

OPINION 6
BENGAL'S
REVIVAL**WORLD 8**
SWITZERLAND SETS POST-BREXIT
QUOTA FOR BRITISH MIGRANTS**SPORT 12**
JUVE, BARÇA, CHELSEA,
SEVILLA ADVANCE IN CL

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10 VIVACITY

States can't impose lockdown sans MHA nod

MHA's guidelines call for crowd management, but empower States to clamp lockdown and night curfew in Covid zones

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The States cannot impose lockdown without approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). According to new guidelines released by the Ministry of Home on Wednesday, only in containment zones, the States are empowered to impose lockdowns and the list of containment zones has to be updated with the Union Health Ministry.

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday issued new guidelines asking States to follow the strict directives in crowd management to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. As per the new directions, the States are allowed to impose restrictions like night curfew and reduction of number of people allowed to assemble but can't impose lockdown without approval from the MHA. Only in containment zones, the States are empowered to impose lockdowns and the list of containment zones has to be updated with Union Health Ministry.

The MHA's new directions, titled as 'Guidelines for Surveillance, Containment and

A health worker collects swab samples of a passenger at New Delhi railway station on Wednesday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Caution' will be applicable from December 1 to December 31, directed the States and Union Territories to implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) approved by the Union Health Ministry in controlling the crowd management, fines for non-mask wearing, opening of academic institutions etc. These guidelines are to implement Covid appropriate behaviour,' said the MHA.

"The main focus of the guidelines is to consolidate the substantial gains that have been achieved against the spread of Covid-19 which is visible in the steady decline in number of active cases in the country. Further, keeping in view the recent spike in new cases in a few States/UTs, ongoing festival season and onset of winter, it is emphasised that to fully overcome the pandemic, there is need to maintain caution and

to strictly follow the prescribed containment strategy, focussed on surveillance, containment and strict observance of the guidelines/SOPs issued by MHA and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW).

"Local district, police and municipal authorities shall be responsible to ensure that the prescribed containment measures are strictly followed. States and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions, with a view to contain the spread of Covid-19 and implement surveillance and containment," said the MHA's new guidelines. There shall be intensive house-to-house surveillance by surveillance teams formed for the purpose and testing shall be carried out as per prescribed protocol in containment zones.

"Listing of contacts shall be carried out in respect of all persons found positive, along with their tracking, identification, quarantine and follow up of contacts for 14 days (80 per cent of contacts to be traced in 72 hours). Quick isolation of Covid-19 patients shall be ensured in treatment facilities/ home (subject to fulfilling the home isolation guidelines)," said the MHA detailing the SOPs to be followed in containment zones.

The new guidelines directed that the State/UT Governments shall take all necessary measures to promote Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and to ensure strict enforcement of wearing of face masks, hand hygiene and social distancing. "In order to enforce the core requirement of wearing of face masks, States and UTs may consider administrative actions, including imposition of appropriate fines, on persons not wearing face masks in public and work spaces," it said.

"Social/ religious/ sports/ entertainment/ educational/ cultural/ religious gatherings, with up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity, with a ceiling of 200 persons in closed spaces; and keeping of the size of the ground/ space in view, in open spaces. However, based on their assessment of the situation, State/ UT Governments may reduce the ceiling to 100 persons or less, in closed spaces," said the

**Covid-19
IN INDIA****TOTAL****CASES: 92,64,820****DEATHS: 1,35,245****RECOVERED:****86,77,986****ACTIVE: 4,49,490**

guidelines.

States and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions, with a view to contain the spread of Covid-19 such as night curfew. However, State/ UT Governments shall not impose any local lockdown (State/ district/ sub-division/city level), outside the containment zones, without prior consultation with the Central Government. States and UTs also need to enforce social distancing in offices. In cities, where the weekly Case Positivity Rate is more than 10

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	17,95,959	46,748	16,63,723
Karnataka	8,78,055	11,714	8,41,432
Andhra Pradesh	8,64,674	6,962	8,45,039
Tamil Nadu	7,74,710	11,655	7,51,535
Kerala	5,78,364	2,122	5,11,008
Delhi	5,45,787	8,720	4,98,780
Uttar Pradesh	5,31,050	7,615	4,99,507
West Bengal	4,66,991	8,172	4,34,067
Odisha	3,16,001	1,740	3,08,102
Telangana	2,66,042	1,441	2,53,715
Rajasthan	2,53,767	2,218	2,25,229
Bihar	2,32,460	1,237	2,25,797
Chhattisgarh	2,27,326	2,767	2,01,744
Haryana	2,24,489	2,291	2,01,250
Assam	2,12,021	978	2,07,763
Gujarat	2,01,949	3,906	1,83,856

per cent, States and UTs concerned shall consider implementing staggered office timings and other suitable measures, with a view to reduce the number of employees attending office at the same time, thereby ensuring social distancing. No restriction on Inter-State and intra-State movement, said the new guidelines.

"There shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods including those for cross land-border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries. No separate per-

mission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements," said the guidelines.

**CENTRE ASKS STATES TO
TAKE STEPS TO REOPEN
MEDICAL COLLEGES
FROM OR BEFORE DEC 1**

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry Wednesday asked state governments to initiate steps for reopening of medical colleges from December 1 or before it, but with strict adherence to all Covid-19 related guidelines.

Irate farmers on way to Delhi despite curbs

Haryana seals border, Delhi Police refuses permission to protest

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

While the Delhi Police has refused permission and the Haryana Government sealed borders with Punjab, thousands of farmers from Haryana and Punjab started moving towards the national Capital on Wednesday for their "Delhi Chalo" march on November 26-27 against the agriculture legislations.

The farmers had major scuffles with the Haryana Police which failed to stop them despite heavy deployment of men and use of water cannons. A viral video showed that after crossing the barricades at Ambala, hundreds of farmers faced water cannons at Kurukshetra. The visuals showed massive jets of water being fired at a huge crowd on the highway barricaded by the police.

The scuffle between the farmers and the police broke out at the Shambhu border near Ambala city when the farmers broke the blockades

Police personnel check vehicles at Singhu border ahead of the scheduled farmers' protest march to Delhi on Nov 26-27 against the Centre's new farm laws in New Delhi on Wednesday
PTI

and managed to proceed to Delhi for staging a demonstration.

Despite the use of water cannons, the protesting farmers, riding tractor-trailers, cars and motorcycles, managed to enter Haryana from Punjab. They were later joined by thousands of their counterparts from Haryana, led by Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) State chief Gurnam Singh Charuni.

Meanwhile, the Haryana Police set up barricades and deployed water cannons across the State. Massive security arrangements have been made at the Delhi-Haryana border at Gurugram. The build-up is

the heaviest on the Haryana side. As a preventive step, neighbouring BJP-ruled Haryana has imposed Section 144 of the CrPC to prevent assembly of protesters. Also, the police had taken nearly 100 farmer leaders from the State into "preventive custody".

However, there was no report of any violence or the use of teargas shells or batons. BKU Punjab president Balbir Singh Rajewal said Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has got the inter-State borders sealed for Punjab farmers to prove that "Punjab is not part of India".

Continued on Page 2

China cries foul after India bans its 43 more apps

AGENCIES ■ BEIJING

A day after India banned 43 more Chinese mobile apps, including Alibaba Group Holding's e-commerce app AliExpress on national security ground, China on Wednesday said it is firmly opposed to India's decision, claiming the move violated WTO rules.

The ban had come against the backdrop of border tensions with China in eastern Ladakh since May. The banned applications, which include a few dating apps, were a threat to the "sovereignty and integrity of India", an official statement said in New Delhi.

Asked for his reaction to the latest ban on Chinese apps by India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said, "Since June this year four times India has imposed restrictions on smart phone apps that have Chinese backgrounds under the pretext of national security... This behaviour violates market principles and World Trade Organisation rules, severely undermines the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies. China firmly rejects it."

Slow wind deteriorates Delhi's air quality to 'severe' category

Ghazipur landfill fire adds to pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality deteriorated to the "severe" category on Wednesday due to slow winds after 10 days, Government agencies said. Stubble burning accounted for two per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, political blame game started after a fire broke out at Ghazipur landfill in East Delhi. The fire started early morning and the landfill site smouldered throughout the day with firefighters putting up massive efforts to douse it.

As the national Capital's overall air quality deteriorated, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) mobile app, SAMEER, said the city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 401.

It forecasted winds to pick up and improve the ventilation condition by Thursday.

"The AQI is forecasted to improve towards 'very poor' category by tomorrow and likely stay in the lower end of Very Poor on November 27 and 28," SAFAR said.

Firefighters attempt to douse a blaze at the Ghazipur landfill site in New Delhi on Wednesday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Stubble burning accounted for five per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Tuesday, six per cent on Monday and 12 per cent on Sunday. It was 13 per cent on Saturday, 15 per cent on Friday and 20 per cent on Thursday.

The maximum and minimum temperatures in the city on Wednesday settled at 24.4 degrees Celsius and 10.4 degrees Celsius with cloudy sky.

Regarding the Ghazipur landfill, Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Services (DFS), said the call regarding fire was received around 9.56 pm on Tuesday following which five fire tenders were rushed to the

spot.

"Later, three more fire engines were dispatched to douse the fire. The fire was at different places at the landfill. The operation is still going on," said Garg.

Another official said the cause of fire at different locations might be due to the garbage collectors who dumped garbage here and set it on fire. "DFS had informed this practice of garbage collectors to authorities several times but the garbage collectors keep on repeating the same putting lives of nearby residents at risk and causing pollution levels to spike in the city," he said.

Continued on Page 2

SC revokes HC's gag order on Amaravati land scam FIR news

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Andhra Pradesh High Court direction restraining the media from publishing news regarding an FIR lodged on alleged irregularities in land transactions in Amaravati.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said that the high court shall not decide till January last week the pending matter which relates to the alleged illegal land transactions during shifting of the State capital to Amaravati.

The bench, also comprising Justices RS Reddy and MR Shah, refused to stay at this stage the other directions of the HC, including the stay on probe into the FIR. The SC passed the order while hearing an appeal filed by the Andhra Pradesh Government against HC's September 15 order.

The top court, which did not issue notice to chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on the appeal, sought responses from the officials including the Director General of Police of Andhra Pradesh.

"In the meantime, directions issued in the impugned order dated September 15, 2020 to the extent of following shall remain stayed."

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CAPSULE

KALBE SADIQ DIES, PM CONDOLES HIS DEATH

Lucknow: Prominent Shia cleric and All India Muslim Personal Law Board vice president Maulana Kalbe Sadiq died in Lucknow on Tuesday. He was 83. Expressing grief, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Maulana made notable efforts towards social harmony and brotherhood.

SOCCER GREAT DIEGO MARADONA NO MORE

Buenos Aires: Diego Maradona, the Argentine soccer great who was among the best players ever and who led his country to the 1986 World Cup title before struggling with cocaine use and obesity, has died. He was 60.

'JALLIKATTU' IS INDIA'S OFFICIAL OSCAR ENTRY

New Delhi: Malayalam feature "Jallikattu", directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery, has been selected as India's official entry for the International Feature Film category at the Oscars, the Film Federation of India (FFI) announced on Thursday.

Chennai halts ahead of Nivar's landfall

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flights operations were cancelled from 7 pm onward at the Chennai airport for 12 hours; metro and buses services suspended, and trains cancelled or diverted as torrential rain and heavy winds continued to lash Chennai and the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu ahead of severe cyclone 'Nivar's' landfall. More than 1.25 lakh people have been shifted to safer places in the State.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) late at night, the landfall process of Nivar has commenced and it would cross the coast soon. The IMD, on its twitter handle said, "Very severe cyclonic storm Nivar now lies about 50 km east-southeast of Cuddalore, about 40 km east southeast of Puducherry. Landfall process commence. Centre of cyclone to cross coast near puducher-

ry within next 3 hours."

The cyclone is likely to cross Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mamallapuram around early hours (2am) of November 26 with a wind speed of 120-130 kmph, gusting up to 145 kmph. Nivar has brought with it heavy rain and strong winds in coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

In Chennai, the impact of powerful cyclone is being felt in the form of heavy rain and waterlogging in parts of the city. Velachery, Madipakkam, Valluvar Kottam, Royapettai, Triplicane and adjacent sides of Mount Road — all prime areas in Chennai — have reported waterlogging. The authorities also announced a closure of all roads leading to Marina beach, Pattinambakkam, Kasimedu Harbour, Besant Nagar beach, and Thiruvannmiyur.

Continued on Page 2

Sonia's Man Friday Patel succumbs to Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and the party's trusted backroom strategist Ahmed Patel died at a Gurugram hospital in the early hours of Wednesday due to multiple organ failure more than a month after he tested positive for Covid-19.

His son Faisal took to social media to share that Patel died at 3.30 am at Medanta hospital in Gurugram where he was admitted on November 15 after he developed complications.

Patel's family urged all well-wishers to adhere to the Covid-19 regulations by avoiding mass gatherings. The veteran Congress leader had himself announced on Twitter on October 1 that he had tested positive for Covid-19 and all those who had come in close contact of him should also get tested.

Patel leaves behind his wife, a son and a daughter. Patel will be laid to rest at his pater-

**AHMED PATEL**
AUGUST 21, 1949 — NOVEMBER 25, 2020

nal village and also his birthplace at Piraman in Gujarat on Thursday.

"AP" to his friends and "Ahmed Bhai" to colleagues, Patel was one of the closest aides of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and her political secretary for a long time. He was the troubleshooter of the

Congress and had steered the party out of ticklish situations many a time.

He was the grand old party's pointsman for building consensus on key issues with other parties and leaders and was instrumental in steering the two UPA Governments under the Prime Ministership of

Manmohan Singh.

A soft-spoken and affable man, Patel was well respected and had friends across the aisle and in different spheres. Patel was currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat. He was an eight-time parliamentarian — five times in the Rajya Sabha, three times in the Lok Sabha. His last Rajya Sabha election in 2017 was contested very keenly amid charges of horse-trading. He was currently the Congress treasurer, a post that he occupied thrice.

Patel began his political career by contesting the local body polls in Gujarat's Bharuch district in 1976. He became a Lok Sabha member in March 1977 and was a member of the sixth, seventh and eighth Lok Sabha till 1989. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha for the first time in August 1993.

Patel was a close confidant of Rajiv Gandhi and the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister from 1985 to 1986. He later took charge of

the Congress's organisational structure both in Gujarat and at the party high-command. Though Patel never became a Minister, he always worked as the background man in the Congress and was at the centre-stage of the party's decision-making till his death.

"Secrets will travel with me to my grave." That was Patel's matter-of-fact response a few months ago when asked if he would pen his memoirs to share his experiences as the party insider with a finger on its power buttons.

Patel's name cropped in several political scams and scandals and he was also undergoing probes regarding which he always claimed that he will come out clean.

Patel could have been the tell-all leader offering insights and information with his inside view of the workings of the Congress and the political world. But he would have none of it.

Continued on Page 2

Kejriwal calls for audit of Covid deaths in meet with LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a spurt in the coronavirus cases in the national capital, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday reached out to experts to audit Covid-19 death cases and suggested measures to reduce fatalities in the national Capital. The Chief Minister made the request in the meeting chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal on Wednesday.

This comes against the backdrop of Delhi's three BJP-led municipal corporations alleging inconsistencies in the official death count vis-a-vis the number of deaths project-

ed by funerals at the crematoria and burial grounds here.

Delhi recorded 5,246 fresh Covid-19 cases on Wednesday and a positivity rate of 8.49 per cent while 99 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,720. The number of tests done per million as on Wednesday was over 61778 while the total number of tests stood at over 5976437.

Bajjal emphasised to enhance Information Education Communication (IEC) outreach, strict enforcement of COVID-19, appropriate behaviour and continued and coordinated action to contain positivity and mortality

Following the meeting, Bajjal tweeted "Reviewed COVID situation and implementation status of decisions taken during the meeting held under the Hon'ble Union Home Minister on 15th Nov2020 with special reference to scaling up testing, augmenting hospital capacities, conduct of house to house survey & review of home care."

In another tweet, he said "Emphasised enhanced IEC outreach, strict enforcement of COVID appropriate behaviour and continued and coordinated action to contain positivity and mortality."

The national capital had

recorded its highest single-day spike of 8,593 cases on November 11 when 85 fatalities linked to the pandemic were also registered.

According to the bulletin, the total number of cases has climbed to 545787 of which 498780 have recovered. The number of COVID-19 containment zones in Delhi rose to 4980.

The bulletin said that of the total number of 18196 beds in COVID-19 hospitals, 8,928 are vacant. On Monday, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain had attributed the high COVID-19 death rate to the pollution caused by stubble-

burning and said he expected a downtrend in the next two-three weeks, while the city got a mobile laboratory that will conduct free RT-PCR test for coronavirus.

The sudden spike in cases came amid the festive season and rising pollution level.

The National Centre for Disease Control in a report drafted recently had warned that Delhi needs to be prepared for about 15,000 fresh cases of COVID-19 per day taking into account the upcoming winter season-related respiratory problems, large influx of patients from outside and festive gatherings.



STUBBLE BURNING

BJP telling lies to Delhiites, alleges Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta alleged that none of Delhi's farmers had received the Pusa bio-decomposer by the Delhi Government to convert stubble into manure, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday slammed the BJP saying that the leaders of the saffron party is constantly telling lies to the people to malign the image of the Delhi Government.

"The bio-decomposer solution was sprayed on 2000 acres of land across Delhi after the farmers filled the forms. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the people of Delhi have waged a war against pollution. The Delhi Government introduced 'Red Light On Gaadi Off' campaign to curb vehicle pollution,



anti-dust campaign to combat dust pollution. We also deployed teams and are taking action on biomass burning across Delhi and introduced the bio decomposer technique in association with IARI, Pusa, to combat pollution due to stubble burning in Delhi," he said.

BJP leader Vijay Gupta

took to the streets to protest against the 'Red Light On Gaadi Off' campaign, but no BJP leader is seen participating in any campaign. They are not doing anything to control dust or biomass burning. Today the garbage mountain is burning, but they are busy playing blame games. The people of Delhi are choking since the last two

months due to stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Delhi. The farmers do not have any solution to stubble burning. The experiment of the Delhi government in association with the Pusa institute which has developed a capsule that turns stubble on the fields into manure, has been successful," said Rai.

Rai said that there are 15,000 acres of paddy fields in Delhi, out of which non-basmati rice is grown on 2000 acres of land and the rest of the fields where the basmati rice is grown, go through manual harvesting and not mechanised harvesting, due to which there is no stubble on the fields.

"On October 3rd, the Delhi government ordered 2000 packets of the bio-decomposing solution. In 400 utensils, we used 25 litres of water, 5 pouches (4 capsules in one pouch) in

one utensil, 750 gms jaggery and 250 gms of chickpea flour to prepare the solution, which was then stored. On October 5th, 10000 litres of the solution was prepared. The solution was again prepared from 750 gms of jaggery and water to prepare 20000 litres of the solution to spray in 2000 acres of land. The solution was first sprayed on the farmlands in Hiranki village, Narela, on October 13th by the CM, he said.

The Delhi government has the record of the forms filled for spraying the solution on the fields, he said, adding that every form from every village has been collected and kept in our records, a centre was established in Kharkhari Nahar Village to prepare the solution under the guidance of the scientists or the Pusa Institute since it was a new thing for us too.

BIKE BOAT PONZI SCHEME

Seven more directors held for duping investors of ₹42,000 cr

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested seven more directors of a company who under their ponzy scheme 'Bike Boat' duped several people across the Country to the tune of Rs 42,000 crore.

The accused has been identified as Sunil Kumar Prajapati, Vinod Kumar, Karan Pal Singh, Lalit Kumar, Pushpender Singh, Adesh Bhati and Tarun Sharma. Police said that they are running in judicial custody in Gautam Budh Nagar in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and they have been placed under arrest by the EOW after permission from the Court. With the latest arrests, 15 Directors of the Company has been arrested by EOW, Delhi Police till date

According to Dr O P

Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, several victims had filed complaints against Sanjay Bhati and others of Garvit Innovative Promoters Limited regarding cheating of approximately Rs 42 thousand Crore.

"It is alleged that the accused persons have induced the victims to invest Rs. 62,000 for a bike and to receive Rs. 9500 monthly including principal and rental income on bike for one year. Due to lucrative offers of alleged, number of victims invested and in January 2019, the alleged company launched the Electric-Bike scheme and offered to deposit Rs. 1.24 lacs for a Bike and to receive Rs. 17000/per month till one year. Initially alleged had repaid the assured amount but after winning confidence of investors, they absconded," said the Joint CP.

"During investigation, the account details of the alleged company were obtained and a reply from the RBI was also received, where it was revealed that the alleged company was not registered with RBI as a NBFC and was not authorized to collect money from the public," said the Joint CP.

"Around 8000 complainants against the alleged company are Delhi based and their cheated amount is approx 250 Crore. From the investigation conducted, a number of properties worth Rs several hundred crores have been found and investigation on the same is in progress. It further revealed that Directorate of Enforcement Lucknow Zonal office is also investigating this issue and a number of cases are registered in Noida and other States," he added.

