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LUCKNOW, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3



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VIRTUAL WORLD
HAS PROSPERED
POST-COVID: BIG B
12 VIVACITY

Trump sues as Biden nears finishing line

POTUS lays ground to contest election outcome, wins first legal battle in Pennsylvania

AP/PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democrat Joe Biden pushed closer on Thursday to the 270 Electoral College votes he needed to win the White House, securing victories in the “blue wall” battlegrounds of Wisconsin and Michigan and narrowing President Donald Trump’s path to reelection.

With just a handful of States still up for grabs, Trump tried to press his case in court in some key swing States. In spite of the aggressive Republican move, the flurry of court action did not seem obviously destined to impact the election’s outcome.

However, Trump scored the first legal battle in the battleground State of Pennsylvania wherein an appellate judge has ordered that poll watchers must be allowed within six feet of counting of votes.

“Big legal win in Pennsylvania,” Trump said in a tweet soon after the court gave the ruling.

Trump is currently leading in Pennsylvania, but his vote count has reduced considerably over the last one day.

Trump Campaign Manager Bill Stepien told



Democratic presidential candidate and former Vice-President Joe Biden takes off his face mask as he arrives to speak in Wilmington

AP

reporters during a conference call that the court ruling would allow them to review the counting that has already occurred as well. The Trump Campaign on Thursday filed a lawsuit in the battleground State of Nevada, alleging mass level electoral

malpractice.

Nevada is the fourth State where the Trump Campaign has filed a lawsuit. Trump, who has 214 votes so far, has filed lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan and demanded recounting of votes

in Wisconsin.

Two days after Election Day, neither candidate had amassed the votes needed to win the White House. But Biden’s victories in the Great Lakes States left him at 264, meaning he was one battle-

ground state away — any would do — from becoming President-elect.

Trump, with 214 electoral votes, faced a much higher hurdle. To reach 270, he needed to claim all four remaining battlegrounds: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada.

Trump’s campaign engaged in a flurry of legal activity to try to improve the Republican president’s chances and cast doubt on the election results, requesting a recount in Wisconsin and filing lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia. Statewide recounts in Wisconsin have historically changed the vote tally by only a few hundred votes; Biden led by more than 20,000 ballots out of nearly 3.3 million counted.

Biden had an edge nationally over Trump after victories in Wisconsin and Michigan, key Midwestern battleground states. Contests in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Nevada and North Carolina were tight with votes still being tabulated.

The Trump campaign said it was confident the President would ultimately pull out a victory in Arizona, where votes were also still being counted,

including in Maricopa County, the State’s most populous area.

With millions of votes yet to be tabulated, Biden already had received more than 71 million, the most in history. At an afternoon news conference Wednesday, the former vice president said he expected to win the presidency but stopped short of outright declaring victory. “I will govern as an American president,” Biden said. “There will be no red states and blue states when we win. Just the United States of America.”

Democrats scoffed at the legal challenges the President’s campaign filed on Wednesday in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia. And the flurry of court action did not seem obviously destined to affect the election’s outcome.

However weary Americans will have to wait for some more time to know the clear winner of the closely-fought election between Trump and Biden, as the final outcome hinged on a few states on Thursday where a flood of mail-in ballots triggered by the coronavirus pandemic were still being counted.

Continued on Page 11

State Govt announces bonus for employees

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a decision which will bring a big smile on the faces of the government employees, the Yogi Adityanath government has announced a Diwali gift for around 15 lakh state employees in the form of bonus which, the officials say, will increase spending in festival time.

The official said that the state government had announced a bonus for 30 days’ wages with a maximum of Rs 7,000.

According to official sources here on Thursday, 14,82,187 state employees, including state employees, teachers, employees of aided institutions and even daily waged workers, will be eligible for the bonus.

The state government will have to bear an additional financial burden of Rs 1,022.75 crore on bonus. However, the dearness allowance (DA) payment for the employees remains suspended till next year due to the huge expenses incurred on account of the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the benefited employees will get 25 percent of their bonus in cash before the festival and the rest 75 percent will be deposited in their provident fund.

Relief in mandi fee for farmers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major relief for farmers in the state, the Uttar Pradesh government has reduced the mandi fee to one per cent from two.

The announcement was made by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on his official twitter handle on Thursday.

However, the 0.5 percent development fee will continue and, hence, the farmers will now have to pay 1.5 percent mandi fee in place of 2.5 percent for trading inside the mandi premises.

The decision is being considered as a Diwali gift to lakhs of farmers and agri organisations of the state.

In order to provide relief to farmers during Covid lockdown, as many as 45 fruits and vegetables were exempted from mandi fee in May last. Now, the usage fee on these items has been halved. In June, the Centre had segregated mandi area into mandi premises and trade area and the jurisdiction of mandi samitis was limited.

CAPSULE

JHARKHAND WITHDRAWS CONSENT FOR CBI PROBE

New Delhi: The Jharkhand Government on Thursday revoked its general consent to the CBI to carry out any investigation in the State. Jharkhand is the latest State to withdraw the general consent to the CBI to probe cases.

75% QUOTA IN PVT JOBS FOR LOCALS IN HARYANA

Chandigarh: The Haryana Assembly on Thursday passed a bill to give 75 per cent reservation in the private sector to job seekers from the State, fulfilling an election promise made by ruling alliance partner Jannayak Janta Party.

GOVT SCIENTIST: INDIAN VACCINE LIKELY BY FEB

New Delhi: An Indian Government-backed Covid-19 vaccine could be launched as early as February — months earlier than expected — as last-stage trials begin this month and studies have so far shown it is safe and effective, a senior Government scientist said.

AMRAPALI DIRECTORS ARRESTED FOR CHEATING

New Delhi: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police has arrested the directors of Amrapali group in connection with two cases of cheating, an official said on Thursday.

Contesting my last poll, says Nitish at rally

Kumar’s detractors mock him, say it’s emotional drama to woo voters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday sprang a surprise by announcing at a poll rally in Purnia that he is contesting his last elections. This was Kumar’s last election rally for the third and final phase of the Assembly polls on November 7.

“Jan lijiye aaj chunav ka aakhri din hai aur parson chunav hai aur ye mera antim chunav hai. Ant bhalo, to sab bhalo (You should know that today is the last day of campaign and the day after is the election. And this is my last election. All’s well that ends well),” Kumar said.

At 69, Kumar could still have many years in politics going by the way his contemporaries have remained active in their late 70s and early 80s. Kumar is seeking a fourth straight term in office.

The crowds were stunned into silence for a few seconds, after which they erupted in applause for the 69-year-old leader who has ruled the state for nearly 15 years.

This is for the first time that the socialist warhorse, who has ruled the state for close



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar addresses a gathering during an election rally in Katihar on Thursday

PTI

to a decade and half, barring a few months when he made Jitan Ram Manjhi the chief minister to keep the seat warm for him, has apparently talked about quitting electoral politics.

Kumar detractors have mocked at his decision, saying this was an “emotional” drama to win back the voters. “Kumar never sticks to his words. If he could go back to BJP after vowing never to join hands with the saffron outfit, who will trust his today’s announcement,” said RJD leader Shivanand Tewari.

RJD chief and former Chief Minister Lalu Prasad, who is lodged in a Ranchi jail as fodder scam convict, tweeted a video clip of Kumar speaking

at Bihar Assembly elections in which he had declared he would never join hands with the BJP even if “mai mitti me mil jau.”

“How can anyone be so unprincipled, thoughtless and immoral in public life,” Lalu said.

“Nitish Kumar has realised that he has become tired...that he cannot handle Bihar. Today, he has understood the ground reality and decided to quit,” RJD leader and the chief ministerial candidate of the opposition Grand Alliance Tejashwi Yadav told reporters.

Chirag Paswan, the LJP chief, who led his party out of the NDA in Bihar just before

the election, contended Kumar’s comments at his rally on the last day of canvassing would have demoralised JD(U) candidates even further.

“I don’t know who advised him to make this statement at his last rally. When the leader runs away from the battleground, the contestants will definitely be demoralised,” Paswan said.

Some in the JD(U) said what Kumar meant was that it was his last public meeting of the election and not the last election of his political career. They, however, chose to be anonymous.

Premchandra Mishra, a Congress MLC and party spokesperson, said Kumar’s announcement was an acceptance of “impending defeat.”

“Nitish Kumar is tired and retired. A wave of change sweeps Bihar,” said Randeep Surjewala, while reacting to the development.

A fourth term victory in the polls will enable Kumar to surpass the record of Bihar’s first chief minister Shrikrishna Singh, who was at the helm for little under 15 years.

Kumar has been the chief minister since November, 2005.

Delhi’s air worst in 1 year, stubble burning share 42%

PM10 stands at 561 microgram, highest since Nov 15 last year

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The air quality in Delhi deteriorated further and reached the “severe” category on Thursday morning. The worsening of air quality has been attributed to stubble burning whose share has considerably increased to 42 per cent in Delhi’s pollution. This is maximum so far this season.

Meanwhile, PM10 levels stood at 561 microgram per cubic metre (g/m3) at 10 am, the highest since November 15 last year, when it was measured at 637 g/m3.

While the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) settled at 486, highest of the season, the farm fire incidents recorded by the NASA observatory on Wednesday night were 4,135.

According to scientists in Ministry of Earth Sciences, raging farm fires and a fall in the wind speed and temperature pushed air quality in



Vehicles ply amid hazy weather condition in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

Delhi-NCR to the worst in the past one year.

SAFAR said the farm fire count in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and neighbouring areas increased significantly. “The boundary layer wind direction is northwesterly favourable for the transport of pollutants from farm fires,” it said.

“The share of stubble burning in Delhi’s PM2.5 pollution was estimated at 42 per cent for Thursday,” it said.

In weekly trend, stubble burning accounted for five per

cent of Delhi’s pollution on Wednesday, 10 per cent on Tuesday, 16 per cent on Monday and 40 per cent on Sunday.

However, the stubble contribution to Delhi’s pollution had peaked to 44 per cent on November 1, according to SAFAR data. NASA’s satellite imagery showed a large, dense cluster of fire dots in Punjab and parts of Haryana and UP. SAFAR predicted conducive conditions for dispersion of pollutants in the next two days.

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India slams handing over Kartarpur Sahib upkeep to non-Sikh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking strong exception to a decision to transfer Gurdwara Kartarpur to a non-Sikh body, India on Thursday protested to Pakistan terming the move as “unilateral and condemnable.”

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said here, “We have seen reports about Pakistan transferring the management and maintenance of the Holy Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib away from the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (PSGPC), a body run by the minority Sikh Community, to the administrative control of the Evacuee Trust Property Board, a non-Sikh body. This unilateral decision by Pakistan is highly condemnable and runs against the spirit of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor as also the religious sentiments of the Sikh community at large. We have

received representations from the Sikh community expressing grave concern at this decision by Pakistan targeting the rights of the minority Sikh community in Pakistan. Such actions only expose the reality of the Pakistani Government and its leadership’s tall claims of preserving and protecting the rights and welfare of the religious minority communities. Pakistan is called upon to reverse its arbitrary decision to deprive the Sikh minority community its right to manage affairs of the Holy Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib.”

Reports indicated as per a notification issued on November 3, Pakistan’s Religious Affairs Ministry handed over the management of Durbur Sahib Gurdwara to a “project management unit” under the Evacuee Trust Property Board, a department that oversees the shrines of the country’s minorities.

Continued on Page 11

China bans entry of travellers from India on rising Covid concerns

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

China has decided to temporarily suspend the entry of foreign nationals holding valid Chinese visas or residence permits to the country from India due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Chinese embassy here said foreigners holding Chinese diplomatic, service, courtesy and C visas will not be affected by the decision.

The decision comes after almost 20 passengers of an Air India Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) Delhi-Wuhan flight of October 30 tested positive on arrival last Friday. A proposed VBM flight for November 6 was rescheduled as China held back clearances on flights from India. Air India had planned four flights to China between November 13 and December 4 which could now be impacted.

“The entry into China with visas issued after November 3 is not affected,” Chinese Embassy in India said, adding the suspension is a temporary measurement.

Continued on Page 11

Centre notifies guidelines to reopen universities, colleges

Central university VCs, State Govts to take final call

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday notified a set of guidelines for the reopening of universities and colleges closed since March in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For Central universities and other Centrally funded higher education institutions, the decision for reopening of campuses has been left to the Vice Chancellors and heads of the institutions.

However, for State universities and colleges, the respective State Governments will have to take a call as per the fresh set of guidelines notified by the Education Ministry issued through the university regulator University Grants Commission (UGC).

As per the new guidelines, universities and colleges out-



side the containment zone can be opened in a sequential manner after consultation with the respective State/UT Governments. UGC has suggested six-day weeks, smaller class-sizes to enable social distancing, however, teaching hours in a day may be extended, as per the institution’s requirements.

“Six-day schedule may be followed so that classes can be conducted in phases and the seating arrangement be made keeping in view the requirements of physical distancing. Universities and colleges may consider reducing the class size and break them in multiple sections to maintain phys-

ical distancing during the classes,” and Education Ministry official said.

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank announced that the colleges and universities will reopen as per the UGC guidelines issued in consultation with the Home, Health and Education Ministries. “It is a request to all educational institutions, students, parents and all those associated with the education world to ensure compliance of these guidelines for the survival and bright future of themselves and others,” Pokhriyal tweeted on the new SOP.

Continued on Page 11

BAN USE OF DISINFECTANTS, UV RAYS ON HUMANS: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre to issue directions within a month on banning or regulating the use of disinfection tunnels spraying chemical or organic disinfectants on humans. Similar directions may be issued on exposure of humans to artificial ultraviolet rays, the apex court said, observing that the Covid-19 pandemic has “threatened the health of entire citizenry” and all facets relating to its prevention and cure be dealt with by the authorities empowered under different statutes.

Museums, galleries, expos from Nov 10

Culture Ministry issues guidelines for preventive Covid measures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After cinema halls, monuments and gyms, now the museums, art galleries and exhibitions are all set to be reopened from November 10. They have been closed since March 17.

The Culture Ministry on Thursday issued guidelines for

preventive measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 in these public places.

“Other similar institutions can be reopened as per convenience and in tune with relevant State, city or local laws, rules and regulations/unlock guidelines in force,” said the Ministry in a statement.

These guidelines contain standard operating procedure (SOPs) to be followed by the management of museums, art galleries and exhibitions (both temporary and permanent), as well as the visitors to these spaces, the Ministry said.

“Comprehensive guidelines have been issued for adequate cleaning, purchase of tickets and for ensuring safety of visitors and staff at museums, exhibitions and art galleries,” the Ministry said.

The Ministry has also clarified that no museums and/or art galleries shall re-open inside containment zones, and State/UT Governments may consider proposing additional measures as per their field assessment.

GRADUATE, TEACHERS CONSTITUENCIES

Notifications issued for Council polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Notification for the much-awaited biennial elections to 11 Legislative Council seats from graduate and teachers constituencies was issued in Lucknow on Thursday.

The polling for these seats will be held on December 1.

The elections to these seats have been delayed by six months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

These seats fell vacant on May 6 after the end of the

tenure of five graduate members and six teachers' constituency members.

As per the schedule, the last date for filing of nominations will be November 12 while scrutiny of papers will be done on November 13 and the last date for withdrawal of nomination will be November 17. Polling will be held between 8 am and 5 pm on December 1 and counting of votes will be taken up on December 3.

The seats where the polls

will be held are Lucknow, Varanasi, Agra, Meerut and Allahabad-Jhansi divisions of graduate constituencies, and Lucknow, Varanasi, Agra, Meerut, Bareilly-Moradabad and Gorakhpur-Faizabad divisions of teachers constituencies. Meanwhile, Congress and Samajwadi Party announced some candidates for the elections to the Upper House of UP Legislature.

The candidates announced by Samajwadi Party include Dr Aseem (Agra), Samshad Ali

(Meerut), Ram Singh Rana (Lucknow), Ashutosh Sinha (Varanasi) and Dr Maan Singh (Allahabad- Jhansi) for the graduates seats and Umashanker Choudhury Patel (Lucknow), Lal Bihari (Varanasi), Sanjay Kumar Mishra (Bareilly- Moradabad), Dharmendra Kumar (Meerut), Harendra Chaudhary (Agra) and Awadhesh (Gorakhpur-Faizabad) for teachers constituencies.

Candidates announced by the Congress include Rajesh

Dwivedi (Agra graduate constituency), Jitendra Kumar (teachers, Meerut), Ajay Kumar Singh (Allahabad-Jhansi graduate), Brajesh Kumar Singh (graduate, Lucknow), Sanjeev Singh (Varanasi, graduate), Nagendra Dutt Tripathi (Gorakhpur-Faizabad teachers) and Dr Mehndi Hassan (Bareilly-Moradabad teachers).

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party are yet to announce their candidates.

Rural health service to be upgraded

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to provide the best health care to the people in rural areas of the state, the Yogi Adityanath government has thrashed out an ambitious people-centric scheme under which the rural health sub-centres will be upgraded.

"People living in the countryside will not have to run to big health centres any more as the state government plans to bring treatment for typhoid, malaria and tuberculosis to health sub-centres in villages," a senior official said.

Under this scheme, health and

wellness centres will be set up at these sub-centres at a cost of Rs 7 crore. In the first phase, 97 such health and wellness centres will be opened in Lucknow. Each centre will be allocated a sum of Rs 7 lakh and the facility will be extended across the state in the second and third phases.

The sub-centres will have facilities to diagnose 12 types of non-communicable diseases and the patients will be treated there.

Chief Medical Officer of Lucknow, Dr Sanjay Bhatnagar, said that ailments like blood pressure, diabetes, TB, measles, leprosy, malaria,

heart, typhoid and others would be initially diagnosed at these centres and the patients could be referred to specialists later.

"Till now, an ANM (Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife) used to sit at health sub-centres but now community health officers (CHOs) will be appointed there," he said.

After a six-month training at institutes like King George's Medical University, staff nurses will be appointed as CHOs and will be paid salaries from the National Health Mission funds. The CHOs will apprise villagers of life style diseases and ways to check and control them.

14 anti-CAA, NRC protesters declared absconders

Lucknow(PNS): Declaring them absconding criminals, the Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday announced cash rewards on the arrest of anti-CAA, NRC protesters and posters of 14 of them, including Mohammad Saif, have been put up at various locations in Lucknow.

It may be mentioned here that eight of the protesters were declared wanted under Gangsters Act and notices were also pasted outside their houses. They are charged with arson, spreading communal disharmony and causing damage to public properties.

Cases in Covid-19 hotbeds come down

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The areas in Lucknow which had virtually turned into coronavirus hotbeds now have less than 30 patients each. A senior official at the CMO office said five such areas — Indiranagar, Gontinagar, Aliganj, Chinhat and Sarojininagar — have cases reduced to between 26 and 28.

He further said that among different age groups, those testing positive are aged between 21 and 50 years, forming around 60 per cent of the cases. "This is because of no lockdown and people stepping out more frequently," he added.

Foreign consultants to identify export potential of UP dists

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to make each district an export hub, the Uttar Pradesh government has charted out a plan and engaged companies like Ernst and Young and PriceWaterhouseCoopers to identify export potentials of each district.

Once the exercise is over, the UP Export Promotion Bureau (UPEPB) will undertake skill development programmes to make identified products competitive in price and quality in line with global markets. The government also has plans to bring up special economic zones (SEZs) and export parks in future in districts with the maximum potential. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, most countries have lost interest in continuing businesses in China and have been looking for other options. With its new export policy, the UP government is trying to encash the opportunity and has started a process to identify products most exported from China to other countries.

The current export levels of UP, key competitors in the global market and possible strategies to meet existing competition will also be included in the new Export Policy. Other than exports, the new policy will also focus on the service sector. For this, nursing, education, AYUSH and wellness, tourism and hospital-ity have been considered as potential sectors and the UPEPB will be conducting skill development programmes with the departments concerned.

Unable to pray on Karwa Chauth, woman suffering jumps to death

Lucknow (PNS): Piqued at being hospitalised and unable to pray for the long life of her husband on Karwa Chauth, a woman suffering from COVID-19 jumped to death from the third floor of Saifai Medical University hospital in Etawah district on Wednesday evening.

In Meerut, a man hanged himself to death after a tiff with his wife on Karwa Chauth while another woman ended her life while observing fast on Wednesday.

In Etawah, a coronavirus positive woman from Mainpuri was admitted to Saifai Medical University hospital for treatment on Wednesday and kept in the isolation ward.

She was initially admitted for a neurological ailment on October 27 but tested positive for COVID-19 on October 29 after which she was shifted to Isolation Ward 5 on the third floor. On Wednesday evening, while some other women patients prayed on Karwa Chauth, the woman suddenly jumped from the third floor of the Covid facility and died on the spot. Additional Medical Superintendent Anil Aeri confirmed the woman's death and said that the reason for her suicide was being probed.

In Meerut, a woman observing fast for the long life of her husband on Karwa Chauth lost her husband as he ended his life in Nai Basti area on Wednesday. It surfaced that Vinod Kumar had a fight with his wife after which he hanged himself to death at their house.

The couple has two children. The police said that the couple used to regularly fight and the man was ostensibly upset over it.

In another incident in Meerut, Kanchan (29) ended her life by jumping off a building on Karwa Chauth after being tired of abuses by her husband. The victim's father alleged that her husband, a painter, used to routinely assault her.

In Ambedkarnagar, Manoj Verma (38) of Gopalaipur Belahi in Sultanpur was posted as junior engineer at Akbarpur power sub-station. As Manoj left office and headed home, a speeding Bolero knocked him down, killing him on the spot.

In Baghat, Lokendra (42) of Kasimpur Khedi was heading to Ramala Cooperative Sugar Mill to join duty when a speeding bus hit his motorcycle on Wednesday noon. He was taken to hospital only to be pronounced dead.

CITYBRIEFS

NEXT GEN CREDIT CARDS

SBI Card, India's largest pure play credit card issuer, and Paytm have joined hands to launch next generation credit cards. Available in two variants, Paytm SBI Card and Paytm SBI Card SELECT, the product has been launched on the Visa platform. Paytm SBI Card variants reimagine the credit card experience by enabling smart app features and providing superior rewards & benefits for users. This launch is in line with SBI Card's endeavour to offer customers tailored products which bring maximum value in line with spending needs and to encourage digital forms of payments for a safe and enhanced customer experience. Paytm SBI Cardholder will be empowered to control their cards through smart one-tap features available on both SBI Card mobile app & Paytm app.

SYMPOSIUM

A 3-day international research symposium was inaugurated at AKTU on Thursday. The symposium is being organised jointly by Centre for Advanced Studies, AKTU, Sri Mata Vaishno Devi University (J&K) and SRM University (Tamil Nadu) on 'Impact of tribology on society'. Vice-chancellors of all three universities attended the inaugural session. The symposium is recognised worldwide by Tribology Society of India, Malaysian Tribology Society and International Council for Tribology.

POORVANCHAL PREMIERE LEAGUE

Poorvanchal Premiere League is organising the 2nd Poorvanchal Premiere T20 Cricket League from December 6 at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium. Final will be played on December 13.

Ex-pradhan, son killed over political rivalry

Lucknow (PNS): A former gram pradhan (village head) and one of his sons were killed while another son was seriously injured after their political rivals opened fire on them in Hamirpur on Tuesday night.

As per reports, former gram pradhan Prithviraj Yadav (53) was returning home from his fields on a motorcycle with his sons Jitendra Yadav (26) and Virendra Yadav ((24) late Tuesday night. Midway, they were intercepted by a political rival, Ram Sevak Rajput, and his sons of the same village. After hurling abuses at Yadav for daring to campaign in the village, Ram Sevak and his sons opened indiscriminate fire, critically injuring Prithviraj and his sons. Taking all three as dead, the assailants slipped away from the area. In the wee hours of Wednesday, some locals spotted the three lying in pools of blood bodies and rushed them to the district hospital where Prithviraj and his elder son, Jitendra, were

pronounced dead. The younger son, Virendra, is battling for his life. It surfaced that the Yadavs and Rajputs had a long-standing political rivalry.

Additional police force was

deployed in the village as a precautionary measure and a case was registered against Ram Sevak Rajput and his sons, Sanjay and Kapil, and efforts were on to nab them.

SBC EXPORTS LIMITED
(CIN: U18100UP2011PLC043209)
Regd. Off: House No.-20, Lohiya Talab, Choti Basahi
P.O.: Vindhyaschal Mirzapur Up 231307 In
Email-Id: info@sbcsl.com; Website: www.sbcexportslimited.com

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be scheduled to held on **Friday, 13th November, 2020 at 5.00 P.M** at the Corporate office of the Company i.e. 49/95 Site-IV Sahibabad Industrial Area Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 to transact, inter-alia, consider and approve the Un-audited Financial Results of the Company for half year and year ended September 30, 2020 or any other matter with permission of the chairman.

By the order of Board
For **SBC Exports Limited**
Sd/-
Harim Sharma
Company Secretary

Place: Sahibabad
Date : 05.11.2020

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RAJENDRA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
RANCHI - 834009, JHARKHAND
Short E-Tender notice no. RIMS/Medicine Store/01/4314 dated 05.11.2020 (For Covid-19 Patient)

A Important dated for tender	
1. Date of uploading of tender document on website.	05/11/2020 (The intending bidder may visit RIMS website : www.rimsranchi.org & also on NIC website : www.jharkhandtender.gov.in)
2. Date of Start for submission of E-tender	06/11/20 from 3:00 P.M
3. Last date/Closing date of submission of e-tender	On 23/11/20 till 4:30 P.M
4. Cost of e-Bid/ Tender fees (Non refundable)	Rs.5000.00 inclusive of GST @18% (Rs.five Thousand and only) Payable by NEFT/RTGS in favour of "Director, RIMS A/C ", Payable in A/C No- 31653767533 of State Bank of India, RMCC Bariatu Ranchi (Jharkhand) IFSC code: SBIN0001672 Note:- Govt.firms are not required Tender fees Rs. 5000.00
Cost of EMD (Refundable)	Rs. 100000 inclusive of GST 18% (Rs. One Lakh only) Payable by NEFT/RTGS in favour of "Director, RIMS A/C ", Payable in A/C No- 10042745576 of State Bank of India, RMCC Bariatu Ranchi (Jharkhand) IFSC code: SBIN0001672 The details of Receipt/ Proof of The online submission of EMD must be attached along with the Technical Bid.
5 Online opening of technical bid	24/11/20 at 12:00 P.M.

