on 4 July 2020 at 12:05 pm to

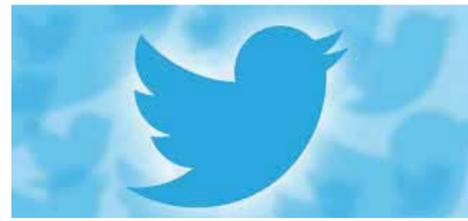
request that 35, Lodhi Estate be allotted to another INCMP so that Priyanka Vadra can stay on. Let's not sensationalise everything please."

Reacting to the Puri's tweet, Priyanka replied: "If someone called you Mr Puri, I thank them for their concern, and thank you for your consideration as well but it still does not change the facts: I have made no such request. As I said, I will be vacating the house by the 1st of August.. as required in the

eviction letter."

Puri's reply came shortly afterwards and he left little to imagination as he described the so-called powerful Congress leader who he claimed had called him.

"The leader who called me, & many others, is at the very top of the Congress hierarchy...the same political advisor who speaks and acts on your family's behalf. It was when he requested that we decided to give a two month extension in good faith", he



request that 35, Lodhi Estate be allotted to another INCMP so that Priyanka Vadra can stay on. Let's not sensationalise everything please."

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"The leader who called me, & many others, is at the very top of the Congress hierarchy...the same political advisor who speaks and acts on your family's behalf. It was when he requested that we decided to give a two month extension in good faith", he

tweeted. "Would only request you to first sort out these issues within your own party before venting in public. Streak of entitlement and playing victim don't go well together," the minister further added.

The Minister's tweet did not go unchallenged. Priyanka's husband Robert Vadra also tweeted, "This is completely incorrect!! We have not asked for any extension of stay. We were sent a notice on the 1st of July to leave in 30days. We at a time of 'Covid' have packed our entire household, and will leave a week before time".

Congress leader Randeep Surjewala tweeted: "Priyankaji fights for the cause of people and needs no favours from your ilk. So stop bragging unwarrantedly. The issue is closed. And so that all know, did you allot 35, Lodhi Estate to a Congress MP or BJP Spokesperson? So please stop sensationalizing your lies."

Ex-Principal Secy to CM Vijayan quizzed over links with Swapna Suresh

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Gold Smuggling through diplomatic channel busted by the Customs officials at Thiruvananthapuram Airport took a new turn on Tuesday as M Sivasankar, the former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, was questioned by Customs officials. A team of officials from

the Customs Department called on Sivasankar at his residence in the capital city and was issued a notice asking him to present himself for questioning in their office at the Air Cargo Complex.

The Customs officials summoned Sivasankar for questioning amidst reports aired by TV news channels that the latter had telephonic conversa-

tions with the accused in the gold smuggling case Sarith and Swapna Suresh, who are in NIA custody now.

The questioning was continuing at the Customs Office at the time of going to Press. This is the first time in the history of Kerala, a senior official in the CMO is questioned in a gold smuggling case by the Customs, pointed out political

commentators.

In another development, news channels aired that K T Jaleel, Minister for Higher Education and a leader of the banned SIMI, had telephonic conversations with Swapna Suresh many times.

But Jaleel told reporters that he spoke to Swapna as per the directive of the UAE Consul General in connection with the

distribution of Ramzaan relief materials. Though Swapna was working as an executive of the Kerala Government owned Space Park, the Minister said he spoke to her in her capacity as the executive secretary at the UAE Consulate.

Jaleel said he was unaware of the phone calls between his staff member and Swapna. The Minister also avoided

the question why should he, as a Minister, speak to the executive secretary of the Consul General when a staff member in his office could have attended to the disbursement of Ramzaan relief materials.

PC George MLA and leader of Jana Paksham, said whatever has been reported as gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was just the tip

of the iceberg.

"This issue will lead to the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan who has been literally caught with his pants down. Vijayan should quit immediately owning up the responsibility for the immoral activities of his principal secretary," said George.

But Chief Minister Vijayan scoffed at these allegations and

said let the investigating agencies come out with concrete proof of the involvement of officials in this scam.

"A team of officials led by Chief Secretary is looking into allegations that Sivasankar was having liaison with persons associated with gold smuggling. Let them come out with the report and we will see what should be done," said the CM.

Pilot sacked

The fact that Congressmen across the spectrum sympathised with him and not Gehlot after his dismissal is proof of his worth



In the end, the Congress has chosen to waste away wilfully rather than renewing itself to make sense in contemporary politics. And perhaps it is reconciled to the idea of natural destruction rather than carrying on its tired self. Its central leaders, namely the Gandhis, have decided to go by their known playbook, even if it is hopelessly out of sync with the times. So instead of addressing the anxieties of younger leaders, who were crafting a new party and rebuilding it with one State election after another, the high command has decided to be content with its old courtiers, who themselves are well past their prime and as directionless and confused about the party's future as the central leadership. But mutually serving each other, they could last for a while, existing but not functioning. And so it is that the party sacked Sachin Pilot for revolting against the high command-endorsed Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. And the sad part is like Jyotiraditya Scindia, he did everything right, strengthening the grassroots matrix of the party, scoring electoral wins and attracting a younger demographic that has a more social than political vision, all of which were interpreted as political overreach. Needless to say that both have been true blue Congressmen, sons of fathers — Madhavrao Scindia and Rajesh Pilot — who have been dynamic and forward-looking leaders of their time and were quite indispensable to the party. Nobody is saying that experience should be overlooked or not valued but when all the old guard did was to ensure stasis, the Young Turks did move and shake things around and had only wanted their rightful place and accommodation. Both Scindia and Pilot had even agreed to junior positions if not the chief minister's posts in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan but were not made use of or allowed to function. Both wouldn't have rebelled against the party they called home if they were given space to grow. Besides, the Congress rout in the 2019 general elections, especially in the three States which it had won just six months before in the Assembly polls, was an embarrassment for both Gehlot and Kamal Nath. Gehlot's son even lost from Jodhpur. Still they were prized for past loyalties, their propaganda that they had the state units in their grip and their veiled sabotage threats if denied primacy.

Yes, Gehlot has played his politics well. Fearing a Gujar consolidation around Pilot and an erosion of his base, he had made the relationship between a Chief Minister and his deputy dysfunctional from day one. With constant provocations and clipping his powers, he pushed Pilot further away, who still held on with all his might. And when Pilot began questioning his own Chief Minister on sensitive issues like the Kota child deaths, Gehlot got busy praising Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for taking on UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He has encashed that obsequiousness now and by serving Pilot police summons for conspiracy to topple his Government, he got him in the exact spot where he wanted. Pilot, who had been approached by a watchful BJP informally for some time, burst forth, making it easier for Gehlot to justify his junior's breakaway tendencies and demand action from the central leadership. And unlike Kamal Nath, he prepared himself, herding a majority of legislators, securing his bargaining position and isolating Pilot. Even if the latter has 30 odd MLAs, he cannot ensure his political survival without the BJP. So yes, Gehlot is more skilled in the art of political entrapment. But Pilot has the popular perception, of a leader who staked his life in Delhi to work the ground in Rajasthan. And the Congress leadership, particularly Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, would be seen as untrustworthy simply because they didn't even bother to defend their peerage in the public eye. This is their defeat as legacy bearers, unless they are happy that their surname will anyway ensure their continuity, friends or not. The BJP has been subtle about its Operation Lotus attempt this time around as Pilot, unlike Scindia, was not particularly inclined to swing in extremes. As parties ready for a floor test, the Congress has the support of 107 MLAs, one MLA each from CPI(M) and the RJD, and that of 13 Independents, six more than are necessary to remain in power. It may woo back some MLAs from the Pilot camp, threatening disqualification that would leave them with no gains. This would bring down the halfway mark to around 92-94, a number that suits Gehlot. He is also reshuffling his Ministry to humour some. BJP has 72 MLAs and its ally RLP three. Pilot may be the lone wolf now and may have to fight a pack in the avaricious BJP if he joins it. But if he continues working the way he has, he would soon turn into an asset anywhere. Even Scindia, who broke away with 23 MLAs, is still getting more Congress legislators into the BJP. Some rebel Congressmen have emerged mighty successful in the BJP like Himanta Biswa Sarma. The fact that Congressmen across the spectrum sympathised with Pilot and not Gehlot after his expulsion is proof that dedication is the bigger political capital.

Problem of plenty

With a record percentage of meritorious students, how will colleges accommodate them despite raising cut-offs?



If the CBSE Class XII results brought relief to students, given the uncertainty over their declaration and forward career planning, they have thrown up a new challenge. Due to the revision in the marking scheme necessitated by the Corona-induced exam disruptions, the pass percentage has touched an all-time high of 88.8 per cent and there is a glut of meritorious students. Presenting universities and colleges with a problem of plenty, the number of students scoring 90 per cent and above has breached the 1,00,000-mark. The number of high scorers has gone up by 63,000, from 94,299 in 2019 to 1,57,934 this year. The number of students scoring 95 per cent and above has also more than doubled to 38,686 from last year's 17,693. Lucknow girl Divyanshi Jain has got a perfect score of 100 in six subjects. The CISCE, too, has seen similar stupendous results and 96.84 per cent of students have cleared them.

Colleges and universities are already considering increasing the cut-offs for undergraduate admissions. In fact, these institutions have suggested that as the percentage of students in the high-scoring bracket keeps increasing each year, the marking system at the school level be re-evaluated. But this year might see the pressure easing off premier universities and colleges due to the pandemic as many students might opt for studying in their home States. If this happens, then it might give meritorious local students the chance to get admissions in hard to enter premier institutions. We need to worry about the bigger picture though, that of imposing an unrealistic performance pressure on the younger generation, considering that only a skimming layer of five to 10 per cent students will get into good colleges. Are we building an unfair expectation of deservedness among our young and not preparing them for a failure in a realistic competitive scenario that's not based on marks or grades but application of imbibed knowledge? While there is much debate going on about CBSE's marks moderation policy, which allows grace space to students, and a demand for a more equitable assessment code, question is the status of the average students who may not have breached the 90s' barrier but aren't too bad either. Clearly, standardisation marking protocols are building up more complexities in the system of higher education. Testing methods are being simplified and made more objective without factoring into account analytical ability or subjective assessment, the last being the preserve of humanities. The problem with such a format is that it encourages learning by rote rather than priming creative thinking or challenging teaching quality. In the process, merit, too, is being compromised as two students with different real capacities, maybe one 80 per cent and the other higher, are being flat-planed on a performance graph.

Muddling through

The actual situation along the LAC is by no means what is being depicted. This is where the battle of narratives is either compromised or lost when we should be calling the shots



ASHOK K MEHTA

Deciphering the statements made by India and China after the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meeting (July 10) is instructive. In the Indian statement, there is no reference about restoring status quo ante as on end of April/May 5. Instead, it calls for full restoration of peace and tranquility in accordance with border protocols, "urging both sides to honour and respect the Line of Actual Control (LAC)." It does not reiterate claim over the Galwan River Valley or blame China for the clash. On the other hand, the Chinese statement emphasises: "Disengagement and de-escalation" be done in a timely manner, leading to peace and tranquility (which is a historical Chinese formulation first made in the 1993 Peace and Tranquility Agreement). China has not used the word LAC but "border area." It justified its stand during the Galwan clash by indirectly blaming India while pontificating on the rights and wrongs of the clash.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on July 5 that both India and China have strategic interests and do not pose a threat to each other (another historic formulation after India named China as the reason for its nuclear tests). Chinese Ambassador in India, Sun Weidong, posted a video saying that China is not a war-like State and that both should meet each other halfway and not fall into the conflict trap. He stressed on the risks of decoupling India-China trade from bilateral relations. Chinese statements have to be taken with a pinch of salt as they can only be judged by deeds, not their words.

On the ground, except for one categorical report of breakdown in talks between local military commanders on mutual disengagement in Galwan (PP14), Hot Springs (PP 15) and Gogra Heights (PP17 A), all other sources have called the first phase of disengagement a success and according to Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, "a work in progress." The dissenting report confirms disengagement only from Galwan but to India's disadvantage, where concessions have been made on the alignment of LAC. Indian



troops have withdrawn from their own territory. Military commanders met this week to deal with Pangong Tso (Fingers area), where some thinning out has taken place and Depsang, where troops are confronting each other dangerously. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is trying to shift the LAC westwards towards the Shyok River to provide strategic depth to the G219 Highway from Xingjiang to Tibet via the Aksai Chin.

The Government of India is not making any assertions of the actual situation along LAC but using sources to disseminate information. For example, the use of DMZ/buffer zone, suspension of patrolling and other disengagement details are coming from journalists, who are attributing the information to "sources," who are Army officers leaking information. Independent journalists are crediting "my sources" for information. They are also presumably Army officers. Last time even Army Chief Gen Naravane got it wrong when he reported disengagement from Galwan when the PLA was waiting in ambush.

The Government is constrained because it is not sure about the PLA's sincerity. The actual situation along the LAC is by no means what is being depicted by "sources." This is where the battle of narratives is

either compromised or lost when we should be calling the shots.

This is, therefore, neither a case of breakdown nor breakthrough but muddling through towards some disengagement. Galwan, which was deemed to be the tough nut, appears to have been frozen. The Fingers area is very complex and has been the bone of contention for years where the PLA has made creeping territorial gains. Depsang is not a new intrusion site. Still, Government supporters are attributing the implementation of disengagement to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's muscular message in Ladakh ("Modi calls China's bluff") and Doval's conversation with his counterpart Yi.

Facts are different: The first phase of disengagement had been worked out by military commanders on June 30 and was to be completed by July 4 and verified by July 5, much before the claimed political intervention. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh already knew on the morning of July 5 that the troops had started withdrawing from Galwan, much before Doval spoke to Yi.

Lt Gen SL Narasimhan of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) has categorically stated in an interview to *The Wire* that claims of Chinese build-up, incursions and forti-

fications are "exaggerated and none is true." He even said that during the clash on June 15, some Indian soldiers may have crossed over to the Chinese side and when the clash ended, no Chinese troops were on the Indian side of the LAC. This lent weight to Modi's statement to the all-party meeting on June 19 that Indian land was safe and not violated. Overall, he squarely blamed the journalists for inaccurate reportage due to impatience and competition to report first. By creating an illusion of strength, the Government is misleading the nation.

Assuming it is indeed the Government's coercive diplomacy that led to the PLA starting a faithful disengagement from LAC, why did Modi blink first? Reason: He neither wants a limited conflict nor another skirmish like Galwan, given the military's operational unpreparedness. Modi has not named China anywhere and apparently not wished the Dalai Lama on his 85th birthday this month. His thundering from Leh served another purpose: Boosting the morale of the Indian soldiers, who are periodically driven into fire brigade actions along the LAC in Ladakh and Bhutan because India has not developed a usable conventional deterrent.

As for Government failures for enabling multiple intrusions

along LAC in Ladakh, 144 veterans have appealed to the President to hold the people accountable. These intrusions are happening on a regular basis where the Army and ITBP are being caught off guard. Let us not forget the lessons from the 73-day stand off at Doklam. After disengagement (India was made to pull back first) from Doklam, the PLA returned after three months in this area, where they had built enormous military fortifications and continued building the road to Jangpheri Ridge through a circuitous route but across territory disputed by India and Bhutan. India did not invoke Article 2 of the India-Bhutan Treaty of 2007 to intervene as it had done earlier and let China have its way. Unfortunately, we are repeating the mistake of Sumdorong chu, too. In 1995, when our posts overwhelmingly dominated the PLA intrusion at Wangdung along Sumdorong Chu, they were ordered to pull back. Question was then asked: Why are we quitting our own territory? We are doing the same now when the intruder should be pulling back.

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

SOUNDBITE

The high command was compelled to take the decision because since a long time BJP was conspiring and resorting to horse-trading. We knew it was a huge conspiracy.

Rajasthan CM
—Ashok Gehlot



My music was being heard all over the world, regardless of the language. I could high five God, but I wasn't living to the fullest. I was sad. I was depressed.

Singer
—Ricky Martin



We have been culturally deceived as India has distorted facts. Sita was not given in marriage to an Indian prince. Ram came from what is present-day Nepal, as did Sita.

Nepalese PM
—KP Sharma Oli



Because you're Virat Kohli, your standards are high. Watching you on TV, I don't expect you to just play well against Australia. I expect you to win.

BCCI chief
—Sourav Ganguly

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Declining fortunes

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Piloting a revolt" (July 14). It is unprecedented in Indian political history that a Chief Minister has sent a secession notice to his own party colleague. Though the relationship between Sachin Pilot and Ashok Gehlot was frosty since the party formed the Government, Pilot's sacking from his party post was the final nail in the coffin. He had worked hard to ensure the Congress' victory in the 2018 Assembly polls. The Gandhi family's ostrich-like approach never helped the party in the past nor will it in the future. The Congress-led Government in Rajasthan may survive for now but if the party leadership does not learn lessons, it will have no one else to blame.

Bal Govind
Noida

Drugs shortage

Sir — The shortage of game-changing drugs Remdesivir and Tocilizumab is resulting in chaos at private hospitals. With huge demand and less supply, these

Congress must balance the old and young

This refers to the editorial, "Piloting a revolt" (July 14). Rumblings in the Rajasthan Congress unit have the potential to dislodge the Ashok Gehlot-led Government. The developments followed close on the heels of what happened to the Kamal Nath-led Government in Madhya Pradesh. In both these States, injuries to the grand old party were self-inflicted. Both Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot, sons of towering figures in the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi, are now being flushed out from the party. With the Congress yet to overcome the leadership crisis, it is but natural for younger leaders to seek opportunities in a bid to sustain their political lives and grow further.

It's no secret that both Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Pilot were at loggerheads when the latter was to be rewarded with the Chief Minister's post but the former's hold over the party came as a stumbling block. The current situation in the Congress explains how the power tussle between the old guard and the Young Turks has peaked. Lacking mass support, the Congress leadership is on a sticky wicket



and is unable to have a hold over party legislators. The back to back drubbing in general elections discounted the political face value of Sonia and Rahul and also evaporated the little gains made in a few State elections. The present state of affairs can lead to implosion as voices are now being aired from the likes of senior leaders like Kapil Sibal, who have blamed the party management. The Congress must retain young and talented leaders in the party.

N Sadhasiva Reddy
Bengaluru

injections are being sold at 10 times their actual cost. Black marketing in this pandemic situation is unfortunate. Families of COVID-19 patients are facing many hurdles in getting these drugs. Some private hospitals are leaving it to the patients to get the injections. It is imperative that the Government becomes

more vigilant and makes sure that the drugs are available to the patients who need them. It should also check whether private hospitals are prescribing the drug to the right patients or administering it merely to make money.

Ravi Teja Kathuripalli
Hyderabad

Leadership crisis

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Piloting a revolt" (July 14). Sachin Pilot's defiance is another wake-up call for Congress president Sonia Gandhi after Jyotiraditya Scindia's exit from the party. This shows there is

something wrong with the party. Entrenched nepotism, leadership vacuum, lack of efforts aimed at democratisation of the rank and file are now putting paid to the hopes of an early resurgence of the Congress. Unless the central leadership issue is resolved, there can be no hopes for revival for the party.

Rashmi
Via email

Focus on the economy

Sir — RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has outlined how the Corona pandemic has severely affected the supply of goods and services and movement of capital and labour across the world. Das has made it clear that growing the economy is his priority. The RBI's measures such as a reduction in interest rates and the supply of cash have brought relief to the general public. Thanks to this, the financial stability in the country has been maintained.

Bhupendra Singh Ranga
Haryana

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Break this toxic nexus, now

If we don't stop electing criminals as our *netas*, then we are just getting the Government we deserve



KALYANI SHANKAR

Recently, the BJP president, JP Nadda, while addressing a virtual rally observed, "Criminalisation of politics has scaled new heights. Now we all hear about cut money in Bengal. We need to cut to size these leaders who demand a cut. We need to restore Bengal's glory and remove this Government lock, stock and barrel." He was so right in his observations that what followed a week later confirmed the need for checking criminalisation of politics.

Last week's encounter killing of Uttar Pradesh-based don Vikas Dubey by the State police brings into focus once again the nexus between politicians and criminals and has sparked off a wider debate. Dubey was shot dead on July 10 by the UP Police, who claimed that he was trying to flee after the vehicle carrying him from Ujjain skidded and toppled over. Prior to that, on July 3, Dubey and his henchmen had killed eight policemen in a shoot-out in Kanpur amid allegations that some politicians and police officers had been shielding him. Both, his arrest and the encounter, have raised several inconvenient questions. The Opposition parties in UP have accused the BJP-ruled Yogi Adityanath Government of shielding him, forgetting that many other parties which ruled UP over the years helped him to grow as a don. UP leaders, right from Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra have demanded a probe, alleging that the gangster who was trying to join the BJP, was killed to protect leaders in the UP Government.

Former DGP and a distinguished ambassador Julio Ribeiro has put it succinctly in an opinion piece: "How did Vikas Dubey, a local hoodlum whose territory did not extend beyond a couple of districts in Uttar Pradesh, lose all respect for the police and authority of the State? The answer is not difficult to formulate. All the classical signs of decay of the judicial system, because of the politicisation of the institutions of governance, were long visible to even those outside this system."

With a criminal career spanning over three decades, Dubey is a classic case of how a small-time goon grew to head a major criminal network with the help of the corrupt system. Dubey's death marks the 118th encounter killing since March 2017, when Yogi Adityanath took over as the Chief Minister of UP. Unfortunately with the encounter death, the truth is now lost as the don was needed alive and not dead to know the names of his backers. Many say that the killing was outside the law and an encounter death is not real punishment as he needed to go through the judicial process. The judicial system was equally to blame as with about 60-odd criminal cases against him, Dubey had managed to remain outside prison, on bail.

The criminalisation of politics has often been debated in public fora. This nexus between the *netas* and criminals saw an upward trend from the 80s onwards. While the politicians used criminals earlier, the latter saw that they themselves could get into Parliament. The Supreme Court and the Election Commission of India (ECI) — the two constitutional bodies — have since undertaken some commendable steps to reform the electoral process. The February judgment of the apex court in this regard will have a far-reaching impact as the court has asked for "reasons for such selections, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates." If implemented, for the first time the political leadership will be answerable for criminalisation of politics. In the last four elections, there has been an alarming trend of increased criminalisation of politics. Interestingly the judgment also noted that, "In 2004, 24 per cent of the Members of Parliament (MPs) had criminal cases pending against them. In 2009, that went up to 30 per cent; in 2014 to 34 per cent; and in 2019 as many as 43 per cent of MPs had criminal cases pending against them." The first test of implementation of this judgment will be the Bihar elections, although successive judgments barring criminals have done little good. Under the current law, only people who have been convicted at least on two counts can be debarred from becoming candidates. What is needed are urgent judicial reforms, police reforms and electoral reforms, which are long overdue. For instance there have been a number reports on electoral reforms, including the Dinesh Goswami committee, that are lying unused. They need to be dusted out and their recommendations implemented. The Election Commission needs to be provided with more powers. The nexus between the criminals, police and politicians needs to be broken and checked.

Interestingly, many criminals have entered politics and become lawmakers. Nearly half of the newly-elected Lok Sabha members in 2019 have criminal charges against them, a 26 per cent increase as compared to 2014, according to the Association of Democratic Reforms. Many Governments have talked about these reforms but nothing concrete has been done. What is lacking is the political will and the support of all parties to bring legislations to address these issues. The public, too, should not elect criminals. If we don't stop electing criminals then we are just getting the Government we deserve. (The writer is a senior journalist)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THERE IS NOTHING IN PILOT'S HANDS, IT IS THE BJP WHICH IS RUNNING THE SHOW. THE SAME TEAM WHICH WORKED IN MADHYA PRADESH IS AT WORK HERE.

—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT



OUR PRIORITY IS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT LOSES ITS POWER. WE ARE VIGILANT AND WILL DECIDE OUR STRATEGY AS THE SITUATION UNFOLDS.

—RAJASTHAN BJP PRESIDENT SATISH POONIA

Future mortgaged for food

Tax collections are far from adequate to pay for free food and the Govt is borrowing heavily to make up for the shortfall, thereby imposing an unsustainable burden on the future generation of taxpayers



UTTAM GUPTA

To shield millions of poor from the devastation caused by the COVID-19, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that the Government would give five kg of rice or wheat per person per month for "free" to around 80 crore people through the Public Distribution System (PDS) for three months. It would also give for "free" one kg of pulses per household for three months. This was in addition to five kg of cereals per person per month that 80 crore beneficiaries are already getting at a heavily-subsidised price of ₹3 per kg rice, ₹2 per kg wheat and ₹1 per kg under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

As the deadline for the free supplies ended on June 30, the same day the Prime Minister announced extension of the scheme for five months till November 30. This time, the Government will also provide one kg grams free to each family per month.

Enumerating a spate of festivals during the extended period, when the demand normally increases, Narendra Modi exhorted that it was necessary to continue with additional supply (albeit for free) to ensure that people are not hard-pressed. He also thanked farmers for producing the required quantity of food and the taxpayers for helping the Centre garner resources to facilitate supplies to the poor, free of cost.

But what Modi didn't say is that collections from tax are far from adequate to pay for free or subsidised food supplies and that the Government is borrowing heavily to make up for the shortfall, thereby imposing an unsustainable burden on the future generation of taxpayers. Let us check out some facts.

Under the NFSA, the supply of wheat, rice and coarse cereals to the beneficiaries/consumers at ₹2/3/1 per kg is a fraction of the cost of procurement, handling and distribution (e.g. 1/12th in case of wheat). The supplies are made by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other State agencies on behalf of the Centre who reimburses to them an amount equal to "the difference between the cost and the sale price multiplied by the quantity sold." This reimbursement amount is known as food subsidy.

In recent years, food subsidy has increased to frightening levels. During 2019-20, against an already high Budget Estimate (BE) of ₹1,84,000 crore, the actual spend during the year was ₹2,19,000 crore. Of this, the Revised Estimate (RE) was ₹1,09,000 crore even as the balance ₹1,10,000 crore was borrowed by the FCI from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). For 2020-21, the expenditure was estimated to be ₹2,53,000 crore, including ₹1,16,000 crore as BE and likely borrowings of about ₹1,37,000 crore by the FCI.

That was before the COVID-19 crisis. It does not include the impact of free food given during April-June, (₹60,000 crore) and promised by Modi for July-November (₹90,000 crore). With this additional expenditure of ₹1,50,000 crore, the total spend on food subsidy during the current year will cross the ₹4,00,000-crore mark (in case, the scheme is extended beyond November, that will further inflate the bill).

Given the highly-fragile resource position (due to a steep fall in tax collections on the one hand and COVID-19-related hike in expenses on the other), the Government is unlikely to provide any extra amount over and above the Budget

UNLESS THE FOOD SUBSIDY IMBROGLIO IS ADDRESSED AND PAYMENTS ARE BROUGHT DOWN TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS, INDIA RUNS THE RISK OF FALLING INTO A DEBT TRAP. BROADLY, THERE ARE THREE MAJOR FACTORS BEHIND HIGH AND EVER-INCREASING FOOD SUBSIDY VIZ HIGH COST OF SUPPLY, LOW ISSUE PRICE AND AN OCEAN OF BENEFICIARIES



allocation of ₹1,16,000 crore. This means that all of the incremental amount, ₹1,50,000 crore, will be borrowed by the FCI. Together with the ₹1,37,000 crore initially budgeted, the total borrowings by the FCI during 2020-21 will be ₹2,87,000 crore.

Add to this figure the cumulative borrowings of ₹2,00,000 crore as on March 31, 2019 plus ₹1,10,000 crore borrowed during 2019-20. The total amount owed by the FCI to the NSSF would be close to ₹6,00,000 crore by the end of the current fiscal. Though staying on the balance sheet of the FCI, the fact remains that this mammoth debt is entirely the liability of the Union Government and will need to be serviced from the latter's tax collections in the future.

In the past, thanks to inadequate allocation in the Budget, the Government had been making short payments to the FCI, forcing the latter to borrow from banks to sustain operations. When the FCI started taking loans from the NSSF in 2016-17, the Centre had committed to release the subsidy arrears to enable it to pay back in subsequent years. But that was not to be. The subsidy arrears kept mounting and the FCI kept on borrowing more and more from the NSSF.

The Indian food subsidy regime remains fundamentally vulnerable. The COVID-19 crisis has only aggravated this vulnerability. The irony is that despite spending mammoth sums, even the poor are not getting full justice. The supplies under the NFSA at five kg per person per month barely cover 50 per cent of the requirement of a person which is 10 kg per month, as estimated by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO).

This forces him/her to buy the bal-

ance quantity from the market at a much higher price, which in the case of rice, is at least ₹35 per kg, being linked to the cost of supply. For buying 10 kg, the poor have to spend a total of ₹190 (five kg at ₹3 per kg plus five kg at ₹35 per kg). Thus, the effective price works out to ₹19 per kg instead of ₹3 per kg that s/he should be paying. Unless the subsidy imbroglio is addressed and payments are brought down to sustainable levels, India runs the risk of falling into a debt trap. Broadly, there are three major factors behind high and ever-increasing food subsidy viz. high cost of supply, low issue price and an ocean of beneficiaries.

The cost of supply includes the Minimum Support Price (MSP) paid to farmers besides the handling and distribution cost. While the former is computed as cost of cultivation plus 50 per cent of this as profit, the latter is reimbursed to handling agencies on "actual" basis. This system of paying on "actuals" devoid of any norm with regard to efficiency in operations lies at the root of both the MSP and handling and distribution cost being on a rising trajectory at all times.

The price at which foodgrains are issued to beneficiaries, i.e. ₹2/3 per kg for wheat and rice, are almost close to "zero." This means that almost the entire cost of supply is subsidised. In case of rice, with ₹35 per kg being the cost, ₹32 comes from the Government as subsidy. In such a scenario, rampant misuse of subsidy is inevitable.

Finally, the beneficiaries getting food at near zero price are over 80 crore or nearly two-third of the population. Is India home to that many poor? There is something seriously amiss as the official word on the number of poor is over

80 crore people are eligible for food virtually for free, the subsidy bill is bound to become unsustainable.

In early 2015, a committee under Dr Shanta Kumar, a senior BJP leader, had examined these issues. It recommended a cut in beneficiaries from 67 per cent to 40 per cent. It also proposed restricting the benefit of ₹12/3 per kg only to the poorest of poor people under the *Antyodaya Anna Yojana* while increasing the supply to seven kg per person and making the rest pay 50 per cent of the MSP paid to farmers. That report is lying in cold storage.

The above recommendations can help in saving a good amount of money. But this is far from making a dent in the problem of a ballooning food subsidy. A sustainable solution won't emerge so long as the Government remains involved in procurement, handling and distribution of foodgrains; as then, all stakeholders will expect it to do all that keeps the subsidy bill rising all the time. Thus, farmers would want it to pay higher MSP; handling agencies won't rein in costs and more and more people would wish to come under the NFSA.

The Government should withdraw from buying and selling of food. Instead it should restrict its role only to giving subsidy directly to the poor using the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) option. This will also be in sync with its big bang reforms (announced on May 15) giving an unfettered role to the private sector in agri-marketing. The State agencies may continue but as a commercial entity at par with private players. Then only will we have real food security in the country without mortgaging the future.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

Banks have yet to lend emergency credit

It is vital to implement the MSME loan package while balancing the interests of businesses and banks so that the financial system and credit cycle remain stable



APARNA RAMAN

The economic stimulus scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), announced by the Centre on June 1, has still not been satisfactorily implemented, thanks to the ineffectual status quo process of credit approval and disbursement by commercial banks and specialised financial institutions such as the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). Unfortunately, even a crisis of this scale has not been able to reform commercial lending practices, which continue to operate in the same manner, both in terms of how banks assess and select MSMEs to disburse

loans. The data on credit offtake provided by the Finance Minister's office on June 18, almost a month after the stimulus announcement, clearly shows that out of the ₹3 lakh crore allocated for the collateral-free Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), only about six per cent or approximately ₹2,000 crore has been disbursed.

Apart from the big Public Sector Banks (PSBs), namely the State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank and Punjab National Bank, the rest of the PSBs have fallen woefully short of both the sanctioned amount and disbursement target.

Private banks and small finance banks are yet to even participate in the ECLGS scheme. In the meantime, the cash flow situation of the majority of the over six crore registered MSMEs, including sole proprietorships, is already extremely dire, with several small businesses in shut-down mode and their owners on the

verge of personal bankruptcy.

The drastic decline in demand and the prolonged absence of workers have made it nearly impossible for the MSMEs to pass the regular credit checklist of lenders. As a matter of fact, those with existing debt on their books or having stressed balance sheets are struggling to stay solvent until credit approvals are processed and funds disbursed to their accounts.

In the face of fast-disappearing equity, most MSMEs now face a looming threat of existing creditors invoking the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 and forcing them to declare bankruptcy.

The gravity of the situation that MSMEs find themselves in was recently brought to public knowledge by the Federation of Indian Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises, when its president, Animesh Saxena, sounded an alarm in an interview that

MSMEs were in the ICU and if not given working capital, they would not survive after another three to four months. The 2019 report of the RBI Committee on MSMEs estimated the difference between demand and supply of credit for them to be in the range of ₹20-25 trillion. The ongoing pandemic has increased this gap, making it harder for MSMEs to access credit than ever before.

Despite the Central Government's intention and the RBI's endorsement of the MSME rescue package, bankers still remain extremely wary of disbursing loans to those who need it the most. The ground reality is that lenders now view every MSME utilising the loan moratorium as a potential Non-Performing Asset with impaired repayment ability or inherent disability to service even short-term debt.

As far as the immediately borrowable amount of up to 20 per cent of outstanding debt is concerned, the

Credit Guarantee Funds Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) notwithstanding, the level of transparency and trust in lender-borrower relations has proved to be seriously inadequate to respond to the need for instant fund transfers to be implemented.

Based on an analysis of last month's reports in the Press, only PSBs have so far sanctioned emergency loans worth ₹8,320 crore to MSMEs in 12 States under the ECLGS, of which, ₹599 crore have been disbursed to 17,904 accounts. This is barely a fraction of the total number of MSMEs or of their total credit requirement.

Private bankers have also remained unwilling to increase credit exposure to their existing MSME clients due to the unprecedented uncertainty that has gripped the supply chains and manufacturing processes because of the pandemic. While on the one hand, bankers seek

to increase their customer base and diversify their loan portfolio, on the other, they are faced with the perennial risk of default and potential bad debts, which worsens the macroeconomic consequences of their confusion "to lend or not to lend" at such a time of crisis.

Since bank loans to MSMEs are classified as Priority Sector Lending and the RBI has recently exempted such loans from the statutory requirement of maintaining a Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) under Section 42(1) of the RBI Act, 1934, more liquidity will be available in the banking system and the balance sheets of the banks will not be under constant pressure throughout the year.

Since the recent revised definition of MSME removes the distinction between manufacturing businesses and service businesses altogether, and classifies them based on investment and turnover, they must now be given new financing options for growth and

expansion, separate from their day-to-day operational or working capital requirement.

It is vital to implement the MSME loan package while balancing the interests of businesses and banks such that the financial system and credit cycle remain stable and sustainable. Hence, the Government must remember that on the one hand, while it must create more entrepreneurs and employment, on the other, it must also take necessary steps to mitigate the risk to public deposits and the State's own investment in banks and financial institutions.

At the end of the day, the Prime Minister's clarion call for an *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and the *Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* cannot be realised and become a successful pan-India model until and unless each and every MSME is made solvent as well as profitable in the long-term.

(The author is a lawyer and investment advisor)

PASSENGER VEHICLE SALES PLUNGE 78% IN APR-JUN: SIAM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Declining for the ninth straight quarter, passenger vehicle sales in India plunged 78.43 per cent in the April-June period this year hit by the coronavirus pandemic, making it the longest slowdown in 20 years, auto industry body SIAM said on Tuesday.

The commercial vehicles segment also saw a decline of 84.81 per cent in sales during the period, the fifth quarter in succession of decline, which is also the longest period of slowdown the segment has witnessed in the last 15 years,

according to the latest data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). Passenger vehicle (PV) sales were at 1,53,734 units in April-June 2020 as compared to 7,12,684 units in April-June 2019.

In the past 20 years, the previous longest streak of decline of five quarters in PV sales was witnessed between 2013-14 and 2014-15 and between 2001-01 and 2001-02.

Similarly, commercial vehicles sales stood at 31,636 units in the period as against 2,08,310 units in April-June 2019. The previous longest

period of decline in CV was witnessed for eight quarters between 2013-14 and 2014-15, SIAM said.

"Currently, we are going through a very difficult phase due to coronavirus... We have been suffering hugely on the demand side since last year; but this quarter, the degrowth is due to COVID-19. It is going to be very harsh on the auto sector," SIAM President Rajan Wadhra told reporters in a video conference.

He said the outlook for the auto sector looks grim due to decline in sales expected to range in 26-45 per cent across

various vehicle segments of the industry, and forecast of lower GDP growth coming from various quarters including the RBI Governor and ministers of the Government.

"Therefore, there is a need for a strong stimulus from the Government for the sector as was done in the past when the sector was hit by slowdown," Wadhra said.

He reiterated the auto industry's long-pending demand for 10 per cent reduction in goods and services tax (GST) across all vehicle categories and introduction of incentive-based scrappage

scheme to generate demand.

"The incentive for the scrappage scheme could be generated in the form of 50 per cent rebate in GST, road tax and registration charges," Wadhra said, adding the auto industry with an expected profitability of just around 3-9 per cent is not in a position to offer discounts anymore for scrappage incentive.

During the quarter, two-wheeler sales were at 12,93,113 units as compared to 50,13,067 units in April-June 2019, down by 74.21 per cent. Similarly, three-wheeler sales were 12,760 units as against 1,49,797 units

in the year-ago period, a decline of 91.48 per cent, SIAM said. Wadhra said SIAM members have resumed production, but it has not been smooth due to supply chain issues owing to the health crisis due to continued restrictions in some places where supplier factories are located, non-availability of labour and delays in clearing of import consignments, besides COVID-19 cases emerging in and around production sites of some member companies.

He also said, henceforth, SIAM - which has been releasing monthly sales data

across all vehicle categories - will be doing it only for passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers as commercial vehicle (CV) manufacturers have expressed their discomfort in sharing monthly sales data.

CV sales data will be shared on a quarterly basis along with grand total of all categories, Wadhra added. In June, passenger vehicle sales in India declined by 49.59 per cent in June at 1,05,617 units as against 2,09,522 units in the same month last year, SIAM said.

During the month, market leader Maruti Suzuki India sold

51,274 units, down 49.61 per cent from the same month last year. Hyundai Motor India posted sales of 21,320 units, a decline of 49.25 per cent and Mahindra & Mahindra sold 8,075 units, down 54.54 per cent.

Two-wheeler sales were also down 38.56 per cent at 10,13,431 units as compared to 16,49,475 units in the same month last year. Motorcycle sales were at 7,02,970 units as against 10,84,596 units in June 2019, down 35.19 per cent.

Scooter sales were also down 47.37 per cent at 2,69,811 units as against 512,629 units in the same month last year.

WPI inflation falls for third consecutive month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prices in the wholesale market fell for the third straight month, declining 1.81 per cent in June, due to sharp decline in fuel and power items even as food articles remained expensive.

Inflation in May and April was (-) 3.21 per cent and (-) 1.57 per cent, respectively. In March it was 0.42 per cent.

"The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly Wholesale Price Index (WPI), stood at (-1.81 per cent) (provisional) for the month of June, 2020 as compared to

2.02 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," the industry Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

However, prices of food articles hardened with inflation at 2.04 per cent, as against 1.13 per cent in May.

While inflation in vegetables and onion stood at (-) 9.21 per cent and (-) 15.27 per cent, respectively, potato saw a spike in prices with inflation at 56.20 per cent. Pulses too saw rise in cost with inflation at 10.10 per cent, while the same for wheat was 5.17 per cent during June.

In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at (-) 13.60 per cent in June, against 19.83 per cent in the previous month.

Manufactured products witnessed inflation of 0.08 per cent in June, against (-) 0.42 per cent in May.

Data released on Monday showed retail inflation as measured by consumer price index (CPI) increased to 6.09 per cent in June, which is higher than RBI's tolerance level.

ICRA Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said the extent of the disinflation in the WPI narrowed sharply

in June 2020, with all the major sectors except minerals displaying a sequential uptick in their year-on-year inflation.

"The divergence between the food inflation at the wholesale and retail level narrowed considerably while remaining substantial in June 2020, pointing to the continued varied dynamics driving food prices as the country emerges from the lockdown," Nayar said.

With vegetable prices rising sharply in the recent weeks, she noted that the uptick in wholesale food inflation may continue in

July 2020.

She said higher vegetable prices and a stabilisation of crude oil prices at moderate levels are expected to contribute toward a further narrowing of the disinflation in the WPI in July 2020.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) takes into account retail inflation while formulating monetary policy.

The monetary policy framework of the RBI targets to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent).

To boost economic activity, the RBI has cut interest rates by 250 basis points since February 2019.

Sensex, Nifty crash over 1.8% in line with global slump

Mumbai: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty plunged over 1.8% on Tuesday, the biggest single-day decline in nearly five weeks, mirroring massive global selloffs amid simmering US-China tensions and mounting COVID-19 cases. The BSE gauge Sensex ended 660.63 points or 1.80% lower at 36,033.06, while the NSE Nifty closed 195.35 points or 1.81% down at 10,607.35.

Banking stocks continued to slump, crashing over 3 per cent; while metals and auto counters emerged as other major sectoral laggards, ending lower by 2.5% each. Shares of the HDFC duo led the fall on the indices, shedding up to 2.94%, after HDFC Bank said it has launched a probe into its auto lending practices following allegations against the conduct of a long-time executive who retired on March 31 this year.

IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Maruti,

PowerGrid, Bajaj Finserv and SBI were among the other major laggards.

On the other hand, Titan, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Auto were the gainers. Broader midcap and smallcap indices finished 0.95 per cent lower.

"Key indices corrected close to 2 per cent on weakness in financial and metal stocks. We witnessed profit booking in key auto stocks as their volume numbers are already known to the street for the first quarter," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities. Negative cues from global markets amid escalating US-China tensions and rising COVID-19 cases dampened investor sentiment here, traders said. The markets exhibited high correlation with the global markets and with the virus infections hitting day highs in India, the uncertainty caught up with the markets.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	10750.85	10755.65	10562.90	10607.35	-195.35
DRREDDY	3904.00	3966.05	3874.00	3975.05	75.50
TITAN	960.00	977.90	955.00	975.20	8.85
BHARTIARTL	584.50	596.80	578.55	588.40	1.60
BAJAJ-AUTO	2988.00	2909.90	2847.00	2900.00	0.00
UPL	439.50	445.50	429.10	430.00	-0.70
TECHM	594.95	603.80	592.55	598.50	-1.55
ULTRACEMCO	3784.80	3820.80	3744.00	3775.00	-12.90
NESTLEIND	1699.90	1711.15	1685.20	1685.00	-10.85
ITC	197.40	199.50	192.75	196.25	-1.30
ASIANPAINT	1705.65	1718.00	1682.10	1692.50	-13.15
CIPLA	639.95	644.00	631.25	625.50	-5.80
WIPRO	228.40	231.70	224.10	225.20	-2.30
RELIANCE	1934.00	1941.70	1887.30	1915.00	-20.00
IOC	86.75	87.80	85.90	86.30	-1.10
SHRECEAM	2288.00	2294.80	2177.45	2200.00	-311.20
BAFINANCE	3219.80	3219.80	3122.35	3188.75	-45.85
INFRATEL	210.25	215.40	207.55	208.60	-3.10
INFY	792.95	806.40	781.35	784.95	-12.10
BRITANNIA	3795.55	3795.95	3729.00	3738.10	-58.70
HINDUNILVR	2268.80	2269.95	2226.60	2227.35	-37.90
BPCL	379.50	385.90	372.10	373.60	-6.35
IT	928.90	934.95	905.85	912.50	-15.65
COALINDIA	130.40	130.40	128.00	128.25	-2.25
HDFCBANK	1062.60	1068.90	1050.00	1061.45	-18.80
SUNPHARMA	500.00	503.90	490.10	491.00	-8.70
TATASTEEL	339.00	339.00	332.60	336.05	-6.05
ONGC	78.50	78.95	77.15	77.35	-1.55
GAIL	101.15	102.20	98.30	99.10	-2.00
TCS	2210.00	2239.00	2165.00	2175.00	-45.00
HCLTECH	604.60	613.75	588.10	590.25	-12.35
ICICIBANK	351.50	352.45	340.60	346.05	-7.55
NTPC	89.80	89.90	87.40	87.95	-1.95
M&M	553.00	553.95	538.00	543.75	-12.10
GRASIM	612.45	613.85	593.85	597.60	-14.15
JSWSTEEL	198.00	198.40	191.65	193.70	-4.70
VEDL	111.45	111.45	108.15	109.50	-2.90
TATAMOTORS	106.90	107.55	104.10	105.20	-2.80
HEROMOTOCO	2672.00	2681.65	2604.00	2640.00	-75.70
HDFC	1825.00	1825.30	1770.50	1793.10	-52.45
KOTAKBANK	1328.80	1331.40	1293.30	1295.90	-39.65
POWERGRID	168.80	168.80	163.00	163.55	-5.55
SBIN	192.30	192.30	184.60	186.35	-6.35
HINDALCO	167.00	168.70	161.95	163.55	-5.70
MARUTI	5951.00	5987.75	5750.00	5778.95	-209.90
BAJAJFINSV	6460.00	6460.00	6211.00	6227.00	-234.45
ADANIAPORTS	332.70	333.50	319.70	319.90	-12.30
ZEE	172.45	172.50	165.50	166.25	-7.50
ECHERMOT	19655.00	19659.60	18694.55	18760.00	-879.00
AXISBANK	434.90	435.80	415.40	418.50	-21.55
INDUSINDBK	535.00	535.00	505.05	510.00	-29.65

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	APOLLOHOSP
Security Name <td>Open <td>High <td>Low <td>LTP <td>VMART</td> </td></td></td></td>	Open <td>High <td>Low <td>LTP <td>VMART</td> </td></td></td>	High <td>Low <td>LTP <td>VMART</td> </td></td>	Low <td>LTP <td>VMART</td> </td>	LTP <td>VMART</td>	VMART
RELIANCE	1934.70	1941.00	1887.80	1916.65	1421.00
BAFINANCE	3224.00	3225.00	3123.35	3190.35	1454.00
HDFCBANK	1064.00	1069.95	1050.00	1059.20	1441.70
BHARTIARTL	586.00	596.60	578.00	589.10	1441.70
IBULHSGFIN	236.90	236.90	220.70	223.65	1441.70
INDUSINDBK	535.00	535.00	505.25	510.85	1441.70
AXISBANK	433.15	435.65	415.55	418.00	1441.70
IDEA	9.65	9.70	9.28	9.34	1441.70
HDFC	1805.00	1830.00	1771.00	1792.15	1441.70
SBIN	192.50	192.50	184.60	186.35	1441.70
BIOCAN	423.40	441.00	417.50	437.45	1441.70
RBLBANK	174.60	174.60	162.60	164.95	1441.70
ICICIBANK	352.00	352.40	340.80	345.60	1441.70
BHEL	42.00	42.00	38.50	38.90	1441.70
CIPLA	640.00	644.00	631.45	632.20	1441.70
GET&D	80.50	80.65	78.40	79.05	1441.70
INFY	795.65	806.30	781.45	783.20	1441.70
DRREDDY	3916.30	3995.05	3880.00	3983.45	1441.70
MARUTI	5985.00	5985.00	5752.00	5771.55	1441.70
JINDALSTEL	169.00	169.00	164.00	165.75	1441.70
HINDUNILVR	2265.00	2269.00	2226.55	2234.40	1441.70
BANDHANBANK	365.85	366.95	344.10	352.40	1441.70
ESCORTS	1126.70	1126.70	1073.60	1079.20	1441.70
TCS	2217.00	2237.45	2165.30	2171.70	1441.70
TATAMOTORS	106.45	107.55	104.10	105.15	1441.70
IT	926.10	934.00	906.50	913.00	1441.70
KOTAKBANK	1325.00	1333.00	1294.60	1298.35	1441.70
TATASTEEL	339.50	339.50	332.85	336.80	1441.70
BATAINDIA	1256.00	1286.95	1253.20	1281.80	1441.70
AUROPHARMA	817.40	823.50	805.90	809.65	1441.70
JSWSTEEL	198.80	198.80	191.80	194.10	1441.70
GENMARK	418.00	420.00	405.10	407.05	1441.70
MINDTREE	1023.80	1023.80	965.75	977.95	1441.70
BPCL	381.00	386.00	372.00	373.65	1441.70
BAJAJFINSV	6459.00	6459.00	6211.25	6239.00	1441.70
UPL	441.00	444.25	429.15	437.40	1441.70
INDIGO	1005.00	1005.00	942.00	953.30	1441.70
DLF	143.25	144.95	139.30	139.90	1441.70
DIVISLAB	2247.00	2256.55	2111.25	2217.50	1441.70
WESTLIFE	31.00	31.00	30.70	30.80	1441.70
KRTH	67.85	68.00	65.50	64.25	1441.70
SRTTRANSFIN	682.00	698.10	657.75	674.60	1441.70
PEL	1432.00	1434.00	1368.00	1390.15	1441.70
M&MFIN	202.55	203.30	191.25	195.00	1441.70
DEEPAKNI	552.70	565.00	539.55	548.25	1441.70
ECHERMOT	19659.90	19659.90	18700.00	18831.60	1441.70
SUNPHARMA*	501.00	503.80	490.45	491.95	1441.70
IOC	86.45	87.80	85.85	86.35	1441.70
ITC	198.00	199.50	192.80	196.00	1441.70
INFRADEL	211.95	213.00	207.65	208.80	1441.70
BHARTIARTL	586.55	587.25	563.40	566.95	1441.70
TECHM	594.00	603.00	593.00		

China claims 1,000 years sovereignty over SCS

Denies US charges of building 'maritime empire'



Beijing: Refuting US allegations of building a "maritime empire" in the disputed South China Sea, China on Tuesday claimed its jurisdiction over the vast ocean existed for more than 1,000 years and accused Washington of attempting to sow discord between Beijing and the Southeast Asian countries.

In a major policy speech on Monday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the world will not allow China to treat the strategically important South China Sea (SCS) as its "maritime empire" and vowed to support worried Southeast Asian countries against Beijing's "campaign of bullying" to control the resource-rich region.

Reacting to Pompeo's statement, Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing in Beijing that the secretary of state's remarks neglected the history and facts about the SCS.

His remarks also breaches the US government's open commitment to not taking position on sovereignty related issues of the SCS, Zhao said.

He disputed the US assertions that China has come up

with its nine-dashed line in the SCS in 2009 to beef up its claims.

"The US says China announced a dotted line in the SCS in 2009. It is not true. China's rights and sovereignty has a long history. Our effective jurisdiction over the relevant islands reefs and waters in the SCS has been there for over 1,000 years," Zhao claimed.

"As early as 1948 China had officially published the dotted line which is not questioned by any country in the region," he said, adding that China's rights have legal and historical basis.

About the judgement of an international tribunal in The Hague in 2016 which had rejected China's claims in the SCS and delivered a sweeping rebuke on Beijing's behaviour

including its construction of artificial islands, Zhao said the "arbitral tribunal abused its mandate, breached the principle of consent."

The tribunal said China has no legal basis to claim "historic rights" to resources in the SCS and it has violated the Philippines' sovereign rights in the disputed waters.

The tribunal sided squarely with the Philippines, which brought the arbitration case "on almost all claims," Pompeo said. Zhao said, "the award was based on flawed evidence and unwarranted application of law. The US hyped up the arbitration to further its agenda, China will never accept that."

Zhao said that China is committed to resolving the issue with the concerned countries. The US is driving a wedge between China and the countries in the region, he said.

Pompeo had said that America stands with its Southeast Asian allies and part-

ners in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law.

His comments came as two US aircraft carriers - USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan - drilled together in the SCS last week, amid China's drills around Paracel islands of the SCS which Beijing claims as Xisha Islands.

Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing has impeded commercial activity like fishing or mineral exploration by countries like Vietnam and the Philippines, claiming that the ownership of territory belonged to China for hundreds of years. **PTI**

US rejects nearly all Chinese claims in South China Sea

Washington: The Trump administration escalated its actions against China on Monday by stepping squarely into one of the most sensitive regional issues dividing them and rejecting outright nearly all of Beijing's significant maritime claims in the South China Sea.

The administration presented the decision as an attempt to curb China's increasing assertiveness in the region with a commitment to recognizing international law. But it will almost certainly have the more immediate effect of further infuriating the Chinese, who are already retaliating against numerous US sanctions and other penalties on other matters.

It also comes as President Donald Trump has come under

growing fire for his response to the COVID-19 pandemic, stepped up criticism of China ahead of the 2020 election and sought to paint his expected Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden, as weak on China.

Previously, US policy had been to insist that maritime disputes between China and its smaller neighbors be resolved peacefully through UN-backed arbitration. But in a statement released Monday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the US now regards virtually all Chinese maritime claims outside its internationally recognized waters to be illegitimate. The shift does not involve disputes over land features that are above sea level, which are considered to be "territorial" in nature. **AP**

Oli's remarks on Ayodhya invites sharp criticism

Kathmandu: Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's controversial remarks that Lord Ram was born in Thori near Birgunj and the real Ayodhya lies in Nepal on Tuesday invited sharp criticism, with a former premier saying it has "crossed the limit."

Several top Nepalese political leaders from different parties slammed Oli for making "senseless and irrelevant" remarks, and asked him to withdraw his controversial statement on Ayodhya.

"PM Oli's statements have crossed the limit. Extremism only creates trouble," former prime minister Baburam Bhattarai tweeted.

In his sarcastic remark, Bhattarai said, "Now let's hope

to hear the new Ramayan of Kaliyug from PM Oli."

"Such silly, unconfirmed and unproven remarks by the Prime Minister was not desirable. PM Oli's attention seems to have been drawn towards damaging Nepal's relations with India instead of improving them, which is not appropriate," said Kamal Thapa, former foreign minister and president of the pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party.

Senior leader of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (NCP) Bam Dev Gautam said that Prime Minister Oli should withdraw his controversial remarks on Ayodhya.

"The statement made by Prime Minister Oli was with-

out any evidence and it has only created controversy within and outside the country, so he must withdraw the statement and apologize for that," Gautam wrote on his Facebook page.

"There are large numbers of devotees of Lord Ram both in Nepal and India, and no one should hurt people's religious faith," Gautam said. "For a realistic communist it makes no difference whether Lord Ram was born here or there."

"Such senseless and irrelevant remarks made by a person of high position will damage the country's prestige," said Bishnu Rijal, deputy chief of the Publicity Committee of the ruling party. **PTI**

US carries out first federal execution in nearly 2 decades

Terre Haute (US): The US government on Tuesday carried out the first federal execution in almost two decades, putting to death a man who killed an Arkansas family in a 1990s in a plot to build a whites-only nation in the Pacific Northwest.

The execution came over the objection of the victims' family.

Daniel Lewis Lee, 47, of Yukon, Oklahoma, died by lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The decision to move forward with the execution -- the first by the Bureau of Prisons since 2003 -- drew scrutiny from civil rights groups and the relatives of Lee's victims, who had sued to try to halt it, citing concerns about the coronavirus pan-

dem.

The decision to move forward with the execution -- and two others scheduled later in the week -- during a global health pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 people in the United States and is ravaging prisons nationwide, drew scrutiny from civil rights groups as well as family of Lee's victims.

Critics argued that the government was creating an unnecessary and manufactured urgency for political gain.

"The government has been trying to plow forward with these executions despite many unanswered questions about the legality of its new execution protocol," said Shawn Nolan, one of the attorneys for the men facing federal execution. **AP**

Japan says coronavirus adds to security threat by China

AP ■ TOKYO

China is pushing harder to make territorial claims in the regional seas and even using the coronavirus pandemic to expand its influence and take strategic superiority, posing a greater threat to Japan and the region, Japan's government said.

The report highlighting the government's defence priorities was adopted by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet on Tuesday, less than a day after the Trump administration rejected outright nearly all of Beijing's significant maritime claims in the South China Sea in a statement likely to deepen the US-China rift.

The Abe Government's Defense White Paper 2020 highlights what are potential Chinese and North Korean threats as Japan tries to further increase its defense capability.

Under Abe, Japan has steadily increased its defense budget and capability and purchased costly American arsenals.

Defence Minister Taro Kono recently scrapped the deployment of a pair of costly US land-based missile intercepting systems due to technical issues, and Abe quickly announced his intention to revise Japan's defense guidelines, possibly allowing Japan to go beyond its conventional defense-only

role under the Japan-US security alliance, including discussing a possibility of acquiring a preemptive strike capability.

The White Paper accused China of using propaganda, including spreading disinformation, about the spread of the coronavirus.

"The COVID-19 pandemic may expose and intensify strategic competition among countries intending to create international and regional orders more preferable to themselves and to expand their influence," the report said. "We need to closely watch their move with serious concern affecting the national security." **AP**

US military Covid policy has multiple problems: Japan

Tokyo: Japan's defence minister said on Tuesday that officials have discovered "a number of problems" with US military measures to guard against the coronavirus among service members stationed in Japan after 95 Marines tested positive at several bases on the southern island of Okinawa.

Okinawan officials on Sunday said most of the cases since early July were at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which is at the center of a relocation dispute. Others were at Camp Hansen, Camp Kinser and Camp McTureous.

On Tuesday, Kadena Air Base reported two positive cases. Combined with three cases at Kadena in March, the total among the U.S. Service members on Okinawa is 100, officials said.

"We have discovered a num-

ber of problems," Defence Minister Taro Kono said.

"We need to more strictly scrutinise the situation with the U.S. Military in Japan."

Kono said the problems were discovered after Japanese officials requested information from the US Military. He refused to give details, but said the problems exist at US Bases throughout Japan, not just on Okinawa.

In a possible indication of one of the problems, Kono said Japanese officials are inspecting a hotel used by the US Military to house service members newly assigned to Okinawa from the US. While they undergo a 14-day self-quarantine. Okinawan officials and residents have raised concerns about whether adequate safety measures are in place at the hotel. **AP**

'Hallmark immune system response in severe COVID-19 decoded'

PTI ■ LONDON

Scientists have identified a unique signature of immune system molecules in 50 critically ill COVID-19 patients, which they say may provide a strategy for combined therapeutic approaches against the disease.

According to the researchers, including those from the Pasteur Institute in France, severely ill COVID-19 patients experience a combination of deficiency in the response of an immune system molecule called interferons, as well as an exacerbated inflammation.

The study, published in the journal Science, assessed blood samples from 50 COVID-19 patients with symptoms ranging from mild to critical, and found this signature may provide a rationale for therapeutic approaches combining interferon supplementation, along with neutralisation of inflammatory response in the body. The scientists said COVID-19 is characterised by distinct patterns of disease progression depending on the patient, implying that patients exhibit different immune responses to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Based on earlier studies, they said about five to 10 per cent of patients progress to severe or critical disease.

Nepal PM Oli, Prachanda hold fresh talks amid ruling communist party crisis

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and co-chair of the ruling communist party Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on Tuesday resumed talks after a six-day hiatus in a bid to save the party from a split in the wake of growing differences between the two factions led by them.

Prachanda's press advisor said that the "two chairs (of the Nepal Communist Party) have resumed discussions," The Kathmandu Post reported.

The talks are taking place ahead of the crucial Standing Committee meeting on Friday which is expected to determine the political future of the 68-year-old prime minister who has previously alleged that his detractors were trying to remove him with India's help.

The key meeting is taking place days after NCP executive chairman Prachanda said he

will not allow the party to split and any attempt from anywhere to weaken its unity would hurt the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and natural disasters.

Prachanda, addressing the NCP members in his hometown Chitwan on Sunday, said he was determined to keep the party intact as it is "natural to have differences of opinion, dispute and debate in a big party."

Top party leaders, including Prachanda, have been demanding Prime Minister Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate."

The differences grew further after Oli said that some of the ruling party leaders are aligning with the southern neighbour to remove him from power after his government issued a new political map incorporating three Indian territories. **PTI**

UK tables new 'cheaper, quicker and easier' Health Visa in Parl

London (PTI) The UK government tabled a new "cheaper, quicker and easier" Health and Care Visa in Parliament on Tuesday, aimed at attracting overseas doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals to the state-funded National Health Service (NHS) as part of a new post-Brexit visa and immigration system.

The new visa, welcomed by Indian professional groups, will be launched from August to create a new fast-track visa route designed to attract the best global health professionals to work in the NHS, for NHS commissioned service providers, and in eligible occupations in the social care sector.

"We are indebted to overseas health and care professionals for their tremendous contributions, not just in saving thousands of lives throughout this crisis, but for the vital role they play year-round," said Home Secretary Priti Patel, who worked on the new visa with Cabinet colleague Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

"This new visa is part of our new immigration system making it quicker, cheaper and easier for the best and brightest health and care professionals from around the globe to work in our brilliant NHS," she

said. "Our health and care system has always had a proud tradition of welcoming overseas staff to work, train and live in the UK, and I'm proud that the NHS is a destination of choice for talented people from around the world," added Hancock.

The new Health and Care Visa was included in Patel's announcements on Monday, when she laid out further details of the new points-based system to come into force from January 1, 2021, at the end of the Brexit transition period when the UK is no longer bound by the European Union (EU) free movement of people rules.

"The fast-track healthcare visa is a welcome initiative," said Baroness Usha Prashar, Chairperson of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) UK Council.

"The new system will benefit Indian companies and employees doing business in the UK. It is equitable and will provide level playing field to EU and non-EU citizens seeking assignments and skilled jobs in the UK," she said.

The new Health and Care Visa will come with a reduced visa application fee compared

to that paid by other skilled workers, including exemption from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) - a long-standing demand of Indian-origin doctors' groups in the UK. Health and care professionals applying on the new route can also expect a decision on whether they can work in the UK within just three weeks, following biometric enrolment.

The British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) has relentlessly campaigned for the scrapping of the IHS, which they had branded as a "financial penalty" on healthcare workers.

The IHS, introduced in April 2015, is imposed on anyone in the UK on a work, study or family visa for longer than six months and is set at 624 pounds per year. With the charge applicable on each member of a family, the overall cost was seen as prohibitive in a number of cases, over and above the tax payments.

The Home Office said that as part of the launch of the Health and Care Visa, those who apply via the visa and their dependants will be exempt from the IHS. Those working in health and social care who do not qualify for the Health and Care Visa will still be able

to claim a reimbursement from the IHS if they have paid this on or after March 31, the Home Office said.

The Department of Health and Social Care said it is currently working with the sector to set up operational arrangements for reimbursing health and social care staff outside the scope of the Health and Care visa, which will commence from October.

"The unwavering commitment, skill and compassion staff have shown during the fight against this deadly virus is nothing short of phenomenal, and the reimbursement of the immigration health surcharge recognises the enormous contribution of those who have come to the UK to work in health and social care," said Hancock.

The new Health and Care Visa will apply to eligible roles within the health and care sector.

Under current rules, a Tier 2 (General) visa for a skilled worker - including healthcare professionals - applying from outside the UK, can cost from 464 pounds for a visa lasting up to three years if the job is in national shortage or up to 1,220 pounds for a visa lasting more than three years in a role not in national shortage.

WHO ON CORONAVIRUS



Unrealistic to have a 'perfect vaccine' ready, WHO issues warning

There have been 13 million confirmed COVID-19 cases recorded globally and six months after, it is just as deadly and mysterious as before. There is no proper cure or treatment identified yet and work is in progress to develop a vaccine which could garner immunity against the deadly virus. Russian researchers too claimed to have found success in its human trials and are quite hopeful of launching the vaccine by August. Not only has the timeline been mooted by several epidemiologists and medical experts, WHO, in its latest briefing said that it won't be wise to expect a vaccine to solve our problems.

Can't pin our hopes on a vaccine alone, says WHO

Mike Ryan, executive director of health emergencies, WHO was also quick to admit that it would be wrong to pin all of our hopes on a vaccine alone. "And also, believing that magically we will get a perfect vaccine that everyone will have access to, is also not realistic." However, he did attest to the fact that despite everything, it is not impossible to develop a vaccine to combat COVID-19: "We can and will develop a vaccine, the question mark is: 'how effective will that vaccine be?' And, more importantly, and more worryingly; 'who will get that vaccine?' And: 'will that distribution be fair and equitable?'"

What are the dangers we are facing?

After months of lockdown, several places have opened up with curtailed measures. However, there still are places where guidelines are not being followed. The US, for example, is recording a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases, which is now the worst affected nation by the pandemic. Following on the list are Brazil and India. Sharing light on this, Mike Ryan continued saying: "If people continue to frequent crowded places without taking the necessary precautions, if people aren't practising physical distancing, if people aren't practising hygiene, if people aren't wearing masks in the proper settings, then the disease will continue to transmit."

Coronavirus crisis may get 'worse and worse and worse'

In its latest briefing, the leading health body said that the situation has only been getting worse and worse. Even though we don't know for sure when we will have a vaccine ready available, WHO mentioned that even with a vaccine, achieving immunity in the first go is a distant dream. According to WHO data, over seven groups have proceeded to conduct advanced phase II and III stages of their vaccine candidates, post which, regulatory checks can be expected. India too is seeing the development of two candidates, COVAXIN and another by Zydus Cadila.

Can a person be immune from COVID-19?

The briefing follows a sample study done by King's College, London, which found that antibodies, in recovered patients, begin to wane away in 3 months time and getting immunity is a far fetched dream. The WHO, also taking note of all developments said that while all of us continue to live in a new normal, the virus is here to stay. A statement said: "Expecting that we will eradicate or eliminate this virus in the coming months is not realistic."

Are there lessons we can learn?

Experts have long said that while pharmaceutical inventions and healthcare could help to an extent, in the nascent stage, simple measures like avoiding crowding, exposure, maintaining good hygiene protocols and most of all, wearing a mask could help curb the viral spread. It could also lessen the load on medical services and help them serve us better. The WHO official also added that government officials and authorities should use this pandemic as a lesson in managing public healthcare.

TAKE A LEAP

Online teaching has now become a strategic priority emphasising the need for value-based education and re-establishing standards of excellence, says DR JITIN CHADHA



Over the years, technology has been utilised to improve teaching and learning and help our students be successful. The concept of force multiplier when applied to technology allowed students access to online resources, assignments and assistance from teachers on-demand without the physical connection. It also expanded the school day by allowing them this access anytime and from anywhere with just an Internet connection.

Although design institutes amongst others have openly utilised this technological feature or outsourced it, it still formed only a part of the curriculum. The pandemic brought home the fact that our older business model was now in trouble as students and teachers remained confined within their homes. Thus as institutes, leaders, academicians, administrators, service providers, technological partners and students, we needed to up our game and adapt to a new normal, which involves understanding learning science and using technology as the intermediary to enable teaching and learning.

The core competency of any institute is the unique blend of imparting quality education and creating a conducive learning environment. Online teaching has now become a strategic

priority emphasising the need for value-based education and re-establishing standards of excellence. It has meant encouraging academicians to upskill, innovate and create learner-centric digital content, find newer interactive teaching methodologies and assessment mechanisms. The new understanding emphasizes that simply interchanging classroom teaching format onto the online medium as a notion of doing live classes isn't effective. It calls for a mindset change to create the correct interplay of synchronous and asynchronous teaching methodologies to influence learning outcomes, elicit interest and productively engage with students and cater to different learner groups without compromising on quality.

CHANGED MINDSET
The pandemic has brought about a changed mindset with regards to the age-old perception of the value of a teacher's physical presence in classrooms while simultaneously looking at how that value can be leveraged effectively online. There is a need now to clearly understand the workload of teachers as they combine offline and online teaching practices.

ONLINE EDUCATION
Online education has also put the ownership of learning

Institutes, academicians, service providers and students have to up their game and adapt to a new normal to enable teaching and learning. The core competency of any institute is to impart quality education and create a conducive learning environment

on to the students. Students learn best in an interactive and socially engaged environment. Teachers working closely with students help explore their difficulties and requirements leading to a better understanding of their learning journey and progress. It also supports that students have different learning styles some are self-motivated while others need the constant nudge to move ahead.

Art and design courses are inherently hands-on, experiential and participatory. As assessments and placements are evolving as key concerns, questions around how effective and valuable online education can be and how learners can apply their acquired learning to practical workplace scenarios need careful thought. This has therefore highlighted the need to relook and redesign our existing physical campuses while adhering to health and safety guidelines.

Reopening institutes call for streamlining processes that will help screen students and staff upon arrival, increasing cleaning and disinfecting the facilities, encouraging hand washing and sanitising and wearing face masks.

Within classrooms, social distancing can be created by strategically altering the existing space with clearly demarcated coloured markings so

desks are sufficiently separated. Flexible furniture and movable furnishings can also add to the space.

Social distancing can also be encouraged by making certain operational decisions like staggering class timings to limit students within a physical space and remove overcrowding, dividing students into groups and rotating their schedule so they have a mix of classroom teaching and home learning, limiting student movements by only allowing teachers to move between classrooms, restricting sharing of commonly utilised high-touch materials like sewing machines, library books, design tools, supplies and equipment.

Students should be encouraged to bring in their supplies to reduce the risk of physical contact. A combination of teaching methods, both offline and online also ensures students are not present within the facilities for extended periods.

Due diligence with regards to wireless connectivity within the physical campus need for setting up mobile hotspots, using mobile whiteboards and large writing surfaces for teachers, exploring electronic learning tools and devices are crucial to upgrade the educational facility.

The writer is director of Indian Institute of Art and Design

'Groom yourself to embrace change

It is important to keep a few guidelines in mind while choosing a B-school in order to reach the top of the ladder, says DR KULNEET SURI

Business management is one of the most sought-after career opportunities and a popular major for college students across the globe. Business management being the most lucrative career is acquiring more and more MBA aspirants every year and the student pool is consistently and dramatically broadening. The business management industry demands professionals who can keep up to the pragmatic, fast-paced race of the new era complexities, and hence taking up an MBA education programme now requires dedicated efforts more than ever before.

Only MBA seekers know how many aspects they need to keep in mind before racing into the constantly flourishing corporate world. Unlike other streams, MBA aspirants need to cope up and prepare themselves in an all-encompassing manner for the highly competitive platform. Besides, the changing paradigms of management education have brought about new ventures to its students and success will follow only if you groom yourself with the right understanding, outlook, and mindset. If you find the mentioned statements familiar and you are one of those pursuing education in MBA, you are at the right place. Listed below are some of the prevailing but potent pieces of guidance that will help you conquer the bigger picture as a new MBA student.

The idea of research might sound ordinary, but it is the foremost practical step to cut-off that nervous, shaky feeling on the first day of your B-school. Attending B-school is quite different from the rest of the streams, as you will need to be of the ongoing activities. MBA courses are mostly loaded with events, seminars, practical sessions, experiential learning, and industry visits and you can't seem to miss on even one.

This is the stepping stone to the active and swift business realm and every move counts. More than textbooks and theoretical knowledge, innovation, active participation, and embracing the dynamic opportunities will help you grow, and that is precisely how you need to start to avoid even the slightest regretful consequences. Moreover, you need to understand that institutions nowadays follow different trends of imparting education and a certain level of pre-research on your institution and course-structure will only ease you in settling you into your MBA life. Your personal and academic life will blend more than you assume. Now, this is a very tricky part that most of the students struggle to adjust with. An MBA course will require you to communicate, interact, and connect with



Dr Kulneet Suri
Senior Director, Institute of Management Studies, Noida

people, more than any other academic stream. Most of the projects will be divided into groups, and you can hence expect to spend ample time working with a team. This becomes a centralised issue for students who are of an introvert nature. However, remember that you do not need to be an extrovert to socialise and work efficiently in a team. These are some of the crucial and lesser-discussed skills that you will learn to inherit during the course of your MBA programme that will further help you build the right attitude both for your academic and personal life. Apart from work, management students often need to be active in an extended classroom environment that involves college events, get-togethers, casual workshops, and webinars. You can always groom yourself to some extent to embrace the change, as it will always be fruitful for your career.

Last, focus on building valuable connections. Many of the MBA students get misguided by the idea of starting to take necessary steps like building connections, researching job availabilities, and grabbing additional opportunities after the completion of their MBA course. You need to keep spirits high when it comes to building a network and socialising with those who may contribute to your professional lives ahead.

However, a substantial part of skillsets and capabilities to attain the customs and practice depends on expertise of mentors. Hence, choosing the right institution is important.

Education towards work is driven by passion and interest and not through monetary needs. Employees should feel satisfied and get assistance to grow constantly to utilise the time at their workplace productively. For someone who does not aim to work just to make a living, shaping their hobbies into a career is the best way to begin.

Hobbies help us to attain mental and emotional peace and help in the development of social, interpersonal, and creative thinking skills. Students stuck at home during COVID-19 lockdown could utilise this time and polish their interests by enrolling in certified online trainings. If you are fond of doing any of the 3 things mentioned below during leisure time, you can learn these

professionally through online trainings.

Learning new languages: Your love for learning new languages has immense potential than just being a hobby. Enrolling in an online training such as the French language training can keep the complexities of learning during lockdown at bay. An official language of 29 countries, learning French can help you get an edge over your peers while applying for higher studies internationally. Through the training, one can learn to read, write, understand, and speak French in their everyday interactions. An in-built speech recognition engine allows you to practice your French-speaking skills and rectify their pronunciation mistakes. The training also features assignments,

MINDIT

assessment tests, quizzes, and exciting exercises. After getting certified in French language, you can work in MNCs, import-export houses, embassies, call centres, tourism and hospitality industry, and can take job roles like teaching and translator and interpreter.

Writing: Writing is a therapy for many. Those who love observing, have attention to details, and prefer to express themselves through write-ups instead of words, should enrol in a writing training program to enhance their skillset. Trainings such as

creative writing bring out your inner wordsmith and help you polish your short story, novel, features, news-stories, screenplay, advertising, or editing skills. The peer grading feature helps you to receive and give constructive feedback on the writing assignments. Your peers act as your readers and anonymously help you to rectify your mistakes and polish your writing skills. Reading their write-ups strengthens your vocabulary and allows you to explore different writing styles. Individuals professionally skilled in writing can find lucrative jobs in every industry. They can

work as copywriter, editor, journalist, speechwriter, technical writer, novelist, story writer, columnist, PR specialist, film critic, and social media specialist in industries such as education, entertainment, food, travel, hospitality, and healthcare.

Capturing moments: The integration of high-resolution cameras in our handsets helped a lot of people discover their passion for photography. Whether you love clicking the beautiful nature around you or have become the official photographer for every college outing, you could sharpen your skills of capturing emotions, storytelling, lighting and colour, framing concepts, and attention to detail by enrolling in an online photography course.

The course gives you a wide understanding of camera and lenses, white balance and exposure triangle parameters, camera metering and focusing, the art of composition and shooting techniques, and image post-processing. Along with a certificate, you also get placement assistance that helps you to find out the right career opportunities for you. After successfully acquiring the title of a certified photographer, one can work as a freelancer for travel, food, entertainment, and other industries, or could find lucrative job opportunities like a film set, pet, portrait, landscape, sports, product, fine art, fashion, architectural, and aerial photographer.

The writer is Sarvesh Agrawal, founder-CEO of Internshala

Scholarship

For further information contact
sbs.admissions@strath.ac.uk
Application deadline: September 1, 2020.

The Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow invites applications for its MBA Deans Excellence Scholarships for 2020. Candidates for full-time MBA programme in Glasgow will automatically be considered for these scholarships.

Number: 5
Value: £15,000
Subject: Accounting and Finance, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Business, Strategy and Organisation, Hospitality and Tourism, Management, Management Science.

Eligibility: Candidates who are prepared to act as ambassadors for the Strathclyde FT MBA. Who can demonstrate through their ideas outlined in their application and interview how they would contribute to bring the class together through teamwork to create community, from the outset, in order to achieve the ultimate earning (and social) experience for the group as a whole. Leadership/management skills or potential, overall quality of the application and financial need will also be considered.

- HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) AT TOPHIRE**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583298
Deadline: August 6, 2020
- DATA ENTRY AT INVICTA CONSUMER**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583300
Deadline: August 5, 2020
- OPERATIONS AT ENETSTUDIOZ INCORPORATION**
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹9,500-₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583307
Application deadline: August 6, 2020
- ADVANCED EXCEL (MIS) AT LABOTEK**
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583308
Application deadline - 5th August 2020
- MARKET SURVEY AT DHISIGMA SYSTEMS**
Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583309
Application deadline: August 3, 2020
- QLT ASSURANCE/SOFTWARE TESTING AT WITSY**
Location - Chandigarh, Mohali
Stipend - Rs. 5,000-8,000 /Month
Link - internshala.com/i/4583310
Application deadline - 4th August 2020
- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT URBANCLAP TECHNOLOGIES INDIA**
Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4583312
Application deadline: July 27, 2020
- COPYWRITING AT 120 MEDIA COLLECTIVE**
Location - Work From Home
Stipend - Rs. 10,000 /Month
Link - internshala.com/i/4583304
Application deadline - 5th August 2020

STUDY ABROAD

'Keep yourself updated with latest policy changes'

There are three key points that students who have applied to study in foreign universities need to keep in mind, says EESHA BAGGA

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated many sectors across the globe. The education sector too got overwhelmed by its might.

Many universities like Stanford and Chicago have either suspended or canceled admissions until further notice.

This has caused problems for those students who got their admission procedures cleared.

So, if you were looking to apply for a programme in a foreign university then you must consider these three things before taking your final call:

Check country's current status report: The pandemic has affected different countries in different ways. Some are coming back on track while others are still suffering. Top universities in the UK like Cambridge and Oxford have asked their students to wait till they receive further notice from the Government.

Check for changes made in admission procedures: Almost all universities have closed their campuses until the circumstances get better and appointed different ways for admission. Like, the University of Kent which is admitting students online. They are also planning to start on-campus admissions from August. Also, some universities like the University of Louisville are arranging virtual visits.

Check for the changes in immigration policy: Countries like New Zealand have ill-advised foreign students to apply for a student visa because of the uncertainty in their immigration policies. They have recommended students to study online (if they are already admitted to any university in New Zealand).

Later a student can use it as proof of association and the New Zealand Government will consider it while approving or extending his/her visa. Many countries are making similar changes.

To be on a safer side you must keep yourself updated with the latest news on the country you are about to migrate to.

The writer is Director, Partnerships & Alliances, Mindler

IN BRIEF

ISBF PARTNERS WITH KINGSTON BUSINESS SCHOOL

The Indian School of Business & Finance (ISBF) has announced a partnership with Kingston Business School, Kingston University (KU), London to bring to aspiring Indian students its acclaimed undergraduate programme in Business Management, at less than half the cost of pursuing it entirely in London.

This programme offers students the unique opportunity to undertake the first two years of this degree in India at ISBF, and then move to Kingston University for third year and graduate in London. Throughout the programme, all students are full-fledged Kingston University students, with the curriculum and the final degree both also coming entirely from Kingston University.

All students of this programme progress automatically to Kingston University in third year, without needing to appear for IELTS in doing so. They also enjoy the benefits of moving with an entire batch of classmates and friends, which helps significantly with making the transition easier. Transitioning students can also opt for hostel accommodation on campus at Kingston University, London.

WORKSHOP ON SCIENCE OF MUSIC

The KIIT World School organised a workshop on Science of Music. The workshop focused on how music plays an important role in our speech and how our language is scientific. Mayank Verma, a management consultant and corporate Acharya spoke about the science of music and its impact on our lives.

Verma said: "If we don't have the capability of sound, we will not be able to relate or identify any of our senses. Our Vedic science said, if we pay enough attention to listen to the sound around us, it can develop our faculty manifold. The sound makes the alphabet, the alphabet makes words and words make sentences which we use to express ourselves. Listening is key to doing anything better and music does that beautifully. We can enhance our perception just by doing this."

Neelima Kamarah, Principal KIIT World School said: "The science behind vowels is amazing. Our language is scientific and it's important as a teacher to understand these finer details."

TALENT SEARCH EXAMINATION FOR UG ASPIRANTS

The TIME is conducting its Talent Search Examination (TSE) for UG aspirants on July 19, 2020. Due to the current pandemic outbreak, students can write the test from the convenience of their homes in any one of the slots., 10 am or 6 pm. It also taken the initiative to provide an attractive fee waiver upto 100 per cent on CLAT/IPM/BBA/HM 20/21 courses. The fee waiver will be available based on their performance in this Scholarship Test.

Here is the link for the aspirants to register: <https://www.time4education.com/local/articlecms/page.php?id=4211>.

As soon as the lockdown was implemented, TIME had announced its online classes for various courses like CAT, CLAT + IPM, Bank Exams, GMAT, GRE, and other. New courses are being launched every week.

Huge chance missed

Manchester United slip at the death to remain out of top 4

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United missed the chance to move up to third in the Premier League on Monday after Michael Obafemi's 96th minute equaliser earned Southampton a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford in the latest twist in the race for a place in next season's Champions League.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men were unable to take advantage of weekend defeats for Chelsea and Leicester to remain in fifth. United had become the first side in Premier League history to win four consecutive games by a three-goal margin, but there was no cruise for the Red Devils this time even after they responded to Stuart Armstrong's early opener.

Two goals in as many minutes from Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial turned the game around, but United were caught out by a corner deep into stoppage time when substitute Obafemi turned home Jan Bednarek's flick on.

"It's the worst time to concede a goal but it happens in football. You have to be strong and take it," said United manager Ole



Southampton's Michael Obafemi, 20, celebrates after scoring his team's second goal against Manchester United on Monday

Gunnar Solskjaer. "We've won so many games that way ourselves but it's all part of the learning for this team."

Manchester City's victory over UEFA in the Court of Arbitration for Sport earlier on Monday upped the pressure on United to continue their impressive form with only

a place in the top four now good enough for Champions League qualification.

Solskjaer will still be confident of achieving that goal as his side have closed an eight-point gap on Leicester, who they face on the final day of the season, since the Premier League's restart.

But two dropped points were a reminder that United are far from the finished article if they aspire to challenge Liverpool and Manchester City for the title next season.

"We didn't deserve three points today," admitted Solskjaer. "We never got the rhythm in our

passing today, especially after 2-1."

Ralph Hasenhuttl's side remain in 12th, but have lost just once in six games since the restart. "We are becoming more brave," said Hasenhuttl. "You can feel the guys really enjoy what they are doing."

Pep 'incredibly happy', but rivals brand Man City let-off a 'disgrace'

LONDON: Pep Guardiola on Tuesday said a weight had been lifted from Manchester City after their European ban was overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), but rival managers Jose Mourinho and Jurgen Klopp criticised the ruling.

The court on Monday lifted a two-year ban imposed earlier this year on the Premier League club by European football's governing body UEFA over Financial Fair Play (FFP) breaches.

"I am incredibly happy for the decision. It shows all the people said about the club wasn't true," said Guardiola. "People cannot understand how difficult it was for everyone as a club being under suspicion. Now we have proven it at the court, we go again on the pitch."

Tottenham manager Mourinho said the court's decision was a "disaster" and showed FFP, which limits club's spending in line with their revenue, is now dead, while Liverpool boss Klopp said City's reprieve was a bad day for football.

An initial fine of 30 million euros (\$34 million) imposed by UEFA was reduced to 10 million euros by CAS. However, the fine related only to City's failure to cooperate with UEFA's investigation rather than FFP breaches.

Mourinho said if they were guilty, City should be banned — but if they were innocent, they should not have to pay a penny.

"It's a disgraceful decision, because if Man City is not guilty then to be punished with some millions is a disgrace. If you are not guilty, you are not punished. By the other way if you are guilty you should be banned so it is also a disgraceful decision. In any case the decision is a disaster," said Mourinho. AFP



Karim Benzema celebrates after scoring Real's second goal against Granada

One more win

Real will be crowned champions if they beat Villarreal at home tomorrow

AFP ■ GRANADA

Real Madrid need one victory to secure La Liga after they held off a second-half comeback from Granada on Monday to win 2-1 and move four points clear of Barcelona.

With two games left, Madrid will be crowned champions if they beat Villarreal at home on Thursday regardless of how Barca fare at the Camp Nou against Osasuna.

But they were made to sweat by a Granada team that are gunning for Europe and have been arguably the division's surprise of the season after being promoted from second tier last year.

Ferland Mendy and Karim Benzema looked to have set Madrid on course for a comfortable win at Los Carmenes but Granada were transformed after the break and Machis's 50th-minute strike gave them hope.

An increasingly nervous Madrid were clinging on by the end and needed Sergio Ramos to clear one shot off the line as Zinedine Zidane's side dug in for a ninth

consecutive victory.

"Our vision when we start every season is to win the league," said Zidane. "There are two games left. We are close but we're not there yet."

When the final whistle blew, Zidane roared with relief and Ramos clenched his fists after coming through their toughest test since the restart.

"We can't relax, we're a bit closer but we have to carry on," said Ramos afterwards.

"We let our guard down here a bit on the second half. We won the first half and lost the second and maybe that's a warning for us. We have to make sure we don't repeat that mistake."

Madrid could win La Liga for the third time in eight years at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium on Thursday night. "It would mean a lot," said Ramos.

"We're in the race and hopefully on Thursday we can celebrate."

If Madrid slip up against Villarreal, they will still have a second chance on Sunday when they finish at Leganes while Barcelona visit Alaves.

Indian team hasn't yet figured out Pant's batting position: Kaif

NEW DELHI: Former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif has tried to decode as to why young wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has been a hit with Delhi Capitals in IPL but has failed to put up consistent performances for Team India on the international arena.

Kaif, who is Delhi Capitals' assistant coach, has seen Pant from close quarters and stated his batting position hasn't been fixed by the Indian team management and that is why he hasn't been able to replicate his consistent IPL performance on the biggest stage.

Before coronavirus pandemic put a stop on cricket in March, Pant saw KL Rahul take over wicket-keeping duties in New Zealand in limited-overs formats as the southpaw was dropped following a string of underwhelming scores.

He, however, kept the gloves in the two-match Test series, which India lost against Kane Williamson's troops.

"Rishabh Pant is a free-flowing player. He is an attacking player and he should play attacking shots from ball one," Kaif told former India cricketer Aakash Chopra on his YouTube show *AakashVani*.

"At first, Dada (Sourav Ganguly), (Ricky) Ponting and I decided to send him early but then we figured out he has to play 10 overs. He should get 60 balls to play. This is something that Indian team hasn't done yet."

"An attacking player should get the role a finisher. I feel they haven't been able to figure out on Pant's batting position in the Indian team. In IPL, we know we have to make him play the last 10 overs. He plays his natural game in the IPL and that is why he does well," he added. IANS

Up to 2nd

Nerazzurri come from behind to tame Torino

AFP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan put one foot in next season's Champions League on Monday after coming from behind to beat relegation-threatened Torino 3-1 and move up to second place in Serie A.

Antonio Conte's Inter moved above Atalanta and Lazio to go eight points behind league leaders Juventus thanks to two goals early in the second half from Ashley Young and Diego Godin and another from Lautaro Martinez just after the hour mark.

The Milanese club are level on 68 points with off-form Lazio, who slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Sassuolo on Saturday, and one ahead of flamboyant Atalanta in fourth.

However, with a first league title since 2010 unlikely, the most important statistic for Inter is the



Inter's Lautaro Martinez, right, celebrates after scoring his side's third goal

14-point gap between them and fifth-placed Roma with six matches left to play.

"It's important to win matches like this any way you can... I think we deserved to win," said Godin to *Sky Sport Italy*. "We're second now and we want to continue winning... let's see where we can finish, but it's difficult to get closer to Juventus."

Torino meanwhile still have to look over their shoulders following their fourth defeat since the league restart-

ed last month. Moreno Longo's side are 16th, five points above the relegation zone.

Inter were dismal in the first period and the transformation after the break suggested they had been subjected to one of coach Antonio Conte's famous roasts at halftime.

"It was a very good performance with over 60% possession, 20 shots on goal, nine corners to two," said Conte. "The lads did well. That goal could have made us nervous but they stayed on their feet and kept playing and finding the goal."

Messi can play till 2025: Garcia

KOLKATA: Former Barcelona midfielder Luis Garcia feels the club's superstar forward Lionel Messi can easily continue playing till 2025.

The 33-year-old is currently contracted until the end of next season with Barcelona holding talks with the ace Argentina forward about an extension.

There is speculation that record six-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi is unhappy with the club's leadership.

"Why not? The way he is playing, adapting his style to the game is impressive. Every year he shows us something different but keeps up the same amount of goals, of assists," Garcia, who played for Barcelona in the 2003-2004 season, said during a video conference facilitated by LaLiga.

"Even getting more every year! He's adapting, he doesn't

spend so much time up front because he knows it's harder, so he drops a little more. He shows why he's so intelligent. He adapts his game to what the team needs in every game. I could see him playing in 2025, easily!" added the former Atletico Madrid and Liverpool winger.

Real Madrid are closer to winning the LaLiga title after their 2-1 win against Granada on Monday which took them four points clear of Barcelona with two games remaining in the season.

"There have been a couple of games where they have struggled. But they carry the momentum when even not playing well they are getting the results."

(Federico) Valverde has been one of their best players so far. Key players have been Ramos and Benzema," Garcia said on Real Madrid. IANS

Federer almost perfect tennis player: Edberg

IANS ■ STOCKHOLM

Former Swedish World No1 Stefan Edberg said that Swiss great Roger Federer is set apart by the kind of all-round ability that he possesses. Edberg coached Federer between January 2014 and December 2015.

"Like I said to Roger, he looks so easy when he plays, he floats around the court. He's got grace, he's got power, he's got touch, he's got everything you wish for. He's almost the perfect tennis player as I see it—both on and off-court. So he's very special like we all know," Edberg told *Eurosport*.

Edberg said that Austrian Dominic Thiem is a player he feels is closest among the younger generation of men's tennis players who can match up to the incredible career stats of Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

"He showed he could have won the Australian Open this year very easily," the Swede said about Thiem. "That was a big chance for him. If Rafa wasn't there, he's going to win the French Open one day. He's probably the closest one today, I would say."

"But at the same time, (Alexander) Zverev has shown a lot of potential, sort of lost track a little bit, but it doesn't take much to get back on the right track again."

"(Stefanos) Tsitsipas has shown some... He's definitely knocking on the door as well. I probably can add a few others. But Thiem, I would say at the moment."

Turner rates Kane ahead of Kohli in tough batting conditions

DUNEDIN: Former New Zealand captain Glenn Turner has rated current skipper Kane Williamson ahead of his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli when it comes to tough batting conditions.

Kohli and Williamson are regarded as two of the finest batsmen in modern-day cricket. As per the latest ICC Test rankings, Kohli and Williamson are placed at second and fourth spots respectively and have been leading their respective teams with great aplomb for a while now.

Turner believes Kohli's ability to play spin is second to none but he rated Williamson ahead



Virat Kohli in action during a match

of him to bat in challenging batting conditions.

"Kohli is less likely to have been exposed early in his development to seaming pitches and the ball continuing to swing for extended periods, whereas Williamson will have experienced those conditions more

often," Turner was quoted as saying by *The Telegraph*.

"Kohli's greater exposure to pitches that take turn will have him more accustomed to playing spin better. Conditions less favourable for swing and seamers will also have allowed him more opportunities to become good at aggressively dominating that type of bowling."

"I would only say that under tougher batting conditions, I would back Williamson ahead of Kohli. Under good batting conditions, Kohli is likely to be more dominant, thereby providing his team with more time to get a favourable result," he added. IANS

Holder reaches career-best rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Jason Holder on Tuesday attained the highest rating points by any West Indies bowler in 20 years, reaching a career-best second place in the ICC Test Player Rankings after leading his team to a famous win over England at Southampton.

Holder, who picked seven wickets including a haul of six for 42 in the first innings, is now on a career-best 862 rating points, the best for any West Indies bowler since Courtney Walsh's tally of 866 in August 2000.

Indian cricketers, who have not taken the field since March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, have retained their positions in the top-10 of batsmen and

bowlers rankings.

Skipper Virat Kohli remains second in the batsmen standings behind Steve Smith while Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane remain seventh and ninth respectively. Jasprit Bumrah is the only Indian bowler in the top-10 at seventh spot.

Holder retained 35th position among batsmen after the first Test and has also reached a career-best tally of 485 points at the top of the all-rounders' list.

The competition at the top promises to gain momentum as number-two Ben Stokes has also made huge gains to attain a career-best tally of 431 points, narrowing the lead from 66 to 54 points. Stokes, leading the side in the absence of Joe Root, has equalled his career-high ninth position among batsmen that he achieved last November, after scores of 43 and 46 at the Ageas Bowl.

He is now only one place behind Root. Stokes has also risen three places in the bowlers' list to 23rd position with six wickets in the match.

Other England players to move up the

rankings include left-handed opener Rory Burns, who is in the top 30 for the first time after scores of 30 and 42, while middle-order batsman Zak Crawley is in the top 100 after accumulating 86 runs in the match.

For the visiting side, Shannon Gabriel has gained 46 points to reach a tally of 726 with a player-of-the-match effort of nine wickets, but risen only one place to 18th owing to the wide gap between him and Ravindra Jadeja (722) behind the match.

Jermaine Blackwood's superb second-innings knock of 95 has helped him advance 14 slots to 58th position among batsmen while Shane Dowrich is at a career-best 37th position after scores of 61 and 20.

England coach backs under-fire Buttler

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

England head coach Chris Silverwood has thrown his weight behind struggling Jos Buttler, saying he looked good with the bat in the first Test and will be given "the best chance to succeed" in the remainder of the series.

Buttler, a wicket-keeper batsman, has not scored a fifty in his last 12 Test innings and also dropped Jermaine Blackwood, who ended up scoring match-winning 95 for West Indies in the first Test.

Former England seamer Darren Gough believes Buttler's place in the team is under threat and he "has got two Test matches to save his career."



Jos Buttler in training session

"I'm not going to go down that road yet of putting Jos under pressure, because I don't think it's going to help him. So

first and foremost, we want to give Jos the best opportunity to succeed," Silverwood said.

"(Jos) looked brilliant coming into this game, in practice and everything. He looked very good in the first innings. He just needs to go and make those big scores now, doesn't he? Which he knows as well."

The 45-year-old said it is all about giving Buttler the confidence with the hope that he will come good in the next match.

"From our point of view, it's just making sure that he feels confident in the environment he's in. We'll give him the best chance to succeed really. The rest of it is, he has a good day out, gets some runs, hopefully the rest will be history — he'll go on

from there."

Another player who struggled in the opening Test is top-order batsman Joe Denly and he might be dropped for the second Test with regular skipper Joe Root returning following the birth of his second child.

Denly scored 18 and 29 in the opening Test, while batting at No four Zak Crawley impressed with a top score of 76 in the second innings.

"We're all desperate to see Joe do really well. We can see he's trying hard, he's training hard. He's a great bloke hence why we all want to see him do well, but obviously he's under pressure a little bit, yeah," Silverwood said. "Zak is improving constantly. He certainly showed maturi-

Gough suggests Archer, Wood rotation

LONDON: England should not be overly reliant on express pace in the next two tests against West Indies and must consider alternating Jofra Archer and Mark Wood, former quick Darren Gough has said.

England opted for the express speed of Archer and Wood and the experience of James Anderson in Southampton but lost by four wickets in the series opener.

"I've said from the start — rotate Archer and Wood," Gough, who played 58 tests between 1994-2003, told *Sky Sport Cricket*.

ty and the innings he played was very good.

"Wed have all loved to have seen him go on and get up to three figures but what we did

"We got a bit carried away, seeing Wood bowl really quickly in South Africa. We've seen Archer do it, but it's very hard to do it every single game."

Gough said England should also bring back Stuart Broad and Chris Woakes for the second test, which begins on Thursday at Old Trafford.

"I would rest Wood and Anderson at Old Trafford and bring in Broad and Woakes," Gough said. "That would be my plan then, with back-to-back Test matches, you bring Anderson and Wood back (for the third Test)."

Agencies



On July 14 last year, the entire world witnessed one of the most dramatic cricket games ever played. The World Cup 2019 summit clash between hosts England and New Zealand at the iconic Lord's in London became one of the most iconic and memorable World Cup finals of all time in the history of the tournament. England, led by Eoin Morgan, became the Men's Cricket World Cup champions after they defeated Kiwis on the account of their superior boundary count