AAP, BJP in war of words over Ghazipur landfill fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Political blame game erupted after a fire broke out at Ghazipur landfill in East Delhi resulting in deterioration of air quality on Wednesday. The fire started early morning and the landfill site shouldered throughout the day with fire fighters putting up massive efforts to douse it.

According to Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Services (DFS), the call regarding fire was received at around 9.56 PM on Tuesday following which five fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"Later, three more fire engines were dispatched to douse the fire. The fire was at different places at the landfill. The operation is still going on," said Garg.

Meanwhile, another official said that the cause of fire at dif-

ferent locations might be due to the garbage collectors who dumped garbage here and set it on fire.

"DFS had informed this practice of garbage collectors to authorities several times but the garbage collectors keep on repeating the same putting lives of nearby residents at risk and causing pollution levels to spike in the city," he said.

Delhi's overall air quality deteriorated to the severe category from "very poor" on Wednesday morning. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) mobile app, SAMEER, the city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 401.

AAP leader Durgesh Pathak claimed that BJP leaders have set a fire in the Ghazipur landfill site to defame the Arvind Kejriwal government, a charge denied by the BJP which

said only AAP leaders can think of such allegations because they themselves might be doing such acts.

"The garbage fire was not spontaneous but the BJP leaders have planned this. In the last 15 years, the BJP-ruled MCD has gifted three huge garbage mountains to Delhi. They have erected three big garbage mountains in Delhi. Due to the fire in this mountain, Delhi people are facing difficulty in breathing. This is only the result of corruption, incompetence and failure of BJP. Durgesh Pathak further said that I have come to know that the BJP people have set themselves on fire in this garbage mountain. The BJP is doing all this to defame the Delhi government," he said.

However, responding to the charges, BJP Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta said that Gautam Gambhir has been

working to reduce the height of the landfill site for the last one year and a half. "The fire was planned by the AAP and put the lives of people in danger. In the last six years, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has not visited the site. The party has been doing politics over all the issue to hide its failure," he said.

A senior EDMC official said that the fire erupted early in the morning and spread over a large area. "There may be several reasons for fire at the landfill site. Landfill fires are caused by wet waste rotting and decomposing material such as plastic and other materials, leading to methane formation, which is a greenhouse gas and flammable and often leads to fires," he said.

Smoke billows from the Ghazipur landfill site after a fire in New Delhi on Wednesday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer



FARMER'S DEMONSTRATION

G'gram Police issues travel advisory, readies for marching protesters

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

In view of the 'Dilli chalo' call given by various farmers' outfits against three agriculture-related Bills, the Gurugram police on Wednesday issued a comprehensive travel advisory to help commuters.

The district administration and police have also made elaborate arrangements as a precaution to maintain law & order in Gurugram district on Thursday, 26 November, to tackle protest calls by various farmers' organisations.

In view of this protest, 7 places of entry have been identified in the district and supervisory officers and duty in-charges including deputy commissioner of police (DCPs), assistant commissioner of police (ACPs) and station house officer (SHOs) of the Gurugram Police have been appointed there also over 500 personnel of the police department have also been deployed at these entry points.

A spokesman of the Gurugram district administration said that to ensure law and order in the district, 7 Supervisory Officers and Duty In-Charge have been appointed, headed by the teams, who have been assigned duty at different places. Inspectors, crime teams and photography teams

will be deployed with each team.

Giving details of these seven places, the spokesman said that DCP South Dhiraaj Kumar Setia has been appointed as supervisor on Kapadivas border. Duty Incharge ACP Manesar, Hitesh Yadav will be at this place and a team of IMT Manesar, Kherki Daula police station, crime unit incharge Farukhnagar and Manesar will also accompany them. More than 100 police force personnel will be present here.

Similarly, Supervisory Officer DCP South, Dheeraj Kumar Setia will remain on the Panchgaon chowk and ACP Crime Preetpal has been appointed as duty incharge here. At this place, the team of Manesar Police Station including SHOs, Sector 37 Police Station and Incharge of crime units Sector-31 and Sector-10 will also be available with them. More than 50 police personnel will be stationed at this place too.

DCP East, Maqsood Ahmed, has been appointed as supervisory officer at Sohna-Nuh Border and ACP Sohna Sandeep Malik as duty incharge. In addition to the in-charges of Sohna police station and Bhondsi police station along with crime unit Sohna incharge will also be deployed here along with 50 police personnels.

DCP West, Deepak Saharan has been appointed as Supervisory Officer and ACP Ashok as Duty Incharge at the Sarhaul-Delhi Border, along with SHO Sector- 10A police station, Sector-17/18 police station and incharge of crime unit-17 will be deployed here and around 100 police force personnel will be present on the border along with the team.

In Bargurjar, DCP Manesar Nitika Gehlot has been appointed as Supervisory Officer and ACP Sadar Aman Yadav as Duty Incharge. Also, a team of Badshahpur police station and crime unit in-charges of Sector-40 and DLF Phase-IV will also accompany along with 50 police personnels at the border area.

DCP Manesar, Nitika Gehlot has also been appointed on the border adjacent to Hotel Western Country Club on Pachgaon-Mohammadpur Ahir Road and has been appointed with duty in-charge ACP traffic Sanjeev Balhara. In addition to these Sector 65 station in-charge and crime unit incharge of Sikanderpur and Sector-39 have been appointed here with 50 personnels.

Gurugram-Nuh border on Kundli-Manesar-Palwal expressway (KMP) will also be supervised by DCP Manesar and ACP Pataudi Veer Singh has been appointed as duty incharge. SHO of Sector-9A

police station along with the crime unit incharge of Sector-40 and Palam vihar will also present here along with 50 soldiers.

Apart from these forces, two parties of tear gas will be on duty at each duty site mentioned above. Vajravahans have also been installed along with it. This vehicle will be used as required. Fire brigades, cranes and ambulances will also be stationed at each venue during the demonstration. To ensure communication, wireless sets have been provided to the officers in charge.

3 Reserve Police Forces will be ready with Anti Riot Equipment

The spokesperson also informed, 2 Reserve Police Forces will be ready with anti-riot equipment. A woman reserve police force has been made available separately to DCP Manesar, whose supervisory officer ACP Usha has been made. This police force will work as per the direction of DCP, Manesar.

7 diversion points identified and appointed as ACP level officers

The spokesperson also asserted that the traffic can be diverted if the protesters are blocking any road. For this also, the police administration has already assigned the responsibility to the officers.

"7 diversion points have

been identified in the district as a precautionary measure. These places include Kapadivas Border, Panchgaon chowk, Dhankot, elevated U-turn-1, exit number-18 (Shankar chowk flyover) -2, Udyog Vihar Sarhaul Naka and Hanuman chowk at Udyog Vihar Phase-4. At these places, ACP rank officers have been appointed as Supervisory Officers and they have also been posted with Police In-charge or Traffic Inspector.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has rejected all requests received from various farmer organisations to protest in the national Capital against the Centre's new farm laws. Police said that action will be initiated if rules and guidelines issued in a wake of Covid-19 are not followed.

According to Dr Eish Singhal, the Public Relation Officer (PRO), various farmer organisations have requested for permission for protest in Delhi on November 26 and 27. "Police have conveyed to them in writing also and through various media also that the protest is not permit-

Delhi cop saves 350 Covid patients by donating plasma

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 42-year-old Delhi Police Head Constable saved the lives of more than 350 patients who were suffering from Covid-19 by donating them plasma. Police said that some of the police personnel had also donated plasmas not just once but a couple of times.

Head Constable Krishan Kumar is posted at Kapashera police station in Southwest district and he donated plasma not just once but five times.

Kumar was tested

Coronavirus positive on May 1 and got admitted in a hospital within five days of getting tested when his health deteriorated. But after battling Covid-19, he was discharged from the hospital on May 19. Within 10 days after recovery, he donated plasma on May 28 for the first time.

Krishan Kumar said that one of his colleague's wife was suffering from Coronavirus and she was serious and required a plasma donor. "I had just recovered then, I was weak and I was a little afraid too, but then when I was battling the virus, my seniors

and colleagues stood by my side. It inspired me and I went ahead with it," said Kumar.

"If I could be of any help and save lives of people, it is my duty to serve the people. So, whenever there was a requirement or urgency, I went ahead with it," he said. "Right from the beginning of Covid in March 2020, police personnel were not only required to maintain law and order during the lockdown but were also on toes as frontline warriors in curbing the pandemic," said Dr Eish Singhal, the Public Relation Officer (PRO), Delhi Police.

Farmers' request to march to Delhi against farm laws rejected

ted in view of the latest DDMA guidelines. When the condition is good, they can seek due permission and exercise their right of protest in Delhi. For now, they are requested to cooperate with Delhi Police and not indulge in any kind of protest. If despite of our appeal they turn up to Delhi, then the legal action will be taken against them," said Singhal.

Meanwhile, a senior police official said that the main focus of police will be on Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur border, Chilla border and DND. "Following the call from farmers' march and no permission from the authorities, heavy deployment of police personnel is already there and the checking will take place

round the clock. The paramilitary force is also placed. Police will also check the other small borders of the district," said the senior police official.

The farmers will reach Delhi on November 26 through five highways connecting the city as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march call. Taking to Twitter, the city police said requests have been rejected for any such gathering in the national capital.

"Please co-operate with Delhi Police in ensuring no gathering in Delhi amid coronavirus, failing which legal action will be initiated as per law," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi in its tweet.

The All India Kisan

Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC), Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh and various factions of the Bharatiya Kisan Union have joined hands and formed a 'Samyukta Kisan Morcha' to press the central government to scrap the three farm laws.

The protest has the support of over 500 farmer organisations. A seven-member committee has also been formed to coordinate the operations of the Morcha. Farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporates. They have been demanding that the laws be repealed.

Coast Guard seizes 100 kg heroin meant for terrorism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In one of the major drug hauls in recent times with ramifications of narco-terrorism, the Indian Coast Guard seized more than 100 kilos of heroin in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. The drug was recovered from a Sri Lankan boat which had received the consignment from a dhow in Karachi.

While investigations are on, officials said here the haul was the result of nearly nine day long operation. It ended in the seizure in the high seas south of Thoothukudi. Six crew members, reportedly Sri Lankan nations, were detained and their questioning was on, they added. Officials from various agencies were now questioning the detained crew.

Preliminary probe indicated that the crew members told the Coast Guard the contraband was transferred to the Sri Lankan vessel Shenya Duwa on the high seas near Karachi by a Pakistani dhow. The consignment was to be ferried to western countries and Australia, sources said.

It was suspected Pakistan was sending the consignment to fund terrorism in several nations. The Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) in the past used narcotics to fund their terror campaign in Kashmir.

The search of the Sri Lankan boat also led the Coast



Guard to the recovery of five 9mm pistols and a satellite phone set. Moreover, the contraband was concealed in an empty fuel tank on the boat, officials said.

The seizure on Wednesday was carried out by Coast Guard (ICG) ship Vaibhav. Other ships of the force including Vikram, Samar, Abhivav and Aadesh and a Coast Guard Dornier aircraft were also involved in anti-smuggling operations, despite rough sea conditions.

A similar seizure was conducted by the Coast Guard last year and foiled an attempt by Pakistan to smuggle heroin worth over ₹500 crore.

The narcotics were recovered from a boat in October last year off Porbandar.

After being intercepted, the boat crew set the vessel afire and also tried to destroy the drugs. The Anti-Terrorism

Squad of the Gujarat police arrested nine Iranians from the boat, the officials said.

The Iranian boat was loaded off the Gwadar port in Pakistan. Occupants of the boat set it ablaze as the Coast Guard and ATS personnel closed in. The boat sank off the Gujarat coast near Porbandar.

The interrogation of the detained crew revealed one Pakistani national named Hamid Malek had sent the consignment, which was loaded in the Iranian boat off Gwadar port of Pakistan.

The seizure came about after the ATS had received a tip-off that an Iranian boat will make an attempt to smuggle in heroin along the Gujarat coast.

The ATS contacted the Coast Guard and the Marine Task Force of the Gujarat police to launch an operation.

Prez, V-P, PM condole death of Ahmed Patel



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and a host of leaders including Congress president Sonia Gandhi and BJP chief JP Nadda condoled the death of senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel and hailed his contribution to his party and public life.

Kovind said he was distressed to learn that Patel is no more. “An astute Parliamentarian, Shri Patel combined the skills of a strategist and the charm of a mass leader. His amiability won him friends across party lines. My condolences to his family and friends,” he tweeted and later at a public function he paid tributes in the mids of his speech.

Patel, 71, died at a Gurugram hospital in the early hours of Wednesday due to multiple organ failure more than a month after he tested positive for COVID-19. Patel, who leaves behind his wife, son and daughter, is the second senior Congress leader to have died due to COVID-related complications in two days. On Monday, former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi died in Guwahati.

In a statement, the Congress said party workers across the country are deeply pained by Patel’s demise. As a mark of

respect, the Congress party flag will fly at half mast for the next three days, the party said.

Vice president Naidu said he was deeply saddened. “He was an able parliamentarian and always maintained cordial relations with leaders across the political spectrum,” the Vice President Secretariat tweeted quoting Naidu.

Prime Minister Modi said Patel’s role in strengthening the Congress will always be remembered. “Known for his sharp mind, his role in strengthening the Congress would always be remembered. Spoke to his son Faisal and expressed condolences. May Ahmed Bhai’s soul rest in peace,” Modi said in a tweet.

Union ministers Amit Shah, Prakash Javadekar, Rajnath Singh and Smriti Irani were among the others who condoled the death of the Congress’ key strategist.

Several top Congress leaders expressed grief, with Sonia Gandhi mourning the loss of an “irreplaceable comrade” and Rahul Gandhi saying Patel “lived and breathed Congress” and stood with the party through its most difficult times.

The Congress president said in her message that Patel, who served as her political advisor for years and was AICC treasurer, had dedicated his entire life to the Congress.

“I have lost an irreplaceable comrade, a faithful colleague and a friend. I mourn his passing and I feel deeply for his bereaved family to whom I offer my sincere feelings of empathy and support,” Sonia Gandhi said. “It is a sad day. Shri Ahmed Patel was a pillar of the Congress. He lived and breathed Congress and stood with

the party through its most difficult times. He was a tremendous asset,” Rahul Gandhi said in his message.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra described him as not only a wise and experienced colleague to whom she constantly turned for advice and counsel but also as a friend “who stood by us all, steadfast, loyal, and dependable to the end”.

The chief ministers of Congress-ruled States—Rajasthan’s Ashok Gehlot, Punjab’s Amarinder Singh, Chhattisgarh’s Bhupesh Baghel and Puducherry’s V Naranayanasamy and a host of other party leaders paid tributes to the leader who always maintained a low profile.

BJP chief J P Nadda said, “Deeply anguished to hear about the demise of veteran Congress leader Shri Ahmed Patel Ji. I pray for strength to the family members and his supporters at this hour of grief. Om Shanti.”

While Home Minister Amit Shah said the news about the death of Ahmed Patel who made a significant contribution to the Congress party and public life is too sad, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Patel was a seasoned leader, who made remarkable contribution to his party and to public life. “Ahmed Bhai had friends across party lines. My thoughts are with his family and well-wishers in this sad hour,” Singh tweeted.

Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Delhi Yogi Adityanath Mamata Banerjee, Hemant Soren and Arvind Kejriwal also mourned Patel’s demise and admired his virtues.

Foundation stone for new Parliament building to be laid in first half of Dec by PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

September.

As per the design by HCP, the new Parliament complex will have a total of six entrances: a ceremonial entrance for the PM and the President; a ceremonial entrance in general; one for the Lok Sabha Speaker, one for Rajya Sabha Chairperson, and MPs; another entrance for MPs; as well as two entrances for the public.

As per the plan, the new parliament building will have separate offices for all MPs and as a step towards creating “paperless offices”, it will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces. The new Parliament building is a part of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and central government’s Central Vista Project.

The Central Vista Project helmed jointly by the CPWD and the Centre also included a complete revamp of Rajpath — a 3 km long path between Rashtrapati Bhawan and India Gate. The Modi government had kick-started the process of bidding while focusing on the need of a new Parliament building earlier this year.

The relocated statues will be reinstalled at prominent places within the new complex once the project is completed.

Tata Projects Limited (TPL) had won the contract to build a new Parliament building for ₹861.90 crore in

Kovind urges lawmakers to engage in healthy dialogue



PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KEVADIA (GUJARAT)

President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday said elected representatives should engage in a healthy dialogue in Parliament and legislative Assemblies and refrain from using unparliamentary language during debates in the House. Use of unparliamentary language and indiscipline in the House by elected members hurts the sentiments of people who elect them, Kovind said addressing the inaugural session of 80th All India Presiding Officers’ Conference at Tent City in Gujarat’s Kevadia village, near the Statue of Unity in Narmada district.

“It is expected from elected representatives that they remain committed to democratic values. The biggest challenge for elected representatives and democratic institutions is to fulfill the expectations of people. I believe that people of this country expect that their

elected representatives to follow parliamentary norms. People get hurt when their elected representatives use unparliamentary words or indulge in indiscipline in Parliament or in the Assembly,” Kovind said.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla were also present on the occasion and addressed the session. Naidu talked about the judiciary process and cited some judgments that gave a distinct impression of the judiciary’s overreach. The higher judiciary deciding on Diwali fireworks, denying the executive any role in the appointment of judges through collegiums, invalidating the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act seeking to enforce accountability and transparency were some of the instances of judicial overreach cited by the vice president.

Naidu stressed that the legislature, the executive and the judiciary are bound to work within their respective domains as defined in the Constitution.

Naidu said harmony lies in each organ doing its job, without interfering with that of the others. This warrants a spirit of mutual respect, responsibility and restraint. Unfortunately,

there have been several instances of crossing the boundaries,” Naidu who is also the Chairman of Rajya Saha stated in his address at the 80th All India Presiding Officers’ Conference.

Talking about the executive, the vice president said there have been cases when rules framed under the delegated “subordinate legislation” violated the provisions of the original legislation passed by Parliament. Expressing concern over the frequent disruptions in the legislatures, Naidu said the “decency, dignity and decorum” of the temples of democracy will be upheld only through adherence to three “Ds” — debate, discuss and decide.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stressed on harmonious coordination between the legislature, executive and judiciary. Addressing the Conference, he said constitution provides the basis for the functioning of parliament and state assemblies according to people’s aspirations. In a democracy, there can be a difference of opinion among institutions. But with improvement in procedures, constitutional provisions and democratic norms, solutions can be found, he said.

Sidhu likely to be back in Punjab Cabinet



PNS ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

After months of strained relationship, cricketer-turned-politician and Amritsar MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu is likely to be back in the Punjab Cabinet. The former Lok Sabh and Rajya Sabha MP had quit his parent party BJP over differences and joined the Congress before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who had axed Sidhu from his cabinet early this year, invited the former Indian skipper over lunch at his official residence in Chandigarh triggering speculation that Sidhu may be re-inducted into the State Cabinet.

Both leaders have not been on the best of terms since May last year when the Punjab CM accused the former cricketer of the “inept handling” of the Local Government Department, claiming it resulted in “poor performance” of the Congress in urban areas during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Sidhu was stripped of key

portfolios in a cabinet reshuffle, after which he resigned from the state cabinet and stayed away from all Congress activities.

In between, there were also rumours that Sidhu can join Aam Admi Party which did not materialise as the famous television humorist had put conditions that he should be announced as the party’s Chief Ministerial candidate when the next assembly elections in Punjab was to be announced.

According to sources close to the chief minister, both leaders spent an hour together at Amarinder Singh’s residence and shared thoughts on various issues. “It was a warm and cordial luncheon meeting that saw Captain Amarinder and Navjot Singh Sidhu discuss a host of important political matters of Punjab and national interest. The two leaders spent a pleasant over an hour sharing thoughts on vital issues,” said the sources.

Earlier, Sidhu had made a public appearance at a “tractor rally” against the Centre’s farm laws in Moga last month where party leader Rahul Gandhi, Amarinder Singh and others were also present. Sidhu attended the “tractor rally” after AICC general secretary Harish Rawat met him at his residence in Amritsar.

India gets two predator drones from US to boost recce along LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to enhance surveillance capabilities and detect movement of the adversary especially on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India has acquired two predator drones from the US. In the months to come, 18 more such sophisticated drones will be inducted into the Indian Navy.

The two drones were made operational earlier this week by the Navy in south India. These drones have an endurance capability of more than 30 hours and can relay top quality visuals to the Navy. Besides getting deployed in the Indian Ocean region there, security establishment also plans to use these machines in Eastern Ladakh and eastern sector of the LAC covering Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, source said here on Wednesday.

They said the Predator drones were acquired through the emergency route in the wake of the nearly seven month long stand-off on the LAC in eastern Ladakh. The two drones were procured under lease agreement valid for more than a year.

A US crew was assisting the Navy in maintenance and technical issues handling the drone.

Harsh Vardhan calls for robust Covid vaccine manufacturing, delivery module in country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the world waits with bated breath for a vaccine to combat Covid-19, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, on Wednesday sought the help of innovators and industry to create a robust Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing and delivery mechanism.

In a message, delivered at the inaugural session of the Global R&D Summit 2020, organised jointly by FICCI and the Department of Science and Technology, Vardhan said research and innovation has become a way of life and their outcomes have been helping a wide of range of industries and communities to develop various solutions such as the latest delivery App to safer cars to breakthrough treatment for illnesses.

“The current pandemic has only reinforced our belief in innovation and research and development. They are not only helping in better disease management but also making our nation resilient and self-reliant,” the Minister said. He cited the example of how industry in the country used the opportunity created by the Covid-19 pandemic to produce five lakh PPE kits per day from scratch.

“As the world raises to find



a cure and vaccine for Covid-19, India is looking to be self-reliant in both vaccine and its mass production. Called as the pharmacy of the world, India has the largest capacity to produce Covid-19 vaccines,” he added.

India, with second-highest coronavirus cases after the US, has at least five vaccine candidates under human trial, of which three candidates are undergoing advanced Phase-2/3 clinical trials to establish safety and efficacy.

Gururaj Deshpande, founder of Tejas Network and many other successful firms, said directed research, by universities to solve specific problems for industry, will not lead to breakthrough innovations.

“We need to find a way so that the industry seeks good thinkers, good innovators and rub shoulders with them to see how their problems can be solved. The Governments on the other hand have to reduce the friction and encourage people to make these connections,” Deshpande said.

Swami Gaud joins BJP ahead of local bodies polls

TRS leader has met JP Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TRS leader and former Chairman of Legislative Council Swami Gaud has joined the BJP ahead of local bodies elections in Hyderabad.

The BJP leadership was trying, for sometime, to rope in the important TRS leader to spread saffron wings in the state.

Gaud has met key central leaders including BJP president J P Nadda.

Party leaders Bandi Sanjay and union minister G Kishan Reddy reportedly had earlier met Swamy and invited him into the party.

He was made MLC and chairman after formation of separate Telangana state. His tenure as MLC from Medak-Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Adilabad constituency ended last year.

ED files chargesheet in Bitumen scam



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday filed supplementary Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet in police parlance) against accused firm Classic Coal Construction Pvt Ltd and others under money laundering charge for confiscation of attached properties and award of punishment in connection with the bitumen scam worth several crore.

The prosecution complaint under Prevention of Money Laundering Act was filed before the Special Judge (PMLA), Ranchi against Classic Coal Construction Pvt. Ltd, Classic Multiplex Pvt Ltd and their directors Dilip Kumar

Singh and Kumar Pranav in a case of bitumen scam in Jharkhand.

“The Prosecution Complaint has been filed before the Court with a prayer for confiscation of attached properties totalling to ₹1.83 crore apart from awarding punishment to the accused persons,” the ED said in a statement.

The attached assets include three immovable properties in the form of a commercial property and a residential property, both at Ranchi and a plot in Ramgarh, held in the name of the accused firms and the erstwhile Managing Director of the Company, Late Pawan Kumar Singh, it said.

The ED initiated investi-

CBI raids locations in 2 graft cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at various places in Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Kerala in connection with two separate cases registered against accused including Chief Engineer (Railways), Assistant Director, India Tourism (Government of India) and

others related to possession of disproportionate assets and other case for accepting bribe.

“During searches, cash of Rs one crore (approximately), documents related to investment, jewellery etc. have been recovered at the premises of the accused, family members, other private persons/suspects,” the CBI said in a statement.

gation under PMLA on the basis of four FIRs and charge sheets filed by ACB, CBI, Ranchi under various IPC sections relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery besides provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act against the accused firms, twenty two Engineers of RCD Department of Jharkhand government and two others.

“Ignoring the mandate to procure bitumen from the government undertaking Oil companies like HPCL, IOCL, BPCL, etc., the directors of the company submitted 492 fake/forged invoices pertaining to HPCL, Ramnagar, West Bengal, to the RCD Dept. showing procurement of 4630

MT of bitumen for road works and got payment in connivance with the departmental engineers on strength of these fake/forged bills to the tune of Rs. 6.88 crores, the ED said.

Investigation under PMLA revealed that this ill-gotten money was used to create assets and to meet miscellaneous expenditure pertaining to the company and its directors. After identification of Proceeds of Crime, two Provisional Attachment Orders attaching assets worth ₹2.08 crores and 1.83 crores were issued.

Earlier, a Prosecution Complaint was filed and now this supplementary complaint has been filed for conducting trial against accused.

India's Covid-19 caseload goes past 92L with 44,376 new cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India’s Covid-19 caseload went past 92 lakh with 44,376 new cases reported in a day, while the number of recoveries surged to 86.42 lakh, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

The number of total coronavirus cases rose to 92,22,216 in the country, while the death toll due to the disease climbed to 1,34,699 with 481 new fatalities, said the Ministry. According to the health ministry, more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

The active caseload shot up to 4,44,746, an increase of 6,079 cases from Tuesday, even though it remained below five lakh for the 15th consecutive day, accounting for 4.82 per cent of the total cases, it added.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 86,42,771, pushing the national recovery rate to 93.72 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.46 per cent.

India’s Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on



August 7,30-lakh mark on August 23 and 40-lakh mark on September 5.

It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, 80 lakh on October 29 and 90 lakh on November 20.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), over 13.48 crore samples were tested for Covid-19 up to November 24, including 11,59,032 on Tuesday.

The 481 new fatalities

include 109 from Delhi, 49 from West Bengal, 33 each from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, 30 from Maharashtra, 24 from Kerala, 22 from Punjab and 21 from Chhattisgarh.

Of the 1,34,699 deaths reported in the country so far due to the disease, Maharashtra accounts for 46,683, followed by Karnataka (11,695), Tamil Nadu (11,639), Delhi (8,621), West Bengal (8,121), Uttar Pradesh (7,615), Andhra Pradesh (6,956), Punjab (4,653) and Gujarat (3,892).

Woman abducted, raped for 14 days in Kota

Kota (Raj): A 20-year-old woman has accused a man of abducting and raping her for 14 days while keeping her in his captivity in a jungle near Mandana town of Kota district, police said on Wednesday.

In her complaint lodged at the Anta police station in neighbouring Baran district, the woman said she was able to approach the police after her father managed to rescue her from the 22-year-old man's captivity on November 22.

The woman said accused Phorulal Odd, a resident of

Kapren town in Bundi district, abducted her on November 9 from her maternal uncle's village where she had gone to attend a marriage in the family, said Anta police station SHO Umesh Manaria.

He said the woman alleged that the man abducted her on his motorcycle when she had gone to the field to answer the nature's call and took her to a jungle where she was held hostage by the man and was raped repeatedly, said the SHO.

She told police that during

her captivity, one day she managed to call up her father who rescued her, said the SHO, adding the father, however, had not lodged any complaint with the police when her daughter had gone missing.

The SHO said on the woman's complaint, the police have lodged an FIR against the man for kidnapping and rape and is trying to nab him.

The woman was earlier examined medically and her statement was recorded by a magistrate, said the SHO. **PTI**

Muslims react with caution to UP Govt's Ordinance against conversion for marriage

Lucknow: With the Uttar Pradesh government clearing a draft ordinance to deal with religious conversions solely for marriage, Muslim leaders on Wednesday reacted with caution, saying it should be ensured that it does not infringe upon the constitutional right to freedom of religion.

The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday approved a draft ordinance to curb forcible or "dishonest" religious conversions including those for the sake of marriage, which could land violators in jail for up to 10 years.

The good thing is that the draft ordinance does not use the term "love jihad" and the forced conversion which has been termed as illegal and punishable is something that is already held as crime in the Muslim law, senior

member of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) Khalid Rashid Farangimahli told PTI.

In the Quran also, Allah has said force in religion is not justified, so we have no objection to punishment over it, he added.

"Love jihad" is a term coined by a section of Hindu groups for Muslim men allegedly forcing women to convert in the guise of love and marriage.

"We are of the opinion that for peace and communal harmony, it is needed that Muslims and Hindus marry in their own communities. We have no objection to whatever we have seen in the ordinance," Farangimahli said.

The AIMPLB member stressed that whenever any law is enacted, it is

based on the intention that there would not be any discrimination with anyone.

"We also expect that this law will not be used wrongly. The legal experts will have to see that the law does not raise a question mark on the constitutional right to freedom of religion for all Indians. Otherwise, we have no objection to this law," he said.

Shaista Amber, president, All-India Muslim Women Personal Law Board, however, said there was no need for such a law. "If anyone is getting married on the basis of deceit and forcibly getting the other person converted, there should be a stringent law for it and we already have laws for it. There was no need to bring a new law," she said. **PTI**

Bengal Govt decides to cut 30-35% of Class X-XII syllabus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Government has decided to slash the syllabus for Class X and XII by about 35 percent for the coming Board exams in early 2021.

Quoting expert committee reports State Education Minister Partho Chatterjee on Wednesday said "considering the pandemic situation we had referred the issue of academics to the expert committee which has suggested that the syllabus for Classes X and XII be reduced by 30 to 35 percent ... accordingly the Government based on the expert committee reports has decided to reduce the syllabus for the next year's board examinations for the two classes."

Junaid Azim Mattu elected Srinagar Mayor for 2nd time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Junaid Azim Mattu on Wednesday became Mayor of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) for the second time in a row.

Mattu polled a total number of 44 votes in a house of 70 members while his nearest rival Sheikh Imran could garner only 7 votes. Nineteen other members abstained during voting. Mattu was ousted from the same post through a no-confidence motion in June 2020.

Previously associated with the Peoples Conference, Mattu contested the polls as an independent candidate with tacit support from the like minded corporators.

During the polling the rival candidate created ruckus inside the house and prevented members from casting open ballots.

On the intervention of the election authorities and security personnel deployed for election duty the situation was contained.

Thanking his supporters Mattu said, "I am happy they have trusted me once again and voted in my favour to lead the SMC".

Taking a dig at the National Conference for creating road blocks and preventing him from contesting the polls, Mattu said first they went to the court to stop these elections but when their plea was rejected they tried to scuttle the democratic process. He said, "I am happy I won the polls." Democracy prevailed", he added.

Mamata vows to win polls even from prison

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said even if the saffron Government in the Centre put her behind the bars she will win the 2021 Assembly elections from jail.

Launching her election campaign quite early from Bankura district where her party Trinamool Congress conceded all the seats to the BJP in 2019 general elections the Chief Minister said BJP, which is "the biggest 'abhisap' (curse) on the nation is planning to put behind the bars by employing the central agencies but I dare them to do so. I challenge them to get

me arrested if they have courage ... I will win the elections from inside the prison."

Calling the BJP a "not a political party but a garbage of lies," Banerjee said whenever the elections came they rake up the chit fund and Narada pay off issue to intimidate our leaders.

"They set central agencies after her before the elections raking up the Sharada (chit fund) and Narada issues ... but I am not afraid of them and am ready to go to jail if they ... let them arrest me if they have the courage to do so ... I will win from jail," the Chief Minister said citing how RJD patriarch Laloo Yadav maneu-

vered his party to near-victory in Bihar from jail.

"Though they jailed Laloo Yadav he ran his party well from inside the prison and brought to a near situation of winning," Banerjee said accusing the BJP of horse-trading. What was promptly interpreted by the political experts as her diminishing trust on the party colleagues Banerjee said she had not appointed district observers for her party as "I am the observer in all the districts and all the seats," accusing some TMC leaders for being in touch with the BJP.

"There are some leaders who are with us in the day time and

with the BJP during the night ... this will not be tolerated," she said.

Accusing the Marxists of providing the support base for the BJP, Banerjee said "yesterday's CPI(M) are today's BJP... these CPI(M) men are joining the BJP to avoid arrest but they must understand that the BJP will never come to power in Bengal."

The TMC displaced the Left Front in 2011 and ever since it has been in power in Bengal amid accusations of corruption, nepotism, falling law and order etc.

Reacting to Banerjee's statements Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh wondered why the Chief Minister was afraid of going to jail.

Maha sees 6,159 new cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a spike witnessed in the number of deaths and infections after a gap of two days, Maharashtra on Wednesday logged 65 deaths and 6159 new infected cases.

A day after Covid-19 deaths remained static at 30 for the second consecutive and the infections rose to 5439 in the state, the number of deaths more than doubled and infections rose by 720 to touch a figure of 6159.

With 65 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra climbed from 46,683 to 46,748. Similarly, with 6159 fresh infections, the total infected cases jumped from 17,89,800 to 17,95,959.

As 4844 more people were discharged from various hospitals the number of people discharged from the hospitals on Wednesday after full recovery

since the second week of March this year went up to 16,63,723. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 92.69 per cent to 92.64 per cent.

Of the 65 deaths reported on Wednesday, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 17 deaths, followed by 11 deaths in Satara, 8 in Nagpur, 6 in Pune, 4 in Beed, 3 in Raigad, 2 each in Thane, Jalgaon, Solapur, Jalna and Yavatmal and one death each in Nashik, Dhule, Sangli, Sindhudurg and Gondia. In addition, one person from outside the state died in Maharashtra.

With 17 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 10,708 to 10,725, while the infected cases went up by 1,144 to trigger a jump in the total infections in the city from 277,453 to 278,597.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the

state went up from 83,221 to 84,464. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 2.61 per cent to 2.60 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,47,789 to 3,48,814, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7298 to 7304.

Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 2,36,390 to 2,37,180 while the total deaths mounted from 5437 to 5439.

Of the 1,04,56,962 samples sent to laboratories, 17,95,959 have tested positive (17.17 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 5,29,344 people are in home quarantine while 6980 people are in institutional quarantine.

People flout Covid protocol, run regular biz pushing positive cases to new high in Raj

Jaipur: Rajasthan, which was once being lauded for its effective containment of the Covid 19 hotspots, is witnessing a steep rise in Covid cases as the suspects have been operating their shops and businesses regularly, pushing the cumulative positive cases to a new high.

Arun (name changed), a medical shop owner, had his wife and children tested Covid positive but he was seen sitting at his shop selling medicines, steamers and various drugs regularly to other patients.

When asked why he has not quarantined himself, he said, "This is a chain which started a month back and is still continuing in my home; initially my wife was infected, when she turned negative, my son tested positive and now my daughter is Covid positive. I can't think of sitting idle inside my home for over a month and not doing anything as tests, CT scans and other such diagnosis have already added more to my regular expenses."

He is not the only one. A garment seller died in Jaipur due to lung infection. A week before his death, he and his sons were

attending to customers at their shop.

"My father died due to lung infection. As the season changed, he contracted a cold. It took a turn for the worse and he passed away," his son said.

Other shopkeepers in the locality said that the family hid the information and did not reveal his real Covid status. The stories of people flouting the Covid 19 protocols do not end here.

There are many patients who are not going for testing but are simply following the prescriptions being circulated on WhatsApp while continuing their regular routine. Monica (name changed), who runs a kids garment shop, has been regularly attending to her customers despite having a cough and cold. She has also been taking the drugs prescribed by doctors which include azithral 500 mg, zincovit and limcee for the last four days.

"Will take these medicines for five days and shall be ok," she said.

IANS contacted CMHO Narottam Sharma in this context and he said, "People have been coming to us after five days of test-

ing positive. We have to tell them that their quarantine period is 14 days so don't come to us before 14 days for another test."

People, it seems, have lost their senses and hence are adopting this approach, he said when IANS informed him of such suspects who have been running their regular business despite having Covid positive patients at home. "We are adopting random sampling and those caught shall be acted against strongly," he added.

On Tuesday, the state had 3314 cases out of which 656 cases were reported from Jaipur, on November 23, 3232 cases were reported from Rajasthan out of which 599 were from Jaipur, on November 22, 3260 Covid cases were reported.

Health Minister Raghu Sharma said on Monday that the state is registering over 3,000 Covid-19 cases daily for the past few days, calling it a second peak of coronavirus in the state. Taking precautions is the only way to save oneself from this pandemic, Sharma said, adding that there are many reasons for the spike in the number of Covid cases. **IANS**

Rats kill, eat newborn baby girl in Aligarh

Aligarh: A newborn baby was eaten and killed by rats in a hospital in the Atrauli area of Aligarh district. The victim complained to the SDM about this injustice. The SDM has given assurance of providing justice to the victim's family.

Pilkhuni resident Rajesh Kumar son of Sukhpal Singh said that his wife Sapna Devi gave birth to the baby in Kirti Hospital on Ramghat Road, Atrauli on Sunday evening. Both mother and child were healthy. After some time, the doctors asked to keep the baby in the freezer etc. and asked to pay the money. After some time, the doctors informed the family that the girl had died. The relatives were surprised that the girl was completely healthy. The staff did not give

any satisfactory response on asking the cause of the girl's death. When the relatives of the dead girl saw the dead body, their senses flew away. The face of the newborn girl was cut in such a way as if a bug or a rat has bitten. Seeing the deranged face, the family of the victim heated up and started creating a ruckus at which the hospital staff pushed them out of the hospital and did indecency with the victim's family. It is alleged that only after depositing the outstanding money, the dead body of the girl was handed over to the relatives and the woman was discharged. The victim side has complained about the injustice done to the SDM. The SDM has given assurance of providing justice to the victim's family. **PNS**

Bengal's Leader of Opp Abdul Mannan tests Covid +ve

Kolkata: Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Abdul Mannan, has tested Covid-19 positive and was admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Abdul Mannan, a Congress legislator from Champdani in Hooghly district, had met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar in Darjeeling on Sunday. After returning to Kolkata, he was staying at the MLA hostel when he developed some respiratory problems.

According to hospital sources, the Congress leader is currently stable and underwent a computerised tomography (CT) scan test. He has co-morbidities, including diabetes, and a mild respiratory infection. **IANS**

BJP workers assault on-duty policeman

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

A dispute broke out between the police and the BJP worker at Mohalla Naurangabad in the Gandhi Park area. It is alleged that BJP worker, resident of Manik Chowk (formerly Mahavirganj BJP Mandal) and zinc businessman Manish Gupta, along with his partner, tore the policeman's uniform and kicked the inspector. Later somehow the police took both to the police station. Three BJP MLAs reached there on the news. Later, they compromised on the intervention of the MLAs.

From the IG level, Inspector Manikant Sharma of Gandhi Park police station

has been called for line. At the same time, a case has been registered against both the accused.

Two parties were having dinner at a function in a hotel at Mukhiya Ji's Dharanishala in the Naurangabad area. Suddenly there was a fight between the two sides on something. A person from one side was recognized as BJP worker Manish Gupta. The people called the police. Shortly, the soldier and the police reached the spot. According to the police, at the time they arrived, Manish and his fellow Awadhesh were found assaulting a man named Virendra. When he was stopped by the soldier Rajkumar, he beaten him and tore the uniform.

831 new corona cases reported in Andhra Pradesh

Amravati: Only 831 new Covid-19 cases werereported in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, taking the gross to 8,64,674.

The number of active cases fell below the 13,000 mark to 12,673 after 1,176 patients got cured in 24 hours ending 9 am on Wednesday.

Six deaths were reported, the lowest daily count in about five months now.

The total recoveries increased to 8,45,039 and the toll to 6,962, according to the latest bulletin.

Only three districts reported between 100 and 150 fresh cases, four districts between 50 and 100 while six others added less than 50 cases each in 24 hours. **PTI**

Police assaulted while out to arrest accused

Aligarh: Inspector and two soldiers, who went to Udaipur village to catch the accused under Pocco Act, were beaten up by the family members & villagers of the accused with sticks. The inspector tried to make a video, but his mobile was snatched away. The attackers fled by seeing more police forces who arrived on the information. The victim has filed a report at the police station.

On October 3, a teenager filed a case against Ajit, son of Kripal Singh, Sachin and Bablu son of Babulal, resident of Udaipur village, for molestation and assault under the Pocco Act. Since then the police was looking for the accused. SSI Yogendra Singh Dhama said that the in-charge Virendra Singh of Barka police station received information from the

informers that an accused Ajit had come to the village. He went to Udaipur to catch him along with soldier Dharamvir and Rajiv Kumar. Police apprehend Ajit from his house. Then the family and the villagers of the accused surrounded the inspector and the two soldiers and started beating them with sticks and rescued the accused. When the inspector tried to make a video, the mobile was also snatched away.

On information, SSI Yogendra Singh reached with the Force. But by then the accused had escaped. In the fight, both the constables and the soldier were badly injured. Inspector Virendra Singh has filed a case against Udaipur resident Babulal son of Kare Singh, Ajay son of Kripal Singh and Sachin son Babulal. **PNS**

Summoned for questioning, Sena MLA Sarnaik goes into quarantine

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after ten of his family premises were raided and his son Vihang was detained by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning, influential Shiv Sena MLA and real estate development Pratap Sarnaik on Wednesday did not appear before the ED, saying that he had gone into quarantine on his return from Goa.

Fifty-six-year-old Sarnaik, who was not present when the ED raided the residences of his two sons and eight other premises at Thane and in Mumbai, was reportedly away in Goa.

Sarnaik, who met Shiv Sena MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut at the office of Shiv Sena newspaper "Saamana", went into quarantine. His fam-

ily sources said that Sarnaik and his son Purvesh had quarantined themselves at their Bandra flat in north-west Mumbai.

In a letter submitted to the ED at its Mumbai on his behalf, Sarnaik's brother-in-law told the investigating agency that Sarnaik was currently in quarantine, while son Vihang was attending to his wife Anita who has been admitted to Thane's Jupiter Hospital. He urged ED that Sarnaik be given one week's time to appear before the ED.

Reacting to Sarnaik's "failure" to appear before the ED for questioning, BJP leader Kirit Somaiya wondered if Sarnaik was "scared" of either Covid-19 or ED or money-laundering and benami transactions.

Sarnaik and his family members are being investigated for their links with TOPS GRUP, a security service provider company owned by Rahul Nanda. On his part, Nanda has gone on record, saying that Sarnaik was his friend for the past 25 years but had not invested in his company.

The case registered by the ED against Nanda and Sarnaik is based filed by two senior employees of TOPS GRUP, who were terminated from service for alleged misappropriation of money. In their complaint, the two employees had alleged that Nanda had "diverted" money to an off-shore trust and his company had indulged in alleged irregularities in the acquisition of a firm in the UK The Shield Guarding Co Ltd for Rs 140

crore in 2017. On his part, Nanda has told the ED that he had set up a trust in Mauritius as per laws.

On Tuesday, the ED conducted simultaneous raids on two residence and eight other premises of Sarnaik and his family, and detained his son Vihang for questioning. Soon afterwards, a political controversy broke out in the state, as the ruling MVA partners slammed the BJP for "misusing" its official machinery to get at them on the occasion of their government celebrating first anniversary in office.

Pratap Sarnaik is a three-time MLA from Ovala-Majiwada constituency in Thane, and is a real estate developer and the Chairman of Vihang Group of Companies with interests in varied sectors.

Within hours after the ED carried out raids at ten Sarnaik's family premises, including son Vihang Sarnaik's residence at Hiranandani Estate, at Thane and Mumbai, NCP chief Sharad Pawar joined other MVA leaders, including Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and Maharashtra Congress president Pratap Thorat in accusing the BJP of using the central investigating agencies for settling its political scores.

Accompanied by a huge posse of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, the ED officials carried out searches at the residences of Sarnaik's son Vihang and Puvesh and eight other premises belonging to Sarnaiks. Pratap Sarnaik was not present when the raids took place.

After the raids, the ED offi-

cials detained Vihang whom they took to their office where they questioned him for more than six hours, before letting him off late in the evening.

Dubbing the ED raids on Sarnaiks' premises as an act of "political vindictiveness", Shiv Sena spokesperson and MP said: "The raids carried out on the premises of Sarnaiks were an act of political vindictiveness. If you want to arrest our people, please go ahead and do. We are not scared of any one. If you (BJP) have guts, please fight against us openly rather than using the central investigating agencies our people".

Without naming the BJP, Raut said that the party should forget about its dream of returning to power in Maharashtra for the next 25

years "no matter how much pressure it exerts on us or spreads terror through agencies"

In a sharp criticism of the BJP over the raids conducted on Sarnaiks' premises, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said: "What we are witnessing in the state today is an act of desperation. Instead of responding to questions being raised by the people (about the lack of governance), the ruling party at the Centre is using its official machinery against its opponents. This is not done. Our MVA government is about to complete its first anniversary in office. Having realised that it won't return to power in the state, the ruling BJP at the Centre is misusing its official machinery against its political opponents".

Two held for raping teenage girl

PTI ■ THANE

Two persons have been arrested from Bhiwandi town in Thane district of Maharashtra for allegedly raping a 16-year-old girl, police said on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the news of arrest of the duo on Tuesday night led to violence in their residential area, an officer said, adding that unidentified miscreants damaged some stalls.

"The accused duo were booked on the charge of rape and under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act," DCP, Bhiwandi, Yogesh Chavan told reporters.

An era ends in Congress

With the passing away of Ahmed Patel and Tarun Gogoi, the old order has receded further. Rebuilding just got tougher



Perhaps, the Congress is in its lost year indeed. Perhaps that's the trigger for that emboldening moment among its legacy holders to rescue the party. Electorally, it is quite done with trying to make a difference. Organisationally, it has been torn asunder like never before. And now an era that justified its bigness and relevance has ended with the passing away of two of its senior and indispensable leaders, Ahmed Patel and Tarun Gogoi. Both were organisation builders who used dissent as an opportunity to strengthen and glue the party further. But Patel's loss is indeed irreplaceable as the Congress has lost its Chanakya. And the Gandhis, their lone warrior and the gatekeeper, who kept them safe and convinced everybody else that the party indeed needed them. A self-effacing man, who masterminded the shrewdest backroom strategies, he ran the party much like the late Pranab Mukherjee ran the Government under successive Gandhis, from Indira to Sonia. But he never let his ambition show unlike the latter, helming the party through crisis after crisis, propping up Governments with coalition partners when the numbers seemed impossible, raising funds and building a worth that would be bigger than any chair. He became the party, the Gandhis the representable face. That doesn't mean he was a courtier, far from it. Or that he was shy, being socially one of the most accessible of Congressmen. He was just sagacious and discreet that made him the most trustworthy leader and the party's ablest troubleshooter. He got the job done. A fact that he put to good use to build connections within the party and outside. He was accessible to cadres, had his ear to the ground and addressed their grievances, a quality that junior leaders are yet to imbibe, believing in data analytics than the human connect. A failing described by the well-meaning and weathered senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad as "five-star" culture. In fact, Patel was the bridge in the perennial tussle between the old guard and the young Turks, between the Congress and its allies in the coalition era and between the party and the Opposition. And he endeared himself to corporates, a fact that even compelled Rahul Gandhi to bring him in as Treasurer though the latter was not too close to him unlike his parents. Patel never went public, choosing to settle matters in private, his last manoeuvre being calming the 23 senior "letter writers" and keeping the party leadership out of an ugly spat. In short, he embodied all that held the Congress together. And he had deep political foresight, winning the Bharuch seat swearing loyalty to Indira Gandhi in 1977, post-Emergency, when the tide was against her even in her own party. Rajiv Gandhi noticed his deliverer capabilities and made him party general secretary, a most wanted post back then. Then he became part of the first family circle. Obviously, he was left out in the cold after Rajiv's assassination but he never embarrassed PV Narasimha Rao despite being sidelined or chorused the then Prime Minister's critics. He had that stabilising quality. By the time Sonia Gandhi warmed up to politics and was ready for the 2004 Lok Sabha election, Patel became her strategist and advisor, finding relevant talk points in the campaign that demolished the "India Shining" blitz by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. And despite the Modi wave, Patel made sure that the Congress at least had a moral victory by narrowing the BJP's margins in the Gujarat Assembly elections or clinching his own Rajya Sabha victory. But the best part was that for all the Congress' appeasement politics, Patel never ever played the Muslim card himself. Personal heft and consensus-building were also the virtues of Tarun Gogoi, who steadied the party's presence in Assam in the post-militancy years as Chief Minister, ensuring development, peace and growth and rescuing a ravaged State from the brink. Both these stalwarts did pull the party out of its morass and kept it on course.

The problem with the Congress now is that none of them is around to steer it back. The senior leaders are understandably adrift, unable to convince the leadership that the party should now give up the culture of nomination and restore organisational democracy first before renewing and rebuilding itself. Sonia, bereft of fresh ideas and now Patel, continues to be reluctant about anything that could challenge the continuity of the Gandhi bloodline at the helm of affairs. And with divisions so sharp, anybody with a prescriptive formula to revive it is usually considered a rebel than a well-meaning loyalist or dismissed as a defector, usually to the other national party. Yet the dynastic entitlement has outlived its purpose in a politically empowered India, one that sees no potential in the leadership of Sonia's children but would certainly believe in a rebuilt party. The Congress last held CWC elections 1998 and holding one now would keep the field workers and grassroots leaders invested in the party. All of them are currently cut off by a sedimentary layer of loyal courtiers, who are interested in simply playing along as long as their posts are secure. Yet State leaders like Chhattisgarh's Bhupesh Baghel and Punjab's Amarinder Singh have proven that they are able organisers and can even articulate and take a stand on national issues. If the Congress wants to stick around, this is its last chance to self-correct, rise above ego, value honest counsel and appear selfless in the interest of a larger political legacy. Unless its leadership just wants to exist for the sake of it. Dynastic stubbornness would have to give way to reason, wisdom and reconciliation. And if Rahul Gandhi still wants the adulation, he has to earn the confidence of the rank and file to be elected, not foisted, in the hardest of times. At least, he would have made a brave choice.

Beating Twitter?

While the makers of Tooter are hoping that a home-grown social network can take off, that bird has long flown



This is not the first time a new social network has popped up to take on the might of Twitter. A few months ago another network called Mastodon created a buzz and while many, particularly those of a certain liberal persuasion, populated the site, sadly its fate wasn't very different from the animal it was named after. The latest site to float up on your device is called Tooter, which is really just a rebadged version of the social network called Gab in the United States (US). While its makers claim it to be Indian or *swadeshi*, it turned out that even the "Terms Of Service" were copied almost verbatim from the American service. Without disparaging the efforts of those trying to create a new service, it would be good if Indian software engineers could create a new social network, one that integrates the best of the others and adds features, rather than blithely copying another product. On this front, India would be well served to learn from the Chinese internet experience.

That said, can Twitter or Facebook ever be replaced? There is an argument that says yes, given their monolithic power now as opinion makers themselves. Twitter has, in particular, played a dubious role in restricting access to certain information during the US election, or so the losing candidate, President Donald Trump, alleges. Then again, one could argue that without Twitter, Trump's popularity would never have soared. It is important that services like Facebook and Twitter, which are transnational, should come under some sort of regulatory mechanism and should not become some extra-constitutional force in nations like India. That said, the arguments for free speech and misinformation make for a dubious grey area and territories have to be clearly demarcated by the Government of the day. Also, a lot of the lamenting about Twitter being right or wrong for one side or another disguises the fact that it is what it is because of such issues and cannot be equal to the electorate. Much of what goes on in social media is happening at a level that the elite, on either side, have little or no idea about, on messaging applications like WhatsApp. Yes, social networks should be subjected to Indian regulations and it may not be a bad idea to create an Indian social network, but clearly, Tooter, like Mastodon, isn't the answer.



PRAFULL GORADIA

If I were still a resident of West Bengal, my first priority in the coming Assembly elections would be to retain the identity of our State. It should not in any way get compromised by Bangladesh or its concerns. We need to recall that on the eve of the Partition of 1947, Sir Abdul Rahim and the popular peasant leader, Fazlur Rahman, had come to Calcutta to convince Netaji's brother Sarat Bose that a united Bengal should be the third dominion besides Hindustan and Pakistan. The Communist Party then began to support the idea of an undivided Bengal. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah also backed it because a Muslim-dominated Bengal would willy nilly side with Pakistan rather than India.

When it comes to song, music, language and literature, all Bengalis take pride in them. But when it comes to memories, most Bangladeshis would recall their social oppression at the hands of the zamindars and their camp followers. Many remember that even when they were invited to dinner at wedding celebrations, they would be asked to sit separately and after meals were expected to clear their clay *thalis*. This hierarchical rift ran so deep that a united Bengal would eventually be torn from within. In conversation a few years ago with some acquaintances from Dhaka, I was surprised to find that they resented how East Bengal was not given Calcutta during the Partition, although the city was, as it were, a stone's throw from Jessore. They believed it was unfair of the British to change the allocation at the last minute, and while conceding Lahore to Pakistan, they had done grave injustice to them. Calcutta was sought after because it was an economic hub and a port city; it supplied all the raw jute and the merchant princes of Kolkata reaped the benefit of jute mills and many other industries.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was anxious to acquire Calcutta and the impression was that he was a capable negotiator. But obviously, he lost out, perhaps because his lungs were failing and his heart was set on getting Pakistan. The interests of East Bengal had a lower priority for him. Incidentally, the Qaid had never visited East Bengal until February 1948. The only so-called industry given to it was the Sylhet district, which was rich in tea gardens. Bangladesh has very few economic means, other



Bengal's revival

It is possible to make a quick start in reviving the State's economy without large investments but through governmental will and management

than subsistence resources, such as rice and fish. That is why, it needs to follow the Japanese model of importing raw materials from overseas and converting them into products with high technology for export. It is difficult for any people to have such techno-entrepreneurial genius as the Japanese. The legend of *Sonar Bangla* is now threatened because six of the western districts no longer receive the rainfall of yesteryears and they badly need river water from India. The other misfortune is that most of the land is low-lying and the sea level is rising. According to scientists, in two decades' time, 17 per cent of Bangladesh's land area is expected to be submerged. All these factors make Bangladeshis the highest number of migrants to other parts of the world. But West Bengal has borne the brunt of this influx.

My heart throbbed with delight when a few years ago, Mamata Banerjee, with all the fury at her command, threw a sheaf of papers on the Lok Sabha Speaker's table. She was then demanding an infiltrator-free West Bengal. The State has limited land and plentiful people and its resources have undoubtedly been stretched over the years, the refugees bulging that burden. Then the many industries — small, medium and heavy — that the State was proud of rapidly turned into industrial graveyards thanks to trade unions and poor management in years past.

Bengalis are a gifted people and certainly intelligent right down to the illiterate. If for

BENGALIS ARE A GIFTED PEOPLE. IF FOR NOTHING ELSE, FOR THEIR TALENT, THE STATE DESERVES A BETTER ECONOMY. A REVIVAL IS OVERDUE AND IT SHOULD TOP THE NEW AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

nothing else, for their talent, the State deserves a better economy. A revival is overdue and it should soon set a new economic agenda. Setting up a new industry is like creating a brand, which would have to compete in this age of globalisation. On the other hand, education is a sphere in which Bengal enjoys a natural advantage as well as reputation. The first major thrust should be in the field of schools, colleges and universities. There is scope for developing a big knowledge economy because the catchment area can sweep UP, Bihar, Nepal, Assam and the Northeast, as well as Bangladesh. None of these regions is able to provide young people with quality education.

I would begin with medical studies. With efficient management and capable doctors, as many hospitals as possible across the State could be improved by deploying professional managers supported by medicos. Let the doctors do their own specialised work. Management and medicine/surgery should not be mixed up. Thereafter, medical colleges along with as many hospitals as possible could be set up. The significant investment would largely be in creating medical colleges. The World Bank could lend the money since the Government could guarantee the loans. There should be an option, wherever possible, for expanding the hospital and adding another college, considering the best of technology is already available in India.

There is a crying need not for ordinary schools but for excellent ones with hostel facilities. The

New Education Policy (NEP) should be used as the lodestar for these schools to come up in the private sector with improved facilities. The land could be allotted by the State or there could be private-public partnerships. A similar strategy should be followed for colleges and universities. This would restore Bengal's pride as the seat of intellect.

Next, the Government should attend to sub-Himalayan West Bengal. There is space for a splendid international airport in and around Bagdogra, which is near the town of Siliguri. This is the place for proceeding to either Darjeeling, Kalimpong or Gangtok in Sikkim. The most glorious mountains in the world form the backdrop of these hill stations. Darjeeling is at 6,000 ft, and another 6,000 ft above that is Sandakphu, which is motorable, too, and from where one can view the Everest on a clear day. World class hotel groups and enterprising airlines could be lured with promises of support, a stable law and order situation and assurance that any obstacles in their path would be removed. Himalayan Bengal would become a brand in itself for Nature has indeed done its best to give North Bengal an unparalleled beauty. It is, therefore, possible to make a quick start in reviving the economy of West Bengal without undue large investments but with governmental will and excellence of management.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. Views expressed are personal)

SOUND BITE

I am satisfied with the discussions with Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit on the issue of release of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassins.



DMK President —MK Stalin

We cannot take any risks. We still have to wait and see when educational institutions can be opened. We will take up the matter with the experts.



Kerala Chief Minister —Pinarayi Vijayan

I share a special bond with Mumbai. I have experienced failure way more than the success that I am enjoying now. Perhaps that is one of the reasons I value success!



Actor —Angad Bedi

I remember missing a couple of Ranji Trophy matches to be with my wife for the delivery of my daughter. It is a very important feeling, especially when you are going to get your first child.



Former cricketer —VVS Laxman

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Maharashtra's COVID plan a good move

It is good that the Maharashtra Government has made it compulsory for all travellers coming to the State from other parts of the country to carry RT-PCR negative reports. Due to the second wave of COVID-19, the State Government has issued new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to contain fresh triggers for a pandemic spread. Just like in international travel, fliers to Maharashtra should get themselves tested 72 hours before boarding. Those passengers who do not have the RT-PCR test reports will have to compulsorily undergo tests at the airports at their own expense. The Airports Authority of India has been requested to check the report before allowing the passengers to board flights.

People arriving in the State via train will have to carry an RT-PCR negative test report from a sample collected 96 hours before their scheduled arrival in Maharashtra. Those rail passengers who do not have an RT-PCR report will be screened for symptoms at the alighting railway stations. And only passengers without Coronavirus symptoms would be allowed to go home.

For those travelling by road, the District Collectors of the State's border districts shall make arrangements to ensure that people are tested for symptoms, includ-



ing body temperature. Those with Corona symptoms will have to undergo an antigen test and will be allowed entry in the State only if the report is negative. People with COVID-19 symptoms would be turned back.

This is being done as Maharashtra's COVID-19 tally has risen to 17,84,361 infections with 46,653 deaths. It is the first State under the Shiv-Sena-Congress-NCP rule to introduce such tough restrictions through notifications. This is a step in the right direction as the State will have to clamp down on imported infections if it has to get a grip on the pandemic on its own turf.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Better sense prevails

Sir — We appreciate the LDF Government in Kerala for bowing to public opinion and agreeing to put on hold the regressive Ordinance empowering the police to prosecute persons disseminating "defam-

atory content." Unlike other Governments, the Leftist Government in the State listened to sane voices, realised the scope of potential abuse of the Ordinance and made amends by keeping it in abeyance. One wishes that the Centre, too, would pay heed to

the voice of the people on undemocratic laws. Clearly, the text of the law was not drafted by those with a clear understanding of the niceties of constitutional provisions. A staggering ignorance of the landmark rulings of the Supreme Court on criminal

defamation was writ large on the Ordinance that had to be put in cold storage. The State Government may have had the good intention of curbing defamatory social media posts. But then the Ordinance, in the form in which it was promulgated, was seen as an attempt to gag the freedom of expression, which is the bedrock of democracy. The phraseology of the Ordinance, built on sweeping generalisations, did not indicate either discernment or sensitivity and gave the police blanket powers of crackdown.

The State cannot be seen to be arrogating to itself or arming itself with arbitrary powers in the guise of curbing abusive or offensive online content. Had the Ordinance been shown to Sitaram Yechury or the Politburo, the Kerala Government could have avoided the embarrassment of promulgating such a dubious law. Better sense has prevailed in the nick of time and saved us another round of Left-Right whataboutery.

David Milton
Maruthancode

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A different ball game altogether

It is crucial to understand the financial behaviour and practices of SMEs which are totally separate from those of larger firms



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Although capital is a scarce resource for any business, it is even more scant for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, cash flow and working capital management are the most crucial challenges of organisations in general and SMEs in particular. Working capital is short-term in nature and refers to the funds required for the daily functioning of a firm. In business parlance it consists of accounts receivables (debtors and any pre-payments, stock or inventory) and accounts payable (creditors and short-term provisions). The lifeline of any enterprise is the flow of cash and other liquid assets through a business cycle — a journey of collecting receivables from the debtors to pay off the creditors. This is also known as the cash conversion cycle. The efficiency and, therefore, the success of a business depends upon how fast the goods are converted into cash.

SMEs differ in many ways from large firms in terms of their financial behaviour and decision-making, mainly because of their characteristics and ownership. This ultimately reflects in their financial habits. So, what are the factors that affect the availability of capital to small enterprises? One of the most important issues is the size. According to researchers, during the start-up phase, the owner's personal savings are an important source of funds. Young and small firms do not have an established track record and may be characterised by informational opacity, making banks and other financial institutions reluctant to lend to them. In general, firms which are less than four years old, rely more on informal sources of funding.

However, when the SMEs increase in size and become larger, they have a greater network of banks willing to fund their business. The firm's ability to deal with multiple banks and other credit agencies generally grows with size, too. So, they rely more on long-term debt and external financing, including bank loans.

Second, the type of ownership is another important determinant for the source of funding. Any SME with a concentrated ownership, like in a proprietorship, should be more prepared to use bootstrap financing, as it would have greater difficulty in accessing a formal source of credit. From the lender's perspective, in such SMEs, there is no clear distinction between the owner and the firm, information asymmetry is prevalent and an ability to provide collateral is missing. On the other hand, a private limited SME may be viewed by financing agencies as more structured and credible. As a result, formal financing options are freely available to it. Third, the location of the start-up makes a huge impact. A firm's proximity to the banks has an influence on its ability to gain external funding. Research also suggests that one of the reasons for a company's failure is poor location that prevents customers and suppliers from reaching it. Therefore, despite high rentals, SMEs prefer to move to urban areas for the sake of better infrastructure and the ease of raising external finance.

Fourth, several researchers have provided evidence that the sector where the SME is operating has an impact on the short and long-term debt available to it. For example, short-term credit is used more in wholesale and retail trade as compared to manufacturing SMEs. Whereas the construction sector, hotel, hospitality and mining industries appear to depend more on long-term finance. And finally, availability of assets plays an important role in raising funds. From a lender's point of view, collateral, which is also known as the lender's second line of defence, is highly relevant while approving loans. Researchers Ono and Uesugi studied the Japanese SME loan market and found a positive relationship between the use of collateral and the ease of access to bank loans and external financing. It can also be understood that firms with lower tangible assets would face difficulties in accessing funds.

Additionally, the characteristics and gender of the owner too influence a firm's capability to raise external funding. According to several researchers in different countries, men and women differ in the way they raise cash for their businesses. There is empirical evidence that women entrepreneurs start their business with a smaller start-up capital, in fact less than half of the amount used by men. In addition, women also face discrimination from banks and other financial institutions. This is evident from the higher rates of interest charged from women entrepreneurs, the requirement of additional collateral, higher loan denial rate and so on. The age of the owner, too, impacts the personal financing preference. Older SME owners are less likely to take additional finance into their firms. Younger owners tend to use a variety of external cash sources like loans, overdrafts, credit cards and personal savings.

SMEs are the backbone of any growing economy. Therefore, it is crucial to understand their financial behaviour and practices which are very different from the financial management of large corporations. This would help policymakers come up with ways to improve the external financing scenario for such firms, as stronger SMEs make a stronger economy.
(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

A FEW DAYS AGO, THE HOME MINISTER WAS HERE. THE FOOD THAT HE ATE WAS COOKED IN FIVE-STAR HOTELS AND TAKEN TO THE DALIT HOUSEHOLD. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE TMC HAS A HABIT OF PLAYING POLITICS ON EVERY ISSUE. THE FOOD THAT AMIT SHAH ATE AT BANKURA WAS COOKED AT THAT VERY HOUSE. —BJP NATIONAL SECRETARY ANUPAM HAZRA

A case for natural gas

Consumption of one fossil fuel over another will, on its own, not offer a long-term solution to climate change, but employing less emission-intensive fuels can reduce pollution significantly



JONATHAN SYIEMLIEH

As the winter approaches, Delhi-NCR is under its annual envelop of smog. Caused by an unhealthy combination of low wind speed, change in wind direction, dip in temperatures and stubble burning in parts of North India, air pollution is back in the headlines and our daily lives. According to a study of 28 cities by IQAir and Greenpeace Southeast Asia, air pollution in Delhi-NCR was linked to the loss of an estimated 24,000 lives and 5.8 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first two quarters of this year, despite a strict COVID-19 lockdown since March. In fact, the linkage between rising air pollution levels and increase in COVID 19-related cases and deaths is being confirmed by several studies from around the world.

A recent study published in *Cardiovascular Research*, which was the first of its kind to distinguish between fossil fuel-related and other human-generated sources of air pollution, estimated that long-term exposure to air pollution has been linked to an increased risk of dying from COVID-19. The study estimated that about 15 per cent of deaths worldwide from the virus could be attributed to long-term exposure to air pollution. In Europe, the proportion was about 19 per cent, in North America it was 17 per cent and in East Asia about 27 per cent.

A recent study by Harvard University indicated that an increase of only one microgram per cubic metre in PM2.5 is associated with an eight per cent increase in the Coronavirus death rate. Long-term exposure to chronically-high PM2.5 levels weakens the ability of the lungs to fight off infections, therefore making people more susceptible to COVID complications.

In 2016, the national Capital ranked third on a list of cities around the world reporting close to 15,000 deaths due to air pollution. Shanghai was ranked first among the cities with most premature deaths at 17,600, followed by Beijing with 18,200 premature deaths due to PM2.5 pollutants. A study undertaken by *Lancet Planetary Health* the following year stated that Delhi had recorded the highest annual population-weighted mean PM2.5 levels in its air. Further, in 2019, the World Air Quality Report, compiled by IQAir, listed Delhi on top of the list of the capital cities with most polluted air for the second consecutive year with annual PM2.5 levels nearly 10 times the limit prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Other prominent NCR cities were also listed among the top 10 cities in the world with most polluted air.

Source apportionment studies, such as the ones conducted by IIT Kanpur (2013-2014) and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (2017), have pointed out that secondary particles are a significant contributor to PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi-NCR, with industrial point sources being the top four major contributors to PM2.5. Polluting fuels such as coal, diesel, pet coke and heavy fuel oil used by industries in Delhi-NCR are a major reason for this.

In such a dismal scenario, natural gas provides a good alternative to not only meet the energy needs of industries, but also as a less polluting option that can contribute to addressing environmental problems. The burning of natural gas for energy results in lower emissions of green house gas (GHG), Carbon Dioxide (CO2) and nearly all types of air pollutants in comparison to burning coal or other fossil fuels to produce an equal amount of energy. However, natural gas has not seen much penetration in industries, especially those situated in Delhi-NCR. According to British Petroleum, India's share of natural gas in the energy mix is lower than

“THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NATURAL GAS PENETRATION IN THE MSME SECTOR PROVIDED THE PRICES ARE RATIONALISED, ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES ARE PUT IN PLACE, AND PROPER REGULATIONS IMPOSED TO RESTRICT CONSUMPTION OF POLLUTING FUELS. A POLICY DIRECTIVE FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO ENFORCE THE BAN ON USAGE OF NON-CLEAN FUELS LIKE COAL, WOOD AND SO ON COULD BE INTRODUCED IN A PHASED MANNER”



many large economies. It had reached a mere 6.2 per cent in 2019; this when the Government aims to raise the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix to 15 per cent by 2030.

Switching to natural gas and displacing polluting fuels has contributed to lower GHG emissions and improved air quality in New York, Toronto and Beijing, according to a 2015 report by the International Gas Union (IGU). The benefits of increasing the use of cleaner-burning natural gas in the industry were acknowledged and put into force by policymakers in Northern China in 2017 where the shift from coal to natural gas in industries led to extensive reduction in GHG and air pollution. In Turkey, the industry around Istanbul, too, witnessed a reduction in air pollution as a result of switching from coal-lignite to natural gas in the early 2000s.

According to the 2019 *World Energy Outlook* special report analysis, an estimated 98 per cent of natural gas consumed today has lower life cycle emissions intensity than coal, when used for power or heat. The analysis incorporates both CO2 and methane emissions and indicates that, on an average, coal-to-gas switching reduces emissions by 50 per cent when producing electricity and by 33 per cent when used for heating purposes.

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in 2019 had assessed the potential and impact of a switch to natural gas from heavier polluting fuels among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) units operating in Delhi-NCR. Data collected showcased the presence of thousands of MSME units operating in this region and using a variety of fuels ranging from coal to low sulphur heavy stock, light diesel oil, wood, bagasse, rice husk, other biomass fuels, high-speed diesel and natural gas. By and large, MSMEs were found to be disinclined to migrate to natural gas owing to high upfront costs such

as connection costs and security deposit, limited access to natural gas and economic viability in terms of increased unit price compared to other fuel options. To add to this, end users were also charged a conversion cost and had to bear the cost of internal piping infrastructure.

Obtaining the right of way and other clearances from State/local Government to lay natural gas pipelines also contributes to delays in setting up adequate pipeline infrastructure. Notably, micro units among MSME clusters in Delhi-NCR were found to be located in non-conforming areas and were especially not in favour of switching to alternative cleaner fuels as this would entail putting themselves under the ambit of regulatory compliances.

However, a switch to natural gas in MSMEs is not without precedent. The case of Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad glass bangle industry is a prime example of how switching from coal and wood to natural gas, coupled with the adoption of energy-efficient technologies, can reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions. Similarly, the Morbi-Wankaner area in Gujarat witnessed immediate reduction in air pollution as a result of the local ceramics industry shifting from coal to natural gas in 2019, following an NGT order the same year. The area recorded a 75 per cent reduction in PM2.5 levels, 72 per cent reduction in PM10 levels and an 85 per cent reduction in sulphur dioxide (SO2).

Further, in case of a shift to natural gas at a metal casting unit in Faridabad, Haryana, the learnings have highlighted that along with fuel switching, there is also scope for further reduction in energy consumption if MSME units follow best operating practices to improve energy efficiency. This requires understanding of technological best practices and their assimilation and adaptation to meet the needs of individual MSME units.

The provisions for upgrading and introducing new clean technologies in

MSME regulations can be capitalised in favour of natural gas augmentation in their energy mix. However, the diverse Government departments that have programmes and schemes related to enhancing clean energy measures in this sector are working in silos. It is important to achieve proper coordination among departments and link related programmes and schemes on clean energy, energy efficiency, technology upgradation, database generation, reporting and monitoring and capacity-building. This could ensure effective targetting and a confluence of actions at the intended delivery point.

There is an opportunity for natural gas penetration in the MSME sector provided the prices are rationalised, energy efficiency measures are put in place and proper regulations imposed to restrict consumption of polluting fuels. A policy directive from the Central Government to enforce the ban on usage of non-clean fuels like coal, wood and so on could be introduced in a phased manner. The city gas distribution companies could also be mandated by the Centre to completely erect the gas pipeline infrastructure in urban areas.

With the overall objective of increasing the adoption and usage of natural gas in the MSME sector, adopting a cluster-based approach would make natural gas penetration more effective. The Central and State Governments can play an important role in this area by facilitating the creation of necessary infrastructure and greener investments to ensure reliable and affordable supply of natural gas to MSMEs. Unabated consumption of one fossil fuel over another will, on its own, not offer a long-term solution to climate change, but employing less emission-intensive fuels such as natural gas can result in significant reduction in both CO2 emissions and air pollution.
(The writer is Associate Fellow, TERI)

A major leap for science and the Corona war

The mRNA technique may mean that future pandemics can be dealt with far quickly. The vehicle is available to carry the next vaccine



GWYNNE DYER

All the usual caveats apply: Don't go out and celebrate. Don't let your guard down because it is still going to be a long haul. This winter will be "hard", warns Ugur Sahin, co-founder and CEO of BioNTech, the German company that announced the first effective COVID-19 vaccine recently. "The vaccine can't be rolled out fast enough to reduce infections much in the current wave," he says.

The publication on November 16 of positive results for a second vaccine, this time by the US company Moderna, strengthened the optimism as did the fact that the AstraZeneca vaccine is also ready to roll out, even

if it does have an average efficacy of just 70 per cent. Clearly, this Coronavirus can be beaten, and there are nine more potential COVID-19 vaccines already in the third and final stage of human trials.

But again, the riders: There will be at least half a million more COVID-19 related deaths this winter — or over a million if people don't observe the lockdowns and other restrictions like social distancing and use of sanitisers and face masks that are meant to contain the spread of the virus.

"What is absolutely essential," says Sahin, "is that we get a high vaccination rate before autumn/winter next year." That's when it could really be over. And yet there is cause to celebrate, because of the 11 vaccine candidates that were already in third-stage trials, both the front-runners are "messenger ribonucleic acid" (mRNA) vaccines, an entirely new approach that allows a much faster response to Novel viral infections.

Traditionally, new vaccines took around ten years to be developed, test-

ed and approved for general use. For the new mRNA vaccines, it has been ten months. It's a revolutionary science at work here.

After Chinese scientists posted the full genetic sequence of the COVID-19 virus online on January 10, says Drew Weissman of the University of Pennsylvania, "we were making RNA within a week or so". Weissman then supplied that RNA to both BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna.

RNA carries the genetic instructions from the nucleus of the cell to build whatever protein is needed, and for the past decade researchers have been trying to fabricate "messenger RNA" that could be inserted into human cells. The mRNA would then use the cell's own genetic machinery to make vaccines and other medically useful proteins.

By 2018, several companies had cracked the problem of getting the mRNA past the body's immune defences. With the full RNA sequence of the new Coronavirus in their possession, all they had to do was choose

which bit of the Coronavirus RNA to use in the vaccine.

Obviously not the whole thing, or it would rebuild the entire virus in the cell. Just a harmless segment of the virus' RNA, copied millions of times by the vaccinated person's cells, would alert the body's immune system and train it to destroy any invading virus with that sequence. Scientists chose the "spike" that the virus uses to attach itself to the human cell.

Several companies had mRNA vaccines ready for testing within two or three months, and the results have been spectacular. BioNTech/Pfizer has just reported 95 per cent efficacy for its vaccine and Moderna has reported 94.5 per cent success.

Even better, both BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna included all major ethnic groups and a significant number of elderly people in their third-phase trials. All categories responded well to the shots (which is not always the case with trial vaccines).

Yet another mRNA vaccine in third-phase trials could be even bet-

ter because it will be far cheaper than the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine (priced at ₹2,896 for two shots) or the Moderna jab (priced at ₹5,495 for two shots) if it pans out. At Imperial College in London, Robin Shattock's team is working on a "self-amplifying RNA" vaccine that may require as little as one-hundredth of the amount of vaccine.

The mRNA technique may mean that future pandemics can be dealt with far more quickly. The vehicle is already available and waiting to carry the next vaccine. Just "plug and play" for any future Coronavirus, as one researcher puts it. (We have had three new Coronaviruses in the last two decades.)

Pfizer boss Albert Boura goes even further to say: "It is the greatest medical advance in the last 100 years." Well, maybe, though a vote taken today would probably plump for antibiotics instead. But we are only beginning to see the potential of the mRNA technique. There are already trials under way for a wide variety of other illnesses.

Not just safer, more effective influenza, polio and HIV vaccines, but immunotherapies for cancer, heart conditions, cystic fibrosis and other systemic and congenital diseases.

Whether or not mRNA now becomes the preferred way to make Novel vaccines, it is clear that a global health emergency on the scale of the present pandemic spurs scientific innovation at a much faster rate now. This is not just the consequence of all the resources and funding made available to those with solutions that might usually be regarded with more scepticism; it is also driven by the remarkable things that humans can achieve when thrust together by circumstances and given a common purpose.

There is a long, dark winter still ahead of us, no doubt, but miracles may await us over the horizon. And we can now be sure that the light at the end of this particular tunnel is not an oncoming train.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work')



COMBATING RAPE CULTURE IN NEPAL

The Oli Cabinet has approved an ordinance proposing stricter laws on rape. Thankfully, lawmakers have let go of their demand of incorporating regressive provisions like the death penalty and chemical castration. Such provisions, if included, would have dealt a body blow to the principles of the modern criminal justice system. (Kathmandu Post editorial)

Pak host to largest number of UN proscribed terrorists: India

United Nations: India has reminded Pakistan, the “host to the world’s largest number of UN proscribed terrorists and entities”, of Abbottabad, the garrison city where al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden hid for years and was killed, in a hard-hitting response as Islamabad’s UN envoy gave a “dossier of lies” to Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T S Tirumurti on Tuesday tweeted that the “dossier of lies presented by Pakistan enjoys zero credibility”. “Concocting documents and peddling false narratives is

not new to Pakistan, host to the world’s largest number of UN proscribed terrorists and entities. Remember Abbottabad!” he said.

The Indian Ambassador’s tweet was in response to Islamabad’s UN envoy Munir Akram meeting Guterres to hand over the dossier from the Pakistan government that alleged India was promoting terrorism in the country.

In his stinging tweet, Tirumurti made a reference to the Pakistani garrison city of Abbottabad, where bin Laden was hiding for years and was killed in an operation by the US Navy Seals in May, 2011.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Monday briefed top envoys of key nations, including the US, Russia, France and Japan on the planned terror attack by Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in Nagrota in Jammu which was foiled by security forces on November 19.

The heads of missions were provided with a comprehensive “information docket” giving the details of the incident, and also a list of items and ammunition recovered from terrorists, clearly indicating their Pakistani origins.

The envoys were sensitised

about India’s concerns regarding Pakistan’s sustained efforts to “destabilise” the situation in Jammu & Kashmir and to “subvert” upcoming local elections and democracy in the union territory, sources said.

Four suspected JeM terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed by security forces near Nagrota in an encounter on Thursday morning after which the government asserted that a major terror attack was foiled by the Indian security forces. India is all set to join the powerful UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021.

PTI

Jaishankar hails contributions of Indian diaspora in Bahrain in strengthening bilateral ties

Manama: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday virtually interacted with the members of the Indian diaspora in Bahrain via video conference and appreciated their valuable contributions to the strengthening of the bilateral ties.

Jaishankar is on a two-day visit to Bahrain from November 24 to 25. It is the first leg of his six-day three-nation tour to Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Seychelles, beginning Tuesday. The visit is seen as important as it comes in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic that has wreaked havoc across the world.

“Glad to interact virtually, with members of the Indian community in Bahrain. Thank them for keeping India’s flag flying high. Appreciate their valuable contribution to the strengthening of our bilateral ties,” Jaishankar tweeted soon after the online interaction.

Earlier in the day, he visited the centuries-old Lord Sri Krishna temple at the Bahrain capital, Manama.

“Began the day with darshan at the 200 year-old Shreenathji Temple at Manama. A testimony to our time-tested and close bonds with Bahrain.

PTI

Proud of Indian diaspora’s achievements, contributions to society: Dutch PM to India’s envoy

PTI ■ THE HAGUE

Noting that the Netherlands is home to one of the largest Indian diasporas in Europe, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has said that he was proud of their achievements and contributions to the society.

In a letter to India’s Ambassador to the Netherlands Venu Rajamony, who completes his term this month, the prime minister cited the seven-decade-long Indo-Dutch bilateral relations and said that both the countries were working together closely on different fields including water, agriculture and renewable energy.

Biden seeks swift Cabinet votes, but GOP Senate stays silent

Washington: As President-elect Joe Biden started rolling out his administrative team, one voice has been notably silent: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Senate Republicans will hold great sway in confirming or denying Biden’s Cabinet nominees, regardless of which party controls the narrowly split Senate after runoff elections.

But key Republican senators, including the GOP leader,

are keeping quiet, for now, choosing their battles ahead.

In announcing his national security team, Biden appealed Tuesday to the Senate to give the nominees “a prompt hearing” and “begin the work to heal and unite America and the world.”

The soonest the Senate would consider the nominations is Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, when past presidents often have been able to win swift

confirmation of top national security officials shortly after taking the oath of office.

But with President Donald Trump still disputing the election, McConnell is setting the tone for Senate Republicans by not publicly congratulating Biden or acknowledging Trump’s defeat.

He wants to give the president time to contest the vote, even as Trump’s legal team has been losing most of the cases.

AP

Analysis: Biden prioritises experience with Cabinet picks

New York: President-elect Joe Biden has prized staying power over star power when making his first wave of Cabinet picks and choices for White House staff, with a premium placed on government experience and proficiency as he looks to rebuild a depleted and demoralized federal bureaucracy.

With an eye in part toward making selections who may have to seek approval from a Republican-controlled Senate, Biden has prioritized choosing qualified professionals while eschewing flashy names. Even the most recognizable pick — John Kerry — lacks the showmanship that has defined the Trump era.

AP

In sharp contrast to President Donald Trump, who openly distrusted the very government he led, Biden has showcased a faith in bureaucracy that was born of his nearly five decades in Washington.

He’s made hires with the deliberate aim of projecting a sense of dutiful and, even boring, competency.

Surrounding himself with longtime aides and veterans of the Obama administration, many of whom have already worked together for years, Biden has so far rolled out a team of careerists with bursting resumes and little need of a learning curve.

US lawmaker expresses concern over Chinese construction along Indian border

Washington: Expressing concern over reports of China’s illegal construction activities along the Indian border in Ladakh, an influential US lawmaker has said that America will always continue to stand with India and oppose any “revisionist efforts” by the Chinese government or anyone else to challenge the peace and stability in the region.

India and China are engaged in a bitter stand-off on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since May.

“I am aware of and concerned with the public reports surrounding Chinese military construction along the disputed border with India. If these

reports are true, and I hope they are not, China’s continued military provocations will continue to escalate tensions in the region,” Democratic congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said on Tuesday.

“The United States will always continue to stand with our Indian partners in the Indo-Pacific region while opposing any revisionist efforts by the Chinese government or anyone else to challenge peace and stability,” he said.

The Indian-American Congressman from Illinois issued the statement in response to reports of satellite images showing Chinese construction activities in eastern Ladakh.

Trump vents about election as agencies aid Biden transition

Washington: President Donald Trump insisted on Tuesday that he is not giving up his fight to overturn the election results, but across the federal government, preparations were beginning in earnest to support President-elect Joe Biden’s incoming administration.

Within hours of the General Services Administration’s acknowledgement Monday evening of Biden’s victory in the Nov. 3 election, career federal officials opened the doors of agencies to hundreds of transition aides ready to prepare for his Jan. 20 inauguration.

And on Tuesday, Trump signed off on allowing Biden to receive the presidential daily brief, the highly classified briefing prepared by the nation’s intelligence community for the government’s most senior leaders.

An administration official said logistics on when and where Biden will first receive the briefing were still being worked out.

Biden, in an interview with “NBC Nightly News,” said he was also working out a meeting with the White House’s coronavirus task force and vaccine distribution effort.

PTI

EU says first virus vaccinations possible by Christmas

Brussels: A top European Union official said on Wednesday that the first citizens in the 27 nation bloc could be vaccinated against the coronavirus by Christmas, but she warned that member countries must urgently prepare their logistical chains for the roll-out of hundreds of millions of doses of the vaccines.

Claiming that “there’s finally light at the end of the tunnel,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told EU lawmakers that “the first European citizens might already be vaccinated before the end of December.” The commission, the EU’s executive arm, has agreements with six potential vaccine suppliers and is working on a seventh contract.

Switzerland sets post-Brexit quota for British migrants

Geneva: The Swiss government says up to 3,500 migrants from Britain will be given permits to live and work in the Alpine nation next year, when Britain’s post-Brexit transition with the European Union expires.

Britain’s departure from the EU means that it isn’t covered by Switzerland’s freedom of movement agreements with the 27-nation bloc.

The Swiss government said Wednesday up to 2,100 British citizens will receive long-term residency permits.

A further quota of up to 1,400 short-term residency permits valid for up to one year will also be made available.

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Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/ downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website:www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

(A)	1.	34/E-tender/GM/SM(WC-3)/2020-21, Name of Work:- M/o Village (Reconstruction at Jatav Bhawan in Village Aghapur), Noida Cost -Rs. 31.25 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 09.12.2020 upto 5.00PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 10.12.2020 at 11.00AM.		
(B)	1.	30/GM/SM(WC-6)/2020-21, Name of Work:- D/o Sector-117 (Rising and Maintenance of Drain wall towards road along 18m, 24m and 30m wide road), Noida Cost -Rs. 70.53 Lacs
	2.	36/GM/SM(WC-2)/2020-21, Name of Work:- D/o Village (P/L C.C. Pavement on damage road, R/o Drain & fixing of Precast slab over drain, streetjall etc in Village Atta), Noida Cost -Rs. 52.33 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 03.12.2020 upto 5.00PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 04. 12.2020 at 11.00AM.		
General Manager NOIDA		
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Notice inviting e-Tender
e-NIT No.PHERSI/73 of 2020-21 Date: - 19/11/2020
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) Item Rate basis are invited from reputed and resourceful Contractors/Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of repute, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> up to **last bidding date:- 11-12-2020 up to 16.30 PM** for the subject work referred below and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form No.- 25 double are applicable. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement Portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/ Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-challan/Treasury Receipt to be deposited in MH-0215-WSS (Revenue Head) or through RTGS in **J&K Bank Branch REASI in CD Bank Account No. 002901020000829, IFSC code JAKA0REASSI in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE), Division REASI** and the proof of having made such payment shall have to be uploaded in Cover-I:-
S.No. 1 Name of Work :- A). RETROFITTING AND AUGMENTATION OF WATER SUPPLY SCHEME MANOON UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION INCLUDING CIVIL, ELETRO-MECHANICAL COMPONENTS, CONDUCTING COMPLETE NECESSARY SURVEY, SOIL TESTS & DESIGN AS REQUIRED AT SELECTED SITE, AS PER THE PARAMETERS/SPECIFICATIONS
Adv. Cost of Work (s) in Lacs :- 265.78, Earnest Money In Rs. :- 531560/- Class of Contractor :- "A", Cost of Document :- 5000/-, Period of completion :- 6 months, MH of Account :- JJM
S.No. 2 Name of Work :- B) Operation & Maintenance of critical components as per SBD for a period of three years.
i) 1st year, ii) 2nd year, iii), 3rd year
Adv. Cost of Work (s) in Lacs :- Inclusive in A), Earnest Money In Rs. :- -----, Class of Contractor :- -----, Cost of Document :- -----, Period of completion :- 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, MH of Account :-
Position of funds:- Available.
No. DIP/J-7582/20 Dated: 24-11-2020

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Reasi.

The Executive Engineer, Rig Division, Agartala, West Tripura invites e-tender against press Nle-T No. 15/EE/RIG/2020-21 dated 20/11/2020 against DNleT No. **18/ACE/PWD(DWS)/ 2020-21** (Estimated costs ₹2,38,51,929.75), DNleT No. **19/ ACE/PWD(DWS)/2020-21** (Estimated cost: ₹2,38,51,929.75), DNleT No. **20/ACE/ PWD(DWS)/2020-21** (Estimated cost: ₹2,38,51,929.75) & DNleT No. **21/ACE/PWD(DWS)/2020-21** (Estimated cost: ₹2,38,51,929.75), Time of completion – 300 (Three Hundred) days. Last date of bidding for bids 29/12/2020 upto 15.00 hrs.

For more details, please visit website:
www.tripuratenders.gov.in & www.eprocure.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Rig Division, Agartala,
ICA/C-2230/20-21
P.N. Complex, West Tripura

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE							
SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL	
1	PWD B&R, YAMUNA NAGAR	CONSTRUCTION OF INDOOR BADMINTON HALL IN GYMKHANA CLUB AT SECTOR -17, HUDA, JAGADHRI IN YAMUNA NAGAR DISTRICT (RE-INVTIE) + 1 OTHER WORK	30.11.2020 15.12.2020	1134.02 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	pwd-eeepd-yamananagar@hry.nic.in01732-237834	
2	PWD B&R, ROHTAK	ANNUAL REPAIR ESTIMATE FOR CENTRAL STATION, AUGMENTATION OPERATION THEATRE & NEURO SURGERY, 50 BEDDED PRIVATE WARD & GENERAL HOSPITAL (WARD & O.T) IN PGIMS ROHTAK FOR THE YEAR 2020-21. + 3 OTHER WORKS	24.11.2020 14.12.2020	47 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01262-282871 pwd-eeepd-rohtak@hry.nic.in	
3	PWD B&R, SIRSA	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ROAD FROM VILLAGE NATHORE UPTO BANI TO BACHER ROAD IN KM.0 TO 1.81 IN SIRSADISTT. (C.M. ANNOUNCEMENT CODE NO. 25411 DATED 08.03.2020.).	24.11.2020 08.12.2020	101.72 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01666-222959/ pwd-eeepd2-sirsa@hry.nic.in	
4	PWD B&R, YAMUNA NAGAR	RE-INVTIE UP-GRADATION OF MADHO BAS TO ALAHAU UPTO BLOCK BOUNDARY (MRL-02) IN YAMUNA NAGAR DISTRICT (PMGSY-III)	30.11.2020 15.12.2020	104.28 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	pwd-eeepd-yamananagar@hry.nic.in01732-237834	
5	PWD B&R, HISAR	UPGRADATION BY SPECIAL REPAIR OF RESEARCH LABORATORY IN PWD B&R OFFICE CAMPUS AT HISAR	26.11.2020 09.12.2020	149.88 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-239887 pwd-eeepd3-hissar@hry.nic.in	
6	PWD B&R,HISAR	WIDENING & STRENGTHENING OF HISAR MIRZAPUR NIYANA ROAD IN HISAR DISTT. (ROAD ID 4845) (SEC. MILL GATE TO KAINCHI CHOWK) RD 0.00 TO 0.700 + 3 OTHER WORKS	24.11.2020 07.12.2020	961.09 LAKH	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-237889	
7	PWD B&R, PANCHKULA	RE-INVTING OF TENDER FOR THE WORK OF IRQP OF NH-73 (NEW NH-7) FROM RD 153.853 TO 160.353 (BARWALA BYPASS) IN PANCHKULA DISTT. (AFFECTED PORTION FROM RD 157.753 TO 158.203 ALONGWITH JUNCTION)	26.11.2020 07.12.2020	222.37 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2920477 pwd-eeepd-panchkula@hry.nic.in	
8	PANCHAYATI RAJ, SONIPAT	1.CONST.&BEAUTIFICATION OF NAGA WALI SAROVER AT VILLAGE KHANDA BLOCK KHARKHODA DISTT. SONIPAT	25.11.2020 15.12.2020	35.15 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	
9	PANCHAYATI RAJ, REWARI.	CONST. OF 19 NO'S AWC AT VARIOUS VILLAGE, DISTT. REWARI	01.12.2020 15.12.2020	160.55 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274-222260, 9416421261 prexeeng.rwr@hry.nic.in	
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ BLOCK DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYAT OFFICER, MATANHAIL.	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK MATANHAIL & DISTT-JHAJJAR.	25.11.2020 15.12.2020	377.89 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416050161	
11	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG. DIVISION HANSI	MIRCHPUR - PROVIDING FUNCTIONAL HOUSEHOLD TAP CONNECTION (FHTC) AND LAYING OF PIPE LINE IN UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION VILLAGE MIRCHPUR DISTT. HISAR "PROVIDING AND LAYING OF DI PIPE LINE IN STREETS AND PROVIDING FUNCTIONAL HOUSE HOLD TAP CONNECTION IN VILLAGE MIRCHPUR AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO + 2 OTHER WORKS	23.11.2020 01.12.2020	89.16 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01663-256145 / eeehansi@gmail.com	
12	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG. DIVN,SIWANI	CHEHAR KALAN & DHANI KHERA - CONSTRUCTION OF BOOSTING STATION, LAYING OF PIPE LINE WITH FHTC IN VILLAGE CHEHAR KALAN & DHANI KHERA DISTT. BHUWANE, (UNDER CM ANNOUNCEMENT CODE NO. 25353 DATED 07.03.2020 UNDER JJM) + 2 OTHER WORKS	20.11.2020 09.12.2020	93.30 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01255-277066 eesiwani@phedharyana.gov.in	
13	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG. DIVN,SIWANI	BIDHWAN- PROVIDING FHTC, RENOVATION OF WATER WORKS, REPLACEMENT OF PUMPING MACHINERY AND LAYING OF DI PIPE LINE UNDER JJM CATEGORY-II (JJM) IN VILLAGE BIDHWAN, "LAYING OF DI PIPE LINE, MAKING FHTC CONNECTIONS AND REPLACEMENT OF PANEL BOARD IN VILLAGE BIDHWAN AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO." + 1 OTHER WORKS	23.11.2020 14.12.2020	186.14 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in tender ID 2020_HRY_151476_1 + 1 other	01255-277066 eesiwani@phedharyana.gov.in	
14	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING KURUKSHETRA	KURUKSHETRA: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL OF DETAIL REPORT CONSTRUCTION OF 25 MLD SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT AT KURUKSHETRA, DNIT FOR RAISING HEIGHT OF EXISTING BOUNDARY WALL FIXING OF IRON GRILL/RAILING CONSTRUCTION OF 1 NO. ADDITIONAL ROOM IN LAB INCLUDING PAINTING WORK AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO	21.11.2020 27.11.2020	32.51 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER	
15	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING KURUKSHETRA	NALWI :- PROVIDING FUNCTIONAL HOUSEHOLD TAP CONNECTION, LAYING OF DI PIPE LINE IN BALANCE STREETS AT VILLAGE NALWI AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION + 1 OTHER WORK	21.11.2020 27.11.2020	20.77 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER	
16	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA KURUKSHETRA.	REPAIR OF PATCHES OF SYL CANAL FROM K.M. 13.000 TO 15.000 (CLOSURE WORK). + 6 OTHER WORKS	24.11.2020 07.12.2020	358.45 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01744-239164 xenwsvdnvkra@gmail.com	
17	IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT (ADAMPUR W/S DIVISION, HISAR)	REHABILITATION OF BALAK MINOR FROM RD 2000 TO 23500 UNDER CM ANC. CODE NO. 17610 DT. 27.11.2016	CLOSING DATE 07.12.2020	419.78 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-230030 xenawsdn@gmail.com	
18	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA CHARKHI DADRI.	ENHANCEMENT OF CAPACITY OF VILLAGE POND KOTIA OFF TAKING FROM K.M. 5.500-R OF AULANT DISTY + 4 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 01.12.2020	28.93 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01250-220264 xenmgckd11@gmail.com	
19	FOREST DEPARTMENT CHARKHI DADRI	RANGE OFFICE CONSTRUCTION AT BADHRA + 2 OTHER WORKS	21.11.2020 01.12.2020	56.87 LACS	http://haryanaeprocurement.gov.in TENDER NO 2020_HRY_151366_1 + 2 OTHER	dfchowkdhadri@gmail.com 01250-297241	
20	TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER, HARYANA, CHANDIGARH	ONLINE TENDER FOR SERVICES PROVIDING "PART-1 OF OUTSOURCE POLICY"	CLOSING DATE 15.12.2020	5.50 CRORE	haryanantransport.gov.in	Sh. Ramesh Kumar Chahal, SAO(Accounts)	
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etendehry.nic.in						RO NO. 84013	

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110001

PUBLICATION NOTICE
in OA No. 1030/18 Date: 21.11.2020

Deutsche Bank AG (Applicant)
VS
KDR Services Pvt. Ltd. & Ors. (Respondent)

To,
DEFENDENT
1. KDR Services Pvt. Ltd.,
Plot No. 70, Sai Enclave Dwarka, Sect-23,
Near PF Office, New Delhi-77
Also At: Flat No. 555, Sun View
Apartment, PKT-4, Sect-11, Dwarka
Phase-1, New Delhi-110077

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 14,73,589/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Seventy Three Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Nine Only)** against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **22.03.2021 At 10:30 A.M.**
Take Notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar, DRT-II, DELHI.

E-TENDER NOTICE
E-tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work:
Sl. No. : [01]. Tender No. : Engg/39/2020-21. Name of the work : Repairs to Maintenance of Horticulture Assets in different location of the CLW township for the year 2020-21 ending upto 30.06.2021 under Zone-6 of Horticulture Superintendent at Chittaranjan. **Tender value (₹) :** 80,66,179.00 (Rupees eighty lakhs sixty six thousand one hundred seventy nine). **Earnest money (₹) :** 1,61,300.00 (Rupees one lakh sixty one thousand three hundred). **Period of completion (in months):** 08 (eight) months. **NOTE: (i) Date of closing : 15.12.2020 at 13.00 hrs. (ii) Complete details can be seen in the Railways website : www.ireps.gov.in (iii) Contact Number : 9136640202.**
Divisional Engineer
AD76 - 168 CLW/Chittaranjan
Like us on : www.facebook.com/cwrrailways

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110001

PUBLICATION NOTICE
in OA No. 684/19 Date: 02.09.2020

Deutsche Bank AG (Applicant)
VS
M/s Aybix Engineers Pvt. Ltd. & Ors. (Respondent)

To,
DEFENDENT
1.M/s Aybix Engineers Pvt. Ltd.,
Through its directors Mr. Aryender Singh / Mr. Pushpendar Singh, K-229, Site-5, Kasna Ind. Area Greater Noida-201308 UP
2. Mr. Aryender Singh, Director- M/s Aybix Engineers Pvt. Ltd., K-229, Site-5, Kasna Ind. Area Greater Noida-201308 UP
3. Mr. Pushpendar Singh, K-229, Site-5, Kasna Ind. Area Greater Noida-201308 UP
Also At-C-243, Sect-37, Greater Noida-201307 UP

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 22,49,902/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred and Two Only)** against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **03.12.2020 At 10:30 A.M.**
Take Notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar, DRT-II, DELHI.

PUBLIC NOTICE</

LVB to become DBS Bank India from Friday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Crisis-hit Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) will merge into the Indian arm of Singapore-based DBS Bank on Friday, leading to removal of all restrictions, including withdrawal cap of ₹25,000, which the RBI had placed on the lender earlier this month.

The RBI notified the effective date of merger soon after the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the Scheme of Amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

All the branches of LVB will function as branches of DBIL with effect from November 27, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement.

“Customers, including depositors of the Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd will be able to operate their accounts as customers of DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL) with effect from November 27, 2020. Consequently the moratorium on the Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd. will cease to be operative from that date,” it

said.

DBIL is making necessary arrangements to ensure that service, as usual, is provided to customers of LVB, the central bank added.The RBI had superseded LVB’s board on November 17 after the private sector lender was placed under a moratorium.Meanwhile, the government issued a gazette notification which notified the Lakshmi Vilas Bank Limited (Amalgamation with DBS Bank India Limited) Scheme, 2020.

All employees of LVB shall continue in service and be deemed to have been appointed at the same remuneration and on the same terms and conditions of service as were applicable immediately before the close of business on November 17, 2020, the gazette notification issued by the Department of Financial Services said.

Earlier in the day, the Union Cabinet approved the merger of LVB with DBIL, providing comfort to 20 lakh customers of the bank which was put under the moratorium.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank shares bounce back, jump nearly 5%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Lakshmi Vilas Bank bounced back on Wednesday after falling for almost a week, rising by nearly 5 per cent following the government approval for merger of the crisis-ridden bank with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL). In early trade on Wednesday, the stock had tanked 4.79 per cent to ₹6.95, its lower circuit limit as well as one-year low, on the BSE. However, it recovered all its lost ground in the afternoon trade, gaining 4.79 per cent to close at ₹7.65 -- its upper circuit limit.On the NSE, the scrip rose 4.79 per cent to close at ₹7.65. Earlier in the day, it had fallen 4.79 per cent to ₹6.95.

I-T refunds worth ₹1.36L cr issued to 41.25L taxpayers till November 24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Dept has issued refunds worth over ₹1.36 lakh crore to over 41 lakh taxpayers so far this fiscal.This includes personal income tax (PIT) refunds amounting to ₹36,028 crore and corporate tax refunds of over ₹1 lakh crore during this period.”CBDT issues refunds of over ₹1,36,962 crore to more than 41.25 lakh taxpayers between 1st April, 2020 to 24th November,2020. Income tax refunds of ₹36,028 crore have been issued in 39,28,067 cases & corporate tax refunds of ₹1,00,934 crore have been issued in 1,96,880 cases,” the I-T Department tweeted.

‘Govt should incentivise production, usage of eco-friendly cement’

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Government should incentivise the manufacturing and usage of eco-friendly cement, according to a stakeholder in the sector.Himansh Verma, Founder & Chairman of Navrattan Group said that the Centre, along with the cement industry, must push harder for an eco-friendly alternative to regular Portland cement.”Along with creating more public awareness, I would also suggest that the government should incentivise the manufacture and usage of such cement so as to give people more reasons to indulge in this practice,” he said.

Verma was of the view

that eco-friendly cement is the future of the industry.

“We are at the crossroads of the future, with Covid-19 pandemic, global warming, environmental degradation, etc. The only way out of it is to go green,” said the Chairman of the green cement manufacturer.He also noted that along with incentives, the government should reach out to the manufacturers with proper regulations.On the demand scenario of eco-friendly cements, Verma said that Indian cement industry is the second-largest producer in the world and considering that cement buying is not an “impulse-buy” commodity, its rising demand in

both urban and rural milieu is

a strong indicator of a robust economic activity nationally.

For September and October 2020, the industry reported consecutive double-digit growth, he said.

“By 2030, the cement consumption is expected to be more than double. The present production capacity will have to work overtime to match that demand and, in doing so, it is highly likely that India will become the world’s largest producer of concrete,” he said.

He noted that India will be producing more cement than China by 2030 which may also lead to more threat of pollution. Keeping the downside in mind, he hopes that people would go for eco-friendly cement.

India IT, business services market to reach \$13bn this year: IDC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The IT and Business Services market in India is expected to grow annually by 5.4 per cent to reach \$13 billion by the end of the year, an IDC report said on Wednesday.

In the first half (January-June period), the India IT and Business Services market grew by 5.3 per cent (on-year) as

compared to the 8.9 per cent growth in the first half last year, according to the IDC’s ‘Worldwide Semiannual Services Tracker-1H20’.

When it comes to only IT Services, the market contributed 77.4 per cent in the first half this year and grew by 5.9 per cent (on-year) compared to the 9.3 per cent growth in 1H2019.

“In 1H20, the role of IT

Services vendors gained higher prominence, as organisations increasingly approached them to help ensure business continuity by putting in place various technologies, solutions, best practices and frameworks,” said Garima Goenka, Market Analyst, IT Services, IDC India.

Apart from ensuring business continuity, the role of IT service providers have also

been towards helping organisations to achieve a higher degree of tech resilience, adaptability and digital transformation maturity, to become future-ready.

According to the IDC, the IT Services market will begin picking up momentum gradually from 2021 onwards and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 7.2 per cent between 2019-2024, to be valued at \$13.4 bil-

Banking operations to be hit on Nov 26 due to farm strike

Chennai: Banking operations will be affected across the country on Thursday with about 4.5 lakh bank employees joining the nationwide strike called by the central trade unions, said a top official of the All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA). The strike was called to protest against the “anti-people policies” of the Central government. “Employees of 12 public sector banks, nine private banks, nine foreign banks, all Regional Rural Banks and most of the Cooperative Banks will be participating in the strike,” AIBEA General Secretary C.H. Venkatachalam told IANS.

Markets tumble from record highs on profit-booking; Sensex sinks 695 pts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity markets’ record run screeched to a halt on Wednesday as investors pocketed gains in banking, finance and IT counters amid a mixed trend overseas.

Snapping a three-day winning streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 694.92 points or 1.56 per cent to finish at 43,828.10. The index touched a lifetime high of 44,825.37 in the opening session. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty touched a record intra-day peak of 13,145.85, before ending 196.75 points or 1.51 per cent down at 12,858.40.

Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding 3.22 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, Sun Pharma, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Tech Mahindra.

Only three index components closed in the green -- ONGC, PowerGrid and IndusInd Bank, jumping up to 6.25 per cent. Global equities were mixed after the US Dow Jones Industrial Average breached the 30,000-mark for the first time in the overnight

session on COVID-19 vaccine optimism.

Reports that US President-elect Joe Biden would appoint former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen as Treasury Secretary also cheered investors.

“The market rally which was led by developments on

vaccine and FPI inflows came to a halt today due to profit booking across sectors in the second half of the trading session.

While western markets continued its positivity, being encouraged by news on vaccine developments and ease in the US political risk.

Rupee rises 10 paise to 73.91 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the fourth straight session, the rupee appreciated by 10 paise to close at nearly a month high of 73.91 against the US dollar on Wednesday as positive development on the coronavirus vaccine front enthused investor sentiment.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.98 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 73.88 and a low of 74.02.

The local unit finally closed at 73.91 against the

American currency, registering a rise of 10 paise over its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee had climbed 10 paise to close at 74.01 against the US dollar.

The domestic unit had closed at 73.87 against the greenback on October 28.

Traders said risk appetite increased on news that US President-elect Joe Biden plans to nominate former Federal Reserve chairwoman Janet Yellen as treasury secretary.

Moreover, a weak American currency in the overseas market also supported the rupee.

50% tech startups expect pre-Covid level revenue in 6 months

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Indian tech start-ups are now witnessing a gradual road to recovery, with over 50 per cent of them saying that they expect revenue to reach pre-Covid level in less than six months, according to a Nasscom survey released on Wednesday.

Revenue acceleration and funding has improved the cash availability with startups, showed the findings of the “Nasscom Start-up Pulse Survey II”.

The IT industry body revisited its first tech startup pulse survey, conducted back in April-May 2020, to understand what the current perspectives are, what has changed and what the next six months look like for the tech start-up ecosystem in the country.

The results showed that 43 per cent of tech start-ups now have a runway for more than six months, compared to eight per cent in the earlier survey.

“The Indian start-up ecosystem has set a global benchmark in remaining resilient during this disruptive year,” Debjani Ghosh, President, Nasscom, said in a statement.

“Setting an example for many other industries across

the globe to follow and learn from how Indian start-ups converted challenges into opportunities.

A large tech start-ups pool, strong innovation focus and entrepreneur’s zeal have been the growth drivers of this ecosystem.”

The research showed that there has been an increased interest from venture capital and funding agencies to invest in seed-early stage start-ups.

Government initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, digitalisation of India, a greater focus on sustainable business models is attracting VC interest for Indian tech start-ups, Nasscom said.

Almost 25 per cent of the surveyed start-ups have been able to raise funds or find prospective investors as compared to seven per cent in the earlier survey.

Sectors like edtech, healthtech and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) continue to attract investor interests.

While the ecosystem continues to be cautious, it is increasingly looking at hiring talent with the right competencies.As per the findings of the survey, hiring freeze at tech start-ups dropped by 20 per cent.



Phoolwati

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Phoolwati, W/o: Sanjay Kumar, R/o: H. No. 407, Gali No. 12, Vill Saboli, Delhi has been reported missing since 03.10.2020 from her house. In this regard DD No. 44-A dated 03.10.2020 has been registered at P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi.** The description of missing lady is as under:

Name: Phoolwati, Age: About 28 Years, Height: 4'8", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Green Colour Suit and Salwar.

If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 **SHO**
Police Station Harsh Vihar, Delhi
Ph: 011-22342073, 8750870734

DP/353/NE/2020



MANVATI

General public is hereby informed that a female (depicted in the photo), **Namely : Manvati W/o Unknown R/o Village Utna, Chhatisgarh** has been found since 08.11.2020 from the jurisdiction of P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 67A dated 08.11.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. Now she is stay at Old Age Home, Budhpur, Alipur, Delhi Her physical description is as under :-

Age : About 60-65 Years, **Height:** 4'6", **Complexion :** Black, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing :** Green colour saree, red colour jarsi, black colour sal/dupatta and hawai chappal in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this found female, may inform SHO, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi at E-mail Id – **cic@cbi.gov.in** or Website: **<http://cbi.nic.in>**

SHO
011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/509/NW/2020

P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
North-West Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27495198, 27497179



Anjali

The general public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Anjali D/o Narendra R/o N-28/B-593, CSA Colony WPIA, Delhi** has been missing since 28.06.2020 from her house. In this regard, **FIR No. 280/20, dated 28.06.2020 has been registered at PS Ashok Vihar, 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: Anjali, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 17 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Fair, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Pink colour kurti, blue colour palazzo and cream colour slipper on her feet.

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

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639 **SHO**
DP/513/NW/2020 **P.S. Ashok Vihar, New Delhi.**
Ph. No. 011-27243066, 27220021



Rajkumari

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Rajkumari, D/o Suresh, R/o H. No. 276, Railway Board Shadi Nagar, Azadpur, Delhi, Age: 21 years, Height: 5'1", Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Gray Colour Suit and Gray Colour Salwar, Gray Colour Duptta, Brown Colour Chappal in her feet has been missing from Jurisdiction of P.S. Adarsh Nagar since **05.11.2020.** In this regard a vide **DD No. 92A, dated 06.11.2020** has been registered at **P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.**

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

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph.: 011-24368638,24368641 **SHO**
Fax : 011-24368639 **PS Adarsh Nagar, Delhi**
DP/516/NW/2020 **Ph. : 011-27672452, 8750870229**



POONAM

General public is hereby informed that a female (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Poonam W/o Jittu R/o D-86/1, Gali No. 2, Budh Vihar, Phase-II, Delhi** has been missing since 09.11.2020 from her house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 52A dated 16.11.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Begumpur, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age : 24 Years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Strong, **Hair:** Black Long, **Wearing:** Green colour suit and legging & badami colour hawai chappal in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing female, may inform SHO, Begumpur, Delhi at E-mail Id – **cic@cbi.gov.in** or Website: **<http://cbi.nic.in>**

SHO
Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/517/RD/2020

P.S. Begumpur, Delhi
Rohini Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27579033, 27579030



Indresh Bundela

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Indresh Bundela D/o Sh. Roop Singh R/o SE-28, Singhal Village, Delhi.** Age: 16 yrs, Height: 5', complexion wheatish, face round, build thin, Hair black. Wearing Firozi Coolour Pajami, Sky blue colour kurti & Badami Colour sleeper in feet is missing since 22.11.2020 from the area of PS Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.

In this regard a **FIR No. 694/2020 dated: 22.11.2020 U/s 363 IPC** has been registered at **PS Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-230111334 **S.H.O.,**
Ph.: 011-23014046 **P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi**
011-23015218 **Ph.: 011-27495198, 27495527**

DP/519/NW/20

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Vishnu, S/o Vinod, R/o Village Pacheta, PS Kelaras, Distt. Murena, Madhya Pradesh,** has committed (or is suspected to has committed) the **offence in case FIR No. 404/2020 Dt. 18.08.2020, u/s 363 IPC, at P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Vishnu** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Vishnu** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Vishnu of case FIR No. 404/2020 Dt. 18.08.2020, u/s 363 IPC, at P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear on this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **05.01.2021**

By Order
Ms. Richa Sharma,
Metropolitan Magistrate (07),
Room No. 06, Rohini Court, Delhi

DP/586/ON/2020-(Court Matter),



ARPAN KUMAR

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped boy but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing/kidnapped boy please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in **SHO**
Fax: 011-24368639 **P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi**
DP/525/RD/2020 **Ph.: 011-27581223**

Trend

Blazer

Never forget why you started: Rao

Actor **RAJKUMMAR RAO** has shared words of wisdom in his latest post on social media. “Never forget why you started,” Rajkummar captioned an image he recently posted on Instagram.

Rajkummar’s latest film *Ludo* released digitally. The Anurag Basu directorial is a dark humour anthology comprising four stories. Abhishek Bachchan, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Rohit Saraf, Aditya Roy Kapur, Pankaj Tripathi and Sanya Malhotra are also seen playing important characters in the film. He has *Badhaai Do* and *Roohi Afza* coming up.





‘TB continues to be one of the most devastating public health issues in our country. With just under 40 per cent of diagnosed cases in people under 30, there is an urgent need to clear misconceptions around it and drive a perception change. *MTV Nishedh Alone Together* conveys this message in a unique and impactful way.’

—Sania Mirza

Miss World 2017 **MANUSHI CHHILLAR**, who will make her Bollywood debut through *Prithviraj*, opposite **Akshay Kumar**, says she’s a vegetarian and loves it.

On International Meatless Day, she said, “For me, being a vegetarian was more of a personal choice. It has been and will always be a way of life for me because my parents are vegetarians and I have inculcated this through them. However, they never forced this on me. I made my choice after I realised that it suits for me remarkably and makes me feel fitter, healthier. Plant-based diet works better for me & I am a firm believer of it.”



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Bieber upset with Grammys

Singer **JUSTIN BIEBER** has earned four Grammy Award nominations for his album *Changes*, including Best Pop Solo Performance (for *Yummy*), Best Pop Duo/Group Performance (*Intentions* featuring Quavo), Best Pop Vocal Album, & Best Country Duo/Group Performance (for his feature on Dan + Shay’s *10,000 Hours*).

Bieber, post announcement, wrote a letter to the Academy on Instagram, talking about how his mission to make an R&B album was not honoured properly.

“To the Grammys,” he wrote, “I am flattered to be acknowledged & appreciated for my artistry. I am very meticulous & intentional about my music. But I set out to make an R&B album. *Changes* is an R&B album. Alas, it isn’t being acknowledged as that.”



Slowly but surely, India and SIndianness are foraying into the world of showbiz in the West, and much of it has to do with the country’s growing presence in the OTT space. The success of Netflix’s *Delhi Crime* winning the ‘Best Drama Series’ award at the 48th International Emmy Awards is, as Shefali Shah rightly said, “a cherry on the sundae”, but Indian stories and talent of the digital space have been making a strong impact the way Bollywood or our mainstream cinema never really did.

The show becomes the first Indian programme to win an International Emmy. Writer-director Richie Mehta’s seven-episode series has Shefali Shah in the central role of DCP Vartika Chaturvedi, and narrates the story of investigation in the aftermath of the heinous Delhi gang-rape of December 2012.

“I am completely ecstatic, euphoric and all the possible superlatives in the thesaurus that I can recollect now. It’s just amazing! I feel so proud to be a part of *Delhi Crime*. This win is like a cherry on the sundae but irrespective for me, *Delhi Crime* has always been a winner since the day I started work on it. I knew that this show is a very special one. The Emmy has put us on the global

AN INTERNATIONAL HIT

With *Delhi Crime* winning the 48th International Emmy Award, Indian stories and the talent pool on the OTT space are gradually making a strong impact globally, the way our mainstream cinema never did



platform and we feel extremely proud of the honour,” Shefali said. “This is a BIG one for us, a big one for India. Thank you for the endless love and support that has flowed our way for the show. I am so honoured to be a part of something that is so real and relevant that it put us on the global map. Thank you for the nominations and the experience, Emmys. Congratulations to the supremely deserving team behind *Delhi Crime*,” she added.

In his acceptance speech, writer-director Mehta thanked all the producers, the OTT platform Netflix that streams the show, the casting crew and the cast, with a special mention of Shefali Shah, his parents and wife, the Sundance Film Festival, and the Delhi police team headed by “Neeraj Kumar and the amazing Chhaya Sharma” that helped them bring the show

alive. “The project was led by women, it was financed and put together and released by women, this crime was solved by women, this is for the courage of those women and all the women who not only endure the violence that so many men inflict on them but then are tasked with solving the problem,” said Mehta.

He paid a special tribute to the victim and her mother. “Finally the fearless and tireless hero of all mothers and her daughter. Not a day goes by when I don’t think about you both and what the world subjected you two to. And I hope none of us ever forget that,” he said.

The fictionalised crime drama series also features Rasika Dugal, Adil Hussain, Rajesh Tailang, Avijit Dutt, Gopal Dutt, Jaya Bhattacharya, Denzil Smith and Yashaswini Dayama in pivotal roles.

“*Delhi Crime* will always be close to the heart for how the narrative examines the lives of women in a patriarchal society through (characters) Vartika, Neeti, Chandni, while reminding us that we as a society allowed a heinous crime like the 2012 rape case to happen,” said Rasika.

—With inputs from agencies

WE’RE OUR OWN ENEMIES

Actor WINSTON DUKE talks about how the characters in the horror film, *Us*, explain that monsters are just some ghostly creatures we create in our minds, rather they’re very much like us. By TEAM VIVA

□ **What did you make of the US script?**

I thought it was really bold and creative, and the most original piece I had read around that time. I felt so privileged to even be asked to look at the material. Well, it being Jordan Peele’s was an added bonus. I have been his fan since his sketch comedy days, the early days on Mad TV, and his own show, *Key & Peele*. To see him transition into the narrative storytelling realm, I felt, ‘Of course! He’s been a genius for years. Can’t wait!’

To know it came from him, and to consume that material at the time, I sat there quiet for a few minutes, thinking, ‘I saw this, I saw that, this means that, this means this... Oh my goodness, it’s a big conversation.’ I wanted to be part of that conversation. And that is why I jumped right on to the film. More than anything else, I said, ‘I want to be a part of the conversation that this film evokes.’



‘I WANTED GABE TO SEEM THE CLOSEST TO THE AUDIENCE THROUGH HIS ABILITY TO BOTH BE IN IT AND ALSO STAND OUTSIDE IT AND MAKE IT FUNNY. HE’S ABLE TO TURN A MOMENT THAT FEELS REALLY TRAUMATIC AND TERRIBLE AND FIND SOME SEMBLANCE OF HUMOUR IN IT’

□ **Did Jordan suggest you horror or any other genre films to watch before making the film?**

I think, for each of us, we wanted something totally different out of the experience. Mine was, because I wasn’t very familiar with the genre, an aversion to horror as a genre for a while. I enjoyed the scary films, the parody ones, because I understood that. All these tropes definitely didn’t benefit people who looked like me, so I never really got attached to the genre. But after reading the script, I knew I wanted to be a part of this new world because it turned everything on its head.

□ **Was there something you wanted to bring to Gabe Wilson?**

I wanted Gabe to seem the closest to the audience through his ability to both be in it and also stand outside it and make it funny. He’s able to turn a moment that feels really traumatic and terrible and find some semblance of humour in it.

I also wanted Gabe to be the perfect avatar for the audience and a construct that reminded the audience of themselves. I wanted them to talk about Gabe when they went home and see themselves in him with a blind comfort. Gabe is so comfortable and privileged. The fact that he thinks he can solve it all with a baseball bat! It’s fascinating. He aspires to be like his friends who are so much more comfortable. It’s his ambition and tied into



his need to ascend to the American dream. Then you realise that the American dream is so flawed and insecure, their house is literally made of glass and it doesn’t protect you. You see it and you say, ‘they are us.’

□ **You also had to play another completely different character than Gabe. How did you work out the differences?**

We rarely did both on one day. I think we only did that on one or two days that I was filming because it was so taxing. Jordan made that possible with the

Deeply. He understands the process, how we need it and gives us a lot of room for it. He respects it and creates space for us to do whatever we need to do. He doesn’t try to force you into his process. He’s like a gardener and he understands he has different flowers. Some need more sunlight and water, some need less.

□ **You were working with Evan and Shahadi. How were they as fellow performers?**

They were brilliant! They came prepared and ready to act, play and be daring. It was really good to just watch them be free and learn what fearlessness looks like. As kids, they’ve got nothing to be afraid of. We were all very pleasant on set so they felt comfortable. They wanted to have lunch with us everyday and most days, we did. Both Evan and Shahadi were so committed to their roles, always showing something new. It was a great collaborative effort. Jordan relied on a lot of different people to bring a lot of dimension and character to these roles. It was a cast of greatness.

□ **Filming something like this, you have a lot of intensity. Is it something that sticks with you?**

It was hard to let go. I think was I was going through a lot of stress. I went on to do two other projects immediately after this. I don’t think I shed the characters of *Us* before I went to do the other jobs to do my regular process of taking them off. I didn’t realise that until New Years, when I finally had a vacation and got to sit and meditate and realise I’d never removed Gabe from my person. I’d been walking around with so much baggage, no wonder I was so stressed! I literally have felt like I’m fighting for my life.

□ **Us loosely falls into horror. But how does it differ within the genre?**

I think there is so much commentary on it. In particular, we’ve been saying a lot about how we’re our worst enemies. It’s very interesting because our monsters aren’t creatures. They don’t have wings, they’re not ghosts or werewolves. They’re not things, they’re people. They’re your monsters. They’re not just “them.” They’re “us.”

(*Us* premieres on November 29 at 1 pm and 9 pm on Sony PIX.)


‘I have no regrets’

From the art of acting he exuded in *Paar*, *Sparshe*, *Pestonjee*, *Junoon*, *Mirch Masala* or *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro*, to the unforgettable screen presence of mainstream roles in *Masoom*, *A Wednesday*, *Jalwa*, *The Dirty Picture* or the *Ishqiya* films, 70-year-old Bollywood veteran Naseeruddin Shah has been there, done that.

The much-feted actor has been equally at home on screens big and small (some feel his role in the TV serial *Mirza Ghalib* is his best ever), and has recently forayed the OTT space with the series *Bandish Bandits*, too.

In a career spanning over four decades, there have been instances when he failed to create magic on screen but he says that he has no regrets. “I don’t have a single regret in life. Yes, I have made mistakes but I have overcome them. I have put them behind me and moved on with learnings. I would be a fool to keep regrets in life. I have acted in several ghastly films. I ate some of them. I might have not enjoyed working for those films but I don’t regret having done them. Each and every decision of mine has taught me something or the other,” Shah said.

—IANS




The *Dev Deepavali*, literally translates to “the Diwali of gods” or “the festival of fights of gods”, is the festival of Kartik Purnima celebrated in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. It falls on the full moon of the Hindu month of Kartika and takes place 15 days after Diwali. On this day, the gods are believed to descend to earth to bathe in the Ganges. The main rituals performed by devotees consist of the *kartik snan* (taking a holy bath in the Ganges during Kartika) and *deep daan* (offering of oil lighted lamps) to Ganga in the evening.

Karmic events, recently, did the first-of-its-kind installation *Glory of Benaras* at Vegas Mall. They recreated the divine ‘ghats of Benaras’ in the mall. Temple structure, intricately designed carvings, pillars, water bodies, twinkling lamps and ornate bells all form a part of the huge installation.

Harsh V Bansal, director of the mall, says, “Diwali on the ghats of Benaras is the most mesmerising sight to behold this year. We wanted to make sure that the Mall gives a one of a kind experience to our patrons. We invested in this enthralling structure, especially to give an unusual experience that the mall industry has never done before.”

Gunwant Singh, MD, Karmic Events Pvt Ltd, says, “The temple is about 68 ft in length, 40 ft in width and 40+ ft in height. The installation was made possible because of 140 skilled artisans, who worked with dedication for 40 days and handcrafted the entire structure. The creation was ideated to make sure that our patrons feel the same spirituality and positivity they would feel on the ghats of Benaras.”



CHHATTISGARH FIGHTS MALNUTRITION

The *Mukhyamantri Suposhan Yojana*, which was launched to curb malnutrition and anaemia, has been a huge success in Bijapur district. There has been a drastic 10 per cent fall in cases

One out of every three children in India is malnourished, making us one of the leading nations in terms of malnourished children. According to the 2018 Global Hunger Index, India ranked 103 out of the 119 qualifying countries, with a score of 31.1, which is high enough to ring the bells for serious concern for hunger deprivation. The nation houses 46.6 million stunted children, one-third globally, as per the Global Nutrition Report 2018. Approximately half of all the under-five child mortality in India is credited to undernutrition.

The crisis of malnutrition is alarming and needs immediate attention. Any leading nation can't accomplish the economic and social development goals of the society, without addressing the basic issue of malnutrition and laying an emphasis over making its populace mentally, physically and emotionally healthy.

Chhattisgarh steps up in its battle against malnutrition

For a heavily forested and tribal-dominated state of Chhattisgarh, the issue of malnutrition came as a challenge in front of the newly formed state government led by the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. Under his leadership, the Chief Minister's *Suposhan Abhiyan* was launched on October 2, 2019 in the state to eradicate malnutrition from its roots.

Decrease in malnourished children in the state

According to the data received from the weight festival in the scheme launching last year, about 4,92,000 children were malnourished in the state, out of which more than 67,000 children have become free from it. Thus, there has been a 13.79 per cent decrease in malnourished children, which is a major achievement in the state's war against malnutrition.

Bijapur Suposhan Mission

Malnutrition has been an enigma in the Bijapur district of the state since time immemorial with the dominant presence of anaemia among women of the region. Scientists claim that the initial 1,000 days of an individual's lifespan, from the day of conception till s/he turns two, is crucial for physical and cognitive development. But a majority of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and infant mothers of the district are anemic with decreasing nutritional levels. Thereby, a malnourished mother is more likely to give birth to malnourished children, forming a vicious cycle with the birth of underweight children and the pattern continuing for ages thereafter.



Concerning the figures of the Weight festival 2019, a total of 3,632 children have been categorised as seriously malnourished and 7,100 children fall under the category of moderately malnourished in the district. Bijapur stands at a malnutrition percentage of 38.50 per cent, which is both disturbing yet challenging. The district has a population of 2,55,230 citizens, out of which 49.6 per cent i.e (1,26,594) are women, according to the 2011 census.

As per the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) 2015-16, there are 86,970 anemic women aged between 15 and 49 years, constituting for 68.7 per cent of anemic women in the district, out of which, the percentile of anemic pregnant women stands at 47.9 per cent. 51.3 per cent of infants from the age group of six months to 59 months are anemic. The alarming figures of malnutrition, maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate and anaemia, reckoned the district administration to come up with this mission to combat malnutrition.

Benefits under the mission

Under this campaign, supplementary nutritious food in the form of

eggs, *ladoo*s, chickpea, jaggery and nutritious biscuits are provided to the identified children, women, lactating mothers, school dropouts and anemic women aged between 15 to 49 years. All the children and school dropout girls are provided with warm nutritious food. With this, 27883 children, 4663 lactating mothers, 10811 anemic women aged between 15 to 49 years, 2751 school dropout girls, with a whopping total of 46,108 people of the district have been benefitted.

Establishment of Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres in Bijapur

Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRC) are being established in the district hospital and four development blocks, with the collaboration of Health Department under the scheme, for the speedy recovery and health improvement of severely malnourished children. Additionally, with the aid of one district hospital, five community centres and 10 primary health centres, health check-ups are conducted regularly for pregnant and lactating mothers and malnourished children of the district.

Reduction in malnutrition levels

within 13 months in the district

The mission started bearing fruitful results within 13 months with the revival of 2,779 severely/moderately malnourished children, getting free from the cycles of undernourishment. Due to the constant efforts and the objective set out by the CM to eradicate malnutrition from its roots, a drastic 10 per cent reduction has been witnessed in the levels of malnourishment in the district.

The malnourishment rate has come down from 38.50 per cent to 28.52 per cent with the number of malnourished children decreasing from 10,732 to 7,953. The anganwadi workers of the district are provided with regular training for the successful implementation of the scheme. Additionally, kitchen gardens are being established in all the anganwadi centres with 276 (fixed wire fencing) and 819 kitchen gardens being established in the workers and assistants premises. Papaya and drumsticks are being planted in the gardens of the beneficiaries to encourage them to avail proper nutrition. Awareness is created through social participation of the Self Help Groups in the gram panchayats of the villages, where infor-

mation is disseminated regarding proper nutrition and health.

Distribution of dry ration material amid lockdown

Amid the closure of all the anganwadi and mini anganwadi centres for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in the state, distribution of dry ration material such as wheat flour, rice, pulses, gram, potatoes and soybeans had been ensured. Additionally, children were also weighed regularly by anganwadi workers by visiting their homes.

Bijapur is one fine example of the successful implementation of the *Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan* in the state. The World Bank has also appreciated the control and prevention of COVID in the state and the distribution of take away ration conducted by anganwadi workers in the state.

Eradication of malnutrition is a community campaign and involves citizens participation and cooperation for the achievement of its goals. It is a time taking process but Chhattisgarh will fulfill its goals in terms of providing people with nourishment and proper nutrition.

Union Minister inaugurates automated tower car parking

The Union Power Minister RK Singh and LG Anil Bajjal in the presence of BJP Delhi President Adesh Gupta, LOP Delhi Legislative Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Mayor Anamika inaugurated Delhi's first fully-automated tower car parking at Green Park near the Metro Station through video conferencing on Wednesday.

Singh congratulated SDMC for selecting the most feasible new-age parking system to overcome the parking in and around the Green Park. He further expressed confidence that the Tower Parking Project will certainly contain pollution in the area. He offered to provide expertise, consultancy and help of his Ministry in providing boost to the innovative actions in future. While giving detailed description of the projects being executed by his Ministry in and around Delhi, he expressed hope that the projects will go a long way in accelerating the pace of development in the city and providing facilities to the citizens.

Deputy Mayor Subash Bhadana, Chairman Standing Committee Rajdutt Gehlot, Leader of House Narendra Chawala, Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti, DC South Zone G Sudhakar and other senior officials were also present.

Bajjal said that this sort of vertical parking is the most appropriate in congested markets and populated colonies as it requires just 1.50 sq metre space to park a car in comparison to 30 sq metre required in conventional parking. He said that all three MCDs should come up with effective parking area management to deal with the parking problem in their jurisdiction. While giving details of the project, he said that the new era steel structured modular designed tower parking is flexible and hence, can be installed at another place. It is eco-friendly, accommodates maximum number of cars in minimum space, allows faster parking and retrieval, has customised parking solutions, comprehensive fire safety, is fully

safe and has parking through lifts.

Bharti while welcoming Union Minister referred to the achievements and ongoing major projects of SDMC and said that SDMC has taken major steps to increase the number of parking sites. The tower parking project is another initiative to develop useful property over a limited sized plot. He further informed that the plot area of parking is 878 sq metre. The total cost of the project is ₹18.20 crore. The height of the towers is 39.50 metres and there are 17 floors in each tower, accommodating 17 cars on each side of the car lift, totaling to 34 cars in each tower. At a time, the tower can accommodate up to 136 cars. Each tower accommodates eight SUVs from the first level to the fourth level and 26 sedans from the fifth level to the 17th. The parking facility is available for 32 SUVs and 104 sedans in total in all the four towers.

He further informed that there is an automated ticket dispenser with boom barrier at entry and exit of the parking and there will be parking charges as per SDMC notified rates — ₹20 per hour, ₹100 for 24 hours, ₹1,200 day pass (monthly) and ₹2,000 day and night pass (monthly).

He added that the operation, maintenance cost and requirement of manual labor will be lower than the conventional parking. The retrieval time of the vehicle in the tower parking will be 150 seconds.

Anamika stated that the SDMC has been completing its project in spite of limited recourse and a paucity of funds. She said, "Such projects will prove to be beneficial in lessening the pollution levels and fuel consumption. Moreover, parking vehicles in the automated car parking will be easy and convenient than those in conventional parking. It will also suffice the car parking need of the residents." She added that the possibilities are also being explored to use the facade for generating revenue for using it for advertisement purposes.

MV Iyer assumes charge as director of GAIL



MV Iyer assumed charge as Director (Business Development) of GAIL. Earlier, he was working as the Executive Director (Projects) with the company.

An electrical engineer, Iyer has 33 years of rich experience in GAIL in projects execution amounting to ₹40,000 crores, including current projects worth ₹25,000 crores spanning 16 states, 150 districts and City Gas Distribution (CGD) projects in six cities.

He is also the director in one of the company's new joint venture Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL) for implementation of North East Gas Grid.



New NCR experience

A ground plan of night market under the *Madhuban Bapudham Yojana* is ready. By A NIRWAN

The road map of vehicle free zone night market has been prepared in NCR's *Madhuban Bapudham Yojana*, which is going to be developed in GDA's 1234 acre area. It is also preparing to open other types of commercial centres in this market besides street food dishes.

The market will also serve as a picnic for those who don't get enough family time as they reach home late. Due to this, plans to open a special type of night market by 11 pm are also being considered. The model is taken from Gangtok where markets are opened till late night for picnics and food. They also plan to build 198 shops and 25 kiosks to promote small shopkeepers. Apart from this, a commercial centre named Central Plaza will also be built on 150 acres

of land.

GDA Secretary, Santosh Rai said that entry of any vehicle in this market will be prohibited so that people are roam around freely without any hindrances. Police will look after the law and order. In this regard, the police administration will be urged to create a checkpoint keeping safety in mind. Madhuban Bapudham police station has already been activated. A budget of ₹100 crore has been made for the construction of roads so that there is no problem for the people coming to this area. Parking for 400 vehicles will also be made. Apart from this, food corners will be developed and a separate wedding zone is being created for street food. Auditorium and conference hall will also be constructed there.

A smarter tomorrow

Almost half a dozen schools run by the Municipal Corporation in the city will be made smart schools soon. In all these schools, the details of all the activities related to the studies of the students will be kept through the schooling education app. The login details of the app will be with the concerned school principal. In the app, the data of all the students studying in the school will be fed and complete information about the status of their studies will also be available from the website. The special feature is that when a child's performance falls his information will be there in the app and the details of what steps the teacher has to take for qualitative improvement in that child will also be available.

In the marathon meeting held by Mayor Asha Sharma and Municipal Commissioner Mahendra Singh Tanwar with the principals of these schools in the municipal auditorium, the issue of implementing this app was discussed and it was decided to implement this app for qualitative improvement in education. The municipal administration feels that government

schools should also be smart so that parents admit their children in these schools instead of private ones.

Talking with the principal in the meeting, Asha said that the modern era demands teaching with new technology. Now new education system will be used and smart class will be run in all corporation schools. The teachers working in these schools will be trained with new teaching methods. Computer labs will be made in all schools and children will be taught through lab tabs. It was also said in the meeting that a list of children who have smart phones should be prepared and linked to the school app. Only children from class six to twelve will be linked with this app.

The mayor promised to provide all the facilities so that students passing out from these schools can take the name of Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation high. She said that there is no dearth of talent here, we have to motivate them to achieve their goal. Additional Municipal Commissioner RN Pandey was also present during the meeting.



Faculty of SRM-AP recognised by Stanford University



Dr Imran Pancha from the Department of Biology, SRM university-AP is recognised among the top two per cent scientists/researchers across the world by Stanford University researchers.

Recently, an article has been published in PLOS Biology by Stanford researchers on the highly cited researchers in 22 different fields and their subfields. In the biotechnology field, 1,074 scientists/faculty members were identified and Dr Imran is one amongst them. From India, only 77 scientists/faculty members could achieve this honour.

This is an admirable achievement for a young faculty. Dr P Sathyanarayanan, the President of SRM University-AP honoured Dr Imran for bringing this scientific lau-

rel to the university.

Overall, of the top 1,60,000 scientists from different fields of Science & Technology, India hosts 2,313 scientists/faculty members. This list comprises of the prominent and illustrious scientists from India.

Dr Imran's primary research focus is to produce renewable energy from microalgae. His team is trying to develop integrated microalgal biorefinery to produce high-value compounds like phycobiliproteins, carotenoids along with biofuel and biofertilisers from microalgae. Apart from this, he is also interested to understand algal-bacterial interaction, particularly isolate and characterise the microalga associated bacteria and finding their role in growth enhancement and inhibition in microalgae.

GOODBYE, MARADONA

Football icon Diego Maradona who helped Argentina win the 1986 World Cup and displayed some of the finest football the world has ever seen dies at 60

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Maradona, the Argentine football great who was among the best players ever and who led his country to the 1986 World Cup title before later struggling with cocaine use and obesity, has died. He was 60.

The office of Argentina's president will decree three days of national mourning because of Maradona's death on Wednesday, and the Argentine football association expressed its sorrow on Twitter.

Maradona died two weeks after being released from a Buenos Aires hospital following brain surgery.

Famed for the "Hand of God" goal in which he punched the ball into England's net during the 1986 World Cup quarterfinals, Maradona captivated fans over a two-decade career with a bewitching style of play that was all his own.

Although his reputation was tarnished by his addictions and an ill-fated spell in charge of the national team, he remained idolized in football-mad Argentina as the "Pibe de Oro" or "Golden Boy."

The No 10 he wore on his jersey became synonymous with him, as it also had with Pele, the Brazilian great with whom Maradona was regularly paired as the best of all time.

Bold, fast and utterly unpredictable, Maradona was a master of attack, juggling the ball easily from one foot to the other as he raced upfield. Dodging and weaving with his low center of gravity, he shrugged off countless rivals and often scored with a devastating left foot, his most powerful weapon.

"Everything he was thinking in his head, he made it happen with his feet," said Salvatore Bagni, who played with Maradona at Italian club Napoli.



In this June 29, 1986 file photo, Diego Maradona holds up FIFA World Cup trophy after Argentina's 3-2 victory over West Germany in the final match at Atzeza Stadium in Mexico City

AP

A ballooning waistline slowed Maradona's explosive speed later in his career and by 1991 he was snared in his first doping scandal when he admitted to a cocaine habit that haunted him until he retired in 1997, at 37.

Hospitalized near death in 2000 and again in '04 for heart problems blamed on cocaine, he later said he overcame the drug problem. Cocaine, he once said famously, had proven to be his "toughest rival."

But more health problems followed, despite a 2005 gastric bypass that greatly trimmed his weight. Maradona was hospitalized in early 2007 for acute hepatitis that his doctor blamed on excessive drinking and eating.

He made an unlikely return to the national team in 2008 when he was appointed Argentina coach, but after a quarterfinal exit at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, he was ousted — ultimately picking up another coaching job with the United Arab Emirates club Al Wasl.

Maradona was the fifth of eight children who grew up in a poor, gritty barrio on the Buenos Aires outskirts where he played a kind of dirt-patch football that launched many Argentines to international stardom.

None of them approached Maradona's fame. In 2001, FIFA named Maradona one of the two greatest in the sport's history,

alongside Pele.

"Maradona inspires us," said then-Argentina striker Carlos Tevez, explaining his country's everyman fascination with Maradona at the 2006 World Cup in Germany. "He's our idol, and an idol for the people."

Maradona reaped titles at home and abroad, playing in the early 1980s for Argentinos Juniors and Boca Juniors before moving on to Spanish and Italian clubs. His crowning achievement came at the 1986 World Cup, captaining Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the final and decisive in a 2-1 victory against England in a feisty quarterfinal match.

Over the protests of England goalkeeper Peter Shilton, the referee let stand a goal by Maradona in which, as he admitted years later, he intentionally hit the ball with his hand in "a bit of mischief."

But Maradona's impact wouldn't be confined to cheating. Four minutes later, he spectacularly weaved past four opponents from midfield to beat Shilton for what FIFA later declared the greatest goal in World Cup history.

Many Argentines saw the match as revenge for their country's loss to Britain in the 1982 war over the Falkland Islands, which Argentines still claim as "Las Malvinas."



Sad news today. I have lost a dear friend, and the world has lost a legend. There is much more to say, but for now may God give his family strength. One day, I hope, we will play soccer together in the sky.

Brazilian football icon Pele hoped he would "some day play ball with Maradona in the sky" as he paid tribute to Diego Maradona after his death

birds. And this was our revenge. It was something bigger than us: We were defending our flag.

It also was vindication for Maradona, who in what he later called "the greatest tragedy" of his career was cut from the squad of the 1978 World Cup — which Argentina won at home — because he was only 17.

Maradona said he was given a football ball soon after he could run.

"I was 3 years old and I slept hugging that ball all night," he said.

At 10, Maradona gained fame by performing at halftime of professional matches, wowing crowds by keeping the ball airborne for minutes with his feet, chest and head. He also made his playing debut with the Argentinos Juniors youth team, leading a squad of mostly 14-year-olds through 136 unbeaten matches.

"To see him play was pure bliss, true stardom," teammate Carlos Beltran said.

Maradona played from 1976-81 for first division club Argentinos Juniors, then went to Boca Juniors for a year before heading to Barcelona for a world-record \$8 million.

In 1984, Barcelona sold him to Napoli, in Italy. He remade its fortunes almost single-handedly, taking it to the 1987 Italian league championship for its first title in 60 years.

A year after losing the 1990 World Cup



Footballers Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, BCCI President & former cricketer Sourav Ganguly paid tribute to Diego Maradona on social media after his death on Wednesday



Footballers Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, BCCI President & former cricketer Sourav Ganguly paid tribute to Diego Maradona on social media after his death on Wednesday



In this June 27, 2010 file photo, Argentina head coach Diego Maradona, left, gives instructions to Argentina's Lionel Messi during the World Cup round of 16 football match between Argentina and Mexico at Soccer City in Johannesburg



In this June 22, 1986 file photo, Argentina's Diego Maradona, left, beats England's goalkeeper Peter Shilton to a high ball and scores his first of two goals at the World Cup quarterfinal match in Mexico City. This was the day of the "Hand of God," when Maradona used his left fist to knock a ball past England's Shilton AP

Juve, Barca, Chelsea, Sevilla advance in CL

They are the first teams to make it out of the group stage, doing so with two games to spare

AFP ■ LONDON

Juventus, Chelsea and Sevilla all claimed last-gasp wins as they qualified for the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday, while Martin Braithwaite grabbed a double in Barcelona's 4-0 victory at Dynamo Kiev as they also secured a place in the knock-out rounds.

They are the first teams to make it out of the group stage, doing so with two games to spare, on a night which saw Erling Braut Haaland, Neymar, Cristiano Ronaldo and Bruno Fernandes all get among the goals.

There was no Lionel Messi for Barcelona, with the Argentine rested for the trip to Ukraine, but Ronald Koeman's side got the job done to make it four wins from four in Group G.

All the goals came in the second half, with Sergino Dest opening the scoring before Danish striker Braithwaite added another and then converted a penalty to make it 3-0.

On as a substitute, Antoine Griezmann wrapped up the win on the night young centre-back Oscar Mingueza, Brazilian midfielder Matheus Fernandes and teenage American winger Konrad de la

Fuente were all blooded in the first team.

"We've achieved our objective," said Koeman. "We looked hungry and scored four goals. Important players were able to rest and the youngsters deserved their minutes."

LATE STRIKES

Juventus injured Barcelona in qualifying from Group G but the Italian champions needed a stoppage-time header by substitute Alvaro Morata to beat Ferencváros 2-1 in Turin and seal their progress.

Albanian international Myrto Uzuni put the Hungarians ahead but Ronaldo drilled in the equaliser before half-time, meaning he has scored in 15 consecutive Champions League seasons.

Chelsea are through from Group E after edging Rennes 2-1 in France, with Olivier Giroud coming off the bench to head in an injury-time winner.

Serhou Guirassy had cancelled out Callum Hudson-Odoi's breakaway opener.

Last season's Europa League winners Sevilla will not get to defend their trophy as they advanced to the last



16 of Europe's elite club competition and did so with a 2-1 win over Krasnodar in Russia, in a rare game played before a sizeable crowd.

Sevilla and Chelsea are level on 10 points but Frank Lampard's side go to Spain next week, when the winner will secure top spot.

Manchester United are in pole position in Group H after a first-half

ing the line before David de Gea could claw it away.

Edin Visca crashed a shot off the bar, but Daniel James made sure of the victory on the counter-attack.

FRIGHTENING RECORD

Solskjaer's side are three points clear of both Paris Saint-Germain and RB Leipzig, after an early Neymar penalty gave the French side a 1-0 win over their German visitors.

PSG go to Old Trafford next week.

Borussia Dortmund need just one more point to qualify from Group F following a 3-0 win over Club Brugge as the prolific Haaland netted twice either side of a Jadon Sancho free-kick in Germany.

Haaland has 16 goals for the season, and has now scored 16 Champions League goals in just 12 appearances — Messi had two goals and Ronaldo none after the same number of appearances.

In the group's other game, Ciro Immobile was on target twice, including from a penalty, as Lazio beat Zenit Saint-Petersburg 3-1 in Rome, a result which eliminated the Russians. Marco Parolo also netted for Lazio, with Artem Dzyuba scoring for Zenit.



KL 'would love to keep' in next three WCs

PTI ■ SYDNEY



India's white-ball vice-captain KL Rahul on Wednesday said he would be happy to keep wickets in the next three global ICC events if given an opportunity even though the team management has not yet spoken to him about it.

Rahul has now pipped specialist wicketkeepers Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson as the No1 glovesman in the limited overs format. Three ICC events — two back-to-back T20 World Cups followed by the marquee ODI World Cup — are scheduled in the next three years.

The 28-year-old's keeping does provide the team the option of having an extra batsman or bowler.

"It helps the the team combination a little more and it's something I would love to do...If the opportunity presents itself and I can keep in three World Cups, I would love to do it for my country," Rahul said ahead of the limited-overs series against Australia starting November 27.

Has the team management spoken to him about keeping in ICC events?

"Nothing has been told to me and we are not thinking that far as a team. Obviously World Cups are important and that is a long-term vision for every team and country," he said.

"I think for me, we are just taking one game at a time. So if I put up consistent performances

with bat and gloves, it gives us an option of playing an extra bowler or an extra batter," said the stylish Karnataka batsman.

In the ODIs, Rahul has been batting at No 5 and has opened in the T20 Internationals, and he admitted that his position in the line-up will depend on formats.

"What the team wants from me and what combination sits better," said Rahul.

"Obviously, the last ODI series (against New Zealand) that we played, I batted at No 5, it's a role that I have enjoyed and (I am) happy to play whatever role the team gives me."

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's keeping was in a different league and the way he guided spinners went a long way in India's white-ball success.

Would he be able to chide a Kuldeep Yadav or Yuzvendra Chahal like Dhoni could, if he

takes upon a similar role?

"Look obviously, nobody can fill MS Dhoni's place. He has shown us the way and how wicketkeeper-batman role is performed.

"With Kuldeep, Yuzi (Yuzvendra Chahal) and Jaddu (Jadeja), we have a decent friendship and obviously I will go and give them a feedback as to what is a better length if they are doing something wrong and anybody in wicketkeeper's role will have that responsibility," he said.

Rahul loved the role of an ODI keeper against New Zealand and hopes to continue with the good work.

"I did one series in New Zealand and quite enjoyed it and hopefully I can be better at reading the game and give bowlers and captains some good feedback for the bowlers and the captain."