Note :
1. For details of tender terms, conditions please visit RIMS website : www.rimsranchi.org or www.jharkhandtender.gov.in from the dated mentioned above.
2. In case of any of the above last date, if announced government holiday, the tender process will continue on the very next working day on the same time and venue.

Sd/- Director
Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION
1, NAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES, PRAYAGRAJ-211001

Tender No.: ELCORE-OHE-TSS-GR-270 Mod
E-TENDER NOTICE
Closing Date/Time: 16.12.2020, 15:00

CAO/RE acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. **ELCORE-OHE-TSS-GR-270 Mod, Closing Date/Time 16.12.2020, 15:00 Hrs.** Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only **through only Payment modes available on IREPS** portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

1. NIT HEADER

Name of Work	"Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV, 50 Hz, Single Phase, AC, Electrification including OHE & TSS as Composite Electrical Work" in Kollam (Excl.) - Punalur (Incl.) Section Gr. 270 of Madurai Division of Southern Railway under RE Project Chennai, Total 44 RKM / 50 TKM.		
Bidding Type	Normal Tender		
Tender Type	Open	Bidding System	Two Packet System
Tender Closing Date, Time	16.12.2020, 15:00	Date, Time of Uploading Tender	04.11.2020, 18:04
Pre-Bid Conference Required	No	Pre-Bid Conference Date Time	Not Applicable
Advertised Value (Rs.)	₹ 160908232.95	Tendering Section	OHE
Bidding Style	Single Rate for Each Schedule Item.	Bidding Unit	
Earnest Money/Bid Security(Rs.)	₹ 954600.00	Validity of Offer (Days)	60
Tender Doc. Cost (Rs.)	₹ 0.00	Period of Completion	12 Months
Contract Type	Works	Contract Category	Expenditure
Bidding Start Date	02.12.2020	Are Joint Venture (JV) Firms allowed to bid	Yes
Ranking Order for Bids	Lowest to Highest	Expenditure Type	Capital (Works)

PR/575/2020/ANU **"Serving Customers with a Smile"** **website: www.ireps.gov.in**

केन्द्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड
CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
PUBLIC NOTICE

The 14th edition of Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) which was scheduled to be held on 05.07.2020 (Sunday) in 112 cities all over the country and postponed due to administrative reasons, the said examination will now be held on **31.01.2021 (SUNDAY)**. To maintain social distance and other safety measures, the said examination will now be conducted in **135 cities**. The new examination cities are Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Begusarai, Gopalganj, Purnia, Rohtas, Saharsa, Saran, Bhilai / Durg, Bilaspur, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur, Ludhiana, Ambedkar Nagar, Bijnor, Bulanshahar, Deoria, Gonda, Mainpuri Pratapgarh, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur and Udhm Singh Nagar. A list of such identified cities is available on CTET website www.ctet.nic.in. A large number of requests have been received from the candidates for change of option for their examination city as they have shifted their place due to COVID-19.

Keeping in view the difficulty faced by candidates due to COVID-19, the Central Board of Secondary Education has decided to give one time chance to the candidates for corrections in their option of city from which they want to appear in the CTET examination. The candidates who wish to change their examination city can make on-line corrections from 07-11-2020 to 16-11-2020 upto 11.59 P.M. **Every effort will be made to accommodate the candidates in the cities opted by them but if the situation arises, they can be allotted any city other than the four cities opted by the candidates.** All the registered candidates may also visit CTET website www.ctet.nic.in for further details, if any.

DIRECTOR (CTET) & SECRETARY, CBSE

केन्द्रीय अध्यापक पात्रता परीक्षा एकक, पी0एस0 1-2 इन्स्टीट्यूशनल एरिया, आई0 पी0 एक्सटेंशन, पटपड़गंज, दिल्ली-110092
CTET Unit, PS, 1-2 institutional Area, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092
फोन/Telephone: +91-11-22235774, 22247154, 22247176, वेबसाइट Website: www.ctet.nic.in
davp 21107 / 11 / 0005 / 2021

Woman found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 26-year old woman was found hanging in Chinhat early morning on Thursday. The bereaved family told police that she committed suicide. The police got a memo from RMLIMS around 5:40 am on Thursday about the death of a woman, identified as Santosh of Shivpuri Colony in Chinhat. It was stated in the memo that the woman was brought dead to the hospital. A team left for the hospital and contacted deceased's husband Shailendra. He told the police that Santosh was staying with him at her parents' house in the locality. Shailendra further said that Santosh was found hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around her neck.

Shailendra works as a broker and the couple had no issue from marriage. Meanwhile, a 28-year-old woman was found hanging at her house in Jankipuram police station area on Thursday. She was identified as Arti Kashyap of Godianpurwa locality. She was spotted hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around her neck around 6 am and was taken to hospital where she was declared brought dead. Police said her husband works with a company in Mumbai. They got married ten years ago and had two children.

In another incident, a 35-year-old man was found dead in Sarojininagar on Wednesday night. Police said the man was killed in a road mishap and further investigation was underway. The victim was identified as Dharendra Srivastava of Secretariat Colony in Motijeel locality under Bazaarkhala police station area. He worked as a cashier in a private company and was unmarried. The police said Dharendra met the mishap near Green Belly School in Daroga Khara locality (Sarojininagar) around 7:30 pm on Wednesday and was rushed to the CHC where doctors declared him dead. The police worked on the case and ascertained the identity of the deceased. According to police, deceased's brother Virendra Srivastava identified the body which was sent for autopsy.

Fraudsters duping people for jobs land in STF net

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Six persons were arrested by STF on Wednesday for defrauding innocents in the name of providing them jobs in different departments of UP government. The arrests were made in Vipul Khand locality on Wednesday.

The accused were identified as Siddhnath Sah, Vikas Prasad aka Romi (both of Talkatora), Dheeraj Kumar Mishra of PGI, Jitendra Kumar Singh of Chinhat, Doodhnath Kushwaha of Krishnanagar and Rakesh Kumar Tripathi of Vinit Khand locality in Gomtinagar. The STF team recovered a laptop, nine mobile phones, five ATM cards, 45 CVs of job-seekers, Rs 4.71 lakh in cash and two luxury cars besides some documents. The police said the accused took Rs one lakh to Rs 15 lakh depending on posts and departments from gullible job-seekers. They also used to take money for contractual jobs in different departments.

The arrests came in pursuance of a case of fraud which was lodged at Gomtinagar police station by Vishal Prajapati of Rajajipuram in Talkatora. Vishal had accused Siddhnath and other accused of having taken money from him and his friends for jobs in Secretariat and Ayodhya Nagar Nigam.

Case against man impersonating as OSD to CM

Lucknow (PNS): A case was registered against an unidentified miscreant who called on the headline number of the chief minister's official residence in Gautampalli police station area impersonating as officer on special duty (OSD) to the CM on November 1. The case was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Ram Veer Singh, who is deployed at Golf Club crossing. In his complaint, Singh stated that he got a call around 9 pm from the office incharge of CM's residence and was told that a person, who introduced himself as OSD to CM and sought to talk to the chief minister. When OSD Dharmendra was contacted, he denied having made any such call. He also denied having the number which flashed on phone screen. The complainant said the impersonator tried to commit a fraud by impersonating the OSD.

Lucknow (PNS): The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Lucknow on Thursday was marked at 349, which is the very poor category and can cause respiratory illness on prolonged exposure.

The smog which enveloped the

Lucknow's air quality in very poor category

city in the morning continued till late evening. MeT office director JP Gupta said it was a thick smog cover and not clouds unlike what people might have thought. According to

environmental experts, weather has a great role to play in pollution as particles are not dissipating like in hot weather conditions when the air rises.

IITR director Alok Dhawan said that under these weather conditions, the pollutants remain the same but they settle down. "Unfortunately, we did not have

rains at all in September. We usually see a lot of rains in September and October which help in the mitigation of pollution. Besides, vehicles are also out in full strength and with these weather conditions, the pollution is bound to increase," he

said. Apart from Lucknow, other UP districts which also recorded a high AQI included Baghpat (464), Greater Noida (457), Hapur (442), Meerut (453), Moradabad (489), Muzaffarnagar (439) and Noida (450).

FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2020						
In order to clear extra rush of passengers during Deepawali and Chhath Puja Festivals, Northern Railway has planned to run the following Festival Special Trains as per schedule given below:-						
Passengers are requested to note that all these Festival Special Trains will have reserved accommodation only. Passengers are therefore requested to get their accommodation (berths/seats) booked beforehand. Passengers having reserved tickets will only be allowed to enter the platform to board the train.						
LIST OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS ORIGINATING/TERMINATING IN NORTHERN RAILWAY						
Spl. Train No.	Station From	Dept. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Frequency / Day	Period
04998	Bathinda	20:50	Varanasi Junction	16:30	SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04997	Varanasi Junction	21:20	Bathinda	16:50	MON	Up to 30.11.20
04612	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	23:30	Varanasi Junction	23:35	SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04611	Varanasi Junction	06:35	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	06:50	TUE	Up to 01.12.20
04422	Anand Vihar Terminal	20:20	Lucknow	04:20	WED, FRI, SUN	10.11.20 to 29.11.20
04421	Lucknow	21:20	Anand Vihar Terminal	05:45	MON, THU, SAT,	09.11.20 to 25.11.20
04924	Chandigarh	23:15	Gorakhpur	16:00	THU	Up to 26.11.20
04923	Gorakhpur	22:10	Chandigarh	14:15	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04090	Anand Vihar Terminal	16:55	Bhagalpur	11:00	MON, WED, FRI	Up to 30.11.20
04089	Bhagalpur	13:30	Anand Vihar Terminal	08:20	TUE, THU, SAT	Up to 01.12.20
04012	Anand Vihar Terminal	07:30	Jogbani	08:30	TUE, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04011	Jogbani	20:00	Anand Vihar Terminal	21:00	WED, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
02237	Varanasi Junction	12:40	Jammu Tawi	11:05	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02238	Jammu Tawi	14:00	Varanasi Junction	12:30		Up to 01.12.20
02231	Lucknow	22:25	Chandigarh	10:05	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02232	Chandigarh	21:05	Lucknow	08:30		Up to 01.12.20
04092	New Delhi	09:20	Jaynagar	11:15	WED, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04091	Jaynagar	15:30	New Delhi	19:30	THU, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04030	Delhi Junction	13:45	Muzaffarpur Junction	08:00	WED, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04029	Muzaffarpur Junction	15:30	Delhi Junction	10:30	THU, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04624	Amritsar Junction	05:45	Saharsa Junction	10:30	WED, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04623	Saharsa Junction	14:30	Amritsar Junction	19:45	THU, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04656	Firozpur Cantt	19:00	Patna Junction	21:25	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04655	Patna Junction	23:25	Firozpur Cantt	23:55	SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04084	Delhi Junction	23:00	Katihar Junction	22:00	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04083	Katihar Junction	23:50	Delhi Junction	22:50	SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04401	New Delhi	23:50	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	11:35	MON, THU	09.11.20 to 30.11.20
04402	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	23:30	New Delhi	11:15	TUE, FRI	10.11.20 to 01.12.20
04418	H. Nizamuddin	21:35	Pune	21:25	TUE	Up to 24.11.20
04417	Pune	05:15	H. Nizamuddin	05:35	THU	Up to 26.11.20
02422	Jammu Tawi	18:10	Ajmer Junction	12:20	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02421	Ajmer Junction	14:05	Jammu Tawi	08:15		Up to 01.12.20
04041	Delhi Junction	22:25	Dehradun	08:25	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
04042	Dehradun	21:20	Delhi Junction	07:25		Up to 01.12.20
02448	H. Nizamuddin	20:10	Manikpur Junction	08:45	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02447	Manikpur Junction	17:05	H. Nizamuddin	05:25		Up to 01.12.20
04515	Kalka	12:10	Shimla	17:20	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
04516	Shimla	10:40	Kalka	16:10		Up to 01.12.20
04854	Jodhpur Junction	09:10	Varanasi Junction	10:30	MON, THU, SAT	Up to 30.11.20
04853	Varanasi Junction	17:15	Jodhpur Junction	18:50	MON, WED, SAT	Up to 30.11.20
04864	Jodhpur Junction	09:10	Varanasi Junction	08:45	TUE, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04863	Varanasi Junction	18:15	Jodhpur Junction	18:50	TUE, FRI, SUN	Up to 01.12.20
04866	Jodhpur Junction	09:10	Varanasi Junction	08:50	WED	Up to 25.11.20
04865	Varanasi Junction	18:15	Jodhpur Junction	18:50	THU	Up to 26.11.20
05115	Chhapra	11:15	Delhi Junction	11:20	SAT	Up to 28.11.20
05116	Delhi Junction	14:00	Chhapra	13:20	SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02581	Manduadih	22:30	New Delhi	12:15	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02582	New Delhi	22:35	Manduadih	11:10		Up to 01.12.20
06229	Mysore Junction	07:20	Varanasi Junction	12:00	TUE, THU	Up to 26.11.20
06230	Varanasi Junction	21:05	Mysore Junction	02:35	THU, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
07323	Hubballi Junction	17:50	Varanasi Junction	12:00	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
07324	Varanasi Junction	21:05	Hubballi Junction	13:00	SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02587	Gorakhpur	14:20	Jammu Tawi	13:10	MON	Up to 23.11.20
02588	Jammu Tawi	22:45	Gorakhpur	20:30	SAT	Upto 28.11.20
05097	Bhagalpur	23:50	Jammu Tawi	13:10	THU	Upto 26.11.20
05098	Jammu Tawi	22:45	Bhagalpur	10:15	TUE	Up to 24.11.20
05251	Darbhanga Junction	03:25	Jalandhar City	05:10	SAT	Up to 28.11.20
05252	Jalandhar City	09:50	Darbhanga Junction	11:35	SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02397	Gaya	14:15	New Delhi	04:30	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02398	New Delhi	12:10	Gaya	03:20		Up to 01.12.20
03255	Patliputra	20:35	Chandigarh	17:35	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
03256	Chandigarh	21:30	Patliputra	18:50	MON, THU	Up to 30.11.20
02355	Patna Junction	07:25	Jammu Tawi	10:37	TUE, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
02356	Jammu Tawi	17:45	Patna Junction	20:55	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02595	Gorakhpur	20:00	Anand Vihar Terminal	08:50	MON, TUE, THU	Up to 30.11.20
02596	Anand Vihar Terminal	20:00	Gorakhpur	07:50	TUE, WED, FRI	Up to 01.12.20
02331	Howrah Junction	23:55	Jammu Tawi	13:10	TUE, FRI, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
02332	Jammu Tawi	22:45	Howrah Junction	11:30	MON, THU, SUN	Up to 30.11.20
02819	Bhubaneswar	15:40	Anand Vihar Terminal	20:50	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02820	Anand Vihar Terminal	07:05	Bhubaneswar	12:20	TUE, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
02549	Kamakhya	10:00	Anand Vihar Terminal	19:20	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02550	Anand Vihar Terminal	06:45	Kamakhya	16:35		Up to 02.12.20
02530	Lucknow Jn	05:00	Patliputra Junction	14:50	Except-SUN, THU	Up to 30.11.20
02529	Patliputra Junction	15:50	Lucknow Jn	02:35	Except-SUN, THU	Up to 30.11.20
02033	Kanpur Central	06:00	New Delhi	11:20	Except-SUN	Up to 30.11.20
02034	New Delhi	15:50	Kanpur Central	20:45	Except-SUN	Up to 30.11.20
08215	Durg	09:00	Jammu Tawi	21:40	WED	Up to 25.11.20
08216	Jammu Tawi	05:00	Durg	19:10	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
02458	Bikaner Junction	22:30	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	06:10	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02457	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	23:35	Bikaner Junction	07:30		Up to 30.11.20
02485	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	07:05	Jodhpur Junction	18:05	Daily	Up to 01.12.20
02486	Jodhpur Junction	11:00	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	22:10		Up to 30.11.20
09027	Bandra Terminus	12:15	Jammu Tawi	01:25	SAT	Up to 28.11.20
09028	Jammu Tawi	09:30	Bandra Terminus	22:25	MON	Up to 30.11.20
02887	Visakhapatnam	06:25	Hazrat Nizamuddin	16:45	Except-Mon, Fri	Up to 29.11.20
02888	Hazrat Nizamuddin	08:35	Visakhapatnam	18:10	Except-Sun, Wed	Up to 01.12.20
08237	Korba	11:35	Amritsar Junction	08:10	TUE, WED, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
08238	Amritsar Junction	16:10	Bilaspur	12:15	THU, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04887	Rishikesh	18:05	Barmer	20:30	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
04888	Barmer	06:45	Rishikesh	10:30		Up to 01.12.20
04519	Delhi Junction	14:00	Bathinda Jn	21:15	Daily	08.11.20 to 30.11.20
04520	Bathinda Jn	05:00	Delhi Junction	12:15		09.11.20 to 30.11.20
02471	Shri Ganganagar	05:55	Delhi Junction	13:35	Daily	Up to 30.11.20
02472	Delhi Junction	13:05	Shri Ganganagar	20:35		Up to 30.11.20

09611	Ajmer Junction	17:55	Amritsar Junction	14:45	THU, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
09612	Amritsar Junction	14:30	Ajmer Junction	10:00	TUE, THU	Up to 01.12.20
09613	Ajmer Junction	17:55	Amritsar Junction	10:45	MON, WED	Up to 30.11.20
09614	Amritsar Junction	17:50	Ajmer Junction	10:00	FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
02683	Yesvantpur Jn	23:40	Lucknow	18:40	MON	Up to 30.11.20
02684	Lucknow	18:30	Yesvantpur Jn	13:30	THU	Upto 03.12.20
02539	Yesvantpur Jn	10:50	Lucknow	08:50	WED	Up to 25.11.20
02540	Lucknow	20:00	Yesvantpur Jn	16:40	FRI	Up to 27.11.20
02851	Visakhapatnam	08:20	Hazrat Nizamuddin	17:10	MON, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
02852	Hazrat Nizamuddin	05:50	Visakhapatnam	17:30	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
01407	Pune Junction	22:00	Lucknow Jn	02:40	TUE	Up to 24.11.20
01408	Lucknow Jn	06:30	Pune Junction	11:05	THU	Up to 26.11.20
02883	Durg	12:00	Hazrat Nizamuddin	09:05	MON, THU, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
02884	Hazrat Nizamuddin	17:25	Durg	15:10	TUE, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04404	Anand Vihar Terminal	18:35	Bhagalpur	15:00	MON, FRI	Up to 30.11.20
04403	Bhagalpur	18:45	Anand Vihar Terminal	15:25	TUE, SAT	Up to 01.12.20
04406	New Delhi	19:25	Barauni	15:00	TUE, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04405	Barauni	19:30	New Delhi	14:50	WED, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04408	New Delhi	19:25	Darbhanga	17:00	MON, THU	Up to 26.11.20
04407	Darbhanga	20:45	New Delhi	17:30	TUE, FRI	Up to 27.11.20
04410	New Delhi	14:55	Patna Junction	09:00	TUE, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04409	Patna Junction	12:00	New Delhi	05:00	MON, WED, SAT	Up to 30.11.20
04412	Delhi Junction	23:00	Saharsa	20:00	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04411	Saharsa	22:05	Delhi Junction	19:20	MON, THU	Up to 30.11.20
09717	Jaipur	19:30	Daulatpur Chowk	12:15	TUE, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
09718	Daulatpur Chowk	14:05	Jaipur	06:40	MON, WED, SAT	Up to 30.11.20
04131	Prayagraj Junction	16:20	Udhampur	13:45	TUE, SAT	Up to 28.11.20
04132	Udhampur	16:05	Prayagraj Junction	13:10	WED, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
09017	Bandra Terminus	13:05	Haridwar Junction	15:50	WED	Up to 25.11.20
09018	Haridwar Junction	18:30	Bandra Terminus	22:00	THU	Up to 26.11.20
02191	Jabalpur	18:55	Haridwar Junction	14:05	WED	Up to 25.11.20
02192	Haridwar Junction	16:20	Jabalpur	11:40	THU	Up to 26.11.20
04321	Bareilly	06:35	Bhuj	09:30	MON, WED, FRI, SUN	Up to 29.11.20
04322	Bhuj	17:05	Bareilly	20:35	WED, FRI, SAT, SUN	Up to 02.12.20
04311	Bareilly	06:35	Bhuj	12:05	TUE, THU, SAT	Up to 01.12.20
04312	Bhuj	14:05	Bareilly	20:35	MON, TUE, THU	Up to 30.11.20
04424	Anand Vihar Terminus	15:20	Katihar Jn	19:55	Daily	10.11.20 to 22.11.20
04423	Katihar Jn	22:45	Anand Vihar Terminus	02:55		11.11.20 to 23.11.20
04426	Anand Vihar Terminus	16:25	Raxaul Jn	22:10	Except-MON, SAT	10.11.20 to 22.11.20
04425	Raxaul Jn	23:40	Anand Vihar Terminus	04:50	Except-TUE, SUN	11.11.20 to 23.11.20
04432	Anand Vihar Terminus	11:10	Saharsa Jn	11:30	SUN	08.11.20 to 22.11.20
04431	Saharsa Jn	14:30	Anand Vihar Terminus	13:45	MON	09.11.20 to 23.11.20
03257	Danapur	15:45	Anand Vihar Terminus	10:25	Daily	10.11.20 to 30.11.20
03258	Anand Vihar Terminus	13:30	Danapur	07:30		11.11.20 to 01.12.20
05529	Saharsa Jn	14:30	Anand Vihar Terminus	18:15		WED
05530	Anand Vihar Terminus	23:45	Saharsa Jn	03:05	THU	12.11.20 to 26.11.20
05211	Darbhanga Jn		Amritsar Jn		Daily	10.11.20 to 30.11.20
05212	Amritsar Jn		Darbhanga Jn			12.11.20 to 02.12.20
05531	Saharsa Jn	03:15	Amritsar Jn	14:45	SUN	15.11.20 to 29.11.20
05532	Amritsar Jn	17:50	Saharsa Jn	03:55	MON	16.11.20 to 30.11.20

82 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 82 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Thursday, increasing the total number of cases to 17,203. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 276. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 36 and out of them 33 have been recovered from home isolation while three from the hospitals, increasing the number to 13,490 and 2,831 respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 16,321, leaving 606 active cases. The recovery rate has declined further to 94.87 per cent but the mortality rate has remained at 1.60 per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has

informed that in the first report of the day, 70 positive patients were found out of 3,045 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 3,41,327 and the results of 2,615 are awaited. Out of them, 3,24,136 were negative, while 17,191 positive. The total number of samples collected was 3,58,362. Earlier, a male aged 55 from Nuwan (Tadiya) succumbed to COVID-19 at Apex Hospital. With the addition of four new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,346 including 188 red zones. There are 2,158 green zones with eight new ones.

Under ongoing mass/group antigen tests, all 390 tests at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura, 227 at

Government Women's Hospital, 95 at Swami Vivekanand Government Hospital, Bhelupur, 160 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar and 225 at SSH BHU were found negative. However, three out of 75 at CHC Shivpur were detected positive. Besides, the Health department has distributed 4,408 Ivermectin tablets to 551 persons. So far, 11.42 lakh tablets were distributed to 1.42 lakh persons and out of them, 9.52 lakh tablets to 1.19 lakh persons were distributed only by the Health department while rest of tablets by other departments including Supply and Education departments and Civil Defence so far.

Apart from this, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amit Pathak has informed that under the 'Mission Shakti'

campaign, a total of 1,296 women / girls were mobilised at 79 places and 501 leaflets were distributed. A total of 297 women / girls were sensitised by the Anti-Romeo Squads at 58 places. Action was taken against one under 34 Police Act, 14 under MB Act apart from warning 35 eve teasers. Besides, the police arrested 20 persons under Section 151 of CrPC, while challaned under Section 188 and took action under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act against 13 persons. During checking at various points, 1,535 vehicles were challaned and seven seized. Apart from this, ₹1,84,300 were realised from 160 vehicles, while ₹23,950 from 791 persons for moving on the roads without wearing masks.

83 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Corona infection is under control in the Prayagraj district. This is what the figures are showing, which is a relief. The recovery rate of the infected is more than 94 per cent, which is the first in the state. On Wednesday, 83 new people tested Covid positive in 24 hours. 147 people became infection free. The number of active patients has also come down to 918. No infected died in the month of November.

Dr Rishi Sahai, the Nodal Officer for Corona, said that the figure of the infected has reached the level of four

months ago. The number of infected is steadily decreasing even after expanding the scope of testing. According to Dr Sahai, the recovery rate of Prayagraj in all the districts of the state is more than 94 per cent till 9 pm on Wednesday, according to comparative data across the state. While the average recovery rate across the state is 93 per cent. This figure is a relief for all. At the same time, the number of active patients is also steadily decreasing. The good thing is that not a single infected person has died in four days of November.

According to CMO Dr

GS Bajpai, the number of infected people is negligible even in the testing of the Target Group. The order of testing continued on the sixth day. He said that so far 24,284 people have been infected in the district. At the same time, home isolation of 17,248 people has been completed with 126 people in 24 hours. 5720 people have been discharged from hospitals after treatment and their report came negative.

The CMO said that on Wednesday, samples of 5,853 patients were screened. Maximum 60 patients are admitted to SRN Hospital.

Beli has 42, United has 21 infected admitted. He said that the death rate is currently zero. As of October 31, 315 corona infected patients have died in the district.

On the directives of the government, it will now be compulsory for private hospital operators to give Covid screening every day in the evening and the details of infected people to the CMO office by 5 pm. In the meeting of the CMO, nodal officer a strategy was decided to implement the instructions of the government. Letters have been sent to all hospital operators about this.

Nomination for two MLC seats begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The nomination process for long-awaited Varanasi Graduate and Teachers constituencies began at Divisional Office here on Thursday amidst tight security arrangements. The elections were scheduled months ago but due to worldwide coronavirus pandemic they were delayed. After issuing the notification following the announcement of dates by the Election Commission for election of 11 vacant seats of Legislative Council of UP from different Graduate and Teachers constituencies, the process of nomination began as several aspiring candidates and their supporters reached the office of Additional Commissioner (Second) to get the nomination papers.

The nomination process will continue till November 12. As per the schedule, the scrutiny of the nomination papers will be held on November 13, while the candidates can withdraw their names by



Nomination process for MLC seats going on in Varanasi on Thursday

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November 17. The election will be held on December 1 between 8 am and 5 pm, while the counting of votes will be held on December 3. For electing their representative from Graduate constituency, 2,07,039 would cast their votes, while 32,649 will elect their representative from Varanasi Teachers constituency. It is expected that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will continue its sitting MLCs Kedar Nath Singh and Chet Narayan

Singh from Graduate and Teachers constituencies. Ashutosh Sinha is likely to be the candidate of Samajwadi Party (SP) from Graduate seat, while Sanjeev Singh and ex-MLC Pramod Kumar Mishra of Congress from Graduate and Teacher seats respectively.

For electing the two MLCs, the voters of eight districts of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) will cast their votes which include 47,488 and 7,209 voters for Graduate and Teachers

seats in Varanasi respectively, while 48,375 and 6,627 in Jaunpur; 31,403 and 6,169 in Ghazipur; 17,916 and 3,091 in Chandauli; 16,214 and 1,911 in Mirzapur; 15,894 and 1,064 in Sonbhadra; 9,524 and 1,345 in Bhadohi and 20,225 and 5,233 in Ballia.

The constituencies include the entire areas of Varanasi and Vindhychal divisions and only Ballia district of Azamgarh division.

Meanwhile, with the declaration of dates of election by the EC and implementation of moral code of conduct, it is expected that the inauguration of many completed projects would also be delayed because the local administration was planning to invite the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate some finished projects in his Varanasi parliamentary constituency in the coming weeks. Any such inauguration either by physical presence or through virtual platforms by the PM will only be possible now after the permission of the EC.

VDA demolishes building owned by close aide of Mokhtar Ansari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In order to tighten noose around those who earned property illegally, a team of Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) on Thursday demolished the illegal construction of Meraj, said to be close to MLA from Mau, Sadar Mokhtar Ansari who is currently in jail.

According to information, Meraj owned a house in Phase-I, Ashok Vihar Colony. It was said that he had got a three-storey building constructed illegally backside of his house without the permission of the VDA. The VDA had served notice to him to demolish the illegal construction about two months ago but he didn't follow the instruction.



Building of close aide of Mokhtar Ansari being demolished in Varanasi on Thursday

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A team of VDA led by zonal officer Paramanand Yadav reached the place along with heavy police force and started the demolition process

of building constructed illegally. It was said that at the time when the VDA team reached the site for the demolition of the building no family member

was present there. Though, some men of Meraj present on the occasion put objections but in vain.

Amidst the presence of heavy police force and PAC personnel as well, the VDA started the demolition process after making an inspection of illegal construction. The VDA team also made videography of the demolition process. The CO, Chetganj Santosh Kumar Meena and Jaitpura Station Officer Shashi Bhusan Rai were also present during the demolition process.

It is pointed out that the state government has taken a tough stand against Mokhtar Ansari and his men and demolished their a number of illegal constructions during the last few days.



Residence of mafia-turned-politician Vijay Mishra is being pulled down by the JCB machines of Prayagraj Development Authority in Allahpur locality under the Georgetown police station. The officials reached the spot around 5 pm on Thursday and immediately came into action. To protect the marketing complex situated about 100 metres away from the residence, the family members had moved the court, and the High Court had directed them to demolish the unauthorised portions on their own by November 9, and inform the court. Because no order had been passed to protect the residence, the authorities reached there with heavy police force on Thursday evening in continuance of the drive against mafia dons and criminals. Vijay Mishra, MLA from Gyanpur Bhadohi is at present languishing in jail.

Pioneer

Mission Shakti focusing on psycho-social issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Director (Women's Welfare) Manoj Kumar Rai said that in the second phase of Mission Shakti there would be focus on protection and support on psycho-social issues and the women and children would be trained in the art of self-protection in view to identify the victims of violence against them. 'The main objectives of Mission Shakti include making women and girls self-reliant, helping them feel safe and creating public awareness,' said Rai, who is also Nodal Officer of Mission Shakti.

According to him, during this month, work would be done mainly on four levels by creating awareness on mental health and psychosocial support, identification of needy people of mental health services, development in the ability to make decisions related to support, service, protection and security and referral for higher consultation. 'It has

been decided to celebrate 'Mission Shakti', which is being run for the safety, honour and independence of women and children in the state on a different theme every month and this month's theme is protection and support from mental health and psychosocial issues,' he said, adding that the Women's Welfare Department is running a joint action plan with the Child Development Services and Nutrition Department under Mission Shakti.

He informed that the services to be provided this month on mental health and psychosocial support are being identified. These include women and children living in shelter homes, whether living due to any legal reasons or due to the need for care and protection or any kind of crime or violence against them. Apart from this, the children and women involved in the POSCO Act or sexual violence and their families and all institu-

tions who went back home or went home on bail will be supported on the issue of mental health. Besides, families or individuals who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19 or affected persons, children, women and their families will be provided assistance under this. Along with this, help will also be provided to the child labour, migrant workers, women, children and their family, who will need the counselling services.

The main programmes including Sandhya Chaupal (evening meeting), Nukkad Natak (street play), folk shows, webinars and seminars will be organised on November 16 at the village, block and district level, while public awareness programmes on the theme of 'daughters to identify' will be organised on November 18. Under this, families and shopkeepers will be made aware that they identify their homes and shops in the names of women and daughters of the family.

Physical strength will be communicated on the safety and mental health of children and adolescents and psychosocial needs, issues and support system on the occasion of International Child Rights Day on November 20 under the leadership of District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and other administrative officers.

Besides, competitions, quizzes, rallies, group discussions, etc. will be held on November 23, while on issues related to mental health and counselling during child marriage, child labour, child trafficking prevention and on November 25, 'Haq ki Baat' with the District Magistrate will be organised. Under this, a two-hour interactive dialogue will be organised for protection, security mechanisms, suggestions and help regarding sexual violence, gender inequality, domestic violence and dowry violence etc.

9 manned level crossings closed in Oct

ALLAHABAD (PNS): Enhancing safety and mobility in train operations is a conscious and continuous exercise on North Central Railway. With highest network of 130 kmph trunk routes and high density passing through traffic safety and mobility are of paramount importance over the three divisions of North Central Railway. To increase safety of road users nine manned level crossings have been closed in October 2020 and so far, 27 level crossings have been closed in current financial year. Road under Bridge (RUB) at LC no 44 in Kanpur-Tundla section completed in October-2020 and so far, five RUBs have been commissioned in current financial year. In Oct 2020, a major work of launching bow string girder of 72 metres span has been completed successfully at ROB no. 147 in Tundla-Ghaziabad section of Prayagraj division.

Track safety is always accorded highest priority on NCR and 48 kms track renewal was done in October-20 with total 241 track kms TRR (primary) completed in current financial year. For detection of any

internal flaw in rails and welded joints ultrasonic testing of 3129 kms track carried out in October 2020. To remove surface defects from track, 11th round of rail grinding utilising modern state-of-the-art Rail Grinding Machine (RGM) was completed in October. In 48 days grinding of 1554 Kms track was done on NCR with daily output of 32 kms which is best ever performance. To enhance safety and speed of trains over point and crossing zone, seven thick web switches have been provided in October 2020 and so far, 22 thick web switches have been commissioned in FY 2020-21 For enhanced safety of passengers two FOBs at Garhmau and Paricha were commissioned in October and so far six new FOBs are constructed in current financial year.

Sixty two routes electronic interlocking (EI) at Khajraha station in Jhansi division commissioned in October 2020. This work will help in timely completion of important Jhansi- Bina 3rd line project. Replacing old electro-mechanical signaling 120 routes latest electronic inter-

locking at Kanpur loco cabin and 20 routes EI at Mota station in Sikohabad-Farrukhabad section were commissioned in October on Prayagraj division.

In the field of rolling stock maintenance, intermediate overhauling (IOH) of 43 coaches, shop schedule (SS-I) of 17 LHB coaches, periodic overhauling (POH) of 29 coaches, routine overhauling (ROH) of 294 wagons and periodic overhauling (POH) of 707 wagons were done during October- 2020 to ensure safe and detention free train operations.

In view of ensuing foggy and cold weather, safety seminars on prevention of signal passing at danger (SPAD); safe train operation during foggy weather; precaution to taken during shunting operation; precautions for workman at work-site and cold weather patrolling and action to be taken in case of hot axle were organised at different stations, crew lobbies, yards etc. of Agra, Jhansi and Prayagraj division. Thrust in these safety seminars was on direct dialogue with front line staff to sensitise and equip them with latest and up to date safe-

ty related instructions for safe and efficient train operation and maintenance activities.

DIRECTIVE: The Allahabad High Court has directed the Shamli police to provide protection to the same gender couple facing threats from the family in particular and the society in general.

'A Constitutional court is duty-bound to monitor and observe the Constitutional morality as well as rights of a citizen which are under threat only on account of sexual orientation,' the court said and directed the SP Shamli to provide protection to the couple, facing resistance. Disposing of a writ petition filed by Sultana Mirza and Kiran Rani of Shamli, the High Court division bench comprising Justice Shashi Kant Gupta and Justice Pankaj Bhatia also directed the SP to ensure that the couple is not harassed by anyone. The petitioners are in a live-in relationship for a long time but were facing resistance from their families and the society because of their sexual orientation. In the petition, they apprehended harassment and threat to their life because of their relationship.

PADDY PROCUREMENT

DC warns against delay in payment of dues to farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar has warned the PCF district officer against unnecessary delays in payment of dues to the farmers.

He directed the district officer to clear all pending payments within 48 hours.

Chairing a meeting to review the paddy purchase on Wednesday, the divisional commissioner said as per the government directive, the payments to the farmers' accounts were required to be made within 72 hours of the purchase but in many cases it was delayed by the PCF.

He also directed all the deputy regional marketing officers to open a help desk at all major purchase centres (one in each major mandi centres in the district) in the next two days and appoint an officer to listen to farmers if there was any issue or they faced any problem at the purchase centres.

The officer will examine the problems and try to resolve them the same day and intimate the ADM about it on daily basis.

The help desk will also display the state helpline numbers, details of facilities at purchase centres, contact numbers of officers etc. for information of the farmers.

The divisional commissioner said districts like Etawah



Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar holds meeting with officials of Food Department.

Pioneer

and Kannauj must improve their performance in paddy purchase.

The meeting was attended by the regional food commissioner, all deputy regional marketing officers and nodal officers of the purchase agencies.

The divisional commissioner was informed that paddy purchase had increased in the last one week and now 207 centres out of the total 251, had

purchased paddy in the last one week.

The fall in export of rice because of COVID-19 pandemic had created problems in sale of paddy in the market. But the government has taken all necessary steps for the procurement of quality and grading based paddy from the farmers at minimum support price at all procurement centres that were opened well in

advance.

The district magistrates and nodal officers of ADM rank are monitoring and reviewing the paddy purchase on a daily basis.

The regional food commissioner informed the divisional commissioner that all the purchase agencies had sufficient number of bags, equipment and cash flow in accounts as required.

70 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 70 more coronavirus positive cases on Thursday evening.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 70 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Wednesday evening and Thursday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 28,181 cases. He said that 11 cases were discharged from hospital and cured figure stood at 7640.

He said one COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Thursday evening keeping the death toll to 735.

The CMO said at present 649 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 4600 samples were sent for testing in the city.

Ex-armyman shoots his father over a petty issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A retired armyman shot his father dead over a petty issue in Nasirpur village under Sikandra police station of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday morning. The police have launched a hunt to arrest the ex-armyman who is absconding. According to reports, Lalaram Katihar (80) was watching TV with his grandson, Rishabh, when his son Ashok Katihar, who retired from the Army, arrived there in a drunken state and asked Rishabh to shut down the TV.

When Lalaram protested, Ashok had a heated argument with him. During the heated exchange of words, Ashok started beating up his son, Rishabh, and Lalaram came to the rescue of his grandson. This annoyed Ashok and he took out his gun and fired at his father.

As Lalaram fell unconscious on the floor, Ashok escaped from there. The family members took Lalaram to the community health centre where the doctor pronounced him dead. Assistant Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar and Circle Officer Rajaram reached the spot and carried out investigation. The CO said raids were being conducted to nab Ashok.

In another incident, a youth axed his father to death in Karbak village of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday morning.

Farmer Raghuvir Gautam (52) had handed over the possession of his 16 biswa field to a village farmer on sharing basis. This irked his son, Ajab Gautam, who had been insisting Raghuvir to take back the possession of the field from the village farmer. Both often had heated arguments on this issue in the past.

On Thursday morning, when Raghuvir and Ajab were returning from the field, both again got involved in an argument over the same issue. On reaching home, Ajab repeatedly hit his father with an axe, killing him on the spot. He was arrested by the police.

ROAD MISHAP

A cyclist was fatally hit by a truck on the highway under Maharajpur police station on Thursday morning.

Aged around 35, the youth was crossing the road when a speeding truck hit him, killing him on the spot.

The truck's driver and cleaner escaped after leaving their vehicle on the spot.

The irate villagers staged a demonstration and indulged in stone pelting. The police got the body trapped between the two wheels of the truck extracted and pacified the villagers.

Illicit liquor factory unearthed

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR



Chilh police unearthed an illicit liquor factory and arrested one accused on Wednesday night. They recovered adulterated liquor, packaging machine, empty bottles and wrappers from the spot. As per the reports, on being tipped off by informer about the illicit liquor factory on Wednesday SHO Chhotak Yadav raided Majhalipatti village along with his team and unearthed the factory which was being run in the house of Vinod Singh, son of late Heera Singh. However the main culprit, Amarjeet Singh alias Chenayi Singh, son of Pahpat Singh, managed to flee taking advantage of the darkness but the house owner Vinod Singh was nabbed. During the raid the police recovered 500 liquor bottles, 600 empty bottles, wrappers of different brands of liquor, including whisky,

50 litres of chemical, packaging machine etc. The police recovered an Alto car (UP65/X-6954) which was being used to transport the illicit liquor. The police lodged the FIR under Section 60 (2) of the Excise act along with the Sections 420, 467, 468, 471 and 272 of the IPC and Section 207 of the Motor Vehicles Act. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the accused to jail and seized the recovered materials. Meanwhile Jamalpur police arrested one person who was accused of molesting a minor girl. A woman had lodged a named complaint with the police alleging that the accused had forcibly entered her house and molested her minor daughter. After registering a case SO Vijay Kumar Saroj constituted a team for nabbing the accused. The police raided his house and arrested Anwar, son of Yakoob, a resident of Rerupur village under Jamalpur police station and sent him to jail.

NCL registers growth

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) has produced 63.69 million tonnes (MT) of coal till October during the financial year (FY) 2020-21, which is about 5.56 per cent more than the coal produced during the corresponding period last year. During the last FY NCL had produced 60.34 MT of coal between April and October. Even during Covid-19-generated adverse conditions NCL has produced a total of 10.15 MT in October which is 101 per cent of the target for this month. NCL has also registered an increase of 8.77 per cent in coal production in October this year as compared to the corresponding month last financial year. Besides, the company has removed overburden of around 214.30 million cubic metres from April to October which is 21.47 per cent more than the last financial year. This accomplishment will play an important role in achieving coal production targets in the coming time, a press release of the company said. Apart from it in the FY 2020-21 NCL has so far despatched a total of 5995 MT of coal so far and out of which 9.965 MT had been despatched only in the month of October. In FY 2020-21 NCL has been given the target of 113.25 MT of coal production and despatch.



SSP Jogendra Kumar giving details about the arrest of four accused in connection with loot of ₹22 lakh case at Police Lines in Gorakhpur on Wednesday

Route march staged

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

In view of forthcoming festivals the IPolice led by ASP (City) Sanjay Kumar staged a route march and carried out an intensive checking drive in the city on Wednesday. The police conducted the checking drive at the roadways bus station and railway station too. They checked luggage and bags of passengers along with the parcel room. The team comprised CO City, SHO Katra along with police force.

Rlys to run three more puja spl trains

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers during the forthcoming festivals has decided to run 04424/04423 Anand Vihar Terminus-Katihar-Anand Vihar Terminus puja special train, 04426/04425 Anand Vihar Terminus-Raxaul-Anand Vihar Terminus Puja special trainand 04432/04431 Anand Vihar Terminus-Saharsa-Anand Vihar Terminus super fast puja special train. All coaches in them will be of reserved category and passengers travelling will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said.

ANVT- KATIHAR SPL: The 04424 Anand Vihar Terminus-Katihar puja special will from November 10 to 22 depart from Anand Vihar Terminus (ANVT) at 15:20 hours daily, at Khurja at 16:50 hrs, Aligarh at 17:27 hrs, Hathras at 18:24 hrs, Tundla at 19:13 hrs, Firozabad at 19:32 hrs, Etawah at 20:47 hrs, Kanpur Central at 22:55 hrs, Unnao at 23:18 hrs, Aishbagh at 00:32 hrs, Badshahnagar at 00:52 hrs, Barabanki Jn at 01:37 hrs, Gonda Jn at 03:00 hrs, Mankapur Jn at 03:26 hrs, Basti at 04:20 hrs, Khalilabad at 04:45 hrs, Gorakhpur Jn at 06:00 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 06:50 hrs, Mairwa at 07:32 hrs, Siwan Jn at 07:58 hrs, Chhapra at 09:50 hrs, Dighwara at 10:25 hrs, Sonpur at 10:55 hrs, Hajipur at 11:10 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 12:15 hrs, Dholi at 12:38 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 12:53 hrs, Samastipur Jn at 13:40 hrs, Barauni at 15:25 hrs, Begusarai at 15:48 hrs, Khagaria at 16:32 hrs, Mansi Jn at 16:44 hrs, Thana Bihpur Jn at 17:23 hrs, Nalgachia at 17:40 hrs, Kosi Block Hut at 18:09 hrs, Kursela at 18:18 hrs, Kadhagola Road at 18:50 hrs and reach Katihar at 19:55 hrs During the return journey the 04423 Katihar-Anand Vihar Terminus Puja special will from November 11 to 23 depart from Katihar at 22:45 hrs every day, Kadhagol Road at 23:08 hrs, Kursela at 23:25 hrs, Nalgachia at 23:48 hrs, Thana Bihpur at 00:25 hrs, Mansi at 01:05 hrs, Khagaria at 01:17 hrs, Begusarai at 01:51 hrs, Barauni at 03:10 hrs, Samastipur at 04:05 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 04:20 hrs, Dholi at 04:34 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 05:35 hrs, Hajipur at 06:35 hrs, Sonpur at 06:50 hrs, Dighwara at 07:13 hrs, Chhapra at 08:45 hrs, Siwan at 09:35 hrs, Mairwa at 09:54 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 10:40 hrs, Gorakhpur at 12:35 hrs, Khalilabad at 13:16 hrs, Basti at 13:48 hrs, Mankapur at 14:35 hrs, Gonda Jn at 15:20 hrs, Barabanki at 16:55 hrs, Badshahnagar at 17:33 hrs, Aishbagh at 18:20 hrs, Unnao at 19:15 hrs, Kanpur Central at 20:00 hrs, Etawah at 21:41 hrs, Firozabad at 22:34 hrs, Aligarh at 00:20 hrs, Khurja at 00:52 hrs, Ghaziabad at 07:00 hrs and reach ANVT at 02:55 hrs. A total of 22 coaches, including 20 of sleeper/general class and two of SLR will be attached.

ANVT-RAXAUL SPL: The 04426 Anand Vihar Terminus-Raxaul puja special from November 10 to 22 daily (except Mondays and Saturdays) leaving Anand Vihar Terminus at 16:25 hrs, Ghaziabad at 17:08 hrs, Pilkhuwa at 17:34 hrs, Hapur at 17:50 hrs, Amroha at 18:53 hrs, Moradabad at 19:40 hrs, Raja ka Sahaspur at 20:05 hrs, Chandausi Jn at 20:35 hrs, Aonla at 21:30 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 23:28 hrs, Hardoi at 00:26 hrs, Alamnagar at 01:50 hrs, Lucknow at 02:25 hrs, Nihalgarh at 04:21 hrs, Musafir Khana at 05:03 hrs, Sultanpur at 06:10 hrs, Lambhua at 06:34 hrs, Sri Krishna Nagar at 07:00 hrs, Jaunpur City at 07:23 hrs, Varanasi at 09:15 hrs, Varanasi City at 09:26 hrs, Aunrihar at 10:00 hrs, Nandganj at 10:24 hrs, Ghazipur City at 10:55 hrs, Yusufpur at 11:15 hrs, Ballia at 12:26 hrs, Suraimanpur at 12:59 hrs, Chhapra at 14:25 hrs, Dighwara at 15:05 hrs, Parmanandpur at 15:27 hrs, Sonpur at 16:10 hrs, Hajipur at 16:20 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 18:15 hrs, Rumi Saidpur at 18:55 hrs, Sitamarhi at 19:30 hrs, Bargania at 19:55 hrs, Ghodashan at 20:19 hrs and reach Raxaul at 22:10 hrs. During the return journey 04425 Raxaul-Anand Vihar Terminus puja special will run from November 11 to 23 daily (except Tuesday and Friday). It will leave Raxaul at 23:40 hrs, Ghodashan at 00:20 hrs, Bargania at 00:44 hrs, Sitamarhi at 01:30 hrs, Rumi Saidpur at 01:50 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 04:00 hrs, Hajipur at 05:00 hrs, Sonpur at 05:12 hrs, Dighwara at 05:33 hrs, Chhapra at 06:40 hrs, Suraimanpur at 07:06 hrs, Ballia at 07:50 hrs, Yusufpur at 08:25 hrs, Ghazipur City at 09:05 hrs, Nandganj at 09:30 hrs, Aunrihar Jn at 10:20 hrs, Varanasi City at 11:18 hrs, Varanasi at 11:45 hrs, Jaunpur City at 12:40 hrs, Srikrishnanagar at 13:14 hrs, Lambhua at 13:55 hrs, Sultanpur at 15:30 hrs, Musafirkhana at 15:57 hrs, Nihalgarh at 16:14 hrs, Lucknow at 18:28 hrs, Alamnagar at 18:46 hrs, Hardoi at 20:07 hrs, Shahjahanpur , at 21:16 hrs, Aonla at 23:00 hrs, Chandausi Jn at 23:55 hrs, Raja Ka Sahaspur at 00:23 hrs, Moradabad at 01:13 hrs, Amroha at 01:43 hrs, Hapur at 03:12 hrs, Pilkhuwa at 03:28 hrs, Ghaziabad at 04:14 hrs and reach Anand Vihar Terminus at 04:50 hrs. A total of 22 coaches will be attached in it.

AVT-SAHARSA SPL: The 04432 Anand Vihar Terminus-Saharsa superfast puja special will from November 8 to 22 every Sunday depart from Anand Vihar Terminus at 11:10 am, Hapur at 12:18 hrs, Moradabad at 13:55 hrs, Bareilly at 15:20 hrs, Hardoi at 17:05 hrs, Lucknow at 18:52 hrs, Gorakhpur at 00:15 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 01:01 hrs, Siwan Jn at 02:00 hrs, from Chhapra at 03:20 hrs, Hajipur at 03:30 hrs, Muzaffarpur Jn at 05:35 hrs, Samastipur at 06:30 hrs, Dalsinghsarai at 06:54 hrs, Barauni at 07:40 hrs, Begusarai at 08:06 hrs, Khagaria at 08:42 hrs, Semri Bakhtiarpur at 09:55 hrs and reach Saharsa at 11:30 hrs. During the return journey the 04431 Saharsa-Anand Vihar Terminus superfast puja special from November 9 to 23 be run on every Monday. It will leave Saharsa Jn at 14:30 hrs, Semri Bakhtiarpur at 14:57 hrs, Khagaria at 15:52 hrs, Begusarai at 16:20 hrs, Barauni at 17:00 hrs, Dalsinghsarai at 17:28 hrs, Samastipur at 18:05 hrs, Muzaffarpur Jn at 19:00 hrs, Hajipur at 19:55 hrs, Chhapra at 21:20 hrs, Siwan at 22:10 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 23:15 hrs, Gorakhpur at 00:40 hrs, Lucknow at 06:10 hrs, Hardoi at 07:36 hrs, Bareilly at 09:35 hrs, Moradabad at 11:10 hrs, Hapur at 12:26 hrs and reach AVT at 13:45 hrs.

reserved category and passengers will have to follow Covid-19 norms, CPRO said. The 08181 Tata-Chhapra Express will from November 5 to 30 every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday leave Tatanagar at 21:25 hrs, Purulia at 23:40 hrs, Anara at 00:08 hrs, Asansol at 02:00 hrs, Chittaranjan at 02:25 hrs, Madhupur Jn at 03:10 hrs, Jasidih at 03:44 hrs, Jhajha 05:20 hrs, Gidhaur at 05:31 hrs, Jamai at 05:45 hrs, Mananpur at 05:59 hrs, Kiul at 06:20 hrs, Hathidah at 07:16 hrs, Barauni at 09:25 hrs, Bachwara at 09:50 hrs, Dalsinghsarai at 10:03 hrs, Samastipur at 11:17 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 11:36 hrs, Dholi at 11:50 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 12:25 hrs, Goraui at 12:51 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 13:02 hrs, Hajipur at 14:27 hrs, Dighwara at 15:05 hrs and reach Chhapra at 16:25 hrs. During return journey 08182 Chhapra-Tata Express will from November 7 to December 2 every Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday leave Chhapra at

12:35 hrs, Dighwara at 13:11 hrs, Paramanandpur at 13:57 hrs, Hajipur at 14:31 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 14:51 hrs, Goraui at 15:02 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 15:48 hrs, Dholi at 16:11 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 16:30 hrs, Samastipur at 17:15 hrs, Ujiarpur at 17:26 hrs, Nazirganj at 17:36 hrs, Dalsingh Sarai at 17:49 hrs, Barauni at 20:30 hrs, Kiul at 21:37 hrs, Mananpur at 21:52 hrs, Jamui at 22:08 hrs, Gidhaur at 22:23 hrs, Jhajha at 22:55 hrs, Jasidih at 23:35 hrs, Madhupur at 00:07 hrs, Chittaranjan at 00:49 hrs, Asansol at 02:00 hrs, Anra at 03:38 hrs, Purulia at 04:15 hrs and reach Tatanagar at 06:35 hrs. A total of 20 coaches, including two of second class, two of AC third, will be attached.

CANCELLED: Due to poor occupancy the run of 82501/82502 Lucknow Jn-New Delhi-Lucknow Jn Tejas Express will remain cancelled on November 14, CPRO PK Singh said.

Nano grain based ethanol unit inaugurated at NSI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The newly-constructed nano grain based ethanol unit was inaugurated at the National Sugar Institute here by Kanpur's Harcourt Butler Technological University Vice Chancellor Dr NB Singh on Thursday.

This unit is integrated with the existing molasses based ethanol unit and now the system will be multi feed stock based ethanol unit capable of working on different qualities of molasses and various grains, including rice, maize, millets and sorghum etc.

Congratulating the NSI, Dr Singh lauded its efforts to create facilities which would be helpful in teaching and training to the students so that they developed confidence while operating different units used in ethanol production.

NSI Director Prof Narendra Mohan, while elaborating the importance of such unit, said that with the growing demand of ethanol for ethanol blending in petrol



'Nano Grain based Ethanol Unit' inaugurated at NSI on Thursday.

Pioneer

that is estimated to be about 360 crore litres per annum at present at the rate of 10 per cent blending, the conventional route of using molasses from sugar factories for ethanol production was not adequate and use of alternative feed stocks through which the ethanol could be produced at reasonable rates was inevitable.

Thus, he said, the deteriorated grains, rice and corn in particular, which were not fit

for human consumption, could be used for ethanol production without inviting a debate on Food vs Fuel.

"Side by side, the surplus grains may also be utilised for the purpose. This will do two goods, first, the ethanol availability will increase and distilleries will work for more number of days resulting in better capacity utilisation and, secondly, the farmers will also be benefited as they would get a new market for selling the

produce at better prices," he added.

Prof Mohan said the NSI had proposed this concept of setting of multi feed stock based ethanol units or smart ethanol units to the Central government.

"Thus, to showcase installation of such ethanol units to the industry and also to provide competent manpower to the industry, this unit has been commissioned with the help of M/s ISGEC Heavy Engineering Ltd. at an expenditure of about Rs.75 lakh. The unit based on dry milling technology has equipment based on latest technology at liquefaction, fermentation, distillation and de-hydration stages," he said.

Prof Mohan said the NSI was the only sugar institute in the world to have a multi feed stock based or smart ethanol unit for teaching and training purposes.

"Once the working normalises, we shall also conduct short duration training programmes for industry personnel," he added.

Bangotra lays stress on quality control

KANPUR (PNS): Ordnance Parachute Factory General Manager DK Bangotra, after hoisting the Quality Assurance Flag as part of the Quality Assurance Month on Wednesday, said quality assurance or QA referred to a programme for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of various aspects of a project, service or facility to ensure that standards of quality were being met, especially in the field of defence production.

He said the quality assurance function encompassed all functional areas from product

assurance, service consumption during the complete life cycle of the product and user satisfaction.

He said the current system of quality control function of defence equipment was mainly based on production shop floor level activity and was a minuscule sub-set of overall quality assurance activities.

He said today quality assurance function had to have inherent capability to redefine or transform itself from controlling function to a facilitating function by being associated with identification of

requirements, mapping existing knowledge of the platforms, identification of the gaps, filling up the knowledge gaps, and continually expanding the base to meet the requirement.

He said the process of procurement and management of material resources directly affected the quality of the final product and the ultimate users always placed a great premium on quality and reliability of systems under procurement or acquisition.

He added that the main role of quality assurance was typically visible only during the

production processes and the acceptance inspections.

He said it was the duty of the defence establishment employees to adopt quality as quality alone brought progress.

He then administered oath of quality, environment, security and health policies. He said it was the duty of every defence employee to be serious and remain committed to adopting quality standards. He also discussed the quality strategies. Those present on the occasion included JtGM Vivek Gupta, Ayesha Khan and several other officials.

IIT-K offers winter course on Python and 5G tech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur will organise a winter course on Python and 5G technology from December 21.

IIT-K is the first public institution to offer technical training on 5G and Python technologies.

The programme is designed for students, faculty and working professionals.

The cutting edge training

school includes Python projects on the latest multi-user, massive MIMO, mmWave MIMO, NOMA, Cognitive Radio and other technologies that form the pillar of 5G.

The participants will gain in-depth knowledge of Python and practical hands-on experience on 5G projects.

Prof Aditya K Jagannathan of IIT-K said the institute would hold the programme on evenings and weekends.

The programme is

designed for UG/PG students. The students can learn advanced scientific programming in Python and 5G technology for projects and theses.

Some of the topics included in the programme are: Introduction and key specs of 5G technologies, overview of sub 6GHz multiple antenna, MIMO and MU-MIMO technologies, signal processing for MIMO systems, optimal power allocation and precoding for

MIMO, introduction to 5G massive MIMO systems, key features of massive MIMO and advantages over point-to-point and MU-MIMO, signal processing operations for massive MIMO in UL and DL, massive MIMO channel model- large/small scale fading, properties of random vectors and massive MIMO analysis, analysis of spectral efficiency in massive MIMO systems and power scaling, pilot design and channel estimation in massive

MIMO Systems, transmitter and receiver schemes with imperfect CSI, spectral efficiency analysis of massive MIMO with imperfect CSI, power scaling in massive MIMO with imperfect CSI and comparison with perfect CSI, introduction to mmWave MIMO communication.

The registration for the programme is open till December 14. The course will start from December 21.

Mehbooba shown black flags at Jammu airport during protests

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

People's Democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti was greeted with black flags during her maiden visit to Jammu after the Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A on Thursday.

The security personnel deployed outside the exit gate of the airport premises stopped traffic for some time to allow her cavalcade to move smoothly without facing any road block.

Displaying black flags and placards, activists of Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena shouted slogans 'Go back Mehbooba'. She had earlier provoked strong reactions in Jammu by announcing that she will not uphold the Tricolor till the time the state flag is restored.

Mehbooba later chaired a meeting with the PDP leaders from different parts of Jammu division at the state Guest house. She gathered feedback from them about the prevailing political scenario and hardships faced by the people

across Jammu region. Three senior PDP leaders from Jammu who recently quit the party stayed away from the meeting.

Emerging out of the meeting former PDP MLC Surinder Choudhary told reporters, "PDP Chief took stock of the political situation and also interacted with PDP leaders from different areas of Jammu division during her maiden visit to Jammu".

He said the political affairs committee of the party will hold a separate meeting to take a final call over the issue of participating in the District Development council polls beginning November 28.

During her brief stay in Jammu, Mehbooba Mufti is scheduled to attend a meeting of the Peoples Alliance for Gupka Declaration in Jammu on November 7. Member Parliament from Srinagar and National Conference Chief Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah are also reaching Jammu on Friday to address a workers meeting.



CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

1, NAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES/Prayagraj-211001
FAX No.: 0532-2408826 www.core.indianrailways.gov.in

Tender Details	CORRIGENDUM-8	Publish Date:04.11.2020,17.00
Tender No.ELCORE-OHE-EPC-15A (Open Tender)	Closing Date/Time	27.11.2020 15.00
Name of Work: EPC TENDER: Request for Proposal for "Electrification of the Railway Lines in various sections of Northeast Frontier Railway (the "Project") through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (the "EPC") Contract". [Bid/Package no. EPC-15A].		
Items Modified		
NIT Header		
Field Name	Existing Value	Modified Value
Tender Closing Date	20.11.2020	27.11.2020
Bidding Start Date	15.00	15.00
	06.11.2020	13.11.2020

PR/573/2020 ADK "Serving Customers with a Smile" www.ireps.gov.in

U.P.RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. OBRA - SONEBHADRA	
E-Tender Notice	
<p>1. Tender No: T-01/OCCCC-II/OCCCD-III/2020-21 online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Construction of Boundary wall between Radha Krishna Mandir and Budha Bihar mandir". E-tender has been uploaded on 02.11.2020 at 09:00 hrs on http://etender.up.nic.in Estimated cost of work is Rs. 21.27,546.00 only, E.M.D. cost Rs. 43,000.00 Tender Cost Rs.1180.00 Last date of submission 11.11.2020 at 17.00 Hrs. SE,OBRA 'C'</p> <p>2. Tender No: T-57/SE(CMC-II)/CMD-IV/2020-21 online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Construction of drain and nala along road from Qtr. no. 3-G-4 to 3-III-29". E-tender has been uploaded on 28.10.2020 at 10:00 hrs on http://etender.up.nic.in Estimated cost of work is Rs. 4,57,103.00 only, E.M.D. cost Rs. 9,500.00 Tender Cost Rs.590.00 Last date of submission 09.11.2020 at 17.00 Hrs. S.E.,CMC-II</p> <p>Total Quality of work, tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Concerned superintending engineer has right to cancel any or all e-Bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time. No.:212, Date:05.11.2020. "Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation"</p>	

लखनऊ नगर निगम, लखनऊ	
टी०एन० मार्ग, लालबाग, लखनऊ, फोन/फैक्स 0522-2612639 ई-टेंडर पोर्टल - http://etender.up.nic.in	
ई-निविदा सूच सं०: 96/ सू०अ/2020-21 दिनांक: 4.11.2020	
ई-निविदा प्रणाली के अनर्गत निविदा सूचना	
ई-निविदा प्रणाली के अनर्गत दिनांक 12/11/2020 को कुल 01 कार्यो हेतु द्विलीफाफा पद्धति पर ई-निविदाये, ई-निविदा पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है, पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर निविदा के साथ जमानत धनराशि एवं निविदा प्रपत्र की धनराशि आरुटीओजीएस/एनआईएफटी/इण्टरनेट बैंकिंग के माध्यम से पोर्टल https://induscollect.indusind.com/pay/index.php पर लॉगिन करके जमा किया जायेगा। ई-निविदा दिनांक 12/11/2020 को अपरानु 15.00 बजे तक ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर प्राप्त की जायेगी जिन्हें दिनांक 12/11/2020 को 16.00 बजे निविदा समिति के समक्ष खोला जायेगा। किसी भी ई-निविदा को स्वीकार एवं अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार समक्ष अधिकारी में निहित होगा। अन्य समस्त नियम/शर्तें यथा कार्य का नाम, आगहन धनराशि, निविदा प्रपत्र की धनराशि एवं जमानत धनराशि तथा निविदा प्रपत्र पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।	
मुख्य अधिकारी लखनऊ नगर निगम	

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, हरदोई खण्ड शास्दा नहर हरदोई। :- ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना संख्या :- 03 / ईईई० / 2020-21 :-						
महामहोदय राज्यालम, उत्तर प्रदेश की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु ऑनलाइन http://etender.up.nic.in के माध्यम से टेडिंगकराये जायेगा। ई-निविदा विभाग में वर्गीकृत श्रेणी में उपलब्ध निविदा कार्यो में दस एवं अनुमय रखते वाले डेक्कालर/प्रतिभागियों से दिनांक 16.11.2020 को 17:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निम्नकी टेडिंगकल बिड दिनांक 17.11.2020 को 11:00 बजे समिति के समक्ष ऑनलाइन खोली जायेगी। निविदा 09.11.2020 को 9:00 बजे से डाउनलोड /अपलोड /रवानिट की जा सकती है। कार्योकर्य बन्द होने या छुट्टी होने की दशा में यह ई-निविदा अगले कार्योदिवस में उसी समय खोली जायेगी। कार्य का विवरण निम्न प्रकार है:-						
क्रम	कार्य का विवरण	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)	कार्यो धनराशि (रु में)	कार्य की अवधि	स्टेडानरी- (निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य+18 प्रतिशत (जीएसटीडी))	पंजीकृत श्रेणी
1.	मईदा राजबहा के किमी 12.679 पर स्थित बहिरगस्त वीआरबी के पुनः निर्माण का कार्य।	15.00	1,50,000.00	60 दिवस	2000+225+41 = 2266.00	सी एवं उच्च श्रेणी
2.	मईदा राजबहा के किमी 15.080 पर स्थित बहिरगस्त वीआरबी के पुनःनिर्माण का कार्य।	15.00	1,50,000.00	60 दिवस	2000+225+41 = 2266.00	सी एवं उच्च श्रेणी
3.	हरदोई राजबहा के किमी 24.500 पर वीआरबी के निर्माण का कार्य	15.20	1,52,000.00	60 दिवस	2000+225+41 = 2266.00	सी एवं उच्च श्रेणी
नोट 1. द्वाा ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त नियम एवं शर्तें http://etender.up.nic.in एवं सिंघाई विभाग की वेबसाइट http://irrigation.up.nic.in पर भी उपलब्ध है। उ.प्र. 156679 दिनांक 4.11.20 अधिशासी अभियन्ता विभाजन वेबसाइट www.upgvo.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है हरदोई खण्ड शास्दा नहर हरदोई						

PRESS NOTICE
Uttar Pradesh Public Works Department,
Government of Uttar Pradesh,
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Construction of Multilevel Parking and Advocates Chambers for Hon'ble High Court at Allahabad on Comprehensive Design, Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Basis

Tender Notice No. 7251/39 वरग/प्रगुवु/2020

Superintending Engineer, Prayagraj Circle, UPPWD, 8-Beli Road, DwarikaPuri, Old Katra, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh & as Executing Agency of Department of Law, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh invites online bids for Construction/ Multilevel Parking and Advocates Chamber for Hon'ble High Court at Allahabad on Comprehensive Design, Engineering, Procurement and Construction(EPC) Basis from eligible bidders working in any central/state departments or government/semi government undertakings or in private sector for building work in two bid system:-

Dated : 02-11-2020

Name and Description of work	Estimated cost	Completion period of Work	Last date to fill/upload the bid through e-tendering	Cost of Bid Document	Bid/Tender Fee	EMD/Bid Security amount
Construction of Multilevel Parking and Advocates Chambers for Hon'ble High Court at Allahabad on Comprehensive Design Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Basis.	Rs. 549.29 Crore	27 Months	18.12.2020 upto 12:30 PM	Rs. 35000.00 +GST@18%	Rs. 300.00 + GST@18%	Rs. 569.00 Lakhs

● The bid document shall be available online from 12.11.2020 at 11 AM to 17.12.2020 upto 5PM & the last date of submission of bid document shall be 18.12.2020 upto 12:30 PM (Online). Opening of Technical Bid shall be 18.12.2020 at 03:00 PM.

● For submission & other tender details, please refer detailed NIT available on websites e-tender portal <https://www.etender.up.nic.in>. Other details are also available on UPPWD website <https://www.uppwd.gov.in> and Corrigendum/amendments etc., if any will be notified on these websites only and separate advertisement will not be made for thesame.

● UPPWD reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason or incurring any liability whatsoever.

Executive Engineer
 Construction Division-1,
 PWD, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

Superintending Engineer
 Prayagraj Circle,
 PWD, Prayagraj

UP-156706 Dt. 4.11.20 विभाजन वेबसाइट www.upgvo.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

2 hurt in terrorist firing at Pampore in Kashmir

Srinagar: Two persons were injured in firing during a Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) launched by the security forces at Pampore in South Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday evening, officials said. Police said two persons were injured after terrorists fired indiscriminately during a CASO at Lalpora in Pampore.

Additional police forces have reached the spot while searches are going on in the area to track down the terrorists.

Six more corona deaths in J&K

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday recorded 524 fresh Covid-19 cases and six fatalities linked to the disease in the last 24 hours, bringing the infection count to 97,224 and the death toll to 1,517, officials said. Of the fresh cases, 185 were from the Jammu division and 339 from Kashmir valley, they said. The officials said Srinagar district recorded a maximum of 155 new cases, followed by 99 in Jammu.

AIADMK Govt denies permission to BJP's Vel Yathra

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu BJP's efforts to cash in on the religious fervour of the Hindus by staging a Vel Yatra (journey with spear) across the State from Friday came to a nought as the AIADMK Government denied permission for the same citing the possibility of a second wave of Covid-19 attack.

Vijay Narayan, advocate general, told the Madras High Court on Thursday that the request for Vel Yatra submitted by the BJP leaders were thor-

oughly examined by the government and it was decided not to grant permission in view of the covid-19 pandemic in the State.

The AG also told that the government's decision was also after considering the threat to law and order situation arising from the Yatra.

He said that the BJP leadership would soon be communicated about the decision. He was replying to the plea made before the first bench com-

prising of Chief Justice AP Sahi and Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy by two Dravidian activists.

Narayanan Thiruppathi, BJP spokesman said that the decision of the Tamil Nadu Government was shocking and it has pained the Lord's devotees. But he ruled out the possibilities of the BJP-AIADMK alliance coming under any strain because of the decision. "That's another issue and we will cross the bridge when the

time comes," he said.

The Vel Yatra has been planned by the BJP as a prelude to its 2021 assembly election campaign. Vel (spear) is the holy weapon carried by Lord Murugan, the popular god of Tamil Nadu. Interestingly, even DMK leaders spot the image of Vel on the rear side windshield of their cars as it is believed to be a good omen.

Vel and Lord Muruga were in the news recently when a group of Dravidian politicians

campaigned against Skanda Shasti Kavacham, a popular hymn in praise of Lord Muruga. The Dravidian activists made a parody on the lines of Shasti Kavacham, termed it Aabhasa Puranam (obscene epic) and aired it through social media.

This resulted in the devotees of the Lord across Tamil Nadu coming out of their residences and rendering the hymn a la Gandhian style in the month of July. **PNS**

Maha Covid infections cross 17L mark, as 5,246 test +ve

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra crossed a grim milestone of 17 lakh Covid-19 infections on Thursday, as 5,246 people tested positive for the pandemic, while the state – with an additional 139 fatalities arising out of a reconciliation process -- witnessed 256 consolidated deaths during the day.

That the infections have been under control could be evidenced from the fact that the infected cases remained below 6000 mark for the sixth consecutive day. With 5246 fresh infections, the total number of infected cases jumped from 16,98,198 to 17,03,444.

Similarly, with 117 fresh deaths reported on Thursday and 139 additional deaths arising out of reconciliation, the Covid-19 toll rose from 44,548 to 44,804. "Owing to the death reconciliation process, there is an increase of 139 fatalities in the cumulative deaths of certain districts and corporations. As a result, the total number of deaths recorded today has gone up to 256," a state health official said.

As 11,277 more people were discharged from various hospitals the number of people discharged from the hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year went up to 15,51,282. The recovery rate in the state rose from 90.68 per cent to 91.07 per cent.

Of the 256 deaths (including the 139 old fatalities) recorded on

Thursday, Sangli district in western Maharashtra topped the list with 51 deaths, 43 deaths in Solapur, 41 in Kolhapur, 26 in Nanded, 25 in Mumbai, 18 in Thane and 12 deaths in Pune.

In the lower range, there were nine deaths in Beed, 5 in Nashik, 4 each in Ahmednagar and Satara, 3 each in Palghar and Aurangabad, 2 each in Buldhana, Nagpur and Chandrapur and one death each in Dhule, Jalgaon, Jalna, Parbhani, Latur and Osmanabad.

With 25 deaths, the Covid-19 toll rose from 10,352 to 10,377, while the infected case went up by 841 to trigger a jump in the total infections in the metropolis from 260,840 to 261,681.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 1,12,912 to 1,06,519 . The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.63 per cent. Currently, 12,52,758 people are in home quarantine while 12,003 people are in institutional quarantine.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,36,430 to 3,36,982 while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 6978 to 6990.

Thane district remained in the third spot – after Pune and Mumbai – after the total number of infections rose from 2,25,470 to 2,26,109, while the pandemic toll climbed from 5219 to 5237.

Amrapali group directors, others held in 14 old cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested directors and other officials of Amarpali Group in 14 old cases for allegedly cheating home buyers. Police said that the Group had promised to complete the construction of the residential apartments and hand over the possession within a period of 36 months but they failed to give possession even after elapsing the period of more than 10 years.

The accused have been identified as Anil Kumar Sharma (56), a resident of Maharani Bagh and Shiv Priya (46), a resident of Noida, both directors of the company.

According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, a complaint was received wherein the complainant alleged that Amrapali Centurian Park private limited a company of Amrapali Group had launched its project "Amrapali Centurian Park, Terrace Homes" at Plot No GH-05, Sector Techzone-IV, Greater Noida, Uttar

Pradesh.

"The complainant alleged that the Directors of Amrapali Group had launched the above said project and had given a wide publicity and advertisement in leading newspapers. It was claimed that the project is approved by the competent Authority. He had booked two flats in year 2017 and made full payment of the flats and the Builder-buyer agreement was executed. During enquiry, 168 more complaints with the similar allegations were received against the alleged persons," said the Joint CP.

"In another complaint received by the EOW, the complainant had alleged that M/s Amrapali Smart City Developers Pvt. Ltd. launched its project "Amrapali Golf Homes" at Greater Noida. It was further represented that the possession of the project would be handed over to its buyers in 2014. Accordingly the complainant executed the Builder-buyer agreement and paid Rs. 17, 47,169/- to the alleged company but no possession given till

date," said the Joint CP.

"The First Information Reports were registered and the accused are presently running in Judicial Custody in another cases and after obtaining permission from the Court, the EOW team interrogated and formally arrested the accused Anil Kumar Sharma and Shiv Priya," said the Joint CP.

"The Group took advances from buyers, ranging from 40 per cent to 100 per cent of the value of the flats. An allotment-cum-flat buyer agreement was executed. The Group had promised to complete the construction and hand over the possession of the apartments, within a period of 36 months but they failed to give possession even after elapsing the period of more than 10 years.

The EOW has arrested the Directors and other officials of the Amrapali Group in 14 more cases. Charge-sheets have already been filed in 15 cases. Further investigation is in progress," the Joint CP added.

Gang duping 27K Govt job seekers of ₹1.09 cr busted, 5 held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of five people, the Delhi Police on Thursday claimed to have busted a gang which allegedly duped over 27,000 job seekers of Rs 1.09 crore by promising them jobs through a fake website of an entity.

The fraudsters had created fake website of a fictitious entity - Swastha Avm Jan Kalyan Sansthan (SAJKS) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare -- and offered over 13,000 fake jobs through their bogus website -- www.sajks.org.

The accused has been identified as Ramdhari, Surender Singh, Amandeep Khatkari, Sandeep and Joginder Hathi, resident of Haryana and Delhi.

Police said that the gang was headed by Vishnu Sharma and Ramdhari, who operated from Hisar in Haryana, and since August 2020, the duo along with their associates cheated over 27,000 job seekers by promising them government jobs. Police said that Ramdhari is one of the key

conspirators with Vishnu Sharma who is still at large.

Police also claimed to have recovered Rs 49 lakh of the duped amount and also seized seven mobile phones and three laptops from them.

According to Anyesh Roy, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Cyber Crime Unit (CyPAD), the matter came to light after the Delhi Police's Cyber Cell received a complaint from a job aspirant who was allegedly duped by the gang.

In his complaint, he alleged that he was cheated through a fake website floated in the name of 'Swastha Avm Jan Kanyan Sansthan'. Believing it to be a genuine website, he applied for various job and also paid the registration fees online, the complainant alleged.

"After initial enquiries, a case of cheating and forgery was registered and investigation was taken up. Police collected technical details and analysed the money trail of the fraudulent activities run by the fake website and learnt that

multiple bogus accounts and digital identities were being used to cover their illegal acts," said the DCP.

"On the basis of the technical investigation, the masterminds operating the fake website were identified and located in Hisar, Haryana and during investigation, it was revealed that thousands of job seekers were duped through the website and that the gang members were siphoning out the cheated money from ATMs in Hisar," said the DCP.

"One of the gang members, Amandeep was arrested after he was caught red-handed with drawing cash from an ATM in Hisar. During interrogation, Amandeep revealed that in August this year, he along with his associates -- Vishnu, Sandeep, Ramdhari, Surender and Joginder -- had hatched a conspiracy in Hisar to cheat gullible job seekers by promising them government jobs," said the DCP.

"To execute their plan, Joginder and Sandeep, both software professionals, designed the

fake website. They also opened a bank account in the name of Swasthya Sansthan under proprietorship of Surender. Amandeep was tasked to withdraw cash from various ATMs which was distributed among the gang members on a daily basis," said the DCP.

"Both Vishnu and Ramdhari, who run an online examination centre outsourced for conducting government recruitment tests allegedly misused the data of job aspirants appearing at their online examination centre. The contact details of the candidates who appeared for various online exams in the examination centre run by Vishnu and Ramdhari was used to send SMSes to them, and lure them to apply for job on their fake website," said the DCP.

"The SMSes had link to their website. When a person visited this site, it offered a wide range of jobs under Swasthya Avm Jan Kalyan Sansthan (SAJKS) and the victim was prompted to submit his or her bio-data with the prescribed fee," said the DCP.

"It was further revealed that

more than 13,000 jobs ranging from accountant, lab attendant, ambulance driver among others were being offered through the bogus website and that over 15 lakh SMSes were sent by the gang members till now to their targets due to which more than 27,000 victims have fallen a prey. Victims had paid Rs 400-500 each, thus totalling an amount of more than Rs 1.09 crore till date from October 1," said the DCP.

The Delhi Police has advised people to apply due caution while applying for jobs through online portals and forums such as social media, instant messaging Apps and emails and said the genuineness of the website or company and its representatives should be checked from credible sources before applying for job, or before accepting an invite for interview.

They added that transfer of money for registration and confidential details should be sent only after thorough check of the website or company's credentials.

Say no to firecrackers on Diwali: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said his Government has provided a sustainable alternative to stubble burning with the newly-developed bio-decomposer technique to curb pollution, appealing to the people of Delhi to avoid bursting firecrackers this Diwali in view of increasing air pollution.. Kejriwal said he will be performing Lakshmi Puja along with other Delhi Cabinet Ministers on the day of Diwali, which will be live-streamed by TV channels.

Addressing a digital press conference, Kejriwal said, "There are adverse effects of both Corona and pollution in Delhi this year. "The Delhi government along with the people of Delhi is making all efforts to deal with the issue."

"Every year, the smoke from stubble burning causes pollution in Delhi. This has been continuing for many years now, but no state government has provided any effective solution to the problem of stubble burning,

Farmers do not want to burn stubble because it kills the good bacteria on the farmlands, makes the soil infertile and causes major pollution," he said.

"To provide an alternative to stubble burning, the Delhi government has taken a crucial step in association with the PUSA Institute, he said, adding that the farmers do not need to burn stubble. "They can use a chemical developed by the PUSA Institute on the fields and the stubble turns into manure in just 20 days. I hope that this is the last year when we have to suffer due to pollution. No government should be able to make any excuse to not provide an alternative to stubble burning, as Delhi has given an alternative to all the states," he said. "We had celebrated Diwali together at Connaught Place through a light show. We will celebrate Diwali together this year as well without burning crackers. If we burn crackers, we will be playing with the health of our children and our family. We are arranging for something different for Diwali this year," he added.

India committed to protect its sovereignty: Rajnath



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is determined to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity against unilateralism and aggression, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday. Sending out this tough message to China without naming it, he also said dialogue is the most favoured way to resolve differences.

His statement came in the backdrop of the ongoing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh for the last six months. His reaffirmation that India is a peace loving country but is ready to make any sacrifice to defend itself was a day ahead of the eighth round of Corps Commander level talks between the two countries at the LAC on Friday.

Speaking at the diamond jubilee celebration webinar of the National Defence College (NDC), Rajnath also said India has fostered close relationships and partnerships with like-minded countries to further the common interests of countries in the region and beyond like Australia, Japan and the US.

"Recently, India has been facing other challenges on its borders. India is a peace-loving country. We believe that differences should not become disputes. We attach importance to the peaceful resolution

of differences through dialogue. However, India is determined to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of unilateralism and aggression, no matter what the sacrifice," the minister said.

He also said peace can only be ensured through "the ability to deter war," adding the country has attempted to build this deterrence through a judicious combination of capability development and an emphasis on long term policy of indigenisation.

Elaborating upon deterrence, Rajnath said "perhaps the most fundamental lesson that the roller coaster of the rise and fall of nations taught us was that peace cannot necessarily be achieved by a desire for peace but by the ability to deter war. Unfortunately, the mere desire to seek peace, if not reciprocated by others, does not necessarily succeed in building a harmonious environment in a world beset by conflicting ideas of security, sovereignty and national interests."

He outlined four broad principles that are likely to guide India's quest for national security in the future. The first is the ability to secure India's territorial integrity and sovereignty from external threats and internal challenges.

Second, the ability to create secure and stable conditions that can facilitate India's economic growth, thereby, creating the resources for nation building and to meet individual aspirations.

Third, "we remain steadfast in the desire to protect our interests beyond the borders in

areas where our people reside and our security interests converge. And finally, we also believe that in a globalised and interconnected world, a country's security interests are inter-linked by shared and secure commons," he said.

On forging ties with various countries, Rajnath said the strategic partnership with the U.S. was stronger than ever before. Moreover, the nation shares traditional and deep-rooted relations with Russia. India has also forged a very special partnership with reliable friends like France and Israel, he stated.

Stating that India and Australia share "common concerns" and "shared values", the minister said India-Australia virtual summit in June 2020 gave a fillip to the already strong comprehensive strategic partnership.

Last month, the foreign ministers of Quad grouping consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the US met in Tokyo and later India invited Australia for Exercise Malabar 2020. The four nation exercise is currently underway in the Bay of Bengal.

As regards Pakistan, Rajnath said it continues to remain adamant in the use of terrorism as state policy.

"However, we have achieved substantial success in working with progressive and like-minded countries to not only expose Pakistan's regressive policies but also make it increasingly difficult to continue with its previous business as usual approach," he said.

Grand-alliance Govt will create 'Naya Bihar' by bringing in industry: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the last phase of Bihar, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi promised on Thursday that a grand-alliance Government will create "Naya Bihar" by bringing in industry, ensuring employment, waiving farm loans, reducing electricity tariff by half, and providing free education and justice to girls.

In an appeal to voters of Bihar, the Gandhian scion tweeted in Hindi, "Get ready, now the grand-alliance Government will provide employment to you, waive loans of farmers, reduce power bill by half, provide free education and justice to girls, will clear obstacles in the progress of all classes, will set up trade and industry and will create Naya (new) Bihar".

In another tweet, he attacked the BJP Government at the Centre for not providing employment opportunities to people, alleging that the job crisis in the country is further deepening and the Modi government is doing nothing to resolve it.

"Lack of employment is a national crisis which is further deepening. The Modi Government knows only to make hollow promises, not to

The Modi Government knows only to make hollow promises, not to resolve them," he said citing a news reports that employment opportunities have further reduced in October.

The former Congress president also termed the boat tragedy in Bhagalpur as "very tragic" and urged Congress workers to provide all possible help. "The boat accident in Bhagalpur is very tragic. My condolences to the families of the deceased. The local administration is expected to quickly find and treat the missing passengers. I appeal to the Congress workers to do everything possible to provide all help possible," he said in yet another tweet in Hindi.

A boat carrying nearly 50 people capsized in Bihar's Bhagalpur district on Thursday, killing a 40-year-old woman, while seven others were feared drowned, officials said.

Polling in 71 and 94 constituencies, out of the 243 Assembly seats, was held in the first two phases on October 28 and November 3 respectively. The remaining 78 seats will go to polls on November 7 and the counting of votes will take place on November 10.

The Congress is contesting the elections in alliance with the RJD and Left parties.

CRPF to recover Hardship Allowance from personnel for 30 days' leave

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has asked all its formations to recover Risk and Hardship Allowance from personnel who availed over 30 days of cumulative leave in a year.

The circular styled as "Regarding clarification on Recovery of Risk and Hardship Allowance (RHA) against availed cumulative leave beyond 30 days in a year" was sent across the formations on October 28.

Earlier, the CRPF headquarters had on September 24 issued a clarification articulating that the leave stretching for more than 30 days will make a person ineligible for drawing RHA.



Only when a person avails leave for more than 30 days at a time, he/she will not be eligible for RHA for the whole period, the circular said.

"Leave period of any kind of less than 30 days may not be counted for deduction of RHA," it said, adding, "Take action accord-

ingly." Officials said the rule will be applicable to all the Central paramilitary forces like the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) among others.

Stubble fire share at 42% in Delhi-NCR pollution this season

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With 5,786 incidents on November 4, the share of stubble burning in Delhi-NCR pollution rose to 42 per cent on Thursday, the maximum so far this season.

The satellite images showed 4,965 stubble burning incidents in Punjab, 132 in Haryana, 144 in UP and 585 in Madhya Pradesh on November 4 that was highest in this season. NASA's satellite imagery showed a large, dense cluster of fire dots covering Punjab and parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Of the 119 cities, 18 mostly from north India have recorded the worst level of air quality.

The average 24-hour AQI at 4 pm on Thursday was 464 in Ghaziabad, 464 in Baghpat, 453 in Meerut, 452 in Bahadurgarh, 457 in Greater Noida, 450 in Noida, 443 in Gurgaon, 439 in Muzaffarnagar, 434 in Dharuhera, 442 in Hapur, 427 in Jind, 422 in Kaithal, and 416 in Faridabad.

It was 389 in Ghaziabad, 368 in Greater Noida, 345 in Noida, 331 in Faridabad and 290 in Gurgaon, on Wednesday.

Unfavourable weather conditions involving a sudden change in wind pattern contributed to a deterioration in Delhi's air quality on Thursday. According to Head of India



Meteorological Department's Regional Forecasting Centre, Kuldeep Srivastava, "There is a layer of pollutant in the atmosphere from the smoke emanating from the stubble burning and local sources.

There will be no respite for the next two-three days (till Sunday)" Experts said raging farm fires and a fall in the wind speed and temperatures pushed air quality in Delhi-NCR to the worst levels in around a year on Thursday.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, a total 50220 burning events were detected between Oct 1 and Nov 4. Of them, 45070 were in Punjab, 3600 in Haryana and 1550 in UP. On Wednesday, stubble burning had contributed only five per cent to Delhi's pollution, 10 per cent on Tuesday and 16 per cent on Monday and 40 per cent a day before. Last year, the farm fire contribution to Delhi's pollution had peaked to 44 per cent on November 1.

PM10 levels in Delhi-NCR stood at 561 microgram per cubic metre (µg/m3) at 10 am — the highest since November 15 last year, when it was 637 µg/m3, according to CPCB data. PM10 levels below 100 µg/m3 are considered safe in India. PM10 is particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers and is inhalable. These particles include dust, pollen and mold spores. The levels of PM2.5 — finer particles which can even enter the bloodstream — were 347 µg/m3 at 12 noon. PM2.5 levels up to 60 µg/m3 are considered safe.

All the 36 monitoring stations recorded the air quality in the "severe" category. The neighbouring cities of Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Greater Noida, Gurugram and Noida also recorded "severe" levels of air pollution.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

KVIC's e-portal brings early Diwali for potters



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Earthen lamps (Diya) made by potters in the remote parts of Jaisalmer and Hanumangarh districts in Rajasthan are reaching every corner of the country, thanks to Khadi India's e-portal.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), this year, for the first time, decided to sell diyas online and through stores to become foot soldiers of the Prime minister's vision of Vocal for Local.

The KVIC launched an online sale of Diyas on October 8, and in less than a month, nearly 10,000 diyas have already been sold online. Huge demand for Khadi's clay diyas was seen from the very first day of its launch and in less than 10 days, a majority of designer diyas were completely sold out.

Following this, KVIC launched new sets of designer diyas that are also in huge demand. The sale of diyas is further rising with Diwali inching closer.

KVIC has launched 8 types of designer diyas that are priced nominally between Rs 84 and Rs 108 for a set of 12 pieces. KVIC is also offering a discount of 10% on these diyas. KVIC potters have expressed happiness that they are earning Rs 2 to Rs 3 on sale of every

diya. Khadi's designer diyas are available at www.khadiindia.gov.in.

The KVIC is also selling diyas and other clay items such as Laxmi-Ganesh idols and other decoratives through its outlets in Delhi and other cities. These idols are being made by potters in Varanasi, Rajasthan, Haryana and other states and are fetching good income for the potters. Diyas, on the other hand, is being procured from KVIC units in Pokharan in Jaisalmer and Rawatsar in Hanumangarh district in Rajasthan. Over 10,000 diyas have also been sold through various Khadi outlets.

KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said the online sale of clay items is a unique way to truly empower potters. "Potters in a particular region would only sell their items locally but with the pan-India reach of Khadi's e-portal, these products are being sold in every part of the country. Through KVIC e-portal, diyas made in Rajasthan are being purchased in remote states like Arunachal Pradesh, J&K, Kerala, Assam, Maharashtra, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This has prompted an increase in production and higher income of the potters," Saxena said.

Notably, KVIC has trained these potters and provided them with electric potter wheels and other equipment under Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana that has increased their production and income by up to 5 times.

Submit list of health workers: Centre to State Covid warriors have been identified as priority group to get vaccination



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as strategies are being worked out towards the preparation of Covid-19 vaccine, with the shots expected to be available early next year, the Central Government has asked all the States to submit the list of health workers — doctors, MBBS students, nurses, paramedic staff and ASHA workers — in the Government and private sector who have been identified as the priority group to get the first doses.

In a letter to all the State Governments, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that the Centre is in the process of preparing a database of healthcare workers who may be prioritized for receiving the Covid-19 vaccine once it is available. Asking the State

Governments to undertake the task of listing the healthcare on priority, Bhushan said that "you are requested to direct all facility in charge i.e. both Government and private to submit the data with immediate effect. If required, additional staff may also be engaged using the funds available under the Emergency Response COVID-19 package. Please ensure completeness, quality and authentication of the healthcare workers data."

The data will be compiled at the District level only. "After receiving the completed datasets from the facilities, the Districts will upload the templates on Covid-19 Vaccination Beneficiary Management System (CVBMS), for which guidelines will be shared later," said the health secretary.

After the data is shared, the central government will supply free doses of the vaccine to the state governments as per their need.

According to the Government, the health workers would get shots in the first

phase followed by aged people with co-morbidities.

"Doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, technicians, pharmacists, ward assistants, scientists and research staff, students of medical, dental, Ayush and nursing courses, supporting staff including dieticians, bio medical waste staff, sanitation workers, ambulance drivers and clerical and administrative staff are among those will get the vaccine once it is ready," said an official from the Ministry.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) had last month said that over 500 doctors in the country have died due to Covid-19, even as it criticised the Centre for "washing its hands" of responsibility by admitting that it does not maintain a database of health workers who have succumbed to the viral infection.

The IMA had slammed the Centre after it said in parliament that the Union Health Ministry does not maintain data about the number of healthcare staff who died from Covid-19.

India Inc pledges to work for tackling climate change

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Responding to the call of the Government, India Inc on Thursday pledged to work to combat climate change and build sustainable economies, thereby helping the country achieve its targets under the Paris Agreement.

CEOs of companies like Reliance Industries Ltd, Tech Mahindra, Dalmia Cement, Ambuja Cement, Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma and Adani Transmission, among others, held a virtual discussion with Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar at the India CEO Forum on Climate Change who had exhorted them to work for helping India achieve climate change targets.

Following the discussion, they issued a 'Declaration of Private Sector on Climate Change', pledging to take necessary action to help India achieve its targets under the Paris Agreement.

The declaration stressed that "a coordinated response by the

government and private sector on climate change that protects the country's interests and ensures that India is on track towards meeting its climate change obligations under the Paris Agreement is the need of the hour".

The companies recognised that India is committed to combating climate change and has demonstrated exemplary leadership in addressing the challenge.

India is party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The objective of the convention is to achieve stabilisation of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, it noted.

The goals are reduction in emissions' intensity of GDP by 33-35 per cent by 2030 from the 2005 level, achieving about 40 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030, and creating

an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

Addressing the India CEO Forum on Climate Change, Javadekar had requested the companies to provide their internal roadmaps and targets on a yearly basis to the Environment Ministry and participate in achieving targets set under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

"I appeal and I'm sure factories are reducing emissions and bringing more greenery in campuses. Using new technologies to save water and (increase) energy efficiency is also a concern which you are taking care of. You (CEOs) are the captains. This is a CEOs' forum. You will give shape to India's actions," he said. About the importance of combating climate change, Javadekar said India was doing well towards achieving its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

Celebrate firecracker-free Diwali, appeals Maha Govt

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a virtual ban on the bursting of firecrackers during the forthcoming Diwali, the Maharashtra Government on Thursday appealed to the people across the State to celebrate firecracker-free festival of lights to prevent Covid-19 patients from being exposed to air pollution caused by firecrackers.

Hours after Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope exhorted the people to refrain from bursting firecrackers, the State Government came out with a set of guidelines for the Diwali celebrations this year.

Among other things, the state government appealed to the people to celebrate this year's Diwali in a simple manner and not to burst firecrackers as the smoke from it would contribute to air pollution which would add to the respiratory problems of the Covid-19 patients in the state. It also urged the people to wear masks and maintain social distancing

and avoid crowds during the festival. It also asked the children and senior citizens to refrain from stepping out of their homes during Diwali.

The State government also appealed to the people not to organise social events or early morning sessions during the festival. If they want to organise events during the Diwali festival, the people could do so online on social media platforms like Facebook and Cable networks.

"In place of social events, the people can organise blood donation and health camps during the festival. They can also organise programmes to create awareness among epidemics like Dengue and Malaria.

Earlier in the afternoon, talking to media persons, the State Health Minister said that he would personally request chief minister Uddhav Thackeray to ban bursting of firecrackers.

Tope, who reviewed the

pandemic situation at a meeting of Covid-19 State Task Force and Death Audit Committee, appealed to the people to maintain social distancing and wear masks during the festival.

"Though the Covid-19 situation is very much under control, we will increase the number of tests and increase fever surveillance among the people during the coming days," Tope said.

Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation announced that it would ban the bursting or lighting of all fire-crackers at public places during the upcoming Diwali festival.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani said that any violators would be penalized and the SOPs in this regard would be issued shortly. "We have proposed the ban on bursting of firecrackers in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the early onset of the winter," Kakani said.

High drama amid ED raid at Kodyeri's house

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Raid by Enforcement Directorate officials in the residence of Bineesh Kodyeri, son of CPI(M) State secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan, led to a stand off between the ED officials and officers of the Kerala Police on Thursday.

The sleuths of the ED had launched a simultaneous raid in the residence and business premises of Bineesh since Wednesday morning. The raid in the house of the CPI(M)'s younger son continued till 11 am on Thursday in the presence of his wife and mother-in-law.

According to Renitta, wife of

Bineesh, the ED team wanted her to sign on a statement in which it was mentioned that the latter seized the credit card belonging to Anoop Mohammed from the residence. Mohammed from the residence. Mohammed was being arrested earlier by the Narcotics Control Board on charges of drug trafficking and money laundering. He had told the ED about his business dealings with Bineesh Kodyeri and this led the investigating agency to arrest the son of the Marxist leader.

There was a stand off between the members of the Kodyeri family and the ED team once the latter finished the raid operations. "We were

harassed and assaulted by the ED officials. Both our children were threatened by them," alleged Renitta while speaking to reporters who had assembled in large numbers. A team of Kerala Police too had a face off with the central agency as the former blocked the vehicles of the ED while they were coming out of the palatial house. The cops wanted to inspect the vehicles of the ED and this led to tense moments. A team of senior officials from the office of the Child Welfare Commission too reached the spot on hearing the news that the grandchildren of the party secretary were threatened by the ED officials.

Nitish's outburst

The JD(U) leader takes on Yogi Adityanath over infiltration, says he is fighting his last election. Will this rescue his political worth?



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is fighting the binary of being wanted and unwanted at the same time. And is desperate to squeeze some self-worth in between, be it for legacy or future rehabilitation. He is wanted by his dominant alliance partner, the BJP, as the chief ministerial face, given his regional appeal, the absence of a towering leader in its own State unit and his utility as a deflector of criticism that the Central party gobbles up allies. At the same time, he is unwanted by the people for a dismal performance in his last term, a burden that the BJP is not quite happy with, what with the ignominy of onions being hurled at him. On his part,

the Janata Dal (United) leader is torn, too, between his ideological moorings as a secular-socialist and political expediency. A conflict he had forcibly resolved to stay relevant but is now too tired to continue. Which is why he publicly announced that this would be his last election as campaigning for the State Assembly election ended yesterday. Perhaps, that also explains his exasperation with the BJP without which he would not have got the throne after he deserted Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Lalu Yadav. Even now, it is the BJP carpet-bombing the State all the way and deploying Prime Minister Narendra Modi, generating a swell that could get him there. But at heart, Nitish knows that he wouldn't really be deserving of the verdict if he got it, facing as he does unprecedented negativity for failing to push the State's development, mishandling the pandemic and bungling the rehabilitation of jobless migrant workers and students. Besides, he doesn't want to be seen as further ignoring local issues or being swept away by the tide of the BJP, which has predictably talked only about national issues than pledging deliverables at the State level. Or be seen as betraying his grain. So in the last leg, he reached out to Muslim voters in the Seemanchal region, dispelling fears over UP Chief Minister and BJP campaigner Yogi Adityanath's speech on "throwing out infiltrators" and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Though he did not name Adityanath, he dismissed the speech as "faltu", saying everyone was an Indian and safe in his State. He even tweeted, "It is our duty and in our culture to take everyone along. Bihar will progress only then." Clearly, he is against the BJP's Hindutva-driven agenda and its positioning of everything else as anti-national. A seasoned politician, he knows that the Opposition, now spearheaded by the feisty RJD leader and Lalu's son Tejashwi Yadav, has a pulse of the locals. Therefore, he wants to make the right noises than appear as a genuflecting stooge. Besides, Nitish has an axe to grind with Adityanath, who is the new-found favourite of Bihar's electorate, comprising a large chunk of returnee migrants and students, for rehabilitating them in camps in UP. Nitish has never been comfortable with either the new citizenship law or the National Register of Citizens (NRC). In fact, the JD(U) suffered a blow with then vice-president Prashant Kishor publicly asking him to rethink the support for the legislation. And though Nitish assured that NRC would not be implemented in the State, he did not contest the CAA for enabling a religion-based criterion that privileged naturalisation of persecuted refugees. But now, at the fag end of his political career, he is not willing to compromise his integrity anymore.

The man, who once built his relevance by pitting the majoritarian BJP against the secular-socialist Lalu, oscillating between both depending on trade winds, is now trapped by his own machinations. He cannot go back to Lalu or the secular camp, having shut the door forever when he chose the BJP. And although he crafted a new caste equation, uniting the most downtrodden, the extreme backward castes and Dalits, that number-crunching did nothing to solve what became a statewide epidemic of joblessness and hopelessness. The BJP, though ambitious about being the single largest party in the State and having its own CM some day, will be chariotteering Nitish for now. And despite promising big economic packages and special status in 2015, it didn't quite push them, unwilling to benefit Nitish by association, preferring to keep him at its mercy. With his political stock at an all-time low, he could be attacking the BJP to show that he still counts. And by dramatically signing off on the campaign as his last, he might be hoping for some emotional response that gives some respectability to JD(U) than it being reduced to the status of a B-team of the BJP. But if he goes back on these statements again, he would be lost forever.

Legal conundrum

In the biggest democratic exercise conducted during the pandemic, the US isn't doing a great job upholding it



Everywhere else in the world, where people directly elect a national leader, whether it is France, Mexico or Nigeria, the candidate with the plurality of the vote wins. Which is perfectly reasonable. Sure, there can often be legal challenges to the way an election has been conducted, particularly in nations new to the concept of democracy and in those where religious and ethnic fissures exist. In such cases, political violence can erupt and elections might be far from "free and fair", whether they are presidential or legislative. But this is hardly expected of a nation that for decades has been the beacon of democracy. If anything, the US, over the past two days,

has been a horrible advertisement for the concept of democracy. Let alone the convoluted "electoral college" system that chooses the President, let alone the fact that twice in the last two decades the candidate who won the presidency lost the popular vote, the fact that the President himself is threatening a legal challenge to the polls even before the last votes are counted is frankly ridiculous. The US does have an established postal ballot system which many States have strengthened, thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic. Few other nations conduct such extensive absentee voting but for the US, where close to a quarter million individuals have succumbed to the pandemic, this was a logical step to curb the spread of the disease. Sure, the system can be manipulated but because most American States have their own set of rules for polling, many precautions were taken. However, it appears inevitable that Donald Trump and his team will challenge the legality of the polls, particularly mail-in ballots, and the time it is taking to count them. The matter is almost certain to head up to the US Supreme Court where he has managed to tilt the balance totally in favour of the conservative side. The US Supreme Court did take a major call in the controversial 2000 election when it stopped the vote count in Florida, which turned the election in favour of George W Bush. The consequence that decision had for modern history is known to all of us. It would be vital for the US Supreme Court to remember that any decision it might make on the elections will have a global reaction since the US has an outside influence on policy. And should the courts intervene in the democratic process at all if there is no clear evidence of wrongdoing? A valid vote should be counted whether it was mailed in or cast at the polling centre.

As the counting continues in the tense presidential race, visuals of mayhem on the streets erode faith in an institution that should have remained sacred. Supporters of both Trump and Democrat candidate Joe Biden are confronting each other. In response to Trump's aggressive effort to challenge the vote count and even accusing Biden of trying "to steal the election," protesters in Minneapolis blocked a freeway while in Portland, hundreds gathered on the waterfront with another group in downtown urging for racial justice. However, things took a violent turn when protesters started smashing shop windows and confronting police officers and National Guard troops. Pro-Trump protesters gathered outside the county recorder's office in Phoenix and outside a ballot-counting centre in Detroit, demanding that officials "stop the count." The biggest democratic exercise conducted during the pandemic has turned into a farce.

Nuh still a cauldron

Fresh sociological studies should be conducted to ascertain how far the Islamic prohibitions on certain issues have kept the Meo Muslims backward



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Tauseef Ahmed and his accomplice Rehan were arrested by the Haryana police from the Mewat region (Nuh district) for the murder of teenager Nikita Tomar in broad daylight in Ballabhgarh (Faridabad district). Tauseef was, allegedly, compelling Nikita to marry him and convert to Islam. In a separate development, a group of lawyers and a social worker have filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking formation of a special investigating team (SIT) to probe alleged forceful conversions of Hindus in Nuh. The petition, filed through Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, argues that the district administration and the Haryana police have failed to exercise their due powers.

Nuh is different from the rest of Haryana because of its religious demography. While Muslims constitute 7.06 per cent of the State's population (as per Census, 2011), they constitute 75 per cent of the district. As per the 1971 census, the Muslims constituted 62 per cent of the population in the five *tehsils* that now form Nuh. This reversal of the majority-minority relationship has had its consequences, particularly in the polarised context prevailing in the rest of the country. That's why Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar declared that his Government would bring a law against forced conversions and set up a board to protect Hindu properties.

The Mewat district was renamed as Nuh in 2016. Earlier in 2001, Mewat (1,507 sq km) was carved out from Gurgaon district. Nuh has been in the news for the wrong reasons. Mewati gangs are notorious for cattle smuggling, automobile thefts and highway robberies. Jails in Gurugram and Faridabad districts have a disproportionate number of Mewati inmates. Terror suspects have been arrested from Nuh. There have been reports of communal disturbances.

Yet things need not have played out like this. The Meo Muslims were a different lot; they were more or less Hindu in custom and culture until the beginning of the 20th century. Their syncretism could have been an example for the rest of the Muslims of the subcontinent. Major Percy William Powlett wrote about the Meos of Alwar (then a princely State) in *Alwar Gazetteer* (1878). He said: "The Meos are half-Hindu by their habits. Mosques are rarely to



be seen in their villages. There are only eight mosques in the 50 villages of the *tehsil* of Tijarah. Leaving aside the temples, the places of worship of the Meos are very much similar to those of Hindu neighbours. They are known, for instance, as *Paanch Peera, Baisa and Chahand*."

Mewat, as a historical region, extends into Alwar and Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan and Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh beyond its heartland, that is Nuh. One has to cross the region while going to either Agra or Jaipur from Delhi. It lies at the heart of the "golden triangle" tourist circuit comprising Delhi, Agra and Jaipur.

It is barely known to the outsiders how this region, merely 70-80 km away from Delhi, acted as the laboratory of Islamic alienation over the last century. Maulana Mohammad Ilyas (1885-1944), who started the itinerant Tablighi movement (Tablighi Jamaat), chose Mewat as its nursery in the 1920s. The movement has been run from its headquarters in the Banglewali Masjid in the Nizamuddin area of Delhi. Since Maulana Ilyas was a product of Dar-ul-Uloom at Deoband (in fact, a pet student of its co-founder Ahmed Rashid Gangohi), the imprint of its orthodoxy is evident in the Tablighi movement.

Tablighi is an outreach movement by Muslim missionaries to take authentic Islam to the doorsteps of the believers. It encourages nominal Muslims (*Momin*) to become true Muslims (*Ihsaan/Muhsin*). The process involves disavowal of all

“THE MEO MUSLIMS WERE A DIFFERENT LOT; THEIR SYNCRETISM COULD HAVE BEEN AN EXAMPLE TO THE REST OF THE MUSLIMS OF THE SUBCONTINENT. THE ORTHODOXY, CHAMPIONED BY THE TABLIGHI MOVEMENT, CHANGED ALL THAT

"*Kafiresque*" (that is not sanctioned by Islam) practices, which might be the legacy of the pre-Islamic past. The recital of six *Kalimas* (six verses of Quran) and performing *namaaz* form the foundation of Tablighi practices. The six *Kalimas* are avowals that there is "no God but Allah and

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." The sixth *Kalima* is especially a rejection of disbelief and polytheism. The *Kalimas* constitute disavowal of associating Allah with any other divine authority. Naturally, syncretism is not merely out of place, but sinful, to be practised alongside Islam.

Way back in 1970, Hashim Amir Ali, Director, Rural Institute, Jamia Millia Islamia, had, by examining the features of the movement, stated that the "institution of Tabligh has begun to blow a wind of change for the worse in the hitherto tranquil and uniquely syncretic culture of the Meos" (*The Meos of Mewat: Old Neighbours of New Delhi, P41*). Ali feared that orthodoxy, championed by Tabligh, would be ruinous for the economic life of the Meos. The religious injunction against interest might discourage them from accepting loans from banks, opening bank accounts or even joining cooperative societies. It might be remembered that Dar-ul-Uloom at Deoband has pronounced several *fatwas* against any kind of borrowing/lending which involves payment of interest. It is high time that fresh sociological studies are undertaken to ascertain how far the Islamic prohibitions on certain issues (like interest on lending/borrowing and family planning methods) have kept the Muslim community backward and impoverished.

The result of the Tablighi movement manifested during the tumultuous times of 1946-47 when a popular demand for a

separate "Meostan" was raised. Interestingly, it was pitched by the Communist leader Kunwar Mohammed Ashraf. Its boundaries were envisaged as extending from Mehrauli in Delhi to Bandikui in Dausa district of Rajasthan. The Meos of Alwar and Bharatpur had formed the Rajputana Muslim League. One of its sections was determined to achieve Meostan, envisaged as adjacent to Pakistan, by the power of guns. This naturally culminated in a riotous situation where Meos suffered heavy losses due to the Hindu backlash. Narayan Bhaskar Khare, the Congressman who was then the Dewan of the Alwar State, had described the situation in detail in his memoirs (*My Political Memoirs or Autobiography, 1959*).

However, Lord Mountbatten's Partition declaration, dated June 3, 1947, which stipulated the division of both Punjab and Bengal, knocked out the plan for a Meostan. Beleaguered, a large number of Meos fled to Pakistan but only to be invited back to India by the Jawaharlal Nehru Government. Stopping them from migrating to Pakistan also became an article of faith for Mahatma Gandhi. Khare, therefore, was not certain that permanent peace had returned to Mewat. He was apprehensive that communalism could still rear its ugly head. Time has vindicated Khare as the discontent continues to simmer.

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

SOUND BITE

He (Nitish Kumar) is the most greedy person and will do anything to remain in power. He used to stand with folded hands in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at political rallies.



Lok Janshakti Party chief
—Chirag Paswan

As I've said repeatedly in the last few months, we need another (COVID) rescue package. And we need to do it before the end of the year.



US Senator
—Mitch McConnell

We will celebrate Diwali together this year as well, without burning crackers. If we burn crackers, we will be playing with the health of our children and our family.



Delhi Chief Minister
—Arvind Kejriwal

Kai Havertz has tested positive for COVID-19. He is in isolation. Everybody has been tested, the whole squad since, and the results have come negative.



Chelsea manager
—Frank Lampard

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tejashwi's time

Sir — A month ago, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was cruising merrily to win a fourth term in the Bihar Assembly while the *Mahagathbandhan* (Rashtriya Janata Dal, Congress and the Left parties) was struggling to stitch together an agenda, which could bring people of all castes and ages together. A confident BJP allowed the incumbent Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, chief of the Janata Dal (United), to lead the coalition. Even so, Lok Janshakti Party, an old member of the NDA, sulked about it and turned into a vocal critic of the Chief Minister.

However, things changed when massive crowds thronged the rallies of Tejashwi Yadav, throwing up more than one possibility. Even the *Mahagathbandhan* emerged as a cohesive unit with an agenda that caught the imagination of the poor, oppressed and the economically backward. The NDA carried on with its usual rhetoric woven around Article 370, Ram Mandir, Muslims via Pakistan and nationalism blissfully. It underplayed crucial issues like the woes of migrant workers, the poor state of the health sector,

Ban crackers, now

Since the onset of winter, Delhi has been wrapped in a blanket of toxic air. On November 4, the Air Quality Index (AQI) entered the "severe" zone. The PM10 levels in Delhi-National Capital Region stood at 561 microgram per cubic meter (g/m3) at 8 am, the highest since November 15 last year, when it was 637 g/m3, according to Central Pollution Control Board data. Experts say that the rise in pollution is due to low wind speeds and solar radiation. On November 3, the noxious haze reduced visibility to merely 600 metres at the Safdarjung Observatory and it increased to 1,200 metres the next morning. As if the things aren't already bad, some people in Delhi-NCR decided to celebrate Karva Chauth by bursting firecrackers.

A day after the National Green Tribunal asked the Ministry of Environment and Forests to ban the use of firecrackers from November 7 to 30 in the interest of public health and environment, a number of States issued restrictive orders. Starting from Rajasthan and Odisha to Bengal and Haryana, all these States have



banned the use of firecrackers. However, it is up to people to take the situation seriously. By continuing to burn fire crackers, they are not just flouting rules but also aiding in the degradation of the overall air quality. And not to forget that toxic pollutants can make people more susceptible to COVID.

Bal Govind
Noida

Long road to recovery

Sir — The BJP Government has cited the GST inflows, which crossed the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time in this financial year, as a clear sign of recovery in the economy after its 23.9 per cent contraction in the first quarter. However, economists and businesses are sceptical about the sustainability of this

trend. Only if this level of revenue is maintained through the rest of 2020-21, will we see a reduction in the shortfall in the GST compensation for the States. Also, the economy can be firmly back on its feet only if exports and private investment return to pre-COVID levels. At present, need-based and time-bound stimulus can go a long way in achieving such a turnaround. However, we need

to await data for November and December before we can confidently say the economy has recovered.

Yash Pal Ralhan
Jalandhar

Race to White House

Sir — With no clear winner emerging from the counting so far, the result of the US presidential elections hangs in the balance. Donald Trump's description of the election as "a major fraud on America" without basis, his accusation against Joe Biden of trying "to steal the election" and his decision to ask the Supreme Court "to stop all vote counting" have just added to the confusion. In the US elections, nothing is predictable as it's the swing States that hold the key to the White House. The race is so close that it can go either way. With both sides ready to deploy legal teams, a cloudy outcome could possibly lead to a court battle. In such a scenario, it might take days or even weeks for the results to come out.

Krishnan Ramani
Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A 2016 redux in the US?

The battle in the courts will be long and exhausting, and there's not going to be any closure or healing in the US



GWYNNE DYER

By the time you read this, you may know more than I do as I write it, but some conclusions about the US presidential election are already certain. First, this has been essentially a re-run of the 2016 presidential poll, when Hillary Clinton was the Democratic nominee four years ago. The final Electoral College tally and therefore the presidency may still be in doubt, but we already know the popular vote as the knife-edge race tilted toward Democrat Joe Biden early on November 5, with wins in Michigan and Wisconsin bringing him close to a majority. President Donald Trump claimed he was being cheated and went to court to try and stop the vote counting. His allegation of a giant “fraud on the American people” is not a reckless statement made in the heat of the moment by a losing candidate. There is no doubt that this chest-beating was a calculated move to discredit a late surge of Democrat votes as postal ballots are counted.

The tragedy is that this “blue shift” syndrome has become a set pattern of the US presidential elections. More so this year after 100 million US citizens voted through the postal ballot or in advance as they tried to dodge the Coronavirus bullet. Trump has been trying for days, in the run-up to the election, to defame postal ballots and to assail the credibility of the US electoral system. Not something that is particularly difficult for him to do considering the fact that he controls the Justice Department, and the Republicans dominate the executive machinery of swing States.

However, as the momentum moved to Biden, the unfazed politician made a televised speech from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, to say that “when the count is finished, we believe we will be the winners.” But does Biden not realise that there is no more a guarantee of victory than Hillary Clinton’s three million majority in 2016?

So the Electoral College is as big a problem as ever, and the “great demographic shift” that was going to make a Republican victory impossible is still becalmed somewhere over the horizon. Second, the Republicans will most likely keep their majority in the Senate, in which case they can block any new legislation the Democrats want to pass even if Biden does win the presidency. That includes any attempt to tackle the Electoral College issue, which was a fairly forlorn hope in any case. Not winning the Senate also means the Democrats cannot create new Supreme Court judges, which is their only possible way to roll back the Republican policy of packing that court with conservative appointees (currently a six-three majority). In that case Supreme Court decisions that will probably re-ban abortion and dismantle former President Obama’s healthcare reforms, will be impossible to reverse.

Finally, the culture war that already obsesses and disfigures the US will continue. Indeed, it will intensify if Trump loses the election and continues to deny it and claim fraud. Losing the presidency is virtually an existential question for him, since without it he would be exposed to an avalanche of legal charges. There has been some speculation that an amnesty would encourage him to accept his electoral defeat and leave the White House quietly, and that would be a good idea if it could actually work. Unfortunately, even a victorious Biden could only offer Trump an amnesty for federal charges, and some of Trump’s worst legal problems are at the State level.

So Trump must hang on to the leadership of the Republican Party and mount as many legal challenges as possible for his own survival. Back in his real-estate days, his first reflex was to tie his opponents up in court battles, even if the courts were ultimately likely to decide against him. At the very least that was a way of buying more time, and now there’s also the slim chance that some key lower-court decision might be appealed all the way up to his friends on the Supreme Court. The battle in the courts will be long and exhausting, and there’s not going to be any “closure” or “healing” in the US in the aftermath of the election.

At the time of writing this column, it looks like Joe Biden will win and become the 46th President of the US but his victory will be as unconvincing in the eyes of foreigners as it is to many of his fellow Americans. A conclusion that has been growing elsewhere about the US since 2016 has only been strengthened by this election: America is not to be trusted. Are they to be trusted as partners and/or allies? For example, within few inches of victory, Biden immediately announced that if he wins, the US will rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement (which the US officially quit on November 4), but it is actually a treaty and he’ll never get ratified by the Senate. Obama got around this once by pretending it wasn’t really a treaty, but it’s hard to get away with that trick twice. The same goes for the US’ existing alliances and trade deals. They may be safe under a Biden presidency but other countries would be unwise to count on them for the long term. The partners and allies will have to start looking for insurance elsewhere, because it is now clear that Trump was not a fluke. The “other America” is permanently just one roll of the electoral dice away from regaining power, and it is both ugly and unreliable.

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

PEOPLE HAD TO RUN FROM PILLAR TO POST TO GET A SCHEDULED CASTE CERTIFICATE. NOW WE WILL ENSURE THAT THE PAPER IS AVAILABLE IN 14 DAYS.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER
MAMATA BANERJEE

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THESE POLL SOPS WON’T WORK. THE TMC KNOWS ITS POLL PROSPECT ALL TOO WELL AND THE MOVE EXPLAINS ITS DESPERATION.

—GENERAL SECRETARY, BENGAL BJP
SAYANTAN BASU

When will we ever learn?

The Army’s occupation of heights along Kailash Range may have strengthened the Govt’s hand in talks with China but it has not grasped the significance of the military action



DEEPAK SINHA

On October 15, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated that the India-China talks on disengagement were “confidential and a work in progress.” Subsequently, former military veteran and journalist Ajai Shukla wrote on October 23 that the Government was in talks with the Chinese for a “Doklam-type agreement” which would result in “mutual troop withdrawals in the Pangong Tso sub-sector of Eastern Ladakh.” If he is correct, and there is no reason to disbelieve Shukla, given the accuracy of his earlier reports on the imbroglio, then our political establishment (as it has on numerous occasions earlier) is once again showing utter ignorance of how the military operates and is in the process of succumbing to Chinese pressure, grasping at straws in the hope of achieving what can, at best, be termed as illusory peace.

The truth is that even a cursory peep into our history suggests that our politicians lack the resolve to see things through, especially when the going gets tough. Oddly enough, they have also repeatedly shown themselves to be remarkably incompetent when it comes to negotiations with adversaries. Pandit Nehru, for example, turned out to be extremely short-sighted in his handling of the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) issue, seeking to negotiate a settlement just as preparations to recapture lost territory were moving forward. We are still paying with blood in J&K for his follies then.

To add to that, Nehru’s disastrous handling of the Indo-China relationship continues to haunt us to this day as well. What was pathetic at the time was his abject surrender and acceptance of defeat without even a semblance of resistance, reflected in his farewell address on radio to our Assamese brethren after our forces had retreated from Arunachal Pradesh. This was not just a reflection of his incompetence or inability to understand the manner in which the military operates, but more importantly, showed him to be irresolute and lacking in moral fibre as well, a flaw that taints most of our political establishment even today.

While one cannot blame Prime Minister Shastri for either lack of spine or absence of principles, he, too, showed complete ignorance of how the military operates and, therefore, a remarkable lack of judgement in his talks with Field Marshal Ayub Khan of Pakistan at Tashkent after the Indo-Pak War of 1965. The decision to vacate Haji Pir Pass, a key feature in the Pir Panjal mountain range, was to put it mildly, not just short-sighted but utterly naïve. The fact of the matter is that its capture, after a brilliantly-planned and executed operation, not only allowed us the option to reach Poonch directly from Uri but also dominate the important townships of Rawalkot, Bagh and Kotla in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). They could have been ours to occupy at any time of our choosing. These locations are now used by Pakistan as launchpads to push militants into Kashmir.

While the Bangladesh Liberation War was undoubtedly an unequivocal victory, its post-war impact weighed heavily on our military. Not only did Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reduce pensions and the status of the military, she agreed to the return of 90,000 prisoners of war (PoWs) without either forcing Pakistan to enter into an agreement on the status of J&K or getting back our own servicemen captured by them. The fact that 54 of our servicemen continue to languish in Pakistani captivity is shameful. But what is worse is the Government’s utter disinterest in getting our PoWs back. As some may be aware, there is an ongoing case in the Supreme Court, lodged by their next of kin, requesting it to direct

“IF INDIA UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MILITARY ACTION, IT WOULD REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE IN ANY TALKS JUST AS THE CHINESE HAVE DONE OVER THEIR OCCUPATION OF DISPUTED TERRITORY IN THE DEPSANG SUB-SECTOR. WHILE IT IS QUITE APPARENT THAT THE CHINESE ARE NOT IN A FAVOURABLE POSITION TO LAUNCH A FULL-FLEDGED OFFENSIVE AT PRESENT DUE TO HOSTILE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND A LACK OF REQUISITE FORCES, THE SITUATION MAY WELL CHANGE BY NEXT SPRING”



the Government to take all necessary measures to arrange for their return, sadly with little success till now. This is not just a reflection of the callousness or lack of empathy within our political establishment that only gives importance to anything that impacts its electoral prospects, but also indicates all of us citizens, who prefer to live in ignorance.

Leaving all this aside, to understand what exactly the signing of a “Doklam-type agreement” signifies, we would need to focus on how that confrontation, in July 2017, which lasted for 75 days, played out. To understand the context, it is necessary to remind oneself that at that time, our general elections were due in just over a year and the NDA Government was already facing difficulties because of a faltering economy, not helped by a rather disastrous demonetisation exercise.

Clearly the last thing the Centre needed was trouble on our borders. This is ironic, given that the BJP probably won handsomely because of the Pulwama incident and our subsequent attack on Balakot.

The critical importance of the Doklam plateau lies in the fact that it straddles the People’s Liberation Army (PLA)-occupied Chumbi Valley, which is to its north, and the Jamphri Ridge to its south, which overlooks the Siliguri Corridor, India’s lifeline to its North-Eastern States. Though the status of the Doklam plateau itself is under dispute with the Chinese laying claim, it was till recently in the possession of our steadfast ally, Bhutan. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect that the Indian Army would intervene in support of the Bhutanese Army if the Chinese attempted to illegally occupy the plateau, given the potential threat that it posed to our own security as well.

Therefore, when the PLA commenced road construction towards

the Jamphri ridge, our Army did respond to the ingress in an extremely robust manner to halt Chinese road construction activity. Surprisingly, however, this action was at the initiative of the local commanders on the ground, unwilling to be bullied by the PLA, reportedly much against the wishes of the Army Headquarters and the Government, who were probably fearful of the consequences of opposing the Chinese.

Favourable public opinion, however, forced the Government’s hand and they had no choice but to walk the talk on nationalism. This matter was subsequently supposedly resolved at the Wuhan informal summit where a vaguely-worded statement, the so-called “Wuhan Consensus”, was released. In view of the mutually-agreed withdrawal of troops by both sides at the confrontation site to reduce tension and probably based on good faith, the Indian Army carried out troop withdrawals as required. However, the PLA reneged and after pulling back only a few hundred metres, established a new camp, recommending road construction activity along a slightly different alignment three months later. In the process, it illegally occupied much of the Doklam plateau.

The latest reports suggest that they completed construction in January 2019 with the road terminating at the base of the Jamphri ridge.

However, the response of the Government to this provocation was remarkably subdued with no counter-action being initiated by the Army against renewed Chinese activity. Clearly its hands had been tied by the Government making abundantly clear that the present Prime Minister had, like those before him, succumbed to Chinese pressure despite being fully aware of the grave implications of the Chinese activity. Therefore, the

Government’s refusal to acknowledge the PLA’s alleged occupation of approximately 1,000 sq km of disputed territory in eastern Ladakh was not unexpected. Nor was the public endorsement of this stand despite the loss of 20 bravehearts to Chinese treachery at Galwan.

Since then, the surprise pro-active action of the Army to occupy heights along the Kailash Range may have strengthened the hands of the Government in the continuing negotiations but it has not truly understood the significance of the military action.

If India understood the importance of the military action, it would refuse to discuss the issue in any talks just as the Chinese have done over their occupation of disputed territory in the Depsang sub-sector. While it is quite apparent that the Chinese are not in a favourable position to launch a full-fledged offensive at present due to hostile weather conditions and a lack of requisite forces, the situation may well change by next spring.

Would the Government then still remain steadfast in its aim and continue to confront the bully, or will it back down, as it has before, accepting some facile, token, face-saving tidbit thrown at us by the Chinese? After the Centre’s earlier misstep in Doklam, there must be fairly serious reservations, within the security establishment at least, as to whether this Government can follow through on its present course to its logical end, especially given that China controls the escalation ladder.

Actions always speak louder than words and we will soon know if Modi has it in him to be different from those in whose footsteps he follows.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a Consultant with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

Address the emerging pandemic within the pandemic

The chances of mental health turning into a public health challenge in a post-Corona world are vast only if it is left unattended



SUMIT MITTAL

The Coronavirus outbreak has birthed another pandemic, that of mental illness. With the world having spent nearly a year battling the outbreak and Indians having spent over six months under various lockdowns necessitated by the contagion, mental well-being has been hit like never before. The major issues that have been reported to have been associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insom-

nia, denial, anger and fear. These feelings are fuelled by the fact that people are continually living in fear of contracting the disease. People with pre-existing health conditions and the elderly are under stress of succumbing to the Coronavirus. Worryingly, the urge to commit suicide is looming among the frontline workers and the medical fraternity because of their exhausting and hectic schedules and the ominous situation surrounding them.

Cases of Coronavirus-related suicides have been reported from Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Kerala. In fact, suicide was the leading cause of over 300 non-Coronavirus deaths reported in India during the nationwide lockdown. And then, there is the added pressure of salary cuts, furloughs and job losses. Those who are fortunate enough to have a job still are having to cope with extended working hours and household chores. All these

factors have left people irritable and brooding. It is evident that even after the pandemic ends, the mental health conditions brought on by the contagion and their socio-economic impact on people will linger for quite some time.

According to a survey, about 41 per cent of the population in India has been affected by loneliness. Between 33 to 74 per cent of the people have reported psychological distress and over 40 per cent are suffering from depression and anxiety. As India faces a mental health pandemic, it is high time that the State invests in establishing a holistic mental healthcare infrastructure that is not hidden under the carpet of physical healthcare.

However, the one good thing that has come out of all this is that the contagion has put the spotlight back on mental health issues. Before the pandemic struck, mental well-being was largely ignored and people did not talk



about it, forget about seeking help. Now, India is more comfortable talking about it. Once the problem is detected, it becomes easy to devise a cure. Vocalising the problem has also given a better insight into things that bother people.

As of now, India accounts for 2.2 lakh suicides each year, as per a World

Health Organisation (WHO) report, and work needs to be done from the grassroot level. Beginning with education, the desired outcome of successful treatment can be realised. Given the paltry number of psychiatrists in the country, the Government needs to increase the number of seats for students of the discipline in the already

existing channels.

Following the initiation at the educational level, reform and sensitivity need to be brought in at the professional level, too. Given the dismal state of affairs right now, where psychiatrists prescribe medicines at the start of treatment without thoroughly assessing the patient’s condition, counselling requires an intensive revival. Likewise, a structured guideline describing the conduct of the treatment must be in place. It is important to increase the access of troubled people to counselling and mental health centres and doctors. This may seem difficult given India’s poor mental health infrastructure and massive population, but the surge in the number of people suffering right now demands massive efforts nevertheless.

During the pandemic and in the post-Corona world, there is a crying need for mental health insurance, too, so that it is instrumental in relieving the

burden of treatment expenditure. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) in 2018 asked mental illnesses to be included in regular health insurance coverage. In line with its directions, some insurers have already started customising mental health products but they are few and far between.

Technology can be harnessed to keep mental health issues at bay. Virtual contact can be a means to connect with isolated people. The arrival of virtual consultancy and chatbots has encouraged the masses to seek help. This has helped those who fear being discovered and judged by others. The chances of mental health issues turning into a sweeping problem in a post-Corona world are vast only if they are left unattended.

(The writer is founder and CEO of a mental wellness platform)

GST collections expected to be 30 per cent lower

About ₹9L crore in FY21

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Government facing severe pressure on revenues due to the Covid disruptions may end the current financial year with a 30 per cent drop in Goods and Service Tax (GST) collections.

This would be a big setback to the Centre that is already burdened with adequately compensating the states for GST related revenue shortfall.

According to the EcoScope report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services, GST collections is expected to come in at Rs 9-9.2 lakh crore range in FY21 as against the budgeted estimate of Rs 13.8 lakh crore.

This comes despite the fact that GST collections stood at Rs 1.05 lakh crore in October, 10.2 per cent higher than the collections in October 2019.

The October collections

were also the highest amount of GST collected since February 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in India.

With this, the total amount of GST collected during April-October 2020 stood at Rs 5.6 lakh crore, a decline of 20.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY).

Additionally, as against the target of Rs 13.8 lakh crore for FY21, the government has collected Rs 5.6 lakh crore so far, which is 41 per cent of FY21 budget estimate (BE) as against 58 per cent (of FY20 BE) achieved last year by this time.

Within the total GST collected last month, CGST amounted to Rs 19,190 crore, SGST amounted to Rs 25,410 crore and IGST amounted to Rs 52,540 crore. Moreover, GST collection on imports also rose by 9 per cent YoY to Rs 23,380 crore in October 2020, implying pure domestic collections at Rs 81,780 crore (which saw growth of 10.6 per cent YoY) during the month.

Notably, daily e-way bill generation in October 2020 (up

to October 25) was 2 million units, the highest in eight months. This is indicative of sustained pick-up in economic activity, the brokerage said.

Growth in GST revenue in Sept-Oct 2020 (vs the contraction seen in Mar-Aug 2020) implies the trajectory of the economy's recovery, and correspondingly, the government's revenues, Motilal Oswal said.

Since the relaxation given for filing of returns has ended, the 8m GSTR-3B returns filed in October 2020 is for the economic activities conducted only in September 2020.

The report highlighted that the level of returns filed has reached pre-Covid levels.

Overall, another monthly growth in GST collection in October 2020 is definitely welcome. The uncertainty regarding the trajectory of GST collection under normal circumstances - post the nationwide lockdown and compliance related reliefs - seems to have reduced after last month's reading.

Sensex erases 2020 losses with 724-pt leap

GLOBAL MARKETS RALLY AMID US POLL GRIDLOCK

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks galloped to near nine month-highs on Thursday following across-the-board buying as global markets ratcheted higher despite uncertainty surrounding the US election results.

Rallying for the fourth straight session, the BSE Sensex surged 724.02 points or 1.78 per cent to close at 41,340.16.

The benchmark has closed above the 41,000-level for the first time since mid-February this year. The Sensex has also wiped off all losses for the 2020 calendar year. It had closed at 41,306.02 on January 1, 2020.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty zoomed 211.80 points or 1.78 per cent to finish at 12,120.30. All Sensex components closed in the green, led by banking, finance, energy, IT and metal counters.

SBI was the top gainer, soaring 5.63 per cent following robust Q2 results. Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Tech, Asian Paints and Titan were the other prominent winners, spurring up to 5.34 per cent. Global equities marched higher amid indications that Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden may clinch the US presidential polls, even as the Republicans look likely to retain their slim majority in the Senate. Meanwhile, the Trump campaign has moved court over the ballot counting process in battleground states like Pennsylvania and Michigan, raising prospects of protracted legal wranglings over the tightly-contested election.

Investors are expecting less confrontational trade policies with China and other countries under a possible Biden presidency, while the Republican-controlled Senate would prevent measures like higher taxes or stricter regulations, analysts said.

"Domestic market moved in tandem with the

Gold up ₹158, silver rises ₹697

New Delhi: Gold prices rose ₹158 to ₹50,980 per 10 gram in the national capital on Thursday, supported by a rally in global prices, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹50,822 per 10 gram. Silver prices also jumped ₹697 to ₹62,043 per kilogram from ₹61,346 per kilogram in the previous trade. In the international market, gold rose to \$1,916 per ounce, while silver was also trading in the green at USD 24.34 per ounce. **PTI**

global market and marched to 8 months high, in expectation that the US presidential election is moving in favour of the Democratic Party.

Uptick in demand for festive travel; safety, hygiene top priority, says survey

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With an uptick in demand for travel, a majority of respondents (75 per cent) are planning on vacations during this festive season with high priority on safety and hygiene, including looking at the number of cases in the vicinity and sanitisation measures, according to a survey.

About 75 per cent of respondents said they are planning to take up a vacation during this festive season, as compared to 61 per cent in 2019 who were willing to go on a holiday during the festive season, indicating an uptick in demand for travel, online travel company Yatra.Com said in the survey.

The trend of advance booking continues with 39.3 per cent of respondents planning leisure trips for more than one month in advance, it added. Further, the survey showed that safety and hygiene take priority while planning a holiday, as travellers are looking at the number of cases in the vicinity, sanitisation mea-

sures, government guidelines, and amenities in case of emergency, among other factors.

The Yatra annual festive survey was done online among 5,000 respondents.

Further, the survey showed that about 52.5 per cent of respondents are seeking medical or travel insurance for the sake of security and more than 50 per cent of respondents said they would prefer ordering room service rather than visiting restaurants and bars. On taking extra safety precautions, about 72.1 per cent of respondents said they will be going through sanitisation processes followed by the monuments and tourist spots before planning a visit to them. This assurance is important as about 48.2 per cent of the respondents are planning their holiday with the family, it added. The survey also found that mountains have beaten beaches as a preferred location for holiday goers, with 37.9 per cent of respondents saying they would like to visit the hills to escape the monotony and stress brought by the pandemic.

Housing sales likely to decline 35-40 pc in FY21: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales may fall by 35-40 per cent in the ongoing fiscal year even as demand improved during the September quarter, rating agency ICRA said while revising its forecast.

It had earlier estimated a 45 per cent decline in sales volumes in FY2021.

Sales across the top eight cities - Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad - rebounded in the second quarter of FY2021, indicating some green shoots of normalisation.

"With some further recovery expected in H2, ICRA is revising its earlier estimate of sales volume decline in FY2021 to 35-40 per cent," it said in a statement.

ICRA said the uptick in absorption levels during the second quarter of FY2021 has been driven by affordable and mid/upper-mid segments.

The residential real estate segment witnessed a sharp recovery in the September quarter, post a severe decline in Q1 FY2021.

"The Covid-19 pandemic had triggered one of the worst demand crashes that the Indian residential real estate industry witnessed in recorded history.

"Overall, the housing sales volume witnessed a year-on-year decline of 50 per cent in H1 FY2021 across the top eight cities of the country," ICRA said.

However, sales volume bounced back considerably, with a quarter-on-quarter growth of 60 per cent recorded across property markets in the second quarter of the current fiscal.

The recent improvement was primarily driven by a gradual unlocking of the economy, pent-up demand and improved affordability on the back of reduced home loan rates and attractive payment schemes/discounts, the rating agency said.

Delhi airport sees record 2,366 freighter movements, 77,000 MT cargo volumes in September

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cargo volumes at the GMR group-owned Delhi airport have recovered 94 per cent y-o-y in September at 77,000 MT, as the private aerodrome operator handled a record 2,366 freighter movements in a single month.

The total cargo handled by the Delhi airport in September 2019 had stood at 82,220 million tonnes (MT), according to Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL).

Economic activities in the country, following gradual unlockings in the past few months, are showing positive signs of recovery with Delhi airport seeing a significant surge in both cargo tonnage and freighter movements in September, it said in a release.

Of the 77,000 MT cargo handled during the previous month, 48,000 MT was international, while the remaining 29,000 MT domestic, it said.

DIAL added that the cargo throughput has met an impressive recovery of 94 per cent in

Of the 77,000 MT cargo handled during the previous month, 48,000 MT was international, while the remaining 29,000 MT domestic

September compared to the same month of 2019.

Also, the total cargo volume in the first half of the fiscal stood at 2,88,00 MT, which is expected to grow further in the coming months, DIAL said.

Freighter airlines, including passenger aircraft used to carry cargo, have significantly contributed in creating capacities to meet the demand, according to the release.

DIAL said it has also enhanced significantly freighter handling capacity with the setting up of three additional dedicated freighter parking bays, taking their total number to 12.

Transformation to the new normal

The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India stepped up to meet the challenge posed by the pandemic. In a conversation *Sanjeev Kumar Chadha*, Managing Director tells The Pioneer's *Saimi Sattar* how the federation intends to keep serving the farmers

What were the challenges during the distribution of pulses under the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)?

During lockdown everything was shut. The labour was not available, vehicles were not moving and offices were shut. The first 15-20 days were extremely challenging. NAFED was entrusted with the task of supplying 5.85 lakh MT pulses to 36 states/UTs by the Government of India towards the end of March. After that we gradually obtained permissions to get the supply chain moving. We shifted all the operations online and got the pulses delivered in the states. The passes for the mill labourers too were taken by us. April, the first month was very slow. During May we managed to complete more than 50 per cent and completed the supply in the third month.

We started dispatching the pulses from April 15 since the auctions too had to take place before the pulses were allotted, bags printed and repacked. Our pulses are not available in districts unlike those of the Food Corporation of India. Pulses are grown and were stored in five-six states. These had to be moved to mills, where they were milled and repacked. Moreover, the mills did not have the capacity to meet the demand so more millers were added to the approved list.

On the procurement side, we had to double the number of centres to ensure that the farmers don't have to travel too much. We used all modes of transport to distribute the pulses - ship, flights, road.

What were the challenges during procurement?

The mandis posed a huge challenge as social distancing had to be maintained. Farmers were called in a staggered manner through SMS and their arrival had to be planned in a way that social distancing was maintained. We had to increase the number of centres. For instance, in one cluster of villages, there was one centre and we increased it to two-three. We made payments online. During Covid times we pumped in more than Rs 30,000 crores in the rural economy.

The prices have soared during and post lockdown. So how are you ensuring that consumers are not affected by this?

We were giving free pulses under PMGKAY. As per government instructions, we are intervening in the market and selling the pulses, especially the ones which have seen a spike in the rates. For instance, the prices of Tur have increased. So the intervention of NAFED is to sell it at Rs 85/kg throughout the country. The operation has already started in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh

and soon it will be rolled out in Delhi. This will be sold in our stores and at other places too at this rate under the government of India's initiative. In the market it is Rs 135/kg.

Then there are onions. In the history of India for the first time we have procured 1,00,000 MT of onions. Normally it is 10-15,000 MT. Last year it was 50,000 MT and this year it has doubled. We started procuring from the farmers towards the end of April when farmers were getting Rs 4 or 5 per kg in the mandi. We bought it for Rs 8 -9 per kg. This programme was inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

How is NAFED's business evolving in the new normal?

We have to change with the times. During the procurement we have to implement safety measures. Recently we have been declared as an agency for formation of FPOs also. We will make and register farmer producer groups at par with NABARD. We are now focussing on, according to the new Agricultural Policy, whether we should register them in groups or in companies. This will be a game changer. The Prime Minister has announced one lakh crore for infrastructure. We are making business plans for farmers to see how they can access funds.

There is a mandi ahead of Nashik, where in partnership with FPOs who have given us about 4-5 acres of land, where NAFED has made the DPR for the infrastructure that is needed. The group will get a partial subsidy and for the remaining amount NAFED has filed a loan application which could be obtained from the infrastructure fund. We will be linking all the farmer groups



with the government schemes. The mandi will have all the infrastructure for packing, sorting, grading, pre-cooling for vegetables so that they stay for some days.

We are setting up a portal for e-kisan mandi. All the big buyers and sellers would be on the platform. The quality of the product can be checked here and the registered farmers will confirm the deal if they find it worth it. Farmers will get that kind of freedom. But it is a long-term project and can only happen over a period of time. We plan to make 100 mandis in the next six months.

NAFED will set up the structure of the mandis outside APMC and hand it over to the APOs and other stakeholders who will run these mandis. The farmers and NAFED have an equal stake in this. These will be transparent so that the farmers know what is happening inside them.

The decision of selling or not is with the farmer. If the moong dal which the farmer brings has high moisture level of say around 14 percent as opposed to 12 percent, which is allowed, earlier he would have been forced to sell it at a price lower than MSP. Now the mandi would have facilities

enforcement, chances are there as they are profit-oriented. When I had a meeting with the Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh I had said that the government should support NAFED to run the mandi so that people are confident. But if the mandis are run by industrialists then it would be said that there has been a sell-off.

We have taken over a company called Federation of Indian FPOs and Aggregators (FIFA). Around 1,000 FPOs have become our members at national level. We are offering our services to make the their DPRs, find out where these organisations can get their money from. Getting access to funds by the farmers' groups and cooperatives was a big gap area which we are trying to fill.

We also floated a tender recently for setting up more than 500 retail in the country in six months. The farming products will be connected to the market. If we ask any other retailer to keep our products, these groups ask for money. Within next six months you will see NAFED as the second biggest retailer in the country. Even international brands have come and have applied to set up store under the NAFED brand.

We are expanding in retail and have launched masalas with the tag line "kisan se kitchen tak".

We have signed a contract with farmers in Chattisgarh and Karnataka giving price assurance for buying millets.

We have already deposited Rs 500 crore in cash in the banks during Covid time. Compare this with three years back when we owed Rs 2,000 crore to the banks which we have paid. **PNS**

INBRIEF

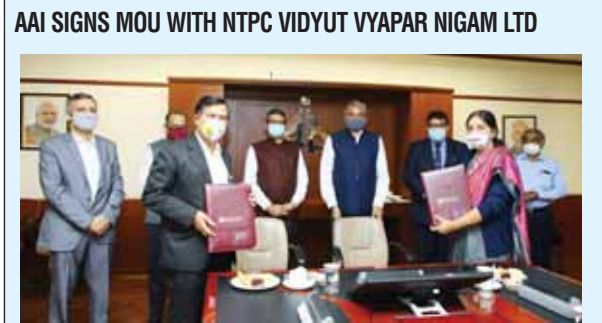
DILIP RATH ELECTED FOR THE BOARD OF IDF
New Delhi: National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) Chairman Dilip Rath has been unanimously elected to the Board of International Dairy Federation (IDF) at the General Assembly of IDF. "I see my election to the IDF Board as an opportunity to bring along valuable insights from the Indian dairy experience and foster complementarities and synergies between dairying nations. It is a privilege for me to represent the world's largest milk producing nation and contribute to promoting the Sustainable Goals of dairying and also meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I keenly look forward to furthering IDF Board's mandate," said Rath after his election.

IMC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ORGANISES INDO-AFRICA VIRTUAL SUMMIT
New Delhi: Just ahead of the 12th BRICS summit, the IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised a three-day long Indo-Africa Virtual Summit 2020. The inaugural day of the first-ever virtual Indo-Africa Summit was graced by the presence of Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal and Cabinet Secretary (Minister) for Sports, Heritage and Culture, former Foreign Minister, Kenya, Dr. Amina Mohamed. President, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rajiv Poddar was also present on the occasion. The summit is taking forward the vision set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit Uganda in 2018 to empower Africa and enhance bilateral ties. The combined markets of India and Africa encompass 2.5 billion people and a GDP of \$5.5 trillion. The volume of trade between India and African countries grew from US\$5.3 billion in 2001 to 70 billion in 2013.



NEW DELHI: The ongoing Kisan agitation in the State of Punjab, especially targeting rail property has severely affected passenger and goods train services in the State for the past month. As a result the State is now experiencing a huge crunch of Coal, Fertilizer, Cement, POL, Container and Steel, adversely affecting the functioning of Thermal Power plants and other industries.

A high level delegation of central and state level leader representing Punjab: Sh. Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, GOI, Sh. Tarun Chug, National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Sh. R.P. Singh, Spokesperson, BJP and Sh. Ashwani Sharma State President, BJP met Sh. Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Railways in New Delhi, today. They apprised him of the dismal situation in the state due to the agitation, which is disrupting normal life and production in farms & industries. They requested him for restoration of train services in the state as soon as possible.



New Delhi: AAI as a responsible organization has taken a progressive step towards conserving environment, reduction of carbon emissions and working towards making AAI airports carbon neutral. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed today between AAI and NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd., (NVVN) subsidiary of NTPC Ltd for setting up solar power plants and adoption of e-vehicles at AAI Airports. Ms. Reena Rai, General Manager (Engineering), AAI and Shri K.S. Bandyopadhyay, Chief General Manager, NVVN signed the MoU at AAI's Corporate Headquarters in presence of Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI, Shri Gurdeep Singh, CMD (NTPC), Shri A K Gautam, Chairman (NVVN) and Shri Mohit Bhargava, CEO (NVVN)



Chittaranjan: 151st Birth anniversary of great freedom fighter, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was observed today in the CLW Administrative foyer on 5th Nov, 2020. On this occasion, Ram Prakash, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer/CLW placed the wreath at the bust of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and paid homage to the great patriot on behalf of General Manager. SD. Patidar, Principal Chief Personnel Officer welcomed the guests and conducted the programme. Members of CLW Women's Welfare Organisation were also present on the occasion. Ram Prakash, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer urged the staff, supervisors and officers of CLW to rededicate them and follow the path shown by the great freedom fighter after whom the workshop was named. Members of CLW-WWO lighted 151 numbers of Candles to mark the birthday of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Sr. Officers, members of CLW-WWO, Staff Council members, Supervisors and staff were also present on the occasion by maintaining all precautionary measures of #COVID_19. Cultural programme was also presented by the members of CLW-Cultural Association.

ICICI BANK LAUNCHES BANKING PROGRAMME FOR MILLENNIALS
Mumbai: Lending major ICICI Bank on Thursday launched India's first banking programme for millennial customers, in the age bracket of 18 years to 35 years. The proposition called 'ICICI Bank Mine' offers an instant savings account, a feature driven iMobile application that offers investment guidance to suit the demand of millennials, curated credit and debit cards, instant personal loans and overdrafts. "We estimate that the country has around 40 million progressive young millennials, who would contribute significantly to the economy and banking in the years to come.

SBI'S PROFIT BUMP SHOWS RESILIANCE AGAINST DOWNSIDE: S&P

New Delhi: State Bank of India (SBI) has the financial strength to withstand tough operating conditions in the next 12 months due to its strong deposit franchise and liquidity, global rating agency S&P on Thursday said. The very high likelihood of the government support, if needed, provides a cushion to accentuated downside risks, it said in a statement. SBI's performance in the second quarter was broadly in line with our expectations of a rebound in performance after the lockdown, with uncertainty about the amount of incremental stressed assets emerging over the next six months, the rating agency said.

The country's largest lender SBI on Wednesday reported a 55 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 5,245.88 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, on account of decline in bad loans.

Young American voters hold key to White House

Houston: Young electors in the US have been making their voices heard and although the votes are being counted, their choice could shape the outcome of the closely-fought 2020 presidential election and decide the presidency of the world's oldest democracy. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University, voters aged between 18 to 29 are voting in record numbers, including more than eight million young people who voted early or absentee in the 2020 elections.

"I think with the recent happenings, racial injustice and the pandemic, it's kind of driving people to be more passionate about the things that are happening in our world as well as just passionate about electing leaders that have the same ideas and values that they do," Texas Southern University junior Mariah Campbell said.

Young voters have been making their voices heard and mobilising, an extension of rising youth activism in response to concerns over issues such as racial inequality, climate change and gun violence, CIRCLE said.

According to an analysis from the CIRCLE, the pre-eminent, non-partisan research center on youth engagement at Tufts University's Jonathan M Tisch College of Civic Life, youth votes have been crucial in the 2020 elections. **PTI**

World waits nervously, impatiently for US election result

Washington: From Ford Model T cars that popped off the assembly line in just 90 minutes to 60-second service for burgers, the United States has long had a major hand in making the world a frenetic and impatient place, primed and hungry for instant gratification.

So the world's realization Wednesday that the U.S. Election winner might not be known for days or longer was jarring for a planet weaned on American speediness.

The guessing game of trying to figure out whether — and how — President Donald Trump or challenger Joe Biden would end up in the White House quickly turned global.

Government leaders scrambled to digest the delay and ordinary people swapped views, hopes and fears on feeds and phones. Some scratched their heads — not for the first time — over the U.S. Presidency being decided not by the overall votes but by whoever wins 270 votes in the Electoral College.

Gloating was heard from parts of the world that have been on the receiving end of U.S. Criticism about their elections and governance. Underscoring how the drama captured global audiences, television graphics in Japan used fireballs to denote some of the battleground states crucial to the outcome.

"I'm hearing it may take some time before things are sorted out," said the Japanese finance minister, Taro Aso. "I have no idea how it may affect us." A Spanish resident of Paris was stunned to wake up without a declared winner. "I thought there was going to be something clear. And I have read different articles, no one really knows who is going to win," Javier Saenz said. **AP**

Biden rebuilding 'blue wall' in race for the White House

Washington: Democrat Joe Biden was pushing closer to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to carry the White House, securing victories in the "blue wall" battlegrounds of Wisconsin and Michigan, and narrowing President Donald Trump's path.

With just a handful of states still up for grabs, Trump tried to press his case in court in some key swing states. It was unclear if any of his campaign's legal maneuvering over balloting would succeed in shifting the race in his favour.

Two days after Election Day, neither candidate had amassed the votes needed to win the White House. But Biden's victories in the Great Lakes states left him at 264, meaning he was one battleground state away — any would do — from becoming president-elect.

Trump, with 214 electoral votes, faced a much higher hurdle. To reach 270, he needed to claim all four remaining battlegrounds: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada.

With millions of votes yet to be tabulated, Biden already had received more than 71 million votes, the most in history. **AP**

Wary China hopes for smooth ending to US Presidential poll amid grim forecast of ties

Beijing: A wary China on Thursday hoped the presidential poll process in the US would end smoothly and successfully and said that there is a room for cooperation between the two nations despite "some differences," as observers forecast heightening of the rivalry between the top two economies no matter whoever emerges victorious.

The US presidential election remained undecided Thursday evening, turning the nation's attention to a handful of battleground states that continue to tabulate the crush of mail-in ballots that will decide whether Donald Trump or Joe Biden will be victorious.

"People are following closely, me included but it seems that the votes are still being counted and results have not come yet," China's Vice-Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said at a media conference here when asked to comment on the US Presidential poll. "We hope the election will proceed smoothly and successfully," Le, a former Ambassador to India said, adding that there is a room for cooperation despite "some differences".

"As per the China-US relationship, China's attitude is clear and consistent. China and the US have some differences but we have extensive common interests and room for cooperation," he said hoping that the incoming American administration would meet Beijing halfway. **PTI**

Biden vows to rejoin Paris Climate Agreement

Washington: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged that his administration would rejoin the historic Paris Agreement on climate change.

Biden, 77, has not won the presidential elections yet, but is inching closer to be declared the winner by garnering 253 electoral votes out of the required 270. His Republican rival and incumbent US President Donald Trump has got 213 electoral votes, according to latest projections released by the US media.

On November 4, the US formally withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a decision originally announced three years ago.

"Today, the Trump Administration officially left the Paris Climate Agreement. And in exactly 77 days, a Biden Administration will rejoin it," Biden tweeted on Wednesday night, reflecting his decision to reverse one of the key policies of the Trump administration on day one.

The US, under the Obama administration, had acceded to the Paris Agreement in 2016. It was a signature achievement of the Obama administration. The Paris accord committed the US and 187 other countries to keeping rising global temperatures below 2C above pre-industrial levels and attempting to limit them even more, to a 1.5C rise. **PTI**

Trump immigration rule takes effect again during appeal

Chicago: A federal appeals court has allowed a Trump administration rule that would deny green cards to immigrants who use public benefits like food stamps to go back into effect while it considers the case.

The Election Day development was the latest dizzying twist in a legal battle over the controversial rule that the Trump administration argues

helps ensure those who are self-sufficient come to the country.

On Monday, US District Judge Gary Feinerman in Chicago struck down the rule and US Citizenship and Immigration Services stopped applying it to pending applications. Government attorneys appealed, and the 7th US Circuit Court of Appeals put a hold on the ruling the next day, allowing the restrictions to

take effect again. USCIS spokesman Matthew Bourke said Wednesday that the agency would immediately restart applying the rule to pending cases, but not "re-adjudicate any applications or petitions that were approved" in light of Monday's decision.

Under the Trump administration rule, officials can deny permanent residency to legal immigrants over their use of

food stamps, Medicaid or other public benefits. Green card applicants must show they wouldn't be burdens to the country, or "public charges".

Immigrant rights advocates deemed it a "wealth test," while health experts warned of poorer health outcomes and rising costs as low-income migrants chose between necessary services and trying to stay in the country legally. **AP**

Thousands to attend Tableeghi Jamaat congregation in Karachi despite uptick in virus cases

PTI ■ LAHORE

Facing intense pressure from religious leaders, the Pakistan Government has allowed thousands of Tableeghi Jamaat members to hold a three-day gathering in Lahore starting from Friday despite an uptick in the number of new coronavirus cases.

"The government has allowed the Tableeghi Jamaat to hold annual religious congregation in Raiwind with the participation of 54,000 followers," said a handout issued by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government here on Thursday.

It added that the three-day congregation will start on Friday and attendees have started to arrive from across the country. However, no one from outside the country is allowed to participate in the religious gathering, the statement read. The government said the

COVID-19 rules will be strictly followed in the congregation. Children and high-risk adults will not be allowed.

Pakistan has seen a spike in the number of new coronavirus cases after a brief lull in September. The virus death toll stands at 6,893 with over 3.3 lakh confirmed infections.

On Thursday, Pakistan reported 605 new coronavirus recoveries, taking the number of reported cases to 316,665. Earlier in the year, the Tableeghi Jamaat members were criticised for congregating in Lahore. Some 80,000 members of the Jamaat had attended the religious congregation at the Raiwind Markaz earlier in March. A number of new coronavirus cases had surfaced from there.

Prime Minister Imran Khan was slammed on social media for allowing the congregation on Friday.

Tanzania's leader sworn in for 2nd term after troubled vote

AP ■ DODOMA (TANZANIA)

Tanzania's populist President John Magufuli has taken the oath of office for a second five-year term amid tight security after the opposition called for a fresh election, the disbandment of the electoral commission and an "endless peaceful demonstration" over the October 28 vote. Magufuli over the weekend said he will not pursue another term amid some concerns that the ruling party, which won nearly all parliament seats, might try to extend the presidency's two-term limit. Police and the army tightened security ahead of the swearing-in, and the leaders of Tanzania's two main opposition parties, ACT Wazalendo and CHADEMA, were charged with organizing unlawful assembly and demonstration.

GLOBE TROTTER

PAK NATIONAL BANK'S MANAGER SHOT DEAD

Lahore: A senior manager of the state-run National Bank of Pakistan was killed by the bank's security guard over the allegation of "blasphemy" in the country's Punjab province, the police said on Thursday. Malik Imran Hanif, manager of the multinational commercial bank's Quaidabad teshil in Khushab was shot by the bank's security guard Ahmed Nawaz, a retired Army personnel, on Wednesday morning.

INDONESIA RAISES VOLCANO THREAT LEVEL

Yogyakarta: Indonesian authorities raised the danger level for the volatile Mount Merapi volcano on the densely populated island of Java on Thursday and ordered a halt to tourism and mining activities. Indonesia's geological agency raised Merapi's alert level, which had been at the third-highest level since it began erupting last year, to the next level after sensors picked up increasing activity.

UK Min warns of tough fines as England enters 2nd lockdown

London: The UK Government on Thursday reminded people about the tough fines in place over severe breaches as England entered its second stay-at-home lockdown in order to try and control the rapid spread of COVID-19 infections, expected to last at least until December 2.

UK Justice Secretary Robert Buckland said that while the police forces of the country will continue to follow the principle of policing by consent, they would respond to

"egregious breaches" and hand out fines where necessary.

Under the legal requirements in place, people have been told to stay at home unless leaving for work if they can't work from home or to shop for essentials or a form of daily exercise. All non-essential shops, pubs, bars, restaurants and gyms have been ordered to close and households are also banned from mixing indoors or in private gardens, unless in a so-called "support bubble".

There is a 200 pounds fine

for each breach which doubles on every offence up to a maximum of 6,400 pounds and organisers of large gatherings face a 10,000 pounds fine.

"Where a more intense intervention is needed then the police will be involved and of course the fine structure is still in force," Buckland told the BBC. "I think the message has to go out very clearly that this will only work if we all play our part," he said, adding that only a "tiny minority" of people are responsible for breaches which

risk public health.

His message came as the Metropolitan Police, the UK's largest police force, issued a statement around its policing plans for the second lockdown.

"It is vitally important that we're all sensible, use common sense and stick to the rules. By working together, we can help prevent the spread of this deadly virus which has already claimed so many lives," said Deputy Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist, the Met Police lead on coronavirus.

FROM PAGE 1

TRUMP SUES AS BIDEN NEARS FINISHING LINE

"The Associated Press continues to watch and analyze vote count results from Arizona as they come in," said Sally Buzbee, AP's executive editor. "We will follow the facts in all cases."

For four years, Democrats have been haunted by the crumbling of the blue wall, the trio of Great Lakes states — Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — that their candidates had been able to count on in presidential elections. But Trump's populist appeal struck a chord with white working-class voters and he captured all three in 2016 by a combined total of just 77,000 votes.

The candidates waged a fierce fight for the states this year, with Biden's everyman political persona resonating in blue-collar towns while his campaign also pushed to increase turnout among Black voters in cities like Detroit and Milwaukee.

It was unclear when a national winner would be determined after a long, bitter campaign dominated by the coronavirus and its effects on Americans and the national economy. The U.S. on Wednesday set another record for daily confirmed cases as several states posted all-time highs. The pandemic has killed more than 233,000 people in the United States.

Trump spent much of Wednesday and Thursday in the White House residence, huddling with advisers and fuming at media coverage showing his Democratic rival picking up battlegrounds. Trump used his Twitter feed to falsely claim victory in several key states and amplify unsubstantiated conspiracy theories about Democratic gains as absentee and early votes were tabulated. Aides did not say when he next planned to appear in public.

Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien said the president would formally request a Wisconsin recount, citing "irregularities" in several counties. And the campaign said it was filing suits in Michigan and Pennsylvania to halt ballot counting on grounds that it wasn't given proper access to observe. Trump campaign spokesman Jason Miller said additional legal action was expected in Nevada.

"We will literally be going through every single ballot," he said of the hotly contested state.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of votes were still to be counted in Pennsylvania, and Trump's campaign said it was moving to intervene in existing Supreme Court litigation over counting mail-in ballots there.

DELHI'S AIR WORST IN 1 YEAR, STUBBLE BURNING SHARE 42%

"Better dispersion condition and not so low daytime boundary layer height is pre-

dicted for the next two days which is likely to improve AQI unless more than estimated fire-related emission takes place," it said.

According to SAFAR's observations, the Particulate Matters PM 10 levels in Delhi-NCR stood at 561 microgram per cubic meter (g/m3) at 10 am - the highest since November 15 last year, when it was 637 g/m3. PM10 levels below 100 g/m3 are considered safe in India.

Scientists said PM10 is particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers and is inhalable. As per studies, these particles include dust, pollen and mold spores. The levels of PM2.5 finer particles which can even enter the bloodstream were 347 g/m3 at 12 noon. PM2.5 levels up to 60 g/m3 are considered safe.

CENTRE NOTIFIES GUIDELINES TO REOPEN UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES

"For Centrally funded higher education institutions, the head should satisfy herself or himself regarding the feasibility of opening of physical classes and decide accordingly. For all other institutions including State universities, private universities, and colleges, opening of physical classes to be done as per the decision of the respective State Governments," the UGC guidelines said.

Universities across the country were closed on March 16 in order to contain the spread of coronavirus and thereafter remained closed following the nationwide lockdown was announced on March 25. However in between all administrative functions and competitive and entrance tests including admissions to the new sessions continued since July and most of the colleges and institutions like IITs, AIIMs, are undergoing the admission process. Online classes for the students of both schools and colleges are also underway as per the session schedules set by the Education Ministry.

The universities and colleges have been asked to plan the opening of campuses in a phased manner, with such activities that adhere to Covid-19 norms including social distancing, use of face masks and other protective measures. "The universities and colleges shall only be allowed to open if they are outside the containment zones. Further, students and staff living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the colleges," the guidelines said.

"Students and staff shall also be advised not to visit areas falling within containment zones. The faculty, staff and students of the university and college should be encouraged to download 'Aarogya Setu App,' said an Education Ministry official.

"Students of all research programmes and post-graduate students in science and technology programmes may join as the number

of such students is comparatively less and norms of physical distancing and preventive measures can be easily enforced. Final year students may also be allowed to join for academic and placement purposes, as per the decision of the head of the institution," it added.

The UGC said that the institutions should have a plan ready for such international students who could not join the programme due to international travel restrictions or visa-related issues. "Hostels may be opened only in such cases where it is necessary while strictly observing the safety and health preventive measures. However, the sharing of rooms may not be allowed in hostels. Symptomatic students should not be permitted to stay in the hostels under any circumstances," it said.

The new guidelines have asked the institutions to ensure that "before reopening of any campus, the Central or the concerned State Government must have declared the area safe for reopening of educational institutions. The directions, instructions, guidelines and orders issued by the Central and State Government concerned regarding safety and health in view of Covid-19 must be fully abided by the higher education institutions."

Institutions have to provide online study material and access to e-resources to such students who prefer to study online while staying at home.

CHINA BANS ENTRY OF TRAVELLERS FROM INDIA ON COVID CONCERNS

"Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it's hereby announced that China has decided to temporarily suspend the entry into China by foreign nationals in India holding valid Chinese visas or residence permits. The Chinese Embassy/ consulates in India will not stamp the health declaration forms for the holders of the above-mentioned categories of visa or residence permits," the Chinese Embassy in India said in a statement on its website on Thursday.

Foreigners holding Chinese diplomatic, service, courtesy and C visas are not affected. Foreigners with emergency or humanitarian needs to visit China can submit visa application to the Chinese Embassy/ Consulates in India. "China will make further adjustment and announcement in accordance with the ongoing pandemic situation in a timely manner," it said.

The new suspension order is a partial reversal of an easing on September 28, when Beijing allowed all foreigners with valid residence permits to enter. At present only Air India operates VBM flights to China. The national airline had operated flights to Shanghai, Guangzhou and Wuhan, from Delhi in October.

This decisions comes three days after China issued fresh guidelines for airlines flying passengers to the country. "In order to reduce cross-border transmission of Covid-19, starting from 00:00 hours (India time) on November 7, 2020, all Chinese and foreign passengers bound for China will be required to take nucleic acid and IgM anti-body tests and apply for a green health code with the "HS" mark or a certified health declaration form before boarding the flight," the notice to "airline boarding requirements for certificates of negative nucleic acid and IgM antibody tests results" issued on November 2 said. Besides, China made similar announcements to bar entry of non-Chinese visitors from Britain, Belgium and the Philippines and demanded travellers from the United States, France and Germany present results of additional health tests as it guards itself against the resurgence in coronavirus cases rising around the world.

China is not the first country to restrict arrivals from India. Hong Kong has already suspended Air India flights, four times since August. The current suspension stays till November 10. Malaysia had also barred Indians from traveling to the country.

A similar instance, this time of an Air India Express passenger testing positive on arrival in Dubai had led to the Emirate barring the airline. But that was taken back within a day.

INDIA SLAMS HANDING OVER KARTARPUR SAHIB UPKEEP TO NON-SIKH

The gurdwara was earlier under the management of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC).

Sources said it is the first time that PSGPC has been shut out of the management of a gurdwara in Pakistan. There are no Sikhs among the officials and staff appointed by the ETPB for the Darbar Sahib Gurudwara.

In a major step in November last year, India and Pakistan opened a nearly five km cross-border corridor linking Dera Baba Sahib in Gurdaspur in India with Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan, in a historic people-to-people initiative.

Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara is located in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi, about four kilometres from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine. It is the final resting place of Sikh faith's founder Guru Nanak Dev, who had spent the last 18 years of his life in Kartarpur.

The corridor was shut in March in view of the coronavirus pandemic. While Pakistan has opened its side of the corridor recently, India is yet to take a decision.

It has also urged Pakistan to construct required infrastructure, including a bridge at Budhi Ravi channel, for the safe movement of pilgrims over a stretch that gets waterlogged during the rainy season.

J'khand withdraws consent to CBI to probe cases

New Delhi: The Jharkhand Government on Thursday revoked its general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to carry out any investigation in the state.

Jharkhand is the latest state to withdraw the general consent to the CBI to probe cases, joining a list of non-BJP ruled states including Maharashtra which have effected a similar move.

From now on, the central agency needs state government's permission to conduct investigations in Jharkhand.

Left-ruled Kerala had on Wednesday withdrawn the general consent accorded to the CBI.

Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are

other states that have withdrawn the consent to the CBI to exercise its powers under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act.

The consent is akin to a blanket nod for the agency to probe scheduled offences specified in the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DPSE) Act, 1946.

The probe agency also lacks a "general consent" from Mizoram.

Unlike the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which has countrywide jurisdiction to take over any case related to terrorism, the CBI requires the consent of the state government concerned under Section 6 of the DPSE Act, the law that governs the agency's functioning. **PTI**

'Need Nitish Govt for Bihar's development,' PM in open letter to voters

New Delhi: Ahead of final phase of voting in Bihar, Prime Minister has written an open letter to the voters of Bihar and urged them to vote for development.

The Prime Minister said he is "committed" to development of Bihar and "I need the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar to ensure that there is no hiccup in the state's development journey, and developmental schemes are not stuck," he wrote in the letter.

The PM said since 2005 the atmosphere in Bihar has changed with better law and order situation, infrastructure and social and economic prosperity. The NDA will deliver both to Bihar and its people. In the letter, PM Modi also mentioned the key promises made by the NDA which include water for every household and better connectivity which includes airports, waterways and roads.

"Better connectivity will help 'ease of living' for the youth, farmers and poor," the PM said in the letter. The PM said the NDA has laid a strong foundation of better infrastructure and rule of law.

"We are working towards aat-

manirbhar Bihar," said the PM.

The PM said the NDA government has presented its report card and vision document for the future. The double-engine government in Bihar will push the state to new heights and stressed that each and every vote matters and those with voting rights are indeed 'powerful'. He urged voters to use that power for the 'bright future of Bihar'.

In his speeches, the PM has been urging people to go 'vocal for local'. This will change the lives of local artisans. "It is a way with which our local products will gradually become a part of the global market."

He had also referred to the Mudra scheme, saying that nearly Rs 2.5 cr have been disbursed in Bihar as loans. Reaching out to women, a key voter base of CM Nitish Kumar in the last election, Modi said that nearly Rs. 1.75 cr out of this amount has gone to women. As many as 1207 candidates are in the fray for the third and final phase of polling for 78 seats in 15 districts scheduled for November 7. **IANS**

Trend Slazer

Virtual world has prospered: Big B

The virtual world has prospered in the time of COVID, observes **AMITABH BACHCHAN**.

Big B took to his official blog to express his thoughts.

"The virtual world has prospered in the times of the pandemic. Even though the loved ones are far away and not in the proximity, the moon is video-called to them so that they can break their fast," he wrote.

"The country is filled with such emotion and culture... traditions of thousands of years and the dedication to carry it through... how were they designed... how did they last for so many years... what has been the devotion of its compliance and its lasting presence ever," he continued.



'One can never know on their own of the reach that films have unless one comes across stories of how they've impacted someone. I spoke to an officer who, while training 2500 election officers, held a screening of Newton. It's the kind of film that resonates with people till date, especially those who try to escape election duty.'
—Pankaj Tripathi

The trailer of the forthcoming web series *Naxalbari* has released and actor Rajeev Khandelwal, who plays a protagonist, promises an action-packed tale of conflict between industrialists and Naxalites.



"The trailer gives viewers a glimpse into the war between the Naxalites and the industrialists. Both parties have their agenda. Then there is politics. Everyone wants to sell the idea that they are doing it for the greater good, but there's a lot more going on. A lot has gone into the project and I hope the audience loves it," said Rajeev.

Pedro Pascal relives childhood

Actor **PEDRO PASCAL** says he relived his childhood while essaying his character in popular series, *The Mandalorian*.

For Pascal, wearing the iconic helmet of his character was a very special moment.

"You can't see very well through the helmet, but I got a pretty clear impression the first time I put it on. If you grew up playing with *Star Wars* toys and watching *Star Wars* movies and then you're staring at yourself and you are the image from your childhood imagination, it's a super moment," Pascal said.

Created by Jon Favreau with five directors — Dave Filoni, Bryce Dallas Howard, Taika Waititi, Rick Famuyiwa, and Deborah Chow — the show also stars Werner Herzog and Nick Nolte.



The good old theatre is taking a U-turn in our otherwise socially-distanced lifestyles. And Delhi theatre enthusiasts are definitely in for a treat as the Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts, Mandi House, has opened its doors for the first play to be showcased in the post-COVID era. Culture-starved and in revenge mode, aficionados have already booked all shows.

Rama Theatre Natya Vidya (RAT-NAV) in collaboration with Austrian Embassy, Austrian Cultural Forum, The Embassy of the Czech Republic and supported by Sideways Consulting, is set to present *Girafari*, based on Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial* — today and tomorrow.

Media veteran and founder of RAT-NAV, Rama Pandey, also the director of the play, lists the necessary measures taken to follow the social distancing norms, due to which there will be only 50 per cent seat occupancy in the auditorium. The area is being sanitised before the play and every audience member will be given a complimentary mask. With *Girafari*, Rama plans to "kickstart the theatre space which has been shut for the past few months."

The Theatre (in association with The Cacophony), at Akshara Theatre, is set to present two 'one hour, one act' plays — *The Red Hot Bombay Lovers* and *The Lockdown Lovers*.

Being the first such play to be showcased in an indoor theatre, Anusuya Vaidya, co-founder, Akshara Theatre, talks about the safety protocols — 50 per cent auditorium occupancy, distanced seating availability, sanitisation after every show and masks for those who require.

However, a few questions arise here — even as all the norms are being followed, is there enough participation from the public to watch live shows? And why not continue showcasing it digitally until the situation gets into place?

Vaidya shares that Theatre, the first theatre company to begin online theatre post lockdown, was "keen on resuming the



THE CURTAIN RISES AGAIN

The Shri Ram Centre stages its first live play today in a post-COVID setting while Akshara has two shows over the weekend. TEAM VIVA assesses the mood of culture vultures

theatre physically. They wanted to make the audience relive what theatre actually felt and experienced like. Performing spaces and arts have been adversely affected due to the pandemic and I think, now was the time to bring it on again. I am sure people have also grown bored of everything going online. In-person experiences have their own significance."

As per the recent observations, she points out at how the amphitheatres have started grabbing attention again. "Even at Akshara, we can see the audience for the outdoor theatre growing, where a few comedies have been staged recently. This indicates that people now want to venture into the outdoor space once again. And when amphitheatres can grab attention, why not closed ones too? We are actually expecting a full house on Sunday. The response has been positive," adds Vaidya.

Pandey says, "The last few months have been quite difficult for the theatre community. The impact of lockdown on performing arts has been immense. I am glad that we have got an opportunity to be the first play in the post-COVID era at the SRCPA. The show must go on!"

She adds that given the pandemic, "it is our responsibility to take adequate precautions and bring back our audience. It's important that these spaces flourish again. Mandi House is the cultural heart of Delhi. We need to let it throb again and reignite the passion."

Pandey believes that since the audience will be back, watching theatre, after a long time, the theme of the play should resonate with the public's mind to grab more eyes. "The plot of *Girafari* will remain relevant in all times as it addresses the plight of the common man in such scenarios," she adds.

Set in contemporary Delhi, *Girafari* is the story of a common Indian man, who has been alienated by society. Pandey uses a fusion of the lost Indian oral and folk forms in the play. Art forms ranging from Tasha Dhol and Nafiri instruments of the streets of Purani Dilli, can be seen, too.

Lending support to the initiative, Abhijit Avasthi, founder, Sideways, says, "Especially, in a time when most of us are finding it hard to make sense of what's going on around us, we are certain that Rama ji's adaptation with nuanced local sensibilities will leave a deep positive impact on the audience. It's our privilege to partner with RATNAV and the Consulate of Austria in the staging of this timeless and important classic."

Matthias Radoszics, Minister Plenipotentiary, says, "Although, the play was published a few years ago but keeping in mind the pandemic situation, the play is suitable for all! Its primary objective is to reach the common man in uncertain times."

Directed by Tathagata Chowdhury, the play, *The Red Hot Bombay Lovers*, aims to explore the dark complexities and non-stop exuberance of humans, which aims at reju-



venating the public minds after seven months of lockdown and staying put.

Anusuya adds that the two plays are light-hearted comedies as "people now want to come back to entertainment." (The plays at Akshara will be staged on November 8 at 7 pm and 8.15 pm.)



A clutchless manual gearbox in a mass-market car is a true innovation and something that should be applauded



Technology of the year

Almost every automotive writer and publication in India will award different types of best car awards, and I'm guilty of that as well. But a few awards look at new technologies introduced in a year or even new engines for that matter. This is because unless forced to by regulations, the pace of technological development in cars these days is fairly gradual. If you would have told me in 2000 that in 2020 not only would the world be brought to a halt by a virus but a commercially available two-litre diesel engine can produce close to 250 horsepower, I would have thought you out of your mind. Even petrol engines today are incredibly lean-burning. You can easily get small petrol hatchbacks to 14-15 kilometers a litre in urban conditions without resorting to hyper-miling.

Sometimes the change is a bit dramatic, take the advent of popular automatics in India for which Maruti should take the credit when they fitted an 'Automated' Manual Transmission (AMT) on the Celerio and have made AMT technology so popular that many other manufacturers including Hyundai, Nissan-Renault and Tata have followed suit. Don't get me wrong here, while driving cars fitted with an AMT is still a



lot more convenient than a car with a manual, AMT's compared to regular automatics, cars fitted with traditional torque converters, Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) boxes or even more modern dual-clutch transmission (DCT) systems, feel horribly lazy. Yes, you learn how to get the best out of them but truth be told, AMT's are not for enthusiastic driving. And nor, to be very honest, are the large majority of CVT systems. Many of them do not even let you hit the rev limit. Then there are DCT systems, designed for exhilaration but not exactly economical.

However, none of these are new. These are all clutchless systems that remove the need for one to operate their left foot and change the gears automatically. Some systems offer various types of manual override contraptions,

from a simple up-down pusher by shifting the lever to the side or a paddle system, but they're not manuals by any stretch. This is what makes the 'Intelligent Manual System' (IMT) brought to India by the Hyundai Motor Group through their Hyundai (Venue and i20) and Kia (Sonet) products fairly unique. There are a couple of things here, I describe this as a clutchless manual system because you, as the driver, are always in control of the gears. But you are not operating a clutch. I have just completed one month with my long-term Kia Sonet with an IMT system and while I will be honest and admit that I was a bit hesitant of the IMT when I drove it for the first time on a Venue, I've actually grown to like the system. In my first review of the IMT system, I wondered whether you can teach an old dog new tricks? Well, this old dog really likes the IMT.

I have honestly never driven anything like an IMT before, something so unique rarely comes in a ten-lakh rupee car. That said, I will be the first to admit that IMT systems are not for everyone and can be very confusing to those who drive one for the first time. But as anyone who has driven a manual in bumper-to-bumper traffic in Bengaluru, Delhi or Mumbai can attest, the constant changing

of gears in such conditions is tiring and stressful even though many of those who swear by manuals will say that 'manuals' are the only way to drive a car properly.

Okay fine, there is a slight lag when you change. But unless you are a fearsome heel-and-toe style changer, the lag in gearshifts is nothing really to be concerned about. Yes, as the weather in Delhi gets colder I am noticing that the gears are a bit sticky upon a cold start first thing in the morning but once the car gets up to temperature there are a few problems. This is something though that I will keep an eye on over the coming months with the Sonet as the mercury continues to dip in Delhi.

But as a system, this does not feel as compromised as say an AMT does, and mated to the Group's 120PS one-litre turbo-petrol engine, you can really have some fun with the IMT as well. And given that it is a lot cheaper than the Dual-Clutch Transmission available on the same models, it is a great combination of performance, convenience and price. I do not know if other manufacturers have access to this technology or if they will bring cars equipped with an IMT into India even if they do, but in opinion, the IMT is the automotive technology of the year.

Lights, camera, thrill

TIGER SHROFF will star in a film set in the post-pandemic world

Actor Tiger Shroff is set to star in an action film set in a post-pandemic, dystopian era. Sharing a teaser motion poster that goes with the theme of the film, titled *Ganapath*, Tiger wrote on Instagram, "This one is special for me, and especially for you guys! Presenting #Ganapath — get ready for more action, thrill and entertainment!"

The teaser has a dialogue by Tiger that goes: "Jab aapna darta hai nah tab apan bohot marta hai (when I get scared, I bash up a lot)." The action-packed thriller is helmed by director Vikas Bahl, who directed *Queen* and *Super 30* in the past and produced by Jacky Bhagnani. *Ganapath* is planned as the first film of a franchise.

"This film is different for me from the rest of the films I've done till date because of the character I play. After multiple conversations with Vikas and Jacky, the script and scale look promising. I am really

looking forward to this one. This will be my first time working with Jacky and Vikas and it will be exciting to collaborate with them," said the *Baaghi* actor.

Jacky Bhagnani is equally thrilled. "I look at Tiger as a global star. He has all the potential and every ingredient that makes him unique and sets him apart. His films have slick action with an international flavour that appeals to the audience all over the world. I am sure the combination of Vikas and Tiger will make magic and redefine the action genre," he said.

For director Vikas Bahl, working with Tiger and Pooja Entertainment is the perfect synergy of like-minded forces. He said, "I am very excited about working with Tiger. It's a challenge to pull off the scale for a script that is set-up in a futuristic world, but with an actor like Tiger and a partner like Jacky Bhagnani and Pooja Entertainment, I am sure that we will be able to bring this larger-than-life vision to fruition!"

The shoot begins in mid 2021 and the film is scheduled to release in the following year.



Your signature drink



- Ginger
 - Ice cubes: 2-3
 - Mint leaves
 - Lemon juice: 1tsp
 - Black salt to taste
- METHOD**
- Peel ginger and wash the mint leaves.
 - Now put all the ingredients in a blender and blend.
 - Serve chilled.

VIRGIN MOJITO

WHAT YOU NEED

- Sprite: 300 ml
- Lemon juice: 2 to 3 tsp
- Mint leaves: 1/4 cup
- Sugar syrup: 3 tbsp
- Ice cubes

METHOD

- Pour lime juice and sugar syrup with crushed mint leaves in a tall glass and pour sprite in it along with few ice cubes, mix well.
- Garnish with a slice of lemon and a small sprig of mint leaf.
- Serve chilled.

FRUIT PUNCH

WHAT YOU NEED

- Fresh Orange juice: 1/4 cup
- Pineapple juice: 1/4 cup
- Mango Juice: 1/4 cup
- Sugar syrup: 1 tbsp
- Lemon juice: 1 tsp
- Ice (crushed)

METHOD

- Mix everything together in a tall glass and serve chilled.

VIRGIN SANGRIA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Orange juice: 100 ml
- Apple juice: 150 ml
- Sprite and Coca-Cola: 100 ml
- Lemon juice: 1 tsp
- Ginger juice: 1/2 tsp
- Apple (finely chopped): 1 tbsp
- Pomegranate seeds: 1tsp
- Ice cubes (as required)

METHOD

- Put all the ingredients together and mix well.
 - Serve in tall glasses and enjoy the refreshing drink.
- (The writer Anuradha Gulati is an expert at Momspresso.)*

With group bubbles becoming the new rule of celebrations, top up your guests' glasses with innovation

Planning a party at home can be interesting but creatively exhausting as well because there is so much to experiment and play with the party menu — be it the decor, food or the drinks.

While the run of the mill drinks like the colas and the alcohols or the lemonades are easy to whip up and serve, what will really amaze your guests is the personal touch and innovation.

This festive season celebrate in style with fun party drinks and be a great host. Here are some drinks tried and tested across numerous gatherings and the feedbacks have just made them better.

FRESH LIME SODA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Lemon: 1



- Soda water: 1 bottle
- Sugar syrup: 11/2 tbsp
- Crushed ice
- Salt to taste
- Chaat masala to taste
- Lemon (for garnishing)
- Mint leaves (finely chopped)

METHOD

- Squeeze lemon in a glass and put sugar syrup.
- Then add salt, chaat masala and crushed ice.
- Pour soda water slowly in the glass and stir well.

- Add mint leaves and garnish with lemon slice.
- Serve immediately.

WATERMELON DELIGHT

WHAT YOU NEED

- Watermelon (without seeds): 1 bowl



Everyday extraordinary

Chef KUNAL KAPUR shares personal insights, instances and anecdotes on keeping kids glued to home platters and helping them forget the burger and pizza

Jelimals, ITC's confectionery brand in the Jelly segment, has shifted its portfolio offerings to Jelimals Immunoz — jellies fortified with two key nutrients Vitamin C and Zinc that help support the immune system amongst children. A serving of two, great tasting jellies per day will ensure kids get 50 per cent RDA of Vitamin C and 15 per cent RDA of Zinc — both essential to support the immune system.

The pandemic-led, unprecedented rise in demand for immunity supporting products paved way for the need to safeguard children through the category and the product's launch comes as a natural progression to enable support towards their welfare in the present context.

Data gathered by InfoLeap Market Research & Consultancy LLC for Jelimals Immunoz from 364 children, aged 8-12 years across Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata revealed that 86 per cent children feel that their mother is putting extra effort in the kitchen to make new and interesting food, 92 per cent still miss the experience of eating outside food/eating in a restaurant. If given a 'Superpower' 74 per cent children would utilise it to save people and find cure from COVID-19 with concern for parents and family being foremost for the children. This followed by saving humanity including doctors, soldiers, friends, animals and testing



individuals for the virus. To discuss the findings and how adults can help make the transition for children, the brand hosted an exclusive webinar with experts, parents and kids Jelimals Immunoz: Kid Me Not. Father and celebrity chef Kunal Kapur, mother and actor Sameera Reddy, child artist Aaryan Prajapati and artist and anchor Karan Wahi moderated the discussion.

In the backdrop of the current times when hygiene and safety are of paramount importance in every family, chef Kunal shared personal insights, instances and anecdotes on how to prepare fun and tasty home-made food for kids that are alternatives to outside food. He elaborated and emphasised on how *ghar ka*

khana gained relevance during this lockdown, beside sharing tips on how to jazz up regular everyday meals.

Speaking about the initiative, Mr. Anuj Rustagi, