

WORLD 6
ANOTHER JOLT TO TRUMP AS US COURT
REJECTS PENNSYLVANIA LAWSUIT**MONEY 7**
ANOTHER INCREASE IN
PRICES OF PETROL, DIESEL**SPORT 8**
INDIA AIM TO KEEP
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**USUAL SUSPECTS**
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

West Bengal politics is at a crucial stage

Unlike some Western democracies where the attachment to political parties tend to be lifelong, there is considerable fluidity in political affiliations for activists. This is partly because — with the exception of the Congress, the BJP, Communists and a handful of regional parties — the party system in India is still evolving and is disproportionately dependent on individuals. Additionally, since politics is all about the quest for power and influence — and I don't mean this in a pejorative way — individuals see political parties as vehicles for the fulfilment of their goals. Consequently, the political eclipse of any political party invariably sees a movement of people between parties. Today, to take an example, the erstwhile followers of Ram Manohar Lohia are to be found in nearly all the political parties. That is because the Indian socialists have a terrible record of creating and nurturing political parties.

Impending elections are normally the occasion for activists to switch loyalties. Such defections are also regarded as barometers of public opinion, since local leaders with an eye on their own political futures tend to try and move to the side most likely to win. In January 1977, it was the defection of Jagjivan Ram, HN Bahuguna and Nandini Sathpaty from the Congress that triggered a political avalanche which culminated in the political defeat of Indira Gandhi.

It is difficult at this stage to anticipate the likely impact of the resignation of Suwendu Adhikari from the Mamata Banerjee Government in West Bengal. The resignation was preceded by months of strained relationship centred on the role of the Chief Minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee in the political dispensation. Adhikari, along with other old-time associates of the Trinamool Congress chief, have resented to growing power of Abhishek and his attempts to undermine them. Mukul Roy, once the de-facto number two man in the TMC, left and joined the BJP in 2017. Now Adhikari, who

If Suwendu Adhikari needs the BJP to demonstrate his political relevance in the State, the BJP needs to prevail all over East and West Midnapore to add to its pre-existing strength. Those in the BJP who believe that defectors from other parties should be discouraged because the party is well placed to win on its existing strength are clearly being unrealistic. There are important gaps in support the BJP must fill — the urban cluster around Kolkata being important examples — if it hopes to form a Government in 2021 in Kolkata

considerably, with the lion's share of it going to the BJP.

There are still many problems that the BJP has to overcome if it is to upstage the TMC in next summer's Assembly election. The most important of these is to ensure that the 40 per cent support it received in 2019 is not only intact but supplemented by additional votes. This is a challenging prospect because regional parties such as the TMC tend to perform better in Assembly elections than in elections to the Lok Sabha. The Left, which performed disastrously in 2019 and failed to win any Lok Sabha seats from the State — the first occasion since 1952 — is also hopeful that its alliance with the Congress will add to their kitty in the Assembly poll. In such a situation, the BJP — apart from holding its own — has two options.

First, it needs to chip away at the TMC's existing voter base. In 2019, the BJP failed to make deep inroads in East Midnapore district, the bastion of the Adhikari family. The members of the Adhikari family won their seats in Tamluk and Contai. Additionally, the TMC won the Ghatal seat. If the Adhikaris shift their loyalty to the BJP, the saffron party will be better placed to consolidate its hold all along the perimeter of West Bengal. If Suwendu Adhikari needs the BJP to demonstrate his political relevance in the State, the BJP needs to prevail all over East and West Midnapore to add to its pre-existing strength. Those in the BJP who believe that defectors from other parties should be discouraged because the party is well placed to win on its existing strength are clearly being unrealistic. There are important gaps in support the BJP must fill — the urban cluster around Kolkata being important examples — if it hopes to form a Government in 2021 in Kolkata.

Secondly, for the BJP, the impression that the TMC is crumbling under the weight of its own contradictions is important. In any election there is a bandwagon effect whereby undecided and wavering voters swing to the party that seems to have the clear edge. In West Bengal the Muslim community — whose voter strength is anywhere between 27 and 30 per cent — plays a crucial role. This section has been outside the reach of the BJP and it forms the bulwark of support for the TMC, except in three districts where the Congress has influence. In the event it seems Mamata is crumbling, there will be a temptation on the part of Muslim voters to either swing to the Left-Congress alliance or support those Muslim parties that are campaigning aggressively to give Muslims an independent voice.

Alternatively, sensing the BJP threat, the Muslim community may choose to back the TMC as a solid bloc. However, even positing non-TMC options before Muslim voters will become difficult if the perception battle favours the incumbent.

These are the reasons why the next few acts in the Suwendu Adhikari drama need to be closely observed. West Bengal politics is at a very crucial phase.

Farmers dig in heels, Shah reaches out

Farmers stay put along Delhi borders, HM says Govt ready for talks any time

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

A day after inviting the agitating farmers for talks on December 3, the Centre on Saturday held out an olive branch to the farmers, who refused to budge from their stand, with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah saying that the Government is ready for dialogue any time and appealed to them to shift to the Burari ground in the national Capital to stage their protests against the farm laws.

"The Government is ready to deliberate on every problem and demand of the farmers... Some farmers' unions and farmers have demanded that talks be held immediately instead of December 3. So, I assure everyone that the Central Government is ready to hold discussions with you as soon as you shift to the ground (in Burari)... the Government has made proper arrangement for you in Burari in Delhi, where you can stage your demonstrations," he said.

Farmers after holding parleys with their leaders and their speeches at Tikri and Singhu borders, announced that they will stay put and not proceed towards the Nirankari Ground and will sit on dharna at borders.

"It is a plan to imprison us



Farmers gather at the Singhu border as part of their Delhi Chalo protest against Centres new farm laws in New Delhi on Saturday

Ranjan Dimri / I Pioneer

in one ground as earlier the Delhi Police has demanded nine grounds to be made as temporary prison in Delhi for the protesting farmers. So we have decided to protest at the border as most of the farmers are still coming from Punjab,

Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to join the movement," said Sukhbir Panwar, a farmer from Fatehabad district in Haryana.

Thousands of farmers marching from Punjab as part of their "Delhi Chalo" cam-

paign against the farm laws, braved water cannons and tear gas shells in Haryana to reach Delhi on Friday. They were, however, not allowed into the national Capital. As the protests continued, the Centre, which looks after the national Capital's

law and order, relented and fixed a place for their agitation.

Hundreds of the protesters, however, refused to go to the outer Delhi protest venue and have remained camped at several places on the outskirts of the national Capital.

War of words between Haryana and Punjab CMs on Farmers' protest

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and his Punjab counterpart Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday entered into verbal fullscale on the farmers' protest with the former accusing the latter of not answering his calls while the Punjab CM retorted saying he will not speak to Khattar until he gets an apology for "inflicting brutality" on farmers marching to Delhi.

"Khattar is lying that he tried calling me earlier and I did not respond. But now, after what he has done to my farmers, I will not speak to him even if he calls me 10 times. Unless he apologises and admits that he did wrong with Punjab's farmers, I will not forgive him," said Capt Amarinder, seeking apology from the Haryana CM for "inflicting brutality" on farmers.

Detailed report on P3

Marine Commandos deployed at Pangong

India preparing for long haul at LAC, bolsters its readiness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



As several rounds of talks to defuse tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have failed so far, India is preparing for a long haul and has bolstered its readiness by deploying crack commandos of the Navy at some stand-off points.

While the Army has already positioned its Special Forces and para-commandos, the elite Marine commandos (MARCOS) of the Navy have also joined in by patrolling the Pangong Tso (lake). This lake in Eastern Ladakh is one of the four or five face-off sites where the Indian and Chinese troops are in eyeball to eyeball situation for the past seven months.

Having taken positions at the lake, these commandos may also be rotated at the other flash points, sources said here on Saturday. This will enable them to familiarise themselves with the weather, topography and how to survive in harsh winters. Incidentally, the temperature has already dipped to minus 10 degrees C in several parts of Ladakh and will plummet to minus 30 degrees in the coming weeks.

The Army has already supplied more than adequate prefabricated huts for the troops now readying themselves for deployment in the winter months. More than one lakh

troops from India and China are now positioned at the LAC in the 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh. China has also ramped up its logistical support for its troops for a long winter there.

The MARCOS commandoes are one of the world's best trained and were seen in action during the initial phase of Mumbai terror attack in 2008.

Some teams of the MARCOS are already working alongside the Indian Army commandoes in Jammu & Kashmir as part of the anti-terrorist operations. The Navy commandoes are guard some of the key water bodies in Kashmir.

J&K voters defy boycott call, DDC polls record 51% turnout

3.62L vote to elect 43 candidates; Pak refugees allowed to vote for first time

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Celebrating the festival of democracy at the grass-roots level, more than 51 per cent voters on Saturday stepped out of their homes ignoring poll boycott calls and chilly weather conditions to cast their vote in the maiden District Development Council and Panchayat bypolls being held for the first time after the reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories and the Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A in August 2019.

The other highlight of the polls was healthy participation of the Pakistani refugees and women electorate in large numbers. The Pak refugees were deprived of their voting rights as long as J&K enjoyed



Voters undergo thermal screening as they arrive to cast their votes for the first phase of District Development Council elections at Hariganwan area of Gund in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir on Saturday

PTI

the special status.

Addressing a press conference after the first phase of polling ended, State Election Commissioner KK Sharma said, "The first phase of DDC polls passed off peacefully across the Union Territory of J&K in which over 3.62 lakh voters participated". He said barring one single incident of stone throwing by a youth no other major incident of poll related violence was reported

from anywhere during the polling hours.

Sharma added, "Around 46.6 per cent women and 54 per cent male electorate came out to vote during the day". He said Kashmir region recorded little over 40.65 per cent polling while Jammu region recorded over 64 per cent voter turnout. Significantly, terror infested Pulwama district recorded the lowest voter turnout of 6.7 per cent.

Modi reviews vaccine progress first-hand

PM visits facilities of Zydus Cadila, Bharat Biotech, Serum Institute of India in three cities

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As part of his effort to review the progress of Covid-19 vaccine development, its launch and distribution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday visited major vaccine

manufacturing institutions — Zydus Biotech Park in Ahmedabad, Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad and Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune — and interacted with the scientists there to get "a first-hand perspective of the prepa-

rations, challenges and roadmap in India's endeavour to vaccinate its citizens".

Modi began his day-long three-city tour in the morning by flying first to Ahmedabad and thereafter heading to Zydus Cadila's Vaccine Technology Centre located at Changodar Park, where he

went around the place and interacted with the team of scientists behind the ongoing vaccine development effort "to know more about the indigenous DNA based vaccine being developed there".

Zydus Cadila is developing its Covid-19 vaccine candidate ZyCoV-D.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits the Zydus Biotech Park to review the development of Covid-19 vaccine, in Ahmedabad on Saturday

PTI

CAPSULE

PAWAN BANSAL MADE CONGRESS TREASURER

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi has appointed Pawan Kumar Bansal as the party treasurer following the demise of senior leader Ahmed Patel, a statement said on Saturday. Bansal, a former union minister, is the AICC in-charge of administration.

**UP GUV OK'S RELIGIOUS CONVERSION ORDINANCE**

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Saturday gave assent to an ordinance against forcible or fraudulent religious conversions that provides for imprisonment up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 under different categories.

AIR QUALITY SLIPS TO 'POOR' LEVEL AGAIN IN NCR

Noida: The air quality remained "moderate" in Faridabad but slipped to "poor" level in Gurgaon, Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad on Saturday.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 93,90,791

DEATHS: 1,36,705

RECOVERED:

87,99,249

ACTIVE: 4,52,688



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	18,14,515	46,986	16,76,564
Karnataka	8,82,608	11,750	8,46,082
Andhra Pradesh	8,67,063	6,981	8,48,511
Tamil Nadu	7,79,046	11,694	7,56,279
Kerala	5,93,958	2,197	5,26,797
Delhi	5,61,742	8,998	5,16,166
Uttar Pradesh	5,39,899	7,718	5,06,938
West Bengal	4,77,446	8,322	4,44,587
Odisha	3,17,789	1,783	3,10,549
Telangana	2,68,418	1,451	2,56,330
Rajasthan	2,62,805	2,274	2,31,780
Chhattisgarh	2,34,725	2,830	2,10,917
Bihar	2,34,553	1,253	2,27,714
Haryana	2,30,713	2,375	2,08,422
Assam	2,12,483	980	2,08,187
Gujarat	2,06,714	3,953	1,88,069

HOME THEATRE

Only for the kiddies



THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES: PART TWO
Netflix
***ing: Kurt Russell, Goldie Hawn, Judah Lewis, Darby Camp, Kimberly Williams-Paisley, Julian Dennison, Tyrese Gibson**
Rated: 6/10

If an adult is watching this, it will be difficult to get past the strange language the elves speak or the near bizarreness of the entire storyline. But first, they are Santa's elves; they can speak whatever they want as long as Santa Claus understands the same. Second, it is a Christmas movie. What else is one going to expect but a good Santa Claus and Mrs Claus. An evil elf who is hell bent on destroying Christmas forever. Imagine the catastrophe in the child's life if there was no Christmas, no gifts, no stocking to hang, no gingerbread house or cookies; it is akin to a Diwali with no crackers.

Having said that, the kids are going to love this movie. The elves are cute and you want to cuddle them even if one of them is evil. The entire Santa's village is a sight to behold – a giant Christmas tree

in the middle of the square with lights twinkling, guns firing snow at regular intervals (it is a secret village in the North Pole that no one is supposed to know about so it has a shield cover), hot chocolate you revive you instantly and most importantly the idea of a Christmas with healthy food – broccoli cake!

Santa's sleigh is another high point. It is like a high-speed sledge with reindeers managing to dodge the evil elf's hyenas or so they look like. Totally something out of a sci-fi film.

Then there is Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn, one of Hollywood's most enduring duos who have been together for 37 years. Goldie here has a much bigger part to play than the cameo she did in the original one. She maintains the holiday spirit and does magic at the span of her fingers. The film rests on their shoulders and while one can see the familiarity and ease, they have with each other, the plot doesn't really help them steer it to safety.

Over all it is a movie that the children will love; the adults can give this one a miss

— Shalini Saksena

Feel good family treat

DOLLY PARTON'S CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE
Netflix
***ing: Dolly Patron, Jennifer Lewis, Josh Segarra, Jeanine Mason, Treat William, Jenna Hathaway**
Rated: 5.5/10

Those who don't know who Dolly Patron is, here is a bit about her. She is one of the most honoured female country performers of all time, achieving 25 RIAA certified Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum awards. She has had 25 songs reach No 1 on the Billboard country music charts — a record for a female artist.

Not only this, she has nine Grammy Awards, two Academy Award nominations, ten Country Music Association Awards, seven Academy of Country Music Awards, three American Music Awards and hit films like Steel Magnolias and 9 to 5 to her credit.

This one, a musical, was bound to create a stir given it is the whole Scrooge thing. This time it is a rich woman who has inherited her father's property and is all set to evict everyone on Christmas Day! But it is a Christmas movie and hence the whole idea of giving rather than receiving. No surprises here how it ends.

The surprise is how beautifully this musical has been curated. The dancers are amazing, the set is beautifully done and how the dialogues have been woven into songs.

While there is nothing much in terms of the story, the fun is in watching the great choreography, a few toe-tapping tunes, creating a fantasy and that miracles happen.

— Shalini Saksena



Plan Your Day



For all those shopaholics out there, Black Friday is anything but a normal day. With major offers and discounts pouring in, it is hard to not shop anything. While now the day has gone for sure, but not the offers. Here are a few brands that are offering major discounts and deals till November 30 that will have your Sunday sorted, without you having to risk your life by making some random outing plan during Covid.

Kiko Milano: The leading Italian cosmetics brand has unveiled its most tempting offer of the season — Buy 3 and Get 3 free, applicable on the entire range across categories available at Kiko Milano exclusive stores pan India. Pamper yourself and don't miss a chance to avail this exhilarating offer till November 30.

Abhishek Bhattacharya, Country Director, Kiko Milano says, "Every year, customers increasingly anticipate tempting offers & await in excitement for the brands to reveal them for Black Friday sales. This year's beauty deals are set to be more riveting than ever, with

our '3 + 3' Black Friday special promotion, we expect the sales to grow by multi-folds alongside acquisition of a new customer base."

Mad Over Donuts: India's favorite donut brand — is giving all its patrons another reason to Bite Into Happiness with their Black Friday Sale till today. With exciting offers like buy 3 donuts and get 3 free, buy 4 donuts and get 2 free, and buy 6 donuts and get 6 free across all their specialty stores, Mad Over Donuts is sure to satisfy your sweet tooth cravings in the sweetest possible way. Visit your nearby Mad Over Donuts stores to check the offer. So, what are you waiting for! Bite into Happiness with Mad Over Donuts' Black Friday Sale!

My Protein: Bringing this sense of festivity to India is Myprotein, the world's leader in nutrition products and fitness goods. Myprotein wants to foster this spirit of celebration in India by encouraging a guilt-free shopping spree through their site-wide promotional offers and unbelievable discounts on the big day. It is sure to be the biggest end-of-year sale, with deals too good to pass up on! Keeping in mind India's distinctive tastes, Myprotein has constantly kept things exciting by innovating new and localised products. This November too is earmarked for some incredible new releases. Their bestselling Impact Whey Protein is now

out in the exciting Masala Chai flavour for our legions of tea lovers. The light and refreshingly juicy Clear Whey Isolate, featuring 20g of protein per serving and low in sugar, is available in exciting flavours and has been a best seller in the UK already.

So make the best use of these offers: 27% off @ ₹6,000 | Use code: BF27 or 30% off exclusive on chocolate proteins + 3 Free gifts @ ₹8,000.

Mia by Tanishq: Mia by Tanishq, one of India's most fashionable jewellery brands unveils an exclusive Black Friday sale on the occasion of Thanksgiving and onset of the holiday season. Black Friday is just around the corner and Mia is offering its customers exciting offers. Consumers can now get Upto 25%* off valid on Mia products till November 29, 2020.

The offer is applicable on different jewellery categories from dainty earrings, bracelets, finger rings to an assortment of neck wears and nose pins. To celebrate the Thanksgiving month with family and friends customers can indulge in gifting Mia's 14 Karat light-weight, fashionable and stylish gold and silver jewellery. Get your hands on the best offers and shine with elegance.

Customers can also sport their favourite pieces from the latest festive collection 'Lyana' and together create heart-warming moments.



TELLY TALE

TUNE IN TO HERO MODE

Get ready for a wonder like never before as Sony SAB's announces its mega-launch of the year *Hero — Gayab Mode On*. With the power of invisibility as a distinctive element in the story, the show promises to be a pure visual delight for the audience blended with a gripping storyline that will leave you asking for more. The show is slated to launch on December 7, every Mon-Fri at 8 pm.

The show is an incredible journey of a common man, Veer (Abhishek Nigam) and his quest to find his father. His life gets fascinatingly exciting as Veer chances upon a miraculous ring, which upon wearing gives him the power of invisibility. The ring can only be worn and owned by someone who has the inherent virtues of kindness, courage, selflessness, nobility and empathy. At the same time, it also has the power to corrupt and degrade the weak hearted making them vicious. But Veer decides to



use this superpower for good, making him the Hero. However, Veer's prized possession is also desired by the evil aliens of the outer world and here begins Hero's real challenge to save humanity.

Introducing Abhishek Nigam in the lead role of Veer aka Hero who promises to live on the screen along with the very talented Manish Wadhwa as Amal Nanda, Ajay Gehi as Shukracharya, the gorgeous Yesha Rughani as Zaara, Nitish Pandey as Mama and the super-cute twins Surabhi and Samridhi as sisters Sweetie & Meethi along with a host of other stars in the show's galaxy.

WHAT'S IN A PROFESSION?

Presenting a heartfelt romantic drama, Colors is set to launch *Namak Issk Ka*, a journey of a flamboyant Chamcham who is looked down upon for her profession but is married off into a reputable family in Mumbai.

Even though Chamcham is a dancer traditionally known as Nachaniya, she is a levelheaded and morally righteous person

Raised in an orphanage, Chamcham became a dancer in order to make ends meet and to take care of those dependent on her. To essay the character of Chamcham,



actor Shrutika Sharma has been roped in. Shrutika Sharma says: "I am very excited to have landed this role. Chamcham is an incredible character, and playing her gives me a lot of scope for performance as an actor. The concept o-f the show is very strong and the background story of the character and her journey will definitely change social perceptions. I am also grateful to Colors for giving me this very special opportunity and I look forward to working on the show and giving it my all."

Kya aap kareng ek nachaniya ko bahu ke roop mein sweekaar? Watch Namak Issk Ka coming soon only on Colors.

RAGHAV'S ENTRY IN RENUKA'S LIFE

Zee TV recently presented a heart-warming story that captures the essence of the ever-evolving dynamics of the saas-bahu relationship in Indian society. Titled *Hamarwali Good News*, it showcases a unique role reversal between the daughter-in-law Navya (Srishti Jain) and her mother-in-law Renuka (Juhi Parmar) to give their family the much awaited Good News.

Versatile actress Juhi Parmar plays the role of Renuka in the show, who is the mother-in-law and the lifeline of the Tiwari family. Shakti Anand, on the other hand, is seen essaying the pivotal character of Mukund, who is Renuka's husband and Navya's father-in-law.

We've seen how Renuka and Mukund have been distant from each other and while we've seen the duo clash and argue like every couple, recently Renuka was trying to make an attempt to get closer to Mukund once again. However, it looks like a new character is all set to take their arguments to a whole new level. Manish Goel is all set to enter as Dr Raghav in Hamarwali Good News and it is his past equation with Renuka that will take the Tiwaris by storm.

Apparently, Raghav and Renuka were in love and he was going to ask for her hand in marriage. However, Mukund's *rishita* came in before he could make his move and the rest is history. While her husband was initially unaware, he came to know after seven-eight

years of marriage and since then his relationship with Renuka has never been the same. Mukund felt that he has been betrayed and has been suspicious of her ever since. When Raghav and Renuka bump into one another after so many years, how will Mukund react? And what will Raghav do after meeting Renuka? Well, the audience is in for a treat as a lot of twists and turns are set to play out in the next few episodes.

With Raghav all set to enter *Hamarwali Good News* and create chaos in Renuka and Mukund's life, the audience will surely want to know what will happen next in the Tiwari *parivaar*.

GET READY TO MEET PHOOL KUMARI

Bhojpuri film icon and bold performer Rani Chatterjee has successfully made a mark in the entertainment industry. The daring actor is all set to make heads turn as she enters &TV's *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari*. Portraying the role of Nanhe's (Sudhir Neema) love interest Phool Kumari, Rani will create a spectacle amongst the men in the family whereas with the women, not so much.

When Gudiya (Sarika Bahroliya) finds out that Nanhe's medical reports show traces of cancer she is disheartened to learn that he has only a few days left to live. To make the most for Nanhe who longs for a companion, Phool Kumari enters the house, adding an extra dose of entertainment and



humour. Everyone in the house is astonished by her breathtaking looks and latke-jhatkes. They can't resist themselves and always seem to have an excuse to be around her and her kaatil adaayein.

Expressing her excitement, Rani Chatterjee says: "I am thrilled to portray the role of Phool Kumari. It is the first time I will be exploring this genre, and I believe that this show is the perfect fit for me to make a debut in it. As Phool Kumari now enters the show, viewers will be in for a treat. I am sure they will enjoy this new role of mine and continue to shower me with their love and support."

'Replacements come with challenges'

ASHI SINGH, who has recently replaced AVNEET KAUR to play Yasmine in Sony Sab's Aladdin Naam Toh Suna Hoga, speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about the challenges that she faced and reveals that she would love to be a part of Jhalak Dikhhlaa Jaa

■ **What made you say yes to play Yasmine??**

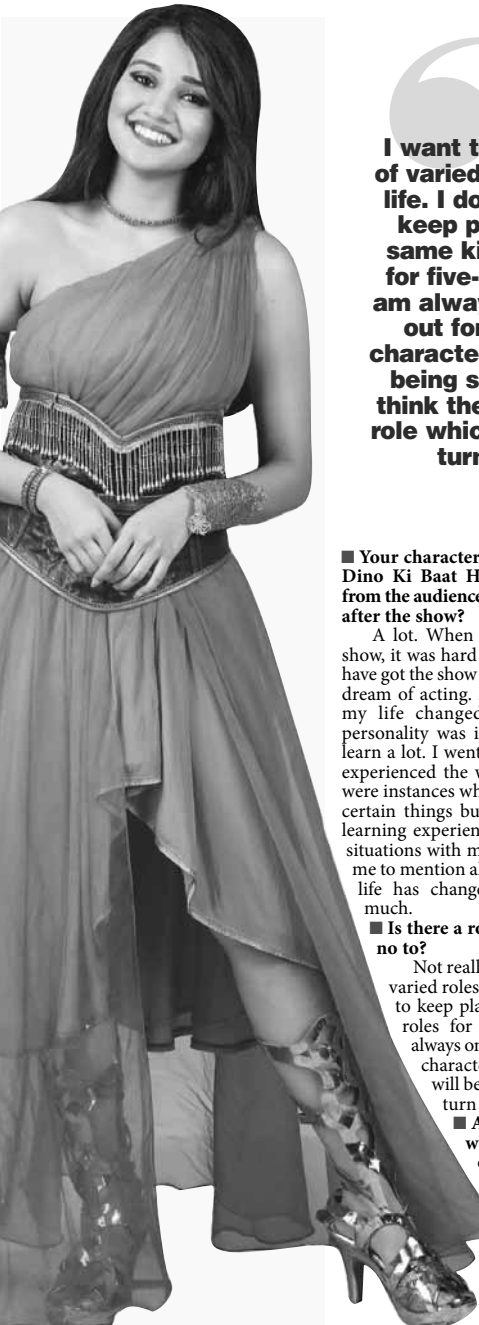
The character of course. Initially, I was apprehensive about taking up the role because it is a replacement, but when I got know about the storyline and the character brief, I liked it very much. It was something that I wanted to do. It is something that one doesn't get to do in daily life. I am fortunate to have got a chance to play this role.

■ **Was it hard to get into the skin of the character? More so because you have replaced Avneet, and the character was already well-established?**

Yes. It was extremely difficult to get into the skin of the character because if the audience has seen an actor play a character for two years, it becomes hard for them to accept another actor play the same role. Also, I didn't have the scope to play it purely my way, because Avneet portrayed it in her way and comparisons will be drawn. Initially, it took a lot of thoughts to play it differently from the previous actor and still maintain the essence. That was a double pressure. Also, it was out of my comfort zone, it required action that I haven't done earlier. There was so much to do.

■ **Some memories from the sets.**

It's been only a while since I am a part of this show, but having said that I have some great memories already. From eating lunch together with the cast to sharing our life experiences with each other, we already have created that rapport. Sometime, even I wonder *hamare paas itni baatein aati kaha se hain*. I share a very good bond with Ginu (played by Raashul Tandon), Sheefan (played by Amit Raghuvanshi), Koyal (played by Shivani Badoni) and Aladdin (played by Siddharth Nigam). We never shy away from pulling each other's leg. There is a very dark location at the sets where we shoot all the haunted scenes, so in our free time all five of us sit there and share ghost stories. It is fun.



“I want to play a lot of varied roles in my life. I don't want to keep playing the same kind of roles for five-six years. I am always on a look out for different characters. With that being said, I don't think there will be a role which I will ever turn down”

■ **Your character Naina from Yeh Unn Dino Ki Baat Hai earned much love from the audience. How has life changed after the show?**

A lot. When I started shooting the show, it was hard for me to accept that I have got the show and that I am living my dream of acting. During the show only, my life changed for the better. My personality was improved and I got to learn a lot. I went out of my bubble and experienced the world out there. There were instances when I was troubled with certain things but now they serve as a learning experience and help me tackle situations with much ease. It is hard for me to mention all the ways in which my life has changed after it, there's so much.

■ **Is there a role that you would say no to?**

Not really. I want to play a lot of varied roles in my life. I don't want to keep playing the same kind of roles for five-six years. I am always on a look out for different characters. I don't think there will be a role which I will ever turn down.

■ **A reality show that you would like to be a part of?**

Yes. I would really want to be a part of *Jhalak Dikhhlaa Jaa*. I like the show since my childhood and would love to be a part of it.

Farmers' protest backed by political parties, organisations of Pb: Khattar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Saturday said the ongoing farmers' march is mainly backed by political parties and some organizations of Punjab adding that he has been trying to contact Punjab Chief Minister, Capt Amarinder Singh regarding the farmers' march since the last three days, but he did not respond.

Khattar said it is really unfortunate and condemnable to see how some people are furthering their political agendas in the name of farmers, appealing to the farmers of Punjab that their representatives should hold talks with the

Central Government as this is the only solution.

Interacting with media persons after presiding over the meeting of District Public Relations and Grievances Committee in Gurugram, Khattar said, "I personally made several calls to the Punjab Chief Minister but every time the request was denied. It is really unfortunate to say that this is the first time it has ever happened that one Chief Minister is trying to talk to another Chief Minister, but his counterpart is not ready to talk," he said.

Only Chief Minister Punjab can answer as to why he refused to talk, said Khattar, while responding to a question asked for the reason behind

Capt Amarinder Singh not taking his calls. "My office told me that they tried to contact him (Capt Amarinder) over telephone on six to seven occasions and every time his staff used to say we will soon get back and then they used to give the plea that the CM was busy in a meeting and so on."

"But it was a very strange situation that the chief minister of a state wants to talk to his counterpart of another state but is unable to get through after so many attempts. For six years, I have been a CM. Never before such a thing has happened. We even talk to opposition leaders. Earlier too, I have been having telephone conversations with the Punjab CM

CM SAYS

- ◆ Capt Amarinder did not take my calls nor called back
- ◆ Officials in Punjab CM's office have been directing protesters
- ◆ Farmers must talk to the Centre, that is the only way forward
- ◆ Punjab political parties and organisations behind protest
- ◆ Haryana farmers not participating in protest



and even when he was busy, he used to call back after 30 or 60 minutes. This time for three days attempts to reach him were made, but he didn't respond," alleged Khattar. Alleging a conspiracy, he

said "card holders" (officials) in the Punjab CM's office have been directing protesters. Replying to a question, Khattar asserted that farmers should talk to the Centre. "There is no purpose of bringing large

gatherings to Delhi. We appealed to Punjab farmers that their representatives could come and talk. Farmers must talk to the Centre, that is the only way forward," he said.

Meanwhile, Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij in Ambala said, "Farmers from the rest of the country have accepted the new farm laws but in Punjab due to political reasons and Amarinder Singh's engineering, they are holding a stir." He hoped that

farmers will soon realise that the laws are for their benefit.

The Haryana CM said farmers of Haryana did not participate in this march, for which he thanked them. Appreciating Haryana Police for dealing with this march, the Chief Minister said that the police showed restraint and did not use any force. The State Police only tried to stop the farmers from unjustifiably marching towards Delhi in such a large number.

Defer all engagements to solve farmers issues as national priority: SAD to PM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "put all other engagements on hold and personally address and resolve the genuine demands of the agitating 'annadata' of the country as a 'top national priority'."

"The agitators' demands on the three anti-farmer Acts are perfectly legitimate, secular and constitutional. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have repeatedly maintained that the Assured Marketing of farmers' produce at Minimum Support Price will be continued under all circumstances. That being so, there should be no objection to nor problem in giving a legal shape to the government's commitments through necessary legislation," the Core Committee of the party said.

A meeting of the Core Committee which met here, also came down heavily against Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar for his "highly provocative, dangerous and divisive statement dubbing the farmers as Khalistanis." "Do these beleaguered elderly men and ladies from farmers' families look like Khalistanis to Khattar and his party? It is not the farmers' but the Haryana CM himself who is guilty of flouting the Constitution of the country on the anniversary of the Adoption Day of the Statute, the Core Committee said.

Harcharan Bains, Principal Advisor to the SAD President, said the Core Committee accused the Haryana CM of trying to revive the old Congress tactics to paint its political opponents as separatists. "It is the same mindset that was responsible for the

Congress repression against Akali agitators in 1982 and continued for a decade and a half, painting a fiercely patriotic community as separatist," said the SAD Resolution, adding that the Haryana CM was trying to create advance-justification for repression and persecution against farmers."

The SAD president said that SAD and every Akali worker has been in the movement from day-one. "We led a massive farmers' protest march from three sacred Takhat Sahiban to Chandigarh. The party later merged its efforts with the on-going movement as there were apprehensions that a parallel show by SAD might hamper a united fight against the center. Since then, in deference to the wishes of the agitating farmers, our entire focus and efforts have been towards a united fight with wholehearted participation by our

workers and local leaders at different levels," Badal said.

The SAD president has set up a three-member Committee including Balwinder Singh Bhundur, Prem Singh Chandumajra and Sikander Singh Maluka to coordinate with leaders of the like-minded national and regional parties across the country for all-round support to secure justice for the farmers and get the Laws against them repealed. The Committee will also coordinate with the organizers of the farmers movement for the success of the on-going agitation.

Badal also directed party's Haryana unit leaders to step up mobilisation for the farmers' cause and to ensure regular flow of langar and medical facilities for the agitating farmers. He also directed the district and circle Jathedars of the party to step up this partici-

pation and work round the clock for the success of the farmers movement.

They have been directed to ensure regular supply of Langar, medical care and other forms of logistic support to the movement. Badal has directed Akali leaders to personally visit the families of protesters while they are away to Delhi for the success of the Movement.

Senior party leaders who attended the meeting of the core committee included Balwinder Singh Bhundur, SGPC President Bibi Jagir Kaur, Prem Singh Chandumajra, Charanjit Singh Atwal, Gulzar Singh Ranike, Upinderjit Kaur, Janmeja Singh Sekhon, Sikander Singh Maluka, Daljit Singh Cheema, Hira Singh Gabria, Jagmit Singh Brar, Baldev Singh Mann, Sharanjit Singh Dhillon and Surjit Singh Rakhra.

Persons on social gathering restricted to 50: Himachal CM

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday said casual approach of the people particularly in social gatherings such as marriages etc. has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of covid-19 patients, announcing that the State Government has now decided to restrict the number of persons on all the social gatherings to 50 persons.

He said that all the political functions would be held virtually and restriction on numbers would be implemented in letter and spirit in such functions. Presiding over a meeting through video conferencing with the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Chief Medical Officers, Principals and Medical Superintendents of various Government Medical Colleges of the State from Shimla, the chief minister expressed concern over the increase in number of Covid-19 cases as well as deaths of Covid-19 patients in the State and directed the officers to take effective steps to increase the bed capacities in their respective districts.

The Chief Minister said the State Government has decided to enforce five days office and sixth day work from home for all the Government employees of the State till 31st December to break the chain of this virus. He said that the State Government would also consider imposing curfew from 9 pm to 6 am in the four districts, viz. Shimla, Mandi, Kullu and Kangra, adding that the situation would be reviewed from time to time.

Thakur said the State Government has also decided to increase the bed capacity in all district, zonal and civil hospitals to facilitate patients and to meet out any eventuality. He said that all the prefabricated Covid Centres coming up in the State would be completed at the earliest, pointing out that the Government of India has sanctioned seven oxygen plants for the State.

He directed the Deputy Commissioners to identify the land for the same so that they could be set up at the earliest. He said that to ensure proper and effective management of hospitals, the Government had also decided to make foolproof arrangements in hospitals by desig-

nating a senior official as in-charge of Covid ward for better treatment of the patients. He also directed the Deputy Commissioners to rope in private hospitals and laboratories for testing and treatment of Covid patients.

The Chief Minister said that proper protocol must be adopted for treatment of the asymptomatic patients under home isolation, adding that such patients must be provided all required inputs for their proper medication. He said that adequate arrangements of pulse oximeters must be made for these patients so that they could regularly monitor oxygen levels in blood. He pointed out that it has been felt that the change in climate was also resulting in the fast spread of this virus, adding that senior doctors must ensure at least three rounds of the wards of covid-19 patients to instill confidence in the patients.

Thakur said that shortage of staff particularly in health institutions with more cases of Covid-19 patients would be met out by deploying adequate staff. He said that adequate para medical staff would also be made available in the health institutions to facilitate fast testing and tracing. He said that the casual approach of people and laxity in adhering to the laid down SOPs was a major reason for the spread of the virus, asking the officers to check this tendency and take remedial measures in this regard by enforcing the instructions of the Government issued from time to time.

Health Minister Rajiv Saizal also gave his suggestions on the occasion. Chief Secretary Anil Khachi also felt the need for adopting a humane approach towards the Covid-19 patients. Secretary Health Amitabh Awasthi said effective steps would be taken to rationalise the staff in health institutions to provide adequate staff for treatment of Covid patients.

Jal Shakti Minister Mahender Singh Thakur, Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, Director General of Police Sanjay Kundra, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister J.C. Sharma, Mission Director NHM Nipun Jindal, Principal ICMC Shimla Dr Rajneesh Pathania, Director Medical Education Dr Ravi Sharma and other officers attended the meeting.

Protesting farmers charged with attempt to murder, rioting in Hry

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH / AMBALA

The Haryana Police has booked state Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) chief Gurnam Singh Charuni and several farmers on attempt to murder, rioting, causing obstruction in government duty and other charges for violations during their 'Delhi Chalo' march.

A cases was registered on November 26 under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 147 (rioting), 149 (unlawful assembly), 186 (obstructing any public servant in discharge of public functions) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) among others at the Parao police station on a complaint from Head Constable Pardeep Kumar as hundreds of farmers assem-

bled on the GT road near Ambala Cantt to proceed towards the national capital.

The FIR names Charuni and several other unknown farmers as accused. According to it, the BKU Haryana chief and others had gathered near Mohra village in Ambala. The FIR says Deputy Superintendent of Police Ram Kumar, who was leading the police team at the spot, asked Charuni not to proceed further but he refused. It adds that Charuni and other farmers broke police barricades with their tractors.

Some of the police officials had a narrow escape and could have been run over by the tractors heading towards Delhi, says the FIR. Charuni and other farmers also violated guidelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it further states. A case against

some farmers from BKU (Charuni) and others from Punjab was also registered at Panipat for violations relating to breaking police barriers and other charges.

A case has been registered under the provisions of section 188 IPC (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), Disaster Management Act, 2005 and under other provisions of the IPC, Inspector Rajvir Singh, SHO of Panipat's Police Station (Industrial) in Sector 29, said over the phone.

Prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPc had been imposed in several parts of Haryana to prevent the assembly of people. Farmers from Punjab and Haryana are marching towards Delhi as part of a protest to demand a repeal of the Centre's new farm laws.

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Lashing out at his Haryana counterpart for inflicting such brutality on Punjab farmers, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday demanded an unequivocal apology from Manohar Lal Khattar, accusing him of spreading lies and sticking his nose into a matter in which his state had no role to play.

"Khattar is lying that he tried calling me earlier and I did not respond. But now, after what he has done to my farmers, I will not speak to him even if he calls me 10 times. Unless he apologises and admits that he did wrong with Punjab's farmers, I will not forgive him," said Capt Amarinder in a series of media interviews.

After Haryana's actions of tear gassing and baton-charging Punjab's farmers and hurling water cannons at them, causing many of them to be injured, there was no way he would talk to Khattar again "neighbour or no neighbour," he asserted. In any case, said Capt Amarinder, if he could talk to the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister so many times on the farmers' issue, why would he have not taken calls from a neighbouring chief minister if he had truly called earlier.

Questioning Khattar's decision not to allow farmers to go peacefully to the national capital when the Centre was ready to talk to them and even the Delhi government had no problem letting them in, Capt Amarinder demanded to know "who's Khattar to come in between? What business does he have interfering in this whole affair?"

Capt Amarinder also slammed Khattar for making baseless allegations that he (Punjab CM) was instigating the farmers and provoking them to agitate.

"I am a nationalist to the core, I run a border state and will never do anything to create law and order problem of any kind," he asserted, adding that for 60 days the farmers were blocking Punjab's railway

Capt Amarinder also slammed Khattar for making baseless allegations that he (Punjab CM) was instigating the farmers and provoking them to agitate

tracks, causing more than Rs 43000 crore in losses to the state, without any problem.

"I will not take this nonsense from Khattar. Don't I have better things to do than to incite farmers?" he said, adding that "sometimes they say it's Khalistanis who're managing the protests and sometimes they accuse me of doing it...let them make up their minds." The Chief Minister categorically declared that no political party was involved in the farm protests, which were a spontaneous reaction of the farmers who were fighting for their future.

Lambasting Khattar's charges of the farmers creating law and order problem, the Chief Minister said the Punjabis were law-abiding citizens and it was Haryana which was damaging public property and blocking the highways by forcibly stopping the farmers.

Terming as ludicrous Khattar's claim that Haryana farmers were not part of the 'Dilli Chalo' agitation, the Punjab Chief Minister said Punjab's intelligence showed that as many as 40000-50000 farmers from the neighbouring state had joined the march to the national capital, which even the Centre's intelligence reports would have borne out. "He (Khattar) doesn't know what's happening in his own state and he's telling me what to do in my state!" quipped Capt Amarinder.

The farmers have the right to protest and speak their mind, they have the right to go to their own national capital to express their angst and feelings, said the Chief Minister, adding that he knows what the farmers are feeling, which is why he has not stopped them from

leaving the state, nor did he prevent them from sitting on the train tracks. Pointing out that the farmers had announced their decision to go to Delhi several days ago, even before lifting the rail blockade, he asked "how did Amarinder come in?"

"The agitating farmers, who include a large number of youngsters, are speaking from their heart, they are listening to the voices of their hearts. It's a question of their future, their lives, they are angry over the Farm Bills which seeks to destroy a well-tryed and successful 100-year-old system of Mandis and Arhtiyas," remarked the Chief Minister, adding that he will not accept all the baseless charges of him being behind the farmers' protest lying down.

These farmers only want to raise their voice, they want to speak out, how can anyone stop them, asked Captain Amarinder, pointing out.

Declaring that nobody was stopping corporate houses from coming into the agricultural marketing system, the Chief Minister pointed out that they are even now procuring and running businesses in Punjab. They can do this while continuing with the existing system, both can run in parallel, he added.

The Chief Minister said he also wanted the issue to be settled and the confrontation to end, and will do what he can to help resolve the problem. He was prepared to back any attempts by the Centre to end this imbroglio, he said, adding that the Government of India has to talk to the farmers and find a solution.

"If the Gov asks Punjab to be part of the efforts to resolve the issue, we will definitely go," he said, adding that "my aim is peace and prosperity for Punjab." The Centre should amend the Food Security Act to guarantee MSP to the farmers, Capt Amarinder suggested.

Capt Amarinder lamented that the Governor was sitting over the state's amendment Bills instead of forwarding them to the President.

SPECIAL VOTER SUMMARY REVISION-2021

From 16th November, 2020 to 15th December, 2020

Turning 18 on 01.01.2021 or Before ? Not Registered as Voter even though you became 18+ on or before 01.01.2021 ?

NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

National Voters Service Portal

<http://www.nvsp.in>

Who can apply:-

- An Indian Citizen
- 18 years of age on or before 15th November 2020
- Ordinary Resident of Polling area
- Not disqualified on any of the ground viz. not a citizen of India or of unsound mind declared by any competent court or Disqualified from Voting due to specified corrupt practices or offenses relating to Elections.

How to apply (On-line):-

- Visit National Voters Service Portal (NVSP) www.nvsp.in
- Click Apply On-line and Enroll your name by filling your name and address in FORM 6 and also upload your Photograph, proof of Age/Residence.
- If any modifications or correction of entries in the Electoral Rolls is required, FORM 8 to be filled by clicking on Correction of Entries in Electoral Rolls
- Overseas Voters may apply online for Registration by filling FORM 6-A

How to apply (Off-line):-

- All forms are available with Electoral Registration Office (ERO) and Booth Level Officer (BLO) or forms may also be downloaded from the website www.ecl.nic.in
- Apply by filling & submitting concerned form with Photo, proof of Age & Address
- Forms may be also submitted at Voter Registration Centre
- Forms may also be filled up online @ www.nvsp.in

Dial Toll Free No.

1950

For more information & help

Following prescribed forms need to be filled

- Form 6** Application for inclusion of name in electoral roll
- Form 6A** Application for inclusion of name in electoral roll by an overseas elector
- Form 7** Application for objecting inclusion or seeking deletion of name in electoral roll
- Form 8** Application for correction to particulars entered in electoral roll
- Form 8A** Application for transportation of entry in electoral roll

Forms can be obtained/submitted between 16.11.2020 and 15.12.2020 (only on working days).

For obtaining/submitting forms, please contact :

- Designed officer appointed at concerned polling station/concerned BLO.
- Office of concerned Electoral Registration Officer (ADM/SDM).
- Office of concerned District Election Officer (DC).

Stay safe-keep others safe too. Be a responsible Citizen

Wear mask properly

Wash your hands with soap frequently or Use Sanitizer

Keep Social Distance of minimum 6 ft.

Consume healthy diet.

Use Aarogya Setu App.

Chief Electoral Officer, Himachal Pradesh

Website : www.ceohimachal.gov.in <http://www.nvsp.in/>

Naidu calls for promoting cycling culture in cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called for promoting cycling culture and creating exclusive cycling tracks in cities and for that a mass movement to encourage cycling is required.

He urged the Government to integrate cycling into urban transport system and that the cities must plan city wide bicycle-sharing schemes, implement carbon credit to benefit cyclists and also promote E-Bicycles.

Naidu said cycling benefits include low-cost, zero pollution and improved health. Virtually delivering the key-note address at an International Webinar on 'Cycling in the post-Covid world', Naidu said there is a need to create a mass movement to encourage cycling through rigorous awareness campaigns and regular promotional events. Terming the webinar theme as timely and important, he called for collective global efforts to make the planet greener and safer.

Observing that the pandemic has changed the way we live, buy, utilise our time and commute, the Vice President pointed out that restrictions in many cities across the world have resulted in a reduction of motorized traffic and an increase in people choosing to walk or ride bicycles.

Pointing out that cycling was one of the best ways to reduce the risk associated with a sedentary lifestyle, he said that cycling provides several benefits in the form of zero dependence on energy sources, zero pollution, and improved health.

"Additionally, bicycles can



The vice President advised urban planners and policymakers to have a re-look at their plans and policies and earmark exclusive cycling tracks

provide critical support to the urban and rural poor who do not have access to the basic mobility", Naidu added.

Stating that the pandemic has provided a rare opportunity to promote and integrate cycling into the urban transport system, he advised urban planners and policymakers to have a re-look at their plans and policies and earmark exclusive cycling tracks.

Observing that many urban cycling networks in Europe, China and USA have seen a surge in traffic, Naidu said that there was a huge potential for promoting cycling in India and called for providing the necessary infrastructure.

Stating that traffic surveys revealed cycle trips account for more than 15% of trips in most towns, he said this was the right time to pro-

mote cycling as it reduces noise pollution, improves road safety and also helps in addressing the increasing energy import bill.

Quoting a recent study, he said it was estimated that the use of bicycles in place of two- and four-wheelers for short-distance trips in India could result in an annual benefit of USD 24.3 billion.

"However, the absence of a cycling ecosystem is preventing it from becoming the preferred mobility solution for all sections of society", the Vice President added.

Stressing the need to ensure that the post-COVID world is greener and more resilient, Naidu urged cities to plan city-wide bicycle-sharing schemes, implement Public Bike Sharing systems, create a mechanism for the carbon credit system to benefit cyclists and promote E Bicycles.

Ms. Raluca Fiser, President, World Cycling Alliance, Christophe Najdovski, Deputy Mayor, Paris and President, European Cyclists Federation, Dharmendra, Chairman, DDMC, Kunal Kumar, Mission Director, Smart Cities Mission, Kamal Kishore Yadav, CEO and Commissioner, Chandigarh Smart City and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

ED attaches ex-babu's properties worth ₹27.8 cr under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday attached properties worth ₹27.86 crore of former IAS officer Babulal Agrawal under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in cases related to criminal misconduct and cheating by a public servant.

The attached assets include plant and machinery, balances in bank accounts and immovable properties of Agarwal and his family members.

The ED initiated investigation under PMLA on the basis of FIR registered by Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Chhattisgarh under Prevention of Corruption Act, leading to disclosure of the disproportionate assets amassed by Agrawal and his family members following searches conducted by the Income Tax Department in February 2010.

The IT Department had then conducted searches at the premises of Agrawal, his CA Sunil Agrawal and his family members.

Further, three more FIRs were registered followed by chargesheets filed by the CBI against Agrawal and others. These FIRs were registered under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Act.

"Investigation under PMLA revealed that Babu Lal Agrawal in connivance with his CA Sunil Agrawal and his brother Ashok Agrawal and Pawan Agrawal opened more than 400 bank accounts in the name of gullible villagers of Kharora and its nearby villages. Cash was deposited in these

accounts and several other accounts, 13 shell companies owned and operated by CA Sunil Agrawal, 26 Delhi and Kolkata-based other shell companies as well as the sister concerns of Prime Ispat Limited (a company owned and managed by family members of Babu Lal Agrawal) were used in placement and layering of this cash generated from corrupt means which was finally integrated in the form of share capital including share premium in Prime Ispat Limited (PIL)," the ED said in a statement.

Out of the above, the ED had already attached properties of PIL to the tune of ₹35.49 crore in the year 2017, it said.

Now, remaining plant and machinery to the tune of ₹26.16 crore has been attached. Besides this, bank balance of Rs 20.43 lacs lying in 291 bank accounts, a residential plot worth ₹39.52 lacs in the name of Xpress Mining Pvt. Ltd. (an entity owned and operated by family members of Agrawal), Rs 15 lacs recovered during the Income Tax search, balance of ₹4.75 lacs in the bank account of one firm Capstone, a residential plot worth ₹10.25 lacs in the name of another company Shri Ram Vihar (both partnership firms owned and operated by family members of Agrawal), cash of ₹39.81 lacs and two Kg gold recovered by CBI have been attached under PMLA.

Agrawal was arrested by ED on November 9 this year and he is in judicial custody till December 5. Further Investigation in the case is under progress, the agency added.

Few misguided farmers will soon understand rationale behind Centre's farm laws: Goyal



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday expressed confidence that the few "misguided" farmers, who are protesting against the Centre's three farm laws, will understand the well-meaning intentions behind these changes while Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Saturday said that the Government is awaiting a proposal from the protesting farmers and then will make a decision based on that.

The Minister has been every day asking the farmers to call off the protests. He said that the Government is ready to hold talks with the farmers and

has invited them for another round of talks on December 3.

"I appeal to them to leave agitation in view of COVID-19 and winter. I am hopeful the farmers will agree to task," he said.

Thousands of farmers started entering the national capital on Friday as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march against the Centre's new farm laws.

"It is little unfortunate that some political vested interests are misleading our farmers. But I am very confident that just like almost across the country, farmers have welcomed our new initiatives on the farm side, the few misguided farmers will also understand the well meaning inten-

tions behind these changes for the benefit of the farmers, and for a better future for our farmers," Goyal said.

He said that if pen or thermos manufacturers do not have any restriction on where and to whom to market their goods, farmers too deserve the same independence.

The Government, he said, is working at strengthening the hands of farmers by unshackling them from the constraints of the past. "We are preparing the country and our farmers to become stronger, to get the ability to market their own products anywhere in the country," the commerce and industry minister added.

Commander Nishant Singh of crashed MIG-29K traceless even after 24 hours

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Naval pilot Commander Nishant Singh is yet to be traced 48 hours after his MIG-29K fighter jet crashed into the Arabian Sea off Goa on Thursday evening.

However, the rescue teams managed to rescue the other pilot who along with Singh ejected from the jet before it went down.

Scores of warships, helicopters and aircraft of the Navy and other agencies were carrying out an extensive search and rescue mission on the spot where the plane crashed into the sea, officials said here on Saturday.

The twin-seater MIG-29K fighter jet crashed during routine sortie. These aircraft operate from the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier.

This is the third mishap involving the MIG-29K in the last one and half years. At least 45 jets manufactured by Russia were inducted into the Navy some years back for flying from the aircraft carrier.

Giving details of the mishap, the navy had said on Friday a board of inquiry was ordered to ascertain the cause of the incident. "A MiG-29K trainer aircraft operating at sea met with an accident at about 1700 hrs on 26 November. One pilot has been recovered and search by air and surface units in progress for the second pilot. An inquiry has been ordered to investigate the incident," the Navy said.

The MIG-29Ks had recently participated in the prestigious Malabar series of maritime exercises with the navies of the US, Australia and Japan. The Indian aircraft carrier along with the US Navy's aircraft carrier Nimitz took part in the second phase of the four nation drill in the North Arabian Sea off Goa earlier this month.

The exercises focused around the Vikramaditya Carrier Battle Group of the Indian Navy and Nimitz Carrier Strike Group of the US Navy. The two carriers, along with other ships, submarine

and aircraft of the participating navies carried out high intensity naval operations over four days from November 17 onwards. These exercises also included cross-deck flying operations and advanced air defence exercises by MIG 29K fighters of INS Vikramaditya and F-18 fighters and E2C Hawkeye from Nimitz.

This is the third mishap of MiG-29K aircraft in the last one year. In February this year, a MiG 29K crashed after being hit by birds over Goa. Both pilots had steered the jet away from habitation before ejecting.

In November last year, a MiG-29K trainer aircraft crashed outside a village in Goa. Both the pilots had then ejected safely. In January 2018, a fighter jet crashed as it veered off the runway at the INS Hansa base in Goa.

The pilot escaped unharmed. The MIG-29Ks of the Navy are based at its base in Goa and operate from the lone aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.

After Nivar, another cyclone forming over Bay of Bengal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Nivar, another cyclone is forming over Bay of Bengal. According to the India Meteorological Department, it is "very likely" to concentrate into a depression in the next 48 hours and intensify further before moving towards the Tamil Nadu coast. Under its influence, various parts in southern States were likely to receive rainfall starting December 1, the IMD said in a series of tweets.

"A Low Pressure Area lies over South Andaman Sea SE (south east) Bay of Bengal and Equatorial Indian Ocean. It is



very likely to concentrate into a depression during next 48 hours and likely to intensify further thereafter," it said.

It is likely to move nearly westwards and reach south Tamil Nadu coast around

December 2, it said.

Under its influence, scattered to widespread rainfall activity was "very likely" over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala, Mahe, Lakshadweep, south coastal

IMD also forecasts isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall with moderate thunderstorm and lightning over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal during this period

Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema on Tuesday and Wednesday, the IMD said.

IMD has issued 'Orange' alert for Pathanamthitta and Idukki districts on December 1 and for Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts on December 2.

IMD also forecasts isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall with moderate thunderstorm and lightning over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal during this period.

Isolated heavy falls with moderate thunderstorm and lightning was also very likely over south coastal Andhra Pradesh during December 1 and 2 and over Rayalaseema and Lakshadweep area on Wednesday, it added.

CBI raids 45 locations in 4 States in coal theft case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Saturday carried out multi-city search operation at 45 locations in four States after registering a case against alleged coal pilferer Anup Manjhi who was suspected to be colluding with two general managers and three security personnel of Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL) for the theft.

The searches were spread across West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, officials said.

The CBI registered the case on Friday against Manjhi, ECL General Managers Amit Kumar Dhar (of then Kunustoria area now Pandaveswar area) and Jayesh Chandra Rai (Kajor area) besides ECL Chief of Security Tanmay Das, Area Security Inspector, Kunustoria, Dhananjay Rai and SSI and security in-charge Kajor area Debashish Mukherjee, they said.

It is alleged that accused Anup Manjhi alias Lala is involved in the illegal mining and theft of coal from leasehold mines of ECL in Kunustoria and Kajora areas, they further said.

The CBI case followed inputs from "reliable sources" indicating illegal excavation and theft of coal in the leasehold area of ECL in "connivance" with the officials of ECL, CISF and Railways, they said.

The vigilance department of the ECL and its Task Force had also noticed illegal mining from May 2020 and onwards with the



help of large excavation machines and vehicles for transportation that were seized by the team.

"Several instances of installation of illegal weighbridges in concrete form were also detected which confirms illegal coal mining and transportation from ECL areas in an organised manner at a very large scale," reads the FIR.

It is further revealed by the source that illegal mining is going on at the leasehold area of ECL behind Topsis village under Kunustoria Area and at Lachhipur Village under Kajora Area by the coal mafias in active connivance with officials of ECL and those of CISF, the FIR alleged.

The departmental raids on August 7, 2020 led to the recovery of over nine MT of stolen coal from the Railway siding of the Pandaveswar area. Similar recoveries were also made from other locations.

"It is learnt that this illegal activity is being run at Railway sidings by the criminals with

the active connivance of unknown Railway officials," the agency alleged in the FIR.

The CBI has alleged that Manjhi is the kingpin of most of the coal pilferage in the area arising out of illegal mining.

It appears that illegal coal mining in the ECL leasehold area is going on along with theft of coal from Railway sidings in an organised manner, the CBI said.

It alleged that the accused officials and security officers of ECL and CISF, in connivance with unidentified Railways officials, allowed Anup Manjhi alias Lala to misappropriate the national property entrusted to them, committing criminal breach of trust.

Dhananjay Roy, the security inspector of the state-run firm in the Kunustoria area in West Bengal's Pashchim Bardhaman district was taken ill when the search operation was underway, they said.

He was rushed to a hospital where he died, they added.

Panwan Bansal appointed interim treasurer of Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Saturday appointed former Rajya Sabha MP Pawan Kumar Bansal as the interim treasurer of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). The post fell vacant after the sudden demise of veteran Congressman and sitting Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat, Ahmed Patel earlier this month.

Pawan Kumar Bansal's predecessor Ahmed Patel served as the AICC treasurer from August 2018 till his untimely demise earlier this week due to corona.

A four-time Lok Sabha MP from Chandigarh, Pawan Kumar Bansal also served one term as a Rajya Sabha MP for Punjab. In addition, Pawan Kumar Bansal has also served as a national spokesperson of the AICC and chairman of the party's research & reference cell in the past.

The 72-year old Congress leader handled the Minister of State (MoS) portfolio in Parliamentary Affairs, Finance and Water resources ministries during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenure. He was made the Railways Minister in UPA-2. Pawan Kumar Bansal resigned from the post in 2013 after his nephew was accused in a bribery case.

Towards the beginning of his political career, Bansal entered the limelight when he was appointed president of the Punjab unit of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC).

His appointment to the top job comes at a time when Congress is looking to challenge not just the BJP but other Opposition parties in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Responding to his appointment as AICC treasurer, Bansal said, "I thank Congress President Sonia Gandhi ji and Rahul ji for posing faith in me and discharging the duty with full responsibility shall be my endeavour."

The application claimed that the probe regarding the accused was complete and his further custody was not required. It also said the court may impose any condition on the accused while granting him the relief.

Advocate Naveen Kumar Matta, the special public prosecutor, had appeared for the Enforcement Directorate.

Members of armed forces deserve special treatment, should not be harassed: Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of the armed forces, who take the oath of laying down their lives for the country, deserve special treatment and are not to be harassed unnecessarily and "made ping pong of" by being sent from one forum of adjudication to another, the Delhi High Court has said.

The high court observed that the oath required to be taken by the President, Vice President, Governors of the States or by the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts does not require them to lay down their lives in the service of the country.

It is only the members of the armed forces who are required under the Constitution and other laws to take an oath of abiding by the command issued to them by the President or any officer set over them, even to the peril of their lives, a bench of Justices Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Asha Menon said.

The court's observation came on a batch of 40 petitions challenging an order issued by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) granting the benefit of pro-rata pension only to Commissioned Officers of the Defence Services and not to the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs)/ Persons Below Officer Rank (PBORs).

The petitioners — NCOs/PBORs who joined the Indian Air Force (IAF) as Airmen/Corporals — said the MoD's order is discriminatory and claimed pro rata pension.

Plea in SC against 'retrospective' change in tenure of SK Mishra as Enforcement Directorate director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed before the Supreme Court seeking to quash the Centre's decision to "retrospectively" amend the tenure of Sanjay Kumar Mishra as the director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The petition, filed by advocate Prashant Bhushan for NGO Common Cause, also sought a direction to the central government to appoint a director for the agency "in a transparent manner and strictly in accordance with the law".

It has contended that the order issued by the Centre extending Mishra's tenure for one more year, was in violation of the provisions of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) Act, 2003.

The petition, which is likely to come up for hearing in the coming days, has alleged that the government employed a circuitous route to ensure Kumar got one more year as director of ED by way of retrospectively modifying the appointment order itself.

Mishra, an IRS officer, was appointed ED director for two years by an order dated November 19, 2018, the plea said.

However, the Central Government on November 13, 2020, issued an office order in which it was stated that the President has modified the 2018 order to the effect that a period of "two years" written in the 2018 order was modified to a period of "three years", it said. "The Centre has done indi-



rectly what could not have been done directly under the statute," the plea said.

The petition contended that the ED handles a large number of cases involving huge corruption, many of which are politically sensitive in nature, and the agency's director has powers akin to that of the director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

It added that "such illegalities in the appointment of the Director of Enforcement will shake the confidence of citizens in the institution of Enforcement Directorate."

"Such an action will be totally against the laudable principles highlighting the need of impeccable integrity of persons holding high public offices and the consequent need for insulating the said offices from extraneous influences, as enshrined by the Supreme Court..." it said.

ED director's appointment is governed by the CVC Act which provides that no person below the rank of additional secretary to the government of India shall be eligible for appointment for the post and the director so appointed will continue to hold office for a period of not less than two years from the date on which he assumes office, the plea said.

TRUMP SUFFERS ANOTHER JOLT US court rejects Pennsylvania lawsuit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a fresh setback to US President Donald Trump's efforts to reverse the November 3 presidential election result in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, a court has dismissed a lawsuit filed by his team, observing that "voters, not lawyers choose the president."

The judgement came four days after Pennsylvania certified Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden as the winner in the state which has 20 electoral college votes.

Trump, a Republican, has refused to accept defeat in the November 3 presidential election, and told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat.

The President has said that he would leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Biden as the winner, but made clear he is not prepared to "concede" the election.

He has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of electoral fraud. Many of the lawsuits have been dismissed by courts.

The three-judge panel of the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday upheld a previous ruling that dismissed the Trump campaign's request for an injunction in the case in Pennsylvania to challenge the election results and slammed the lawsuit.

"Free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious, but calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here," Judge Stephanos Bibas said in his order. "The campaign cannot win this lawsuit," said Bibas, who was appointed by Trump.

He authored the order along with two other judges on the bench, Chief Circuit Judge Brooks Smith and Judge Michael Chagares, who were appointed by former Republican president George W Bush.

Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election to Biden and has filed multiple lawsuits challenging the poll results in several states.

Former vice president Biden was declared the winner of the US presidential election

on November 7 after flipping Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin to the Democrats' column.

Biden has 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232 votes. To win the race to the White House, the successful candidate should have at least 270 electoral votes out of the 538-member Electoral College.

Biden's tally is far more than the 270 needed to win the race for the White House, and he also leads the popular vote by more than six million.

In his Thanksgiving Day remarks, Trump, however, said it will be a mistake if the Electoral College were to elect Biden.

The president-elect leads by more than 80,000 votes in the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

Trump's lawyers Rudy Giuliani and Jenna Ellis said they will now appeal to the Supreme Court.

"The activist judicial machinery in Pennsylvania continues to cover up the allegations of massive fraud. We are very thankful to have had the opportunity to present proof and the facts to the PA state legislature. On to SCO-

TUS!" they said.

According to the local Philadelphia Inquirer, "Bibas pointed out that despite the campaign's speculative claims and fiery rhetoric, it never alleged - let alone offered any evidence to suggest - that any vote had been improperly counted or cast."

"Voters, not lawyers, choose the president. Ballots, not briefs, decide elections," alchemy cannot transmute lead into gold," Bibas wrote in his order.

The New York Times said many courts have used scathing language in tossing out a relentless barrage of lawsuits filed by the Trump campaign and its supporters, but even so, the Third Circuit's ruling was particularly blunt.

The court accused the Trump campaign of engaging in "repetitive litigation" and pointed out that the public interest strongly favoured "counting every lawful voter's vote, and not disenfranchising millions of Pennsylvania voters who voted by mail," the daily said.

Earlier in the day, Trump reiterated that he won the election and unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

"Biden can only enter the

White House as President if he can prove that his ridiculous "80,000,000 votes" were not fraudulently or illegally obtained. When you see what happened in Detroit, Atlanta, Philadelphia & Milwaukee, massive voter fraud, he's got a big unsolvable problem!" Trump tweeted.

"Big Tech and the Fake News Media have partnered to Suppress. Freedom of the Press is gone, a thing of the past. That's why they refuse to report the real facts and figures of the 2020 Election or even, where's Hunter!" he said in another tweet.

The Electoral College is scheduled to meet on December 14 and is expected to formally declare the 78-year-old Biden as the 46th US President.

Under the US electoral system, voters do not directly choose the president. Instead, they vote for 538 officials, who are allocated to American states based on their population size.

Earlier this week, Trump allowed the official start of Biden's transition to power without conceding defeat. Biden is due to be sworn in as president on January 20.

Iran's supreme leader vows revenge over slain scientist

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's supreme leader on Saturday demanded the "definitive punishment" of those behind the killing of a scientist who led Tehran's disbanded military nuclear program, as the Islamic Republic blamed Israel for a slaying that has raised fears of reignited tensions across the Middle East.

After years of being in the shadows, the image of Mohsen Fakhriadeh suddenly was to be seen everywhere in Iranian media, as his widow spoke on state television and officials publicly demanded revenge on Israel for the scientist's slaying.

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian scientists a decade ago amid earlier tensions over Tehran's nuclear program, has yet to comment on Fakhriadeh's killing Friday. However, the attack bore the hallmarks of a carefully planned, military-style ambush, the likes of which Israel has been accused of conducting before. The attack has renewed fears of Iran striking back against the US, Israel's closest ally in the region, as it did earlier this year when a U.S. drone strike killed a top Iranian general. The US military acknowledged moving an aircraft carrier back into the region, while an Iranian lawmaker suggested throwing out UN nuclear inspectors in response to the killing.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Fakhriadeh "the country's prominent and distinguished nuclear and defensive scientist." Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, said Iran's first priority after the killing was the "definitive punishment of the perpetrators and those who ordered it." He did not elaborate.

Speaking earlier Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani blamed Israel for the killing. "We will respond to the assassina-

tion of Martyr Fakhriadeh in a proper time," Rouhani said. "The Iranian nation is smarter than falling into the trap of the Zionists. They are thinking to create chaos."

Both Rouhani and Khamenei said that Fakhriadeh's death would not stop the nuclear program. Iran's civilian atomic program has continued its experiments and now enriches a growing uranium stockpile up to 4.5% purity in response to the collapse of Iran's nuclear deal after the U.S.' 2018 withdrawal from the accord. That's still far below weapons-grade levels of 90%, though experts warn Iran now has enough low-enriched uranium for at least two atomic bombs if it chose to pursue them. Analysts have compared Fakhriadeh to being on par with Robert Oppenheimer, the scientist who led America's Manhattan Project in World War II that created the atom bomb.

Fakhriadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program that Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. Iran long has maintained its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Fakhriadeh's widow appeared unnamed on state television in a black chador, saying his death would spark a thousand others to take up his work.

"He wanted to get martyred and his wish came true," she said.

Hard-line Iranian media has begun circulating memorial images showing Fakhriadeh standing alongside a machine-gun-cradling likeness of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, whom the US killed in the January drone strike.

Biden to let health experts decide who will get a Covid-19 vaccine first: Gounder

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President-elect Joe Biden will let health experts decide who will get a Covid-19 vaccine in the country first, according to Dr Celine Gounder, a member of his coronavirus advisory board.

Since the risk for Covid-19 can vary among different groups of people, prioritisation for a vaccine will be tricky, and Biden will leave those decisions to health experts, the Indian-American infectious disease physician said. It is expected that there will likely be a limited supply of coronavirus vaccine doses available immediately after a vaccine is authorised by the US food and drug administration.

"Other than health care workers, others who will be first in line to get it will be people who do have chronic underlying medical conditions who are older, as well as communities of colour who have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic," Gounder told CNN on Friday.

The country's death toll since the pandemic's start is now more than 264,000. And nearly another 60,000 people could lose their lives over the next three weeks, according to an ensemble forecast published by the US centers for disease control and prevention (CDC) this week. "Now among those groups is where it starts to get a little bit more contentious," she added. "How do you prioritise between the 85-year-old woman in a nursing home, versus the 65-year-old African American — especially when that 65-year-old may be as just as high-risk of significant disease?" The CDC's advisory committee for immunization

practices (ACIP) will recommend groups to receive the vaccine first. "That's where it gets a bit more political and frankly, this is where the President-elect is leaving it to the public health experts and scientists to figure out how best to allocate the limited supply first," said Gounder, who was named by Biden earlier this month to his coronavirus advisory board.

The ACIP called an emergency meeting for December 1, where they will vote on the very first group to get a vaccine.

"Because we know that the vaccine will be available in very limited doses, even if they prioritise health care workers and older people in their population, it's going to be really important to be a little more granular," said Rick Bright, another member of Biden's coronavirus advisory board.

"They're going to discuss that granularity in health care workers. If I only have so many doses available, how do I prioritise those health care workers first and make those recommendations to the states?" he said. Typically, the ACIP meets after a vaccine is authorised by the FDA to make recommen-

dations, but they are working proactively in anticipation of a quick decision by the FDA, the report said. "We foresee imminent authorisation if this vaccine is shown to be effective and safe in the near future and we want to be at the point where we are providing appropriate guidance to the states and jurisdictions for the use of these vaccines," ACIP chair Dr Jose Romero told CNN.

US pharmaceutical major Pfizer has applied to the FDA for emergency use authorisation for its vaccine. An independent panel of experts, the FDA's vaccines and related biological products advisory committee, is slated to meet on December 10 to discuss the application, the report said.

FDA officials say a decision should be made within a few weeks of the meeting and possibly much sooner. The US on Friday marked the 25th day in a row with more than 100,000 new cases. Hospitalisations hit a new high on Thursday — for the 17th consecutive day — with more than 90,400 Covid-19 patients nationwide, according to the Covid Tracking Project.

Biden will be a President who represents the best in us: Kamala

Washington: Joe Biden will be a president who represents the best of America, his deputy and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has said, asserting that he is a leader the world will respect. Lavishing praise on the 78-year-old US President-elect, Harris on Friday said that Biden will be a president for all Americans.

"Know that" Biden "will be a president who represents the best in us. A leader the world will respect and our children can look up to," Harris said in a tweet. Harris, 56, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, has created history by becoming the first Black American woman to be elected as the country's Vice President.

PTI



A crowd of protesters march in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday. Pro-democracy demonstrators are continuing their protests calling for the Government to step down and reforms to the constitution and the monarchy, despite legal charges being filed against them and the possibility of violence from their opponents or a military crackdown

US imposes sanctions on Russian, Chinese companies for supporting Iranian missile programme

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has imposed sanctions on four companies from China and Russia for supporting Iran's missile programme that remains a "significant proliferation concern," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said.

The announcement was made on Friday as the US continues to take tough measures against Iran for continuing their activities related to nuclear arms.

"The US has sanctioned four entities in China and Russia for their support of Iran's missile programme, which remains a significant proliferation concern. We will continue to use all our sanctions tools to prevent Iran from advancing its missile capabilities," Pompeo said.

The companies are Chengdu Best New Materials Co Ltd and Zibo Elim Trade Co, Ltd. in

China and Nilco Group, which is also known as Nil Fam Khazar Company and Sanfers Holding and Joint Stock Company Elecon in Russia for transferring sensitive technology and items to Iran's missile programme.

President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the landmark Iran nuclear deal in 2018. After withdrawing from the Iranian nuclear deal, Trump has asked all countries to reduce their purchase of oil from Iran to zero or face secondary sanctions.

Iran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. Pompeo said all countries need to be vigilant to efforts by Iran to advance its missile programme. "These measures are part of our response to Iran's malign activities. These determinations underscore the continuing need for all countries to remain vigilant to efforts by Iran to advance its missile programme," Pompeo said.

UK appoints vaccines minister to oversee Covid inoculations

AP ■ LONDON

The British Government appointed a vaccines minister on Saturday as it prepares to inoculate millions of people against the coronavirus, potentially starting within days.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Conservative lawmaker Nadhim Zahawi will oversee the country's biggest vaccine programme in decades.

The UK medicines regulator is currently assessing two vaccines — one developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, the other by Oxford University and AstraZeneca — to see if they are safe and effective.

The Guardian newspaper reported that hospitals have been told they could receive the first doses of the Pfizer shot the week of December 7, if it receives approval.

Virus keeps Black Friday crowds thin, shoppers shift online

AP ■ NEW YORK

The raging coronavirus pandemic kept crowds thin at malls and stores across the country on Black Friday, but a surge in online shopping offered a beacon of hope for struggling retailers after months of slumping sales and businesses toppling into bankruptcy.

In normal times, Black Friday is the busiest shopping day of the year, drawing millions of people eager to get started on their holiday spending.

But these are not normal times: A spike in coronavirus cases is threatening the economy's fitful recovery from the sudden plunge in the spring. Crowds at stores were dramatically diminished as shoppers

shifted online.

Game consoles, cookware, robotic vacuum cleaners, slippers and pajamas were popular among shoppers preparing to spend a lot of time indoors this winter. Many were still eager to get into the holiday spirit and delight their loved ones after a tough year.

Eric Kelly, a boxing gym owner, camped outside a store on Black Friday for the first time in his life, trying to score a PlayStation 5 for his 13-year-old twin sons as a reward for persevering through remote learning during the pandemic.

"They've been away from their friends," said Kelly, who failed to get the console at a GameStop in New York City's Union Square but said he would keep trying online. "They've done everything they

had to do in school and outside of school, so I have to award them for being exceptional kids."

Before Black Friday, GameStop teased that it would have a limited supply of the new \$500 PlayStation 5 game console for sale only at its stores, in contrast to other retailers that sold it only online.

Kelly said "people were on top of each other" in the line. At a Garden State Plaza mall in Paramus, New Jersey, police monitored a crowd outside a GameStop, but few people kept their distance.

GameStop said it was taking several safety precautions, including contactless pickup.

Many retailers beefed up their safety protocols to reassure wary customers about coming in on Black Friday. But

stores also catered to those shopping digitally by moving their doorbuster deals online and ramping up curbside pickup options.

"We have been intentional to try to not create the frenzy, the doorbusters, the long lines and the crowds you typically see on a Black Friday," said Stephen Lebovitz, CEO of CBL, which operates about 100 malls and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in November.

Several hundred shoppers lined up ahead of opening at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, which normally attracts several thousand on Black Friday. The mall spread out the Black Friday deals over eight days, and many retail tenants pivoted more to online and curbside pickup, said Jill Renslow, Mall

of America's senior vice president of business development.

"It feels good, and it's the right thing to do to keep everybody safe," Renslow said. "Everyone is shopping a little differently but that's OK."

Only a trickle of shoppers showed up at Macy's Herald Square in New York an hour after it opened, offering 50% off handbags and 60% off women's and men's coats. Workers sanitized door knobs and windows.

A Christmas tree towered over the largely empty streets around The Domain, the most popular outdoor mall in Austin, Texas. Store employees counted masked shoppers trickling in to stay within the state's 75% capacity limit.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention has labeled shopping in crowded stores during the holidays a "higher risk" activity and says people should limit any in-person shopping.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, predicted that shoppers will be looking for reasons to celebrate. The trade group expects sales for the November and December period to increase between 3.6% and 5.2% over 2019, compared with a 4% increase the year before. Holiday sales have averaged gains of 3.5% over the past five years.

"We think there's going to be a psychological factor that they owe it to themselves and their families to have a better-than-normal holiday," said NRF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) CONST. DIV. NO. II, JAMMU

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No. 108 of 2020-2021/Div-2 Dated 27-11-2020

Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Construction Division No. II, Jammu Department Jammu on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K, invite tenders by e-tendering mode from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Union Territory Govt. upto **1800 Hrs on 03-12-2020** for the following work.

S.No. 1 Name of Work :- Construction of road from Kanna Chahal to Dhoon by way of laying of Wet Mix Macadam, 50mm thick B.M, 25mm thick SDBC. (Under Languishing Scheme)

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

Estimated Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 102.99, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 6000

Earnest Money (in Rs.) :- 205980/-, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 01 month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** 04-12-2020 1400 hrs

Class of Contractor :- Hot Mix Plant Holder/ "A" Class Contractor

NOTE: Contractors who have got Contractors cards issued from Kashmir Province, it is mandatory for them to upload their verification certificate of Crime Branch alongwith other qualifying documents failing which their tenders will be declared non-responsive.

1/ Date of Publishing from :- 27-11-2020

2/ The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://ktenders.gov.in> from on 27-11-2020 to 03-12-2020 (1800 Hrs).

No. DIP/J-7887/20 Sd/- Executive Engineer
Dated: 28.11.2020 PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that the 02823/02824 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi - Bhubaneswar (via Tatanagar) Rajdhani Special Express will run **four days in a week** instead of daily as per the following detail :-

Train No. & Name	Frequency	Days of Run	Date from Originating Stations
02823 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani	4 days in a week	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	01.12.2020
02824 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani	4 days in a week	Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat	02.12.2020

02823/02824 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special (Four Days in a week)

Train No. 02823	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	Train No. 02824
--	09:30		Bhubaneswar	17:25	--	
10:00	10:02		Cuttack Jn.	16:40	16:42	
11:38	11:40		Bhadrak	15:12	15:14	
12:25	12:27		Balasore	14:02	14:04	
13:40	13:50		Hijili	12:35	12:45	
15:50	15:55		Tatanagar Jn.	10:35	10:40	
17:58	18:00		Muri Jn.	08:25	08:27	
19:15	19:20		Bokaro Steel City	07:35	07:40	
20:33	20:38		Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jn. Gomoh	06:30	06:35	
21:36	21:38		Koderma	05:19	05:21	
23:03	23:06		Gaya Jn.	04:05	04:08	
01:15	01:25		Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn.	02:05	02:15	
05:17	05:22		Kanpur Central	21:50	21:55	
10:45	--		New Delhi	--	17:05	

Accommodation :- First AC, AC 2Tier and AC 3Tier.

Train No. 02823/24 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special Express will run in the existing timings & stoppages of regular Time Tabled train No. 22823/24.

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

Beware of Touts Always buy Train Tickets from Railway Counters/Authorized Railway Travel Agents only

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

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Q2 GDP surprising resilience: Is it good enough to last?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The surprise resilience shown by the manufacturing sector that restricted GDP contraction to only 7.5 per cent in September quarter could be a result of massive purge in costs such as employee cost by corporates and businesses, which could turn a potential headwind in future, economists at SBI wrote on Saturday.

India's July-September (Q2 of 2020-21 fiscal) GDP growth showed surprising resilience with contraction of only 7.5 per cent in real terms, while the market consensus was higher, wrote Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India, in Ecwrap.

With improvement in manufacturing, due to lifting of lockdown measures GDP contraction has slowed down significantly. Agriculture sector continued to perform well with growth at 3.4 per cent. Services remained in the negative territory, although the decline was contained as trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting showed recovery.

"The most astonishing number is the positive growth in manufacturing Q2. Despite being the worst affected sector in Q1 (due to lockdown), it is quite puzzling how manufacturing turned itself around," he wrote in the Ecwrap issue.

The IIP manufacturing and manufacturing GVA growth are highly correlated (almost more than 0.90) and this correlation collapsed in Q2 when IIP manufacturing declined by 6.7 per cent (average of July-September) while manufacturing GVA grew by 0.6 per cent. "We believe one possible reason for this could be stellar corporate GVA numbers in Q2 on the back of massive purge in costs. Further, we observed small companies, with turnover of up to Rs 500 crore, are more aggressive in cutting cost, displaying reduction in employee cost by 10-12 per cent," Ecwrap said.

This, it said, could turn a potential headwind in future in terms of a drag on consumption. "Additionally, there is evidence of inventory buildup that could act as a drag on future manufacturing growth." Interestingly, government

consumption expenditure has also nosedived in Q2, that is difficult to explain, as such expenditures are typically procyclical, Ecwrap said.

SBI economist said the absolute numbers of services sector in Q2FY21 is Rs 17.19 lakh crore, while in Q3FY20 it was Rs 17.35 lakh crore, only Rs 15,000 crore less. This indicates that the services sector has reached the pre-COVID-19 level.

"Is it because of behavioural changes during pandemic like massive transport of goods once the economy opened up and a massive boost to communication and broadcasting with people mostly working from home?" it asked.

One good thing is that the investment demand has improved with resumption in COVID-19-induced stalled projects. However, the patchy growth across sectors reflects in domestic demand figures, which are showing modest recovery sequentially.

The falling imports and continued contraction in investment suggest a poor domestic absorption and intermediate demand.

Retail inflation for industrial workers rises to 5.91% in Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for industrial workers rose marginally to 5.91 per cent in October from 5.62 per cent in September this year mainly due to higher prices of certain food items.

"Year-on-year (retail) inflation based on all-items stood at 5.91 per cent for October, 2020 as compared to 5.62 per cent for the previous month and 7.62 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," a labour ministry statement said.

Similarly, it stated that food inflation stood at 8.21 per cent in October against 7.51 per cent of the previous month (September 2020) and 8.60 per cent during the corresponding month (October 2019) a year ago.

The all-India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) for October 2020 increased by 1.4 points and stood at 119.5 points.

On one-month percentage change, it increased by (+) 1.19 per cent between September and October, 2020 compared to (+) 0.93 per cent



increase between corresponding months of the previous year. The maximum upward pressure in the current index came from the food & beverages group contributing (+) 1.29 percentage points to the total change.

At item level, arhar dal, poultry (chicken), eggs (hen), goat meat, mustard oil, sunflower oil, brinjal, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, chillies green, gourd, ladyfinger, onion, peas, potato, electricity domestic, doctor's fee, bus fare, etc. Are responsible for the increase in index. However, it said that this increase was checked by wheat, fish fresh, tomato, apple, etc., putting downward pressure on the index. At centre level, Doom-Dooma Tinsukia,

Patna and Ramgarh recorded the maximum increase of 4 points each. Among others, 3 points increase was observed in 9 centres, 2 points in 24 centres and 1 point in 33 centres. Rest of 19 centres' indices remained stationary. Commenting on the index, Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said, "The increase in CPI-IW will have a positive effect on wages/salaries of industrial workers engaged in the organized sector besides government employees and pensioners." The CPI-IW is the single-most important price statistics which has financial implications. It is primarily used to regulate the dearness allowance of government employees and workers in industrial sectors.

Punjab accepts Centre's borrowing option to meet GST shortfall

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Congress-ruled Punjab has accepted the Centre's borrowing proposal and will get Rs 8,359 crore through the special window to meet GST revenue shortfall.

"Government of Punjab has communicated acceptance of option 1 to meet the revenue shortfall arising out of GST implementation. The number of states which have chosen this option has gone up to 26. All the 3 Union Territories with Legislative Assembly (i.e. Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry) have also decided in favour of option 1," a finance ministry statement said.

The Centre has already borrowed Rs 24,000 crore on behalf of the states in four instalments and has passed it on to 23 states and three Union Territories on October 23, November 2, November 9 and November 23. From the next round of borrowings, Punjab, Kerala and West Bengal too would receive funds raised through this window. Earlier

this week, Kerala and West Bengal too had communicated to the Centre about accepting the borrowing option to meet GST revenue shortfall.

Under the terms of option 1, besides getting the facility of a special window for borrowings to meet the shortfall arising out of GST implementation, states are also entitled to get unconditional permission to borrow the final instalment of 0.50 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) out of the 2 per cent additional borrowings permitted by the Government of India, under 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' mission. This is over and above the special window of Rs 1.1 lakh crore. On receipt of the choice of option 1 from the Government of Punjab, the Government of India has granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 3,033 crore to Punjab (0.5 per cent of Punjab's GSDP), the ministry added. Separately, Punjab will get Rs 8,359 crore through special borrowing window to meet the GST implementation shortfall.

Sany India celebrates new milestone

New Delhi: Sany India, a leading manufacturer of construction equipment & heavy machinery which has been advocating and practising "Vocal for Local", has rolled out its 15000th machine from the company's India facility. Sany India South Asia managing director Deepak Garg said, "Rolling out the 15000th machine is a remarkable achievement that reaffirms our commitment to the domestic construction equipment market."

Market's bull run may stay, 'too strong' derivatives data a concern

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

The bull run in the equity market is likely to continue in days ahead, but the only concern at this point is the "too strong" derivatives data, which may lead to a rapid sell-off in case of a course reversal, according to a report by Motilal Oswal Retail Research.

The report said that at current juncture, market is in bulls grip and dips are getting bought into quickly. Nifty's derivatives data is also positive

and it indicates continuation in ongoing momentum.

It however said FIIs index futures data signifies they are overbought in Indian market and any unwinding of longs or fresh shorting may lead to a correction in the market.

Thus, some cautious approach should be adopted at these levels it said.

"As far as levels are concerned, index is moving in uncharted territory and 13,500 would be a hurdle as per options data. On the flipside, major

support exists at 12,700 then 12,350 zones.

The only concern at current juncture is too strong derivatives data and in case of any reversal, the sell-off can be fast," said the report.

It was a historic month for the market as Nifty posted highest ever series on series gains (in absolute terms).

Bulls were aggressive from the start of the November series and kept the ball in their court throughout the series, said the report.

GST officers arrest one for ₹129 cr tax evasion through illegal manufacture, supply of cigarettes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Officers of GST investigation arm DGGI have arrested a Haryana resident on charges of manufacturing and supplying cigarettes illegally and thereby evading taxes of over Rs 129 crore, the Finance Ministry has said.

"The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) Gurugram Zonal Unit (GZU), Haryana has arrested one Satyendra Sharma, resident of Haryana, on charges of manufacturing and supplying illegally manufactured cigarettes without the requisite tax paying documents and without payment of applicable GST and cess," the ministry said in

a late night statement on Friday.

The total tax evasion of more than Rs 129 crore is pegged to have been committed by the accused, it added.

Investigation conducted across Delhi and Haryana revealed that Sharma manufactured and supplied cigarettes under his registered brands 'Nidhi Black' 'Gold queen' and 'E-10'.

"Apart from these, the investigation also revealed that Sharma was illegally manufacturing cigarettes under the brand names of 'Paris', 'Pine', 'Black Djarum' 'Esse Lights' which are international trademarks owned by other companies. All these cigarettes were being cleared clandestinely

without payment of applicable GST/ cess," the ministry said.

Sharma transported these illegally manufactured cigarettes to New Delhi for further supply across India, it added.

"Based on documentary evidence and statements recorded of all persons during investigation, it was ascertained that Satyendra Sharma is the key person in running this racket of manufacturing cigarettes without payment of applicable GST as well as illegally manufacturing

cigarettes under international brand names," the ministry added. Sharma was arrested by DGGI officers on November 27.

Another increase in prices of petrol, diesel

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were increased by oil marketing companies on Saturday as global oil prices remained firm, reaching its highest levels this fiscal. Petrol prices increased by 24 paise to Rs 82.13 per litre on Saturday from Rs 81.89 per litre the previous day. Diesel prices, on the other hand, increased by a higher margin of 27 paise to Rs 72.13 a litre, up from Rs 71.86 a litre on Friday. Oil companies began increasing pump prices of the two petroleum products from last Friday after a nearly two-month-long hiatus in fuel price revision. **FIANS**

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Chandni D/o Subodh R/o H.No. Bobby Ka Makan, Alipur, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 11.11.2020 from her house the area of P.S. Alipur, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 542/20 U/S 363** dated 13.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.

The description of missing/kidnapped girl is as under :-

Name : Chandni, **Father's Name :** Subodh, **Age :** 17 yrs., **Height :** 5'0", **Built:** Thin, **Face :** Oval, **Complexion :** Wheatish, **Hairs:** Black **Wearing :** Red Colour Suit & Salwar. **ID Mark:** Bali in Nose. If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/622/ON/2020

SHO
P.S., Alipur, Delhi
Ph. : 011-27202290
27202265, 7065036325

SEARCH FOR MISSING

The general public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Akhatri Khatoon D/o Mohd. Momirul R/o Village- Bari Lal Ganj, PS Etahar, District - Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal. Presently at Vaniya Bhawan, Man Singh Road, New Delhi** has been missing since 12.11.2020 from the present address at about 6:00 p.m. In this regard, **DD No. 34A, dated 14.11.2020 has been registered at PS Tilak Marg, New Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing girl is as under:

Name: Akhatri Khatoon, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** about 19 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Blue colour with white colour dotted suit, blue colour pajami, yellow colour dupatta and black colour slippers on her feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/Tilak Marg, New Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi.
Ph. No. 011-23382100, 23385571
DP/165/ND/2020



SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

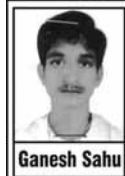


General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Najma, D/o Mohd. Aabid, R/o H.No. A-1201, J.J. Colony, Bawana, Delhi, Age: 17 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Strong, Hair: Black, wearing Navy Blue Suit & Pink colour Salwar, Blue Dupatta and Hawai Chappal in feet, has been missing/kidnapped from her house since 09.11.2020 at 12:00 PM. In this regard a **FIR No. 604/2020 U/S 363 IPC, dated 13.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about her please inform undersigned.**

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/625/ON/2020

SHO
P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi
Ph. No. : 011-27787592, 27787593

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a person namely **Ganesh Sahu, S/o: Shambhu Sahu, R/o: H. No. 104, Near DAV School, Gym Wali Gali, Budhpur, Delhi** has been reported missing since 11.11.2020 at 08:50 AM from his house. In this regard **DD No. 47A, dated 15.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.**

The description of missing person is as under:

Name: Ganesh Sahu, **Age:** 23 Years, **Height:** 5'7", **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Fair, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Orange Shirt, Blue Jeans and Hawai Chappal in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing person please inform P.S. Alipur, Delhi

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph. : 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639
P.S. Alipur, Delhi

SHO
Police Station Alipur, Delhi
Ph. : 011-27202265, 7065036325
DP/627/ON/2020

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead on 11.11.2020 at Govt. Toilet, S.N. Marg, Delhi in the area of PS Lahori Gate, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 84A u/s 174 CrPc, Dated 11.11.2020** has been lodged at **P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi.** The dead body has been preserved in mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi for 72 hrs for identification. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 60 years, **Height:** 5'6" Feet, **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Black Colour Jacket, White Colour Kurta and Grey Colour Dhoti.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
Ph. : 011-23953776, 23958234
DP/748/N/2020



APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Namely:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** approx. 35 years, **Height:** 5' 6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **ID:** Rajesh is written on his right hand, **Wearing:** Blue colour linedar Shirt and saleti/cream colour pant, who was found dead at **Nepali Park Kashmir Gate, Delhi.** In this regard a case **DD No. 46-A U/s 174 Cr. P.C. Dated 20.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO
P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi
Tel.: 011-23967889
DP/751/N/2020(UIDB)



Manufacturing GVA growth in Q2 'surprising': SBI Report

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The manufacturing sector played a major role in narrowing down the India's GDP contraction in Q2 of FY21. An SBI Ecwrap report, however, dubbed the growth in manufacturing GVA as "astonishing" as the IIP manufacturing for the same period declined by 6.7 per cent. India's GDP in the July-September period contracted 7.5 per cent, compared with 23.9 per cent in the preceding quarter. The GVA in Q2 2020-21 from the manufacturing sector grew 0.6%, as compared with a degrowth of 0.6% in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

The report by Soumya

Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India, said: "Though the whole press release is full of surprising numbers, the most astonishing number is the positive growth in manufacturing in Q2." He noted that despite being the worst affected sector in Q1 (due to lockdown), it is quite puzzling how manufacturing turned itself around. The IIP manufacturing and manufacturing GVA growth are highly correlated (almost more than 0.90) and this correlation collapsed in Q2 when IIP manufacturing declined by 6.7% (average of July/August/September) while manufacturing GVA grew by 0.6%.

Total FDI inflow during Q2 FY21 stands at \$28.1 bn

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The total foreign direct investment (FDI) during the second quarter of financial year 2020-21 stood at \$28.1 billion, out of which FDI equity inflows were \$23.44 billion. "This takes the FDI equity inflows during the financial year 2020-21 up to September 2020 to \$30,004 million, which is 15 per cent more than the corresponding period of 2019-20," said an official statement.

In rupee terms, the FDI equity inflows of Rs 2,24,613 crore are 23 per cent more than the last year. August 2020 was a significant month when FDI equity inflow of \$17.48 billion was reported in the country.

According to data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Mauritius and Singapore were the biggest sources of FDI in India with 29 per cent and 21 per cent contribution respectively.

NCPEDP pushes for hike in Union Budget allocation for differently-abled

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) has said the budgetary allocation for people with disabilities has been too low in the past few years. It has urged the Central government to increase the allocation in the upcoming Union Budget.

In a letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the NCPEDP said, "Over the past few years the budgetary allocation for person with disabilities has been 0.04 per cent which is disheartening and inadequate to meet the needs of this particularly vulnerable and marginalised section of society."

It noted that people with disabilities have been the worst-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic this year.

"Loss of access to health-

care, support systems, education, livelihood and even basic food supplies are the new normal for the vast majority of India's differently-abled community. At this time especially and in the near future, access to support has become a survival issue."

Among its recommendations, the rights' body for the disabled people said the Union government should ensure inclusive tax policy measures for the differently-abled.

The NCPEDP said no GST should be levied on aids and appliances for persons with disabilities and no tax should be imposed on the purchase of cars and wheelchairs available in the national and international markets.

It also sought an increase in Standard Deduction under Section 80 U and 80 DD of Income Tax for persons with disabilities.

JNPT says it is adhering to all green norms for Vadhavan port development

Mumbai: The country's leading container port JNPT on Saturday said it is adhering to the terms of reference issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change for prior environmental clearance for development of Vadhavan port. The Govt had in February approved a proposal to set up a new major port at Vadhavan near Dahanu in Maharashtra at an investment of ₹65,544 crore. The new port will be developed on a landlord model under a special purpose vehicle with Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust as the lead partner with equity participation equal to or more than 50% to implement the project. Of this, ₹16,140 crores will be implemented by the SPV in constructing basic infrastructure like breakwaters, rail line/yard and road connectivity, power and water line, internal roads and common amenities, as per JNPT.

Time running out for India

With no Plan B in place, Men in Blue need their 'A' game to save ODI series

Australia vs India
Live from 9:10am IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX NETWORK

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India's battered bowling unit will have little time to regroup and limited resources at its disposal in a desperate bid to perform a redemption act and save the ODI series against a turbo-charged Australia in the second game here on Sunday.

It wasn't just about the margin of defeat — by 66 runs — but the manner in which the home team exposed India's vacant cupboard of all-rounders that will give Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri numerous points to ponder.

Hardik Pandya's 76-ball-90 was at best a good innings but just like the Champions Trophy final in 2017, the sparkling knock was never going to help India win the contest.

Adding insult to injury the was Pandya's frank admission that he is not bowling anytime soon and even if he rolls his arm over, it is likely to be in 20-over World Cups.

So with no back-up all-rounders or a plan B in place, India will have to execute their plan A perfectly.

That leaves Kohli with bowlers who can't bat and a top-order where none can bowl.

Kohli did bowl an over or two but that is history as far as the skipper is concerned.

With Australia's top three — captain Aaron Finch, David



Warner and Steve Smith — hitting the straps right away, Jasprit Bumrah and company will have no option but to pick up the pieces and give a better account of themselves on a strip that promises to be a biter.

It is highly unlikely that India's combination will change unless both Yuzvendra Chahal and Navdeep Saini are declared unfit.

The duo collectively conceded 172 runs in 20 overs between them and the wiry wrist-spinner did leave the field after sustaining an on-field injury just after the completion of his spell.

Saini, on the other hand, has

ODIS AT SYDNEY					
Team	P	W	L	N/R	Success%
Australia	133	88	39	6	68.42
India	21	5	15	1	26.19
Aus v Ind	18	15	2	1	86.11

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS		
Australia	376-9 in 50 overs vs Sri Lanka	08-03-2015
India	331-4 in 49.4 overs vs Australia	23-01-2016

FOR THE RECORD

- Virat Kohli will become the eighth Indian and 43rd player overall to appear in 250 or more ODIs.
- David Warner who scored 907 runs in 19 innings of 20 matches, needs 93 runs to become 11th Australian to score over 1000 runs against India in ODIs.

Faisal Features

back spasms and Thangarasu Natarajan has been inducted in the 50-over squad as a cover.

In case they are ruled out, Shardul Thakur, with decent batting abilities could replace Saini and Kuldeep Yadav's inclusion will be a forced change.

For Australia, it is possible that highly-rated all-rounder Cameron Green will be rewarded with an ODI cap as Marcus Stoinis picked up a side strain during the first game.

While a five-bowler theory is certainly hurting India, some of the shot selections at the top of the order left a lot to be desired.

Especially Shreyas Iyer, whose dismissal was an embarrassing sight as he fended awkwardly to a well-directed bouncer from Josh Hazlewood.

For Mayank Agarwal too, extra bounce became his undoing but he is too good a player to fail consistently.

Skipper Kohli, the man who is revered by the Australian team, media and public at large, would love to play a signature ODI knock, glimpses of which were on display during his 21 in the first ODI.

The lack of a sixth bowling option will put tremendous pressure on Bumrah, whose erstwhile ODI form has deserted him since he came back from his stress injury.

While he was brilliant in the IPL, just like the New Zealand series in February, the Gujarat slinger looked pedestrian at best at the SCG.

An equaliser on Sunday will be easier said than done.

India missing 'skill and character' of Dhoni: Holding

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

West Indies fast bowling great Michael Holding feels that despite a star-studded batting line-up, the Indian team is missing the "skill and character" that the peerless Mahendra Singh Dhoni used to display during big run chases.

The Indian team looked completely out of sorts as a unit in the opening ODI against Australia.

After a listless bowling display that helped the home side reach 374 for 6, the Men in Blue crumbled under pressure, slumping to a 66-run defeat.

"It was always going to be difficult for India to chase that down. One thing India will struggle with is the loss of Mahendra Singh Dhoni," Holding said in a YouTube chat show *Holding Nothing Back*.

The 66-year-old further said that India missed the composure and control of Dhoni, who retired from international cricket in August this year.

"Dhoni comes in to this Indian batting order halfway down and he usually takes control while chasing. India have chased so well in the past with MS Dhoni in the team."

"This batting line-up that they have got is still very talented — we saw some talented players and fantastic strokeplay. Hardik played a beautiful knock but they still need a player like Dhoni. Not just his skills but his strength of character," he added.

Holding said the Indian team felt more confident going about run chases with Dhoni in the side.

"They have never been afraid to win the toss and insert



the opposition because they know what MS Dhoni is capable of and their batting is capable of." Dhoni's calmness was a big factor in run-chases.

"We never see Dhoni panicking at any stage while India are chasing. He usually paces that chase so well because he knows his ability and he knows how to go about the chase."

The former pacer added that Dhoni not only assessed the situation well but also provided support and insights to the person batting alongside him.

"Whoever is batting with him, he is always talking with

them and helping them. Fantastic batting line-up, but MS Dhoni was a special man in the run-chase," Holding said.

The former cricketer turned commentator also slammed India's sloppy display on the field.

"India didn't help themselves with their fielding. The SCG is a big ground but the boundary rope was still in from the extremes of the boundary."

Kohli and company dropped at least four catches, missed a run out opportunity apart from several sloppy fielding efforts.

India cop 20% fine for slow overrate

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Indian cricket team was fined 20 per cent of its match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against Australia in the series opening first ODI in Sydney.

India took an unprecedented four hours and six minutes to complete their 50 overs during their 66-run loss in the first ODI.

ICC match referee David Boon imposed the sanction after India was ruled to be one over short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration.

Even Steve Smith after the match conceded that it was the longest 50-over game he had been part of.

"It was the longest 50 overs in the field I've ever had, that's for sure."

"I don't know what to put that down to. Obviously a few people came on the field in the first innings which took a bit of time and I think they (India) went 45 minutes over the scheduled time and we were something similar," Smith said.

If Hardik is unfit where's the replacement? asks Gambhir



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir feels Virat Kohli's team will keep facing the problem of imbalance till it finds a suitable replacement for a half-fit Hardik Pandya as his nearest competitor Vijay Shankar is not of same level.

Pandya is playing currently as a specialist batsman and is not sure when he would be fully fit to bowl in ODI cricket.

Asked if there is a problem of balance, the hero of two World Cup triumphs couldn't agree more. "Big time and this has been happening what — since the last World Cup. If Hardik is not fit (to bowl), where is your sixth bowling

option," Gambhir was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"It's only Vijay Shankar that I can think of but does he have the same impact batting at No 5 or 6. Can he give you seven or 8 overs, I have my doubts," the straight-talking Gambhir said.

According to Gambhir, this is the kind of problem which can't be sorted even if an opener of Rohit Sharma's calibre comes back. "You can talk (about) putting in Manish Pandey, even if and when Rohit comes back in the XI, the problem you are facing now you will be facing then. There is no one in the top six who can actually give you a couple of overs," he said.

While Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell are already in the playing XI as pace and spin bowlers all-rounders respectively, Australia have a number of back-up men with multiple skill-sets, including rookie Cameron Green, who is set to make his international debut.

"And if you see the Australian side, there is Moises Henriques, who can give you couple of overs, there is Sean Abbott who is bowling all-rounder. They have Daniel Sams who can both bowl and bat."

"From Indian point of view, if Hardik is unfit where is the replacement?"

Bairstow takes Eng home

AFF ■ CAPE TOWN

Jonny Bairstow powered England to a five-wicket win over South Africa in the first T20I at Newlands in Cape Town on Friday.

Bairstow smashed 86 not out off 48 balls as England chased down a victory target of 180 with four balls to spare.

England were struggling at 34/3 before Bairstow and Ben Stokes (37) changed the momentum of the match with a fourth wicket stand of 85.

Even so, South Africa still had a realistic chance of winning as England went into the last four overs needing 51 runs.

But left-arm fast bowler Beuran Hendricks conceded 28 runs in the 17th over, including three wides which cost eight runs, as Bairstow and England captain Eoin Morgan went on the attack.

Morgan said the win was "extremely pleasing, given that we were pretty average apart from two or three players."

Morgan said England's bowlers "missed areas", although left-arm Sam Curran claimed a career-best three for 28 in South Africa's innings of 179/6.

And he was disappointed with the batting start, although he praised Bairstow and Stokes.



"Jonny and Ben rebuilding the way they did set up the win nicely," he told *SuperSport* television.

Bairstow batted at number four instead of opening as he often does in white-ball cricket.

"It's something you've got to enjoy," he said. "You learn to craft your innings in different ways."

Bairstow hit nine fours and four sixes, finishing the match in style with his fourth six which sailed into a building sight on the northern end of the ground.

7th Pak cricketer tests Covid +ve

AFF ■ WELLINGTON

A seventh Pakistan cricketer tested positive for Covid-19 as the team remained confined to their hotel in Christchurch on Saturday, unable to train and with a question mark over their New Zealand tour.

The Pakistanis, who only arrived four days ago, are already on a "final warning" for breaching New Zealand's tight quarantine restrictions, with the growing number of coronavirus cases adding pressure to preparations for their opening match on December 18.

Despite all members of the squad returning negative tests before flying to New Zealand, six came up positive after testing on day one in the country.

"One additional member of the Pakistan cricket squad has today tested positive," the Ministry of Health said in a statement on Saturday, confirming the seventh patient.

"The remainder of the results from the squad's day-three swab testing, apart from the six who have already returned a positive result, are negative."

All overseas arrivals to New Zealand must spend two weeks in quarantine.



The 53-man squad will undergo further tests on Monday and in the meantime they remain confined to their rooms after permission to train while in isolation was revoked by New Zealand authorities.

The ministry said exemptions allowing teams to train while in managed isolation "are very difficult to obtain" and Pakistan's exemption was put on hold after several players were caught flouting social distancing protocols inside the quarantine hotel.

LAMICHHANE ALSO +VE

HOBART: One of T20 cricket's well-known journeymen, Sandeep Lamichhane has tested positive for Covid-19, the Nepalese leg-spinner said on Saturday, less than two weeks before the start of Big Bash League in which he'd signed to play for Hobart Hurricanes.

AFF ■ BRIGHTON

Liverpool were frustrated by VAR Las Pascal Gross's controversial late penalty rescued a dramatic 1-1 draw for Brighton at the Amex Stadium on Saturday.

Jurgen Klopp's side took the lead through Diogo Jota's second half strike after Brighton's Neal Maupay had missed a penalty in the first half.

But Liverpool were stunned in stoppage-time when Andrew Robertson's challenge on Danny Welbeck was ruled a penalty after Stuart Attwell overturned his initial decision.

Gross converted from the spot, leaving Klopp scathingly applauding the officials at the end of a disappointing week for Liverpool after their shock Champions League defeat at home to Atalanta.

Liverpool went back to the top of the table as a result of their draw, but the champions are just one point ahead of previous leaders Tottenham.

Tottenham would regain pole position if they avoid defeat at Chelsea on Sunday, while the Blues will go top if they win.

It was one of those days for Liverpool, who also saw goals correctly disallowed by VAR for offside against Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane.

There was more bad news for injury-ravaged Liverpool as James Milner was forced off in the second half.

With Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez injured and Joel Matip rested, Klopp's makeshift defence were

VAR drama at Amex

Liverpool saw two goals disallowed by VAR before the Seagulls were awarded a late penalty to clinch 1-1 draw



exposed when Maupay's pass sent the unmarked Aaron Connolly racing through on goal.

But with just Liverpool 'keeper Allison Becker to beat, Connolly lost his nerve and timidly guided his shot well wide.

Connolly's runs were causing Liverpool problems and when the Brighton forward made another well-timed incursion in the 20th minute, he was tripped in the penalty area by the panicked Neco Williams after he was caught out of position.

Maupay stepped up to take the spot-kick, but his side-foot effort went wide despite Alisson diving the wrong way.

It was a lucky escape for Liverpool and Maupay's misery was compounded when he limped off injured moments later.

Liverpool thought they had hit back with a sucker punch when Salah sprinted onto Firmino's pass and scuffed his shot past Brighton keeper Mat Ryan.

But VAR curtailed Salah's celebrations as he was ruled offside by the tightest of margins.

After a spluttering first half, Klopp's men finally found some rhythm following Jordan Henderson's introduction at the break.

In a warning that Brighton failed to heed, Jota turned to flash a shot narrowly wide and in the 60th minute the Portugal forward put Liverpool.

Robertson found Salah and his pass teed up Jota on the edge of the Brighton area.

Skipping past two Brighton defenders, Jota cleverly drilled low shot back into the bottom corner.

Jota has enjoyed a superb start to life with the Premier League champions, scoring nine times in 14 games since signing from Wolves in September.

Salah was substituted just after the goal, but he didn't seem happy with Klopp's move, gesticulating with his hands and ignoring the German when he walked past him to the bench.

Liverpool were seconds away from three points when Robertson went to clear in his own area as Welbeck closed in.

Robertson's foot made contact with Welbeck, but there were few appeals from Brighton before Attwell awarded a contentious penalty after consulting the pitchside monitor.

With Maupay off the pitch, Gross took this one and fired down the middle to salvage an unexpected point.

CWI team arrives Dhaka to inspect Covid-19 arrangements

PTI ■ DHAKA

A two-member Cricket West Indies (CWI) team arrived in Dhaka on Saturday to take stock of the Covid-19 management plans put in place by the Bangladesh Cricket Board ahead of their series in January.

CWI director Dr Akshai Mansingh and the board's security manager Paul Slowwill, who arrived here to inspect the BCB's bio-security plans and health protocols, are also expected to travel to Chattogram. The duo will stay in the country till December 3.

"They arrived to come and see our Covid-19 management plan and the security plan ahead of their scheduled tour in January," BCB cricket operations chairman Akram Khan told *Cricbuzz*.

The two officials are likely to undergo a Covid-19 test on Saturday and begin their inspection, subject to clearance.

During the tour, West Indies are scheduled to play a full series comprising three Tests, as many ODIs and two T20Is.

The development comes close on the heels of CWI president Ricky Skerritt's recent statement that West Indies are keen to tour Bangladesh as scheduled, in January next year.

I'm in race for Olympics: Saina

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian badminton star Saina Nehwal on Saturday said she's definitely in the race for the Tokyo Olympics but before that she has to get back to her rhythm and win tournaments.

The 2012 London Olympics Bronze medalist, who has slipped to 22nd in Badminton World Federation's Tokyo Olympics qualification rankings, has recently struggled with niggles and is likely to return to action in next year's Asian Tour.

"I know Olympics is in everyone's head. It's something very big but before that you have to think about so many tournaments. I've to get back to my rhythm and win against the players who are in top-20," Nehwal said on Saturday.

"There's some two-three months' of training before that. You have to be perfectly fine and play seven-eight tournaments, after that only I will think about the Olympics. But yes, I'm definitely in the race. I want to do well and I'm working hard for that."

A big fan of tennis superstar Roger Federer, the 30-year-old Saina said if the Swiss ace along with the likes of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams can go strong at not so a young age, she too can.

"I can see great examples in Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, Serena doing so well. Why not you have to see how it goes? I'm a fighter and I will get back. When he can do it, why can't I?" she said.

"Yes, there were times when I felt



I have to 'stop playing' and 'I can't win anymore'. But then I thought I could push it."

"I love to fight. What will I do sitting at home. This is my life, this is my job," she added.

The former world number one, who recently pulled out of the Denmark Open that restarted the international calendar post Covid-19 pandemic halt, further said she can become the best in the world again.

"I'm doing well. Injuries play a big role and that happened to me. As of now, I feel good. I can do it, I can be the best in the world. It's always been there in my head. I've to correct my niggles. Improvement is definitely happening."

"That's how I play. I don't want to take that action suddenly. I want to see how badly I lose, if I'm not capable of playing anymore," she signed off.

the pioneer agenda

You go through spells
where you feel that
maybe you're too
sensitive for this world.
I certainly felt that
— Winona Ryder



FROM THE INSIDE

Pebbles of a dead sea

Few know that Goa has a past that dates back to the saga of Parshuram in Hindu mythology and India's pre-Islamic era

2



4

Mind balance is the key

It is important to work upon our mind-state before pursuing spiritual process, otherwise it will not offer desired results



As the world got busy battling the effects and impact of the virus, hackers saw this as an opportunity to exploit new vulnerabilities that emerged from a large numbers working from home, writes AJAY SINGH, as he explains various cyber risks faced by individuals and groups and suggests ways to tackle them

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to lockdowns across the world and made working from home an inevitable necessity. While this allows businesses to remain operational, it has exposed organisations to several new risks, particularly for those who fail to take the proper precautions. Even as the world got busy battling the effects and impact of the virus, hackers saw this as an opportunity to exploit new vulnerabilities that emerged from a large work force working from home.

Various reports around the world indicate a sharp increase in cybercrime even as Covid-19 has caused major disruptions and forced changes in the way we work. During this crisis, there has been a sudden surge in cybercrime in many countries with cybercriminals preying on new factors and vulnerabilities related to information systems that have come into play.

Scams, phishing websites, maps loaded with malware, and spam messages linked to the Coronavirus have been reported the world over. Dominic Raab, the British Foreign Secretary observed in early May that 'There will always be some who seek to exploit a crisis for their own criminal and hostile ends. We know that cyber criminals, and other malicious groups are targeting individuals, businesses, and other organisations by deploying Covid-19 related scams and phishing emails'. Since then cyber threats and attacks have only increased.

The lockdowns have not only made us work from home, but also shop-from-home, study-from-home, bank-from-home, attend meetings from home and so on. Studies have also shown a dramatic increase in the amount of time people are spending on-line. Fortunately, technologies like video conferencing, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), VPN (Virtual Private Network), and collaborative platforms exist today that enable working from home. However, the exposure to cyber risk has grown exponentially and rather suddenly and existing security standards have been compromised. Cybercriminals have been quick to discover that employees working from home have weaker cybersecurity than when they operate from their offices. They have exploited new weaknesses in the various technologies used and have incessantly launched attacks.

Given that we are spending (and will continue to spend) a major part of our lives on-line, a comprehensive assessment of the cyber risks that we are exposed to as individuals, families, and businesses, is key to survive and thrive.

A large number of organisations have already announced that some office-based employees will be working from home in some form for the foreseeable future and perhaps even permanently. This shift to a work from home environment which initially was

considered as a temporary solution may become a regular practice. This necessitates a complete rethink on cyber risks and involves moving away from traditional cybersecurity approaches. Any policies and protocols related to cybersecurity which were introduced when companies switched to work-from-home may have served them in the short-term, but when it comes to long-term measures, a thorough re-evaluation needs to be conducted. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, when employees will no longer be confined to working from home, the larger questions of dealing with cyber risks of working-from-anywhere will become more relevant. The top of the cybersecurity agenda for individuals, businesses, and governments in the aftermath of coronavirus should therefore be to mitigate cyber risks and build a safer and more resilient cyber environment.

INDIVIDUALS AND CYBER RISKS

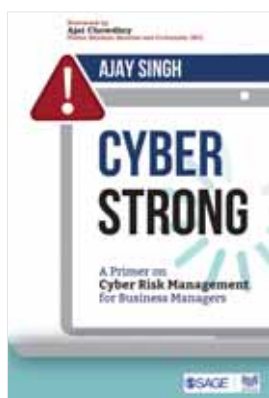
We have all been a target of cyber-attacks in some form or the other, for instance phishing attacks, phone calls or SMSs from cybercriminals, among others. They are after your personal data, passwords, social ids, bank information and social contacts... basically anything that can either fetch them a price for your data or can help them launch bigger attacks. Escaping a cyber-attack means that you have been vigilant, prepared or simply lucky enough to avoid one.

There are fortunately many things we can do as individuals to make our online existence safer while working from home or for that matter working from anywhere. Before looking at what we can do, consider the findings of the latest Norton Cyber Security Insights Report which suggests that:

- 30% of people cannot detect a phishing attack and another 13 percent cannot tell the difference between a real message and a phishing email. This implies that four in 10 are vulnerable.
- Eighty-six percent of people said they may have been a target of a phishing incident.
- 70% of consumers wish that their home Wi-Fi network could be made more secure. However, a mere 27% consider it likely that their home Wi-Fi network could be susceptible to attack.

This goes to show that cyber threats are greatly enhanced by the fact people are largely unaware of the cyber risks that they have to contend with and the counter measures they must adopt to mitigate the risks. Some of the basic things that contribute to maintain better cyber hygiene while working from home are:

- Instead of using personal devices, company-provided computers and laptops should be used
- A VPN software can be utilised to connect the organisation network
- Using different devices for work and leisure



THE LOCKDOWNS HAVE NOT ONLY MADE US WORK FROM HOME, BUT ALSO SHOP-FROM-HOME, STUDY-FROM-HOME, BANK-FROM-HOME, ATTEND MEETINGS FROM HOME AND SO ON. STUDIES HAVE ALSO SHOWN A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF TIME PEOPLE ARE SPENDING ON-LINE. FORTUNATELY, TECHNOLOGIES LIKE VIDEO CONFERENCING, BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE), VPN (VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK), AND COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS EXIST TODAY THAT ENABLE WORKING FROM HOME. HOWEVER, THE EXPOSURE TO CYBER RISK HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY



- Stopping remote access unless it is a necessity
- Default passwords should be changed
- Devices and online accounts should have strong passwords. For both personal and business accounts multi-factor authentication wherever available, should be utilised
- Meeting links should strictly not be shared publicly or through social media platforms
- Trusted apps or those recommended by one's employer should be used for work involving collaboration
- Regularly updating operating systems, antiviruses and other applications on computers and other devices
- Home Wi-Fi and admin passwords should be changed regularly, while avoiding open/free Wi-Fi networks
- Cyber-hygiene guidelines as laid out by one's employer should be strictly followed

ORGANISATIONS AND CYBER RISKS

Today, almost all businesses regardless of the industry they are in and their size are vulnerable to cyber-attacks which can happen at any time, without warning. This is true across sectors and geographies. The pandemic has only accelerated the need to implement comprehensive cybersecurity programs after a thorough assessment of existing, new, and emerging cyber risks. The concept of a cyber 'perimeter' which was once confined to the walls of an organisation or a data centre has completely eroded. Security professionals have been forced to abandon the traditional castle-and-moat strategy used so effectively in the past due to the arrival of cloud computing and the use of portable devices by organisations coupled with the integration of personal devices into organisational systems. The cyber perimeter has interminably moved from the walls of the enterprise to what is today a flexible and extended virtual perimeter. This calls for a reassessment of cyber risks and requirements across the following four dimensions:

- **Technology dimension:** securing IT systems, applications, networks, data, and devices
- **People:** employees and others who are users and have access an organisation's system
- Policies, Procedures and Processes that are used to run business operations
- Laws, regulations, and compliance

In the near future as the pandemic continues, there are a few types of cyber-threats companies must specifically be prepared for and safeguard against:

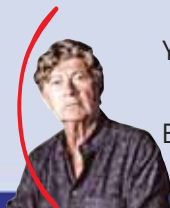
Ransomware: Ransomware is a type of malware that is used to deny access to a computer system or data by encrypting the information and keeping it hostage until the ransom is paid. There has been an alarming rise

in Ransomware attacks in recent months. The deployment methods include socially engineered emails packed with malware, or a weblink that triggers a drive-by download. Some of the ways to protect your systems from Ransomware attacks include changing default passwords at all access points, training employees in identifying suspicious email links, keeping air-gapped up-to-date data back-ups, prohibiting the use of USB drives, and updating all operating systems and software in time.

Phishing: This is a type of social engineering attack where hackers attempt to steal login credentials such as passwords or deceive people in multiple ways into installing malware. Employee training to recognise phishing emails and the use of multi-factor authentication can help to prevent or mitigate damage from a cyber-attack which may result from a phishing exploit.

Business email compromise: During this pandemic, a large number of cases of business email compromise instances have been reported. Here, cybercriminals spoof emails (usually making them look like they are from legitimate sources) to redirect a payment intended for one of the company's suppliers to their own bank accounts. In a work from home scenario, where employees are not in front of each other to seek clarifications, these kinds of cyber-attacks are on the rise. Preventing such attacks calls for a high degree of vigilance and situational awareness among employees (especially those processing payments). Employees must be advised to be careful and alert to such attempts and double check before they initiate action. Organisations must also implement additional controls to prevent any mistakes in this regard.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD): The use of personal devices like phones, laptops and tablets for office work has become common nowadays. As employees switched to working from home, there are many who also started to use their home devices for day to day work. While companies may have policies for onboarding these devices into the corporate network, there is often laxity and carelessness in observing the protocols. More so, during the pandemic. The absence of specific organisational cybersecurity protocols makes them a cyber risk. If any of these devices are compromised, they can provide hackers with an opening into a corporate's network and data which can be accessed and exploited. If employees continue to work from home and rely on personal devices for the foreseeable future, then a more robust protocol must be established which mandates the installation and updating of security software on personal devices that are used for office work.



YOU DON'T STUMBLE UPON
YOUR HERITAGE. IT'S
THERE, JUST WAITING TO
BE EXPLORED AND SHARED
— ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Photos: Worrel Kumar Bain and Reynold Machado

Goa and Portuguese colonisation of India are almost synonymous. Few know that Goa has a past that dates back to the saga of Parshuram in Hindu mythology and India's pre-Islamic era, writes **SOMEN SENGUPTA**. UNESCO World Heritage Week was recently celebrated in India from November 19 to November 25

Nestled between the Western Ghats and Sahayadri Hills, and watered by two beautiful rivers named Mandovi and Zuari, this land was long isolated from the Indians. It was isolated not because of any physical feature or inaccessibility, but for its distinctive history and heritage that was seemingly "foreign" for British-ruled Indians. Goa, the coastal territory of Konkan heartland, was always a hidden pearl and a prized colonial nest for Portugal, a country that traded and ruled at many parts of the globe for several centuries.

Goa and Portuguese colonisation of India are almost synonymous. Few know Goa has a past that dates back to the saga of Parshuram in Hindu mythology and India's pre-Islamic era.

Hindu mythology says that this land was created from sea by Parashuram, the 6th incarnation of Vishnu. Parashuram, according to mythology, excavated this surface from sea with his arrow and gifted it to the Brahmins. In the ancient times, it was known as Govapuri and later Gomantak.

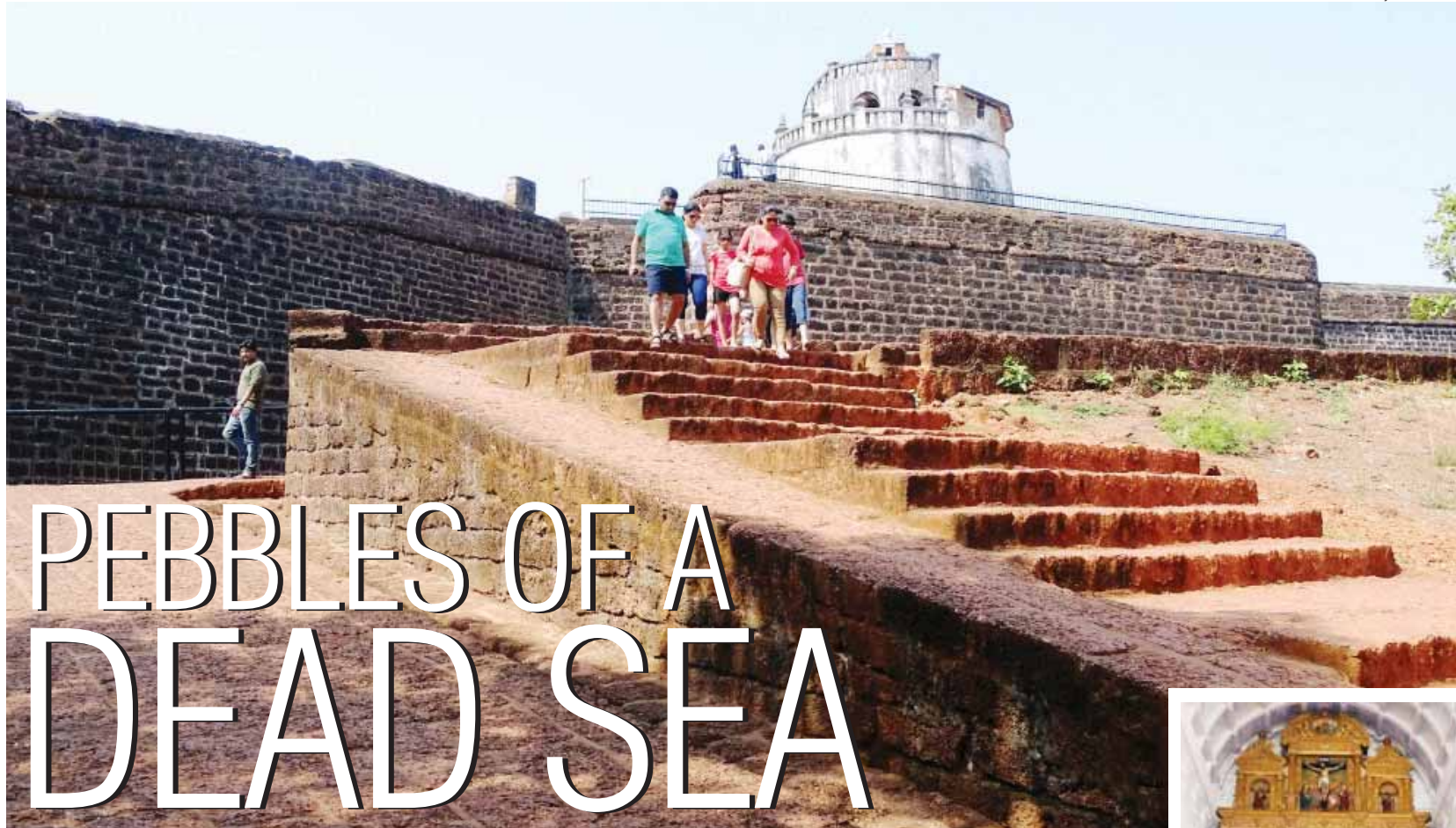
In 3rd century BC, it was a part of Maurya Empire and after that till the end of 750 AD almost all Hindu dynasties of Western India like Satavahanas, Chalukya and Rashtrakuta ruled this land. It fell into the hands of Muslims in 1312 and again in 1370, Hindu king of Vijaynagar conquered it. Hindu rule ended in 1470 when Adil Shah of Bijapur gained Goa.

This was the time when the fragrance of Goa's exotic spices began to attract the Portuguese, who had already arrived in Kerala in 1498, like a magnet. In 1510, 12 years after Vasco Da Gama arrived in Kerala as a trader, another Portuguese named Alfonso De Albuquerque showed his military might and became the ruler of Goa.

Soon after, they took over Diu in 1534 and Daman in 1559. A large part of Bengal was already under the Portuguese and with the new territory, they cemented a foundation of India's Portuguese colonisation. This prevailed till 1961, following which India reclaimed it after a soft military operation.

The conquest of Goa was perhaps the beginning of Portuguese dream to imprint their colonial stamp upon India. As a tyrannical race they soon got into conflict with local Indians, resulting in demolition of temples and forceful religious conversions. This was also the time when they tried to stop the practice of *sati* cult but failed. Soon the need was felt to protect Goa from other European powers, like British and Dutch East India Company, and even from the Maratha warrior, Shivaji, who attacked the Portuguese of Goa.

The need for military competence pushed the Portuguese to go for massive fortification. They got direct



PEBBLES OF A DEAD SEA

support from Lisbon to expand their activities in India, such as expansion of Christianity, through the missionaries landing from Europe. Soon there was a visible change in the entire demography of Goa and tangible changes in architecture, language, food, dress, music and sports Goa came about. Goa gradually became a unique place within India.

This little Portugal of India gradually boomed in its own style and pace. Majestic churches, forts, printing press and above all a legend named "St Francis Xavier" turned Goa into an unparalleled place to which no other Portuguese colonies of India (be it those in Bengal or Gujarat) came a close match.

Towering among the past relic of that fascinating time is Fort Aguada that was built from 1609 to 1612 and still stands a living testimony at north Goa. This is one of the few forts of India, that was never conquered by enemies.

Built in sturdy brown laterite stone for the sake of combating the British, Dutch and Marathas, this is perhaps the best sample of Portuguese military architecture in India. *Aguada* means water, and this fort once had several sweet water streams flowing inside it, offering a great provision of drinking water both for its inhabitants and sailing ships that used to anchor near it. The fort strategically faces Candolim beach near river Mandovi. The upper part of the fort was used as water station and fort where as the lower part was used to berth Portuguese war ships. The huge water reservoir is assumed to store not less than 23,76,000 gallons of water.

The 1.3 metre thick fortification wall skirts the seashore and ascends the edge of bare rocky island. The massive grand stand of Fort Aguada once had 79 canons in place. A 13 mt high light house built in 1864 is the most iconic landmark of the fort. It often

THIS LITTLE PORTUGAL OF INDIA GRADUALLY BOOMED IN ITS OWN STYLE AND PACE. MAJESTIC CHURCHES, FORTS, PRINTING PRESS AND ABOVE ALL, A LEGEND NAMED "ST FRANCIS XAVIER" TURNED GOA INTO AN UNPARALLELED PLACE TO WHICH NO OTHER PORTUGUESE COLONIES OF INDIA (BE IT THOSE IN BENGAL OR GUJARAT) CAME A CLOSE MATCH



appears in many movies. St Lawrence church built in 1630 is situated inside the fort.

Though a large part of the fort is now dilapidated and submerged in water, its remains give enough idea of typical Portuguese style of fortification. Its well planned moats, gunpowder room, bastions, light house and escape passage all are still visible and very clearly mirror mystic timeline of the history.

Goa witnessed a silent revolution when India's first printing press was set up there, though accidentally. It is interesting to note that the first book printed in India was not in Bombay or Bengal Presidency, where historically almost all modern wonders landed from Europe.

It was in September 1556 when a printing press machine, which was originally meant to be delivered at Abyssinia or Ethiopia, arrived in Goa and placed in St Paul's college. From that machine, for the first time, a Spanish theologian named Juan De Bustamante printed a book of Theology named *Conclusions Philosophic*.

This machine was actually shipped from Portugal to Abyssinia of Africa. When the ship anchored at Goa on its way to Abyssinia, the relations between the two countries had declined as the king of Abyssinia detested the fact that Christian missionary had come to his country. So the machine was abandoned at Goa and it was sheer luck that India, as the first country of Asia, got to see the magic of printing machine. Unfortunately, after 1660, the machine went traceless. Today, a printing museum in Goa tells the story without showing any tangible relics.

Portuguese touch is palpable in every corner of old Goa, especially in its massive churches and cathedrals. Two most significant of those are Se Cathedral de Santa Catarina and Basílica de Bom Jesus. Both are UNESCO world heritage monuments and both are filled with stories of exciting history of Portuguese conquest of Goa and its religious history.

Se Cathedral is perhaps the most celebrated religious building of Goa. This is the largest church of India and even bigger than any in Portugal.

A classical example of Gothic Portuguese Manueline style of architec-



ture, this massive church of 250 ft in length and 187 ft wide was built between 1562 to 1619 during the golden era of Portuguese.

Dedicated to the feast of St Catherine of Alexandria, it was built to commemorate the victory of Portuguese over Muslims in 1510. The church exterior bears a Tuscan touch while the interiors are much of Corinthian. Its extraordinary Iberian façade, colourful mosaic floors, typical European ceiling and exotic wood carvings, all put together, create an outstanding piece of European architecture which is matchless on many counts. The laterite plinth and lime plaster of the church have survived the test of time.

Earlier, the church had two towers. One of which was grounded in 1776. The church has a bell called the Golden bell and a chapel known as Cross of Miracles. It is believed that in 1619, the vision of Christ had fallen there. This legend attracts a huge crowd all across the globe. It is the Cathedral of Arch Bishop of Goa. A convent adjacent to it houses a small yet good archaeological museum.

If Se Cathedral is famous for Cross of Miracle then Basílica de Bom Jesus (a smaller monument) is a bigger crowd puller as it holds the legend of St Francis Xavier, the man who is considered the "greatest figure in Asia after St Thomas the Apostle".

Goa's emergence as one of the holiest place in the Christian world is largely because of its association with a holy relic



of a man who died in 1552 in China.

Born in Spain and sent to India in 1542 by both the King of Portugal and Pope the third, Francis Xavier, spent 10 years in Goa serving leprosy cursed people and spreading the message of Christ. From 1510 to 1540, when Portuguese brutality over Indian masses was at its apex, he landed there as an apostle of peace and first gained confidence of local people by serving them. It was he who attracted a huge mass to Christianity that finally changed Goa to a very different demographic marquee in India.

After his death in China, his body which was still intact after many months of his demise, was brought back to Goa on March 14, 1554 and kept in a casket gifted by Queen of Portugal Maria Sophia in 1560 at Basílica de Bom Jesus. The relic is placed on the right wall of the church and can be seen from a distance.

This attracts thousands of pilgrims across the world. Every 10 years the casket is taken down and people are allowed to get a closer look of the relic.

Over a period of time, however, several distortions have taken place. One finger of its feet was vandalised by a lady in 1554 and the right hand of the body was sent to Vatican in 1914, as demanded by Pope himself. This was a year after Xavier was crowned as Saint.

Basílica de Bom Jesus is a gem of architecture and perhaps, the most famous Portuguese footprint in Goa. Its bare exterior, made of brown laterite, offers an irresistible charm to mingle with history. Built between 1594 and 1605 in late Rene structure, it blends Doric, Ionic, Roman and Corinthian style of architecture. The façade contains Jesuit motif emblem "HIS" an abbreviation of Latin "*Iesus Hominum Salvator*" meaning "Jesus. Saviour of Men". The monument enshrines statue of St Ignatius Loyola and infant Jesus.

Cathedral, fort, lighthouse and old colonial buildings are now open to public and Government alike. The general panorama of old Goa runs like a motion picture visualising a saga much different from India's general history. Even though Portuguese are long gone the profound footprints are alive in every edifice of Parashuram's land.

FROM PAGE 1

Working From Home? Beware of that cyber attack

Focussing on the softer aspects of cybersecurity: Thus far, discussions around cyber security have largely focused on IT infrastructure, and the risks that software and hardware can pose to businesses. However, the pervasiveness of cyber threats like Ransomware, stealing of passwords, social engineering attacks like phishing

and Business Email, Compromise among others are forcing businesses to consider the softer and less tangible aspects of cyber security such as awareness, training and a security first culture. A heightened level of situational awareness in the context of responsible online behaviour, maintaining basic cybersecurity standards and

training is also necessary to ensure both new and existing employees are well versed in cyber risks.

GOVERNMENT AND CYBER RISKS

Governments around the world have taken note of the alarming rise in cybercrime in recent months which coincide with the spread of the pandemic.

Indian citizens, commercial and legal entities faced nearly seven lakh cyber-attacks till August in the current year according to Government data. Recognising the rapidly increasing cyber risks, the Government of India issued guidelines for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) relating to their key roles and responsibilities for securing

applications/infrastructure and compliance. All Ministries/ Departments of the Central Government, State Governments (and their organisations) and all critical sectors are implementing a 'Cyber Crisis Management Plan for countering cyber-attacks and cyber terrorism'. Mumbai suffered a major power outage on October 12 which lasted several hours.

Today, authorities are investigating whether this was a cyber-attack.

Cyber risk is real, and it is potent. For all digital citizens and entities, it is a reality that will outlast the pandemic. The specific cybersecurity security challenges across industry sectors, governmental systems, public utilities are wide ranging. As cybersecurity experts say, you are never done as far as cybersecurity is concerned.

Cyber risks and threats keep evolving and so should cybersecurity measures and systems. This is one game you have to keep winning to survive and thrive in the digital world.

The writer is a Corporate Advisor and mentor. He has recently authored a book titled *CyberStrong: A Primer on Cyber Risk Management for Business Managers*, published by SAGE Publications India

OTHErVOICE

Development at the cost of forest: An ethical concern

Decision to give away 243 acres of Shivalik Elephant Reserve forest land for the expansion of Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun is a matter of grave concern, triggering a debate on development and environment



NIBEDITA PRIYADARSHINI JENA

The Uttarakhand Government's decision to give away 243 acres of Shivalik Elephant Reserve forest land for the expansion of Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun is a matter of serious concern which once again opens the debate on development and environment.

The State Government, considering the development motives in terms of economic and technological growth, has taken the decision of using the forest land. The encroachment is predicted to harm a cluster of things, yet certain immediate observable damage can be cited like the loss of 10,000 trees which can't be compensated, limiting the free movement of wild animals due to shrinkage of forest area. Moreover, the proposed, expanded airport will be under the 10 kilometres eco-sensitive zone of the Rajaji National Park.

Protesting against this decision, different polemics have been made, such as: Forest and wildlife are sources of revenue generation in the form of tourism and thus employment generation and this infringement will dismay the fragile ecosystem of Doon.

Nonetheless, all these arguments seem to be repetitively ordinary and thus anthropocentric, on the account of human benefit. There is a need for deeper analysis, based on ethical concerns.

Concerning the issue, the fundamental question needs to be raised at two different levels: How essential is to expand the airport and should environmentalists fight against this proposal for the well-being of humans or the well-being of the wilds or trees or for the entire environment itself?

On the first question, the necessity of the expansion of the airport in the name of development seems to be obscure. The Government's developmental plans should encompass the views of native indigenous of the area where the plan is supposed to be executed. However, here this has been flouted.

This leads to a further question on development for whom and at what cost? From a purely human-centric calculation cutting down of 10,000 trees doesn't necessarily enhance the economic status of the local people. Moreover, one can imagine the level of pollution that would harm them in future because of the deforestation and so-called modernity. Often major invisible harm is disguised in minor visible benefit. A developmental plan of the rule of power is imposed following solely technocratic conditions that in turn lead to the agony of humans as well as animals. Thus, morality is brought to fight against the unjust planning. Humans, animals and plants become the victims of the development project and it is essential to ethically examine the means (plans) and ends (consequences) before processing to execute it. In doing so, the Government can get a path to develop a new way of governing through which universal welfare can be achieved.

The second-level question is underpinned on the protection of the environment. Defending the protest of local people let's begin with invoking a stance of social ecologist in terms of "regional turn in environmental thinking" because as social ecologist L. Mumford says a strong regional centre of culture can be "the basis of active and securely grounded local life".

The local life is a broader concept that includes humans, animals and plants, all of them create a niche to accommodate each other for their wellbeing. Thus, protesting at an individualistic level grounding on the ethical concern directing towards individuals only would not be beneficial because it precludes either one of them — humans or animals or trees. Further, if we fight against the Government's decision to protect the forest for the well-being of humans, then the instrumental value is credited to the forest and thus the day is not far it to be used for a different purpose.

Rejection of anthropocentric option paves a path to ascribe intrinsic value to the forest through which absolute protection of forest can be demanded. However, the ascription of intrinsic value is in question to whom it should be ascribed — to individual animals or species/particular animal species or the entire ecosystem.

Supposed attribution of inherent value to individual animals precluding environment or to forest, excluding animals, leads to unpleasant consequences since both complement each other for their sustainability. Thus, there is a requirement for a holistic approach towards Doon's valley to protect native indigenous and the forest.

Implementation of an unexamined developmental project in the process of deforestation fails to satisfy all types of moral standards. Chopping thousands of trees and leaving innumerable animals homeless shows a lack of sense of "goodwill" and thus serves no adequate duties of humans towards the environment.

It also fails to bring an overall balance of good over evil — human suffering due to pollution and the scary behaviour of wild animals, as well as animals suffering due to the lack of food and dwelling place. Thus, this encroachment leads, in turn, to dire consequences. Furthermore, it prevents to show the virtuous character trait of the human.

The conditions of flourishing human life are not necessarily limited within the intra-human species, it needs the ethical capability as well to consider the entire ecosystem as an end in itself.

Arguing in favour of destroying natural "wild", which is not humanised, based on creating new forests through planting trees ignores the intrinsic value of natural wild which is unacceptable.

Instead of being driven by the instrumental reason to achieve instant non-sacrosanct ends, we humans, including the Government, ought to do actions involving rules, rights, compassion, etc, to protect the environment, including ourselves.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor, Philosophy, Bengaluru Central University)

India must meet US on equal footing

What does the Joe Biden Administration's occupation of the Oval Office mean for India? This is pertinent especially after Trump's tight embrace of India. Though Trump-Modi friendship might not have translated into a trade pact — in all areas, particularly on the foreign policy and geo-strategic fronts in dealing with China or Pakistan, it supported India in becoming the alternative supply chain supplanting China, strengthening military relations, while refraining to interfere in India's internal matters.

Any change in the US policy towards India is unlikely, save some prodding on the Western understanding of human rights issues in the region, something which New Delhi should be prepared to deal with.

A little uncertainty exists on Biden's approach towards Pakistan, while he is strong on anti-terrorism front, the need of Islamabad for peace negotiations with Taliban will bring in a working relationship between the two nations, though a re-appearance of bonhomie is unlikely.

On the trade front, Arun K Singh, former Indian Ambassador to the US, has summed up the position, "era of post 1990s globalisation effectively ended with Trump's election in 2016". On climate change, New Delhi will be asked to do more from the Biden Administration, an approach he has indicated towards other nations.

Besides, there is strong probability of Republicans holding the Senate should also not be lost on us.

India's significance for the US

It is insignificant to think if the Democrats or the Republicans will be more supportive to the Indian cause. It's the US national interest which

made Presidents from Clinton to Trump to deepen ties with India. With 17.7 per cent of the world's population, fifth largest economy, India is important for the US economy.

As the world's largest liberal democracy — among the few in the non-Western world even rare so in Asia — a responsible player in global politics, largest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions, a nation which is looked at with trust and respect in comity of nations, all the more so by the developing world, India today stands at a formidable position with which every global player wishes to partner.

So, in the Asian century when the focus of the world has shifted to the Indo-Pacific economically, politically as well as on the geo-strategic front, while the US power wanes and is increasingly challenged by the rising China in all possible domains: trade and economy, technology, intelligence, military modernisation and in international institutions, who does the US look to?

If a decade or two back India could not be ignored, today, the US can simply not do without India; and Washington DC is well aware of that. Nobody knows this better than the 46th President of the US, a seasoned diplomat. In 2006, he argued India-US relationship is the single most important relationship that the US has to get right for its own safety's sake, declaring his dream of having India and the US as two closest nations in the world in 2020.

In 2008, he led the charge in the US Congress on approval of India-US Nuclear Agreement. As the Vice President in the Obama Administration, he further deepened ties with India.

In a policy paper during campaigning, Biden called India and the US as natural partners, while declaring the

strengthening of India-US relationship as high priority for his administration; mentioning that no common global challenge can be resolved without India and the US.

It pledged support to India in fight against terrorism, cross-border or otherwise, confronting "new threats" India faces in its own region and along its own borders, not allowing China to threaten India with impunity, while supporting a larger role for India in international institutions, including pushing India to become a permanent member of the UNSC.

Chinese threat to the US

In the 2020 US report on China's military, which outlines the fast-paced military modernisation and capacity enhancement of PLA as it moves towards its goal to become a "world class military" by 2049 — understood to mean equal or superior to the US military — it's pointed out that the PLA is not intended to be "merely a showpiece of China's modernity. The report pointed out that China is not only going to keep the PLA focused solely on regional threats" but to have "an active role in advancing" China's foreign policy, particularly with respect to its "increasingly global interests and its aims to revise aspects of the international order".

In the World Economic Output report 2020, the IMF declared China has overtaken the US to become the world's largest economy in PPP terms. In China's recently concluded fifth plenary session, it seemed assured about reaching "high income level" in the next five years and doubling economic output by 2035, which is also the deadline for China to emerge as a global leader in innovation, becoming technological independent of the West by mobilising all of the nation's resources to make

breakthrough in key technologies from AI to quantum computing and semiconductor manufacturing.

To contain China is the top-most priority for the US, and the Biden Administration is going to achieve this by making a multilateral coalition of its allies and partners in Europe and Asia. And of them India is the most important peg in it. Indeed, the US ought to be thankful for the present situation brewing at the Indian border with the dragon, because a scenario where Indian interests with China converge can still be imagined, the same for the US is now impossible.

India might be China's immediate irritant, its real adversary is the US. So, to worry about the US support on China is in vain.

Human rights, Kashmir and CAA

In his campaign, Biden had mentioned his disappointment with the Assam's NRC, CAA and need for full liberties to be returned in Kashmir. The progressive faction has been all the more critical on the front, Vice President Kamala Harris herself being vocal, so, questions will be raised.

In 1993, US political scientist late Samuel Huntington wrote that there is a wide-spread anti-western sentiment rising all over the world because of West's universal enforcement of its values.

The East Asian nations had created a united front against this, with the Japanese Prime Minister of the time Hosokawa saying western human rights concepts can't be "blindly applied to Asia".

The West's hypocrisy on the human rights front has also been time and again raised by the developing world. Why the US is not questioned over arrests of Muslims without charge after 9/11, Guantanamo Bay prisoners that are still rot-

ting in prisons of the US allies in West Asia, most horrible abuses of human rights in Abu Ghraib prison, Iraq, or over the police brutalities on the blacks, or how the UK suppressed the Irish and Scottish national movements?

While India embraced the Western liberal democracy and human right regime, it continues to suffer the destabilising and violent after-effects and grave unresolved issues of the externally created borders and gory partition, unlike the peaceful territories of the West.

It is difficult, therefore, to enforce the same level of liberties to the region bearing the scourge of externally funded and supported terrorism for decades, which threatens the security of the whole nation, with even the temple of Indian democracy not been spared. A discouragement towards democratic process is still being made in Kashmir by terrorists targeting political members. Similarly, a resolution of the post-partition refugee situation had to be undertaken.

India is a free and fair democracy with an independent judiciary, and it must confidently, firmly and calmly draw its red lines over non-interference in internal matters, something that rest of the Asia has been doing for long.

Our External Affairs Minister demonstrated it by not meeting a panel, including Congresswomen Pramila Jayapal. Were it done by even a middle level power, nobody would bat an eyelash. It's time India takes its rightful position in the world, with respect, it deserves, and as Huntington puts it: the US well knows when to concede to maintain "good relations" with friendly countries.

(The author is a public policy analyst and lawyer)

Any change in the US policy towards India is unlikely, save some prodding on the Western understanding of human rights issues in the region, something which New Delhi should be prepared to deal with. It's in the US national interest to have good relations with India. It's time India takes its rightful position in the world it deserves, and as Huntington puts it: the US well knows when to concede to maintain 'good relations' with friendly countries



SONAL SHUKLA

PERSPECTIVE

A new civil war in Ethiopia

Ethiopia, located in the Horn of Africa, is popularly known as the "Mecca of Coffee". Today it has seen one of the bloodiest conflicts in its northern region of Tigray wherein the federal forces are fighting with the local Tigray regional forces. The fierce fight that broke out in early November is simply a war between Addis Ababa, the central capital city, and the regional capital town of Mekele. It's a show of strength of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali against combative Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) based in the restive region.

Further, it is straight fight between the majority Oromo community (around 34.6 per cent) represented by the PM Abiy and the minority Tigrayans, barely 6 per cent of the total population of the country. Initially, the war in the Northern Province was planned for a limited scale, directly to target the TPLF, a militia cum political party, but now more than two weeks of military campaign has hinted a severe fight, showing no signs of talk, withdrawal and negotiation between the two warring groups.

The current crisis in Ethiopia has its roots in the recent past of the country. The TPLF was established in February 1975, more than 45 years ago in the Tigray Province. A year before i.e. 1974 witnessed a tumultuous political situation in the country as Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by the military.

Afterwards, a new military junta, popularly known as "The Derg", came into power in the country. The subsequent years brought home a devastating conflict, leading to the killing of thousands of young man and woman across the country. However, the Tigrayan region had to largely bear the brunt of the so-called "Red Terror", unleashed by the Leftist Derg junta. Sadly, Derg continued in power in Ethiopia till 1991, when it was finally ousted by the armed rebels. And incidentally, the TPLF was an integral part of a coalition of resistance forces that finally moved out the junta from the power corridors of Ethiopia.

Then TPLF leader Meles Zenawi became the interim President later and

also holds the historic record of being the first elected Prime Minister of the country in 1995. What it demonstrates is the consolidation of power by the minority Tigrayans over the majority of the public institutions of Ethiopia.

And the rest is a new history for this emerging African nation. The Tigrayans ruled the country for almost three decades from 1991 to 2018 by becoming an alliance partner of the ruling coalition known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

This coalition was the brainchild of the veteran Meles to bring together like-minded groups to capture power in Addis Ababa. The EPRDF earned both reputation and severe criticism from the Ethiopians in its entire period in power and even after. Many say that during its time, child mortality rate fell, and the famine was prevented. But others argue that the Tigrayan-led EPRDF was no other than an absolute authoritarian regime that ruled the country with an iron hand.

Unfortunately, the other coalition partners had hardly any voice in regard to making critical policy decisions and deciding future course of actions.

A new era has begun with the coming of Abiy to power in 2018 who is the first Oromo leader to come to occupy the seat of the head of the Ethiopian Government. He was a former military intelligence officer of the Government. In fact, years of protest that started after the departure of Tigray's powerful leader and former PM Meles in 2012, forced his successor Hailemariam Desalegn to finally resign after six years of misrule and anarchy across the country. He was the chairman of the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. From the very beginning of his tenure, his role was ambivalent as he could hardly keep the powerful alliance partners under his control.

And most importantly, since he did not belong to the powerful Tigray community, it was absolutely difficult for him to exercise administrative control over them. Over the years, the Tigray ethnic group has massively expanded its sway

over the army, secret services and the bureaucracy. These circumstances offered an opportune moment for Abiy to get elected as the leader of the EPRDF. For years, the Ormos have been marginalised by the EPRDF, led by the Tigray community and its powerful leaders in Addis Ababa.

From the very beginning, he spoke the language of unity and promised his countrymen peace, development and progress. And this earned him praise even from his arch rivals in the Opposition political parties.

After assuming power, he released thousands of prisoners, unblocked a large number of media channels and privatised many Government owned enterprises. He reached out to Eritrea, Ethiopia's old rival on the northern border, and made peace with that country. And as a result, he was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize which had brought home a chance of reclaiming Ethiopia's position in the African continent once again.

However, gradually his reform package has altered the long-drawn power relations of the country. And in the last two years, the Tigrayans have registered their displeasure with Addis Ababa. They say that they are being targeted for the wrongs committed in the past and the current Government is fast trying to marginalise the community and its leadership. Last year, Abiy dissolved the EPRDF, and formed the Prosperity Party, but the TPLF refused to join the new coalition. Thus, formally, the dominance of the TPLF has come to an end and it was made possible by the shrewd leadership of Prime Minister Abiy.

What has finally triggered the current crisis in Tigray is no other than the regional election that took place in the province in September. Actually, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Abiy Government postponed the much anticipated general election on August 21 across the country. But the TPLF leadership accused Abiy of unconstitutionally extending the term of his Government. In defiance of the federal Government's order, the TPLF conducted the election in its province. This

incident has raised tension between the Central Government and the regional Government of Tigray.

And on November 4, the forces loyal to the TPLF suddenly attacked the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defence Force based in Mekelle. After two days, the Abiy Government launched a massive military strike, saying the TPLF has crossed the "Red Line". And since then the war is on the restive region.

Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure, Sudan has closed down the border with Ethiopia to avoid immediate clash and refugee movement. Around the same time, Addis Ababa has declared the regional Government of Tigray as illegal and proposed to form an interim Government out there as per the country's Constitution.

The UN is urging for a peaceful and swift resolution of the conflict in Ethiopia. It seems impossible for now as TPLF leader Debrezion Gebremichael has remained defiant. By now more than 25,000 refugees have crossed over to neighbouring Sudan. On November 14, the TPLF forces launched multiple rocket attacks on Asmara, the capital city of neighboring Eritrea. And interestingly, Gebremichael has stated that Asmara was a "legitimate target" as its airbases are being used by the Ethiopian forces to carry out attacks on the TPLF fighters. This indicates that there is little chance of the warring parties to come down to the negotiation table unless there is a powerful mediating force.

This landlocked East African country is surely careening for a bloody civil war. And this might escalate to a broader regional conflict involving Eritrea and Sudan. The best course of action for Abiy could be an early dialogue and engagement of the regional leadership of Tigray province. Else, the new war could involve much more people, forces and the old militias of the region and across. It's better to avoid a chaos and settle for immediate peace.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

The landlocked East African country is headed for a bloody civil war which might escalate into a broader regional conflict involving Eritrea and Sudan. The best course of action for Prime Minister Abiy could be an early dialogue with the regional leadership of Tigray province



MAKHAN SANKIA



FEELINGS COME AND GO LIKE CLOUDS
IN A WINDY SKY. CONSCIOUS
BREATHING IS MY ANCHOR
— THICH NHAT HANH



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

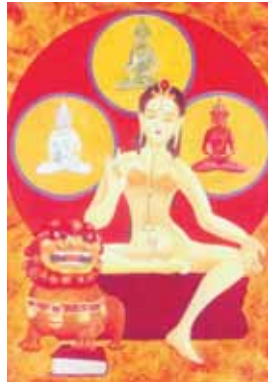
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week you card foresees healing and rejuvenation. Those suffering from an injury or other physical ailments will find quick recovery. There are times in our lives when we must accept change and allow things to come to a natural end. Every negative note has its positive end too. On the career front, a comeback of your old and trusted employee who was supposed to be the backbone of your profession is indicated. Venues will open for those who wish to expand their business or start a new venture. Time spent on the academic pursuits will pay good results now. On the relationship front, love is difficult and confusing this week. Sticking to old beliefs may spoil your relations. It is advised to avoid the intervention of the third party.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Those putting on weight must put their health on priority. You will finally understand the value of money and good health, and work out a plan to be in harmony with nature to maintain good health. Focus on walking, breathing and prayers for mental and physical healing. On the career front, unrelated issues would occupy mind space. You either have little time or are feeling lethargic about work. Hard work and efforts put in the last week are not so rewarding. This is a temporary phase. On the personal front, something special is likely to be celebrated this week. You feel emotionally contented and find a healthy relationship. You have full faith in your partner. This is the time when mutual understanding between the two is great and strengthening of relationship is indicated.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Blue
Lucky day Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You will feel healthy and free and may experience a change of perspective. Negativity replaces optimism. New possibilities are foreseen. You will learn the importance of solving your problems with rational and thorough thinking. This is also a time to utilise your creative energies. Professionally, a promotion is indicated which will make you confident and secure. You are self-disciplined and energetic. Those in business, your ideas and views are being respected and followed. This is the time when your intelligence, wisdom and experience will pay you rich dividends. On the personal front, your relationship will grow. You are romantic and love is in the air. Other relationships too are nurturing, and meaningful in your life.

Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week your inner and outer conflicts may bring upon negative effects to your healthy lifestyle and routine. Challenges are foreseen on the career front. This is a perfect time to clear the fog. This is also a good time to set your goals and targets and work towards them in the system. The win will come after a struggle. Your great insight may work in your favour. A break-through success is on the cards. On the relationship front, you will follow tradition instead of your heart. The conventions and traditions are overpowering you and you will try and seek answers from a guru or a senior person with regard to your emotions. This week you may be more inclined spiritually and worldly pleasures, love and emotions would take a back seat.

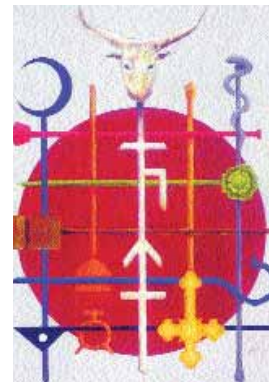
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

There is a balance between mind, body and soul this week. You will be energetic, enthusiastic and full of life. Your farsightedness will pay you rich dividends. This is the time to enjoy good food and live a healthy life, both mentally and physically. On the career front, new job offers and opportunities in business will help you broaden your horizon. If expansion in the business is the plan, this is the right time. Go for it! Good finances, income and gains through the ancestral property are indicated. On the relationship front, those contemplating marriage may start browsing the market for a suitable bride or groom. Guard against temptations and addictions. A step towards spirituality may prove to be the saviour.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you may enjoy the nature's bounty and blessings of the Almighty. Cure of a very old or prolonged illness is on the cards. Those in urgent need of motivation and inspiration to lead a healthy and meaningful life will find a mentor. You feel empowered and embark on a new journey which is progressive and makes you feel comfortable. On the work front, this is the time to keep counting the blessings. You may be busy organising an auspicious ceremony at home/office. The career will boom and so will be your interaction with the outside world. On the personal front, confusion, misunderstanding with the partner is likely. You need to guard yourself against selfish motives, aggression and any haste decisions in this period. Patience is the key.

Lucky number 4
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week you will possess the power and energy to create a fresh lifecycle for yourself. You will have control over your desires and temptations that may harm your health. You realise the importance of the balancing factor in your life and your body is in tune with the five elements of nature. On the career front, you may have experienced setbacks that make you suspicious of the others. The turning point will come when you can leave the past behind you and develop a more open mind about the future. This is the time to think positive and move ahead. On the personal front, confrontation is likely between lovers. Do not let emotion get in the field. Rather, use fact and logic to make your decisions.

Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week cards indicate excessive fear, phobia, and worry. Mental tension will remain, and this may reflect on your health. Headache, insomnia, and sleeplessness may cause unrest. Be careful of cold, cough and seasonal ailments too. This is the time to meditate, join yoga and take a break from the hectic schedule. On the career front, a little indiscretion may put your reputation in the firing line so be careful. At the work area, you may go unnoticed and feel neglected. This may cause tension and hamper your growth. Do not run away from responsibilities and commitments. Do not disclose your working plans till you accomplish them. On the personal front, your partner will be filled with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm while you feel demoralised, or hold low self-esteem.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week your satisfaction and contentment will play an important role for you to be in good health. You will enjoy worldly pleasures and relax. 'All is well' feeling gives you cool mind, contentment, positive aura and a glow on the face. On the work front, there is generosity in your temperament and ability to convince others with your communication. You care for the emotional wellbeing of others and respect your colleagues and juniors. They follow you, admire you, and respect your magnanimity. On the relationship front, there is love, fun and entertainment. You spend time together and present an expensive gift to your beloved and partner. Time is right to bring your romantic relationships out in the open, the family will accept your choice.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week you will adopt a moderate approach to life and be true to your commitments. You have understood that you need a routine and a careful regime if you want to achieve your goals. It is not necessarily a very interesting or exciting period. You are not hesitant to spend money in a gym, meditation, following nutritive diets etc to be in good health and fitness. These efforts will pay you well. On the work front, you will feel stability in your profession. Use experience and skills to achieve your desired goals. Advice from a senior person in job/business will be very helpful. On the personal front, you may get too emotional or possessive in your relationship, and that may become the cause of irritation and separation. You will be compassionate towards those dear to you.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Wednesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

In keeping with the ongoing festive spirit, you will be active and vibrant. Self-knowledge and mastery are the keys to success. You possess the inner light and consciousness, and sheer faith and experience from the past would help you become self-reliant. Through meditation, you are on the path to attain spiritual fulfilment and share this light with others. On the professional front, your wisdom and leadership will help you establish a niche for yourself. Your plans are now well underway and you are beginning to consider more opportunities to expand your current plans. On the personal front, you will find your relationships growing and developing to a satisfactory level. There is faith, understanding with each other.

Lucky number 2
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Fatigue may take a toll this week. Issues — domestic or professional — will leave you disturbed. Restlessness or problem related to Blood Pressure may bother. Consult a doctor. You may require proper sleep and support of near and dear ones. A positive approach will help put life into you. On the career front, there is nothing new happening. Things are moving as usual. Fear of stagnating career or profession may bother you. This is a temporary phase. As the week progresses, you will find the positive results. With your wisdom and experience, you keep moving ahead and achieve the desired results. On the relationship front, you will enjoy the quiet powers inherent in you. You will be able to influence your partner by diplomatic conversation.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Mind balance is the key

Someone concerned about not being able to contain his wavering mind and habit tendencies, despite serious efforts towards that end, connected with me for necessary guidance. "Sir, for almost a decade now, I have been religiously pursuing Yoga-asana and meditation as guided by two acclaimed teachers in the field. So far, I have been able to just identify my fault lines. I have been trying to address them, with no sign of tangible success in immediate future. My monkey like mind keeps randomly flitting towards varying thoughts and ideas, and so I fail to do justice to my priority preferences. I don't know how to go about further. Kindly guide."

"Well, the purpose of spirituality is to understand the living realities of life, which when absorbed in the deep realms of mind help in making reasoned choices in life and conduct with ease and comfort. What is the fun in pursuing spiritual process, if it has not helped reform your thought process?" I asked. "Remember, all actions on your part, be it pursuing spiritual process or targeting material desires are conducted by mind. Better, give me an account of how you are pursuing the process so that the

missing link in the process could be figured out," I said. Looking at the account he shared, it appears that he keeps chanting *mantra* with focus on his energy centres. So, he has been mechanically working on energy plane. He, however, has cared the least to work upon his thought process. He has been reading many books written by realised people for necessary guidance, which makes him academically aware. But his mind, intensely engaged in wanton thoughts that don't allow him the mind-space and time necessary to absorb the educative inputs, but for which it will not find reflection in his conduct.

Here I recall the saying of a realised spiritual master: "You may enjoy the grace of the God, the holy men and teachers. But if you lack the grace of mind, you may go to rack and ruins". That makes it incumbent upon us to work upon our mind-state before pursuing spiritual process, otherwise it will not offer desired result. It may not be out of place to mention that there are five states of mind — Darkening, Scattering, Gathering up, One pointed and Concentrated. Ignorant minds are the darkening type. Minds flirting with



random thoughts are the scattering type. Those who realise that only a focused mind can lead to success, try to contain their wavering mind, which comes under gathering up type. As you graduate in the process further, you may become one pointed. They still remain subject to pushes and pulls. But relatively they are able to remain focused to their priority preferences for long. Those who are able to effortlessly remain focused for long is the call of a concentrated mind.

Those who wish to evolve spiritually, and even grow materially, preparatory to that, at least they should try to graduate to the stage of one pointedness, if not concentrated. I then suggested him to follow the three stage meditation process as suggested in my book titled: "God or No God; Awareness enriches life."

The man then asked: "Sir, I will purchase your book and follow the method you have suggested. But tell me, is my present mental predicament reflected in my chart? Do I have the potential to evolve spiritually?"

Look at the astrological pointers. You are born in an airy sign Libra with fiery planet Mars conjunct headless *Ketu* there in the *lagna*. Mars is also adversely

placed with respect to the two luminaries — the Sun and Moon. Moon is ill-disposed to Venus, which makes you too touchy and sensitive. You may get overexercised even on trivial issues and blow it out of proportion as would fiery Mars flaring up the air element mean. Read together with the implications of the ill-disposed luminaries, it speaks of a temperamental, moody, irritable, impulsive, and rash character, having a disoriented mind.

Now coming to spiritual potential, benevolent Jupiter over the head in the birth chart speaks high of your spiritual quotient. Seen at subtle level, *lagna* sub-lord *Rahu*, happens to be the lord of 5th cusp identified with merits accrued from the past. 9th sub-lord identified translation of acquired merits into fruits happens to be Moon, which occupies the sub-lordship of *Rahu*. All put together indicates seed of spiritually deeply ingrained in your mind. Positioning of Moon, however, calls for concerted efforts to organise your mind before expecting the desired results.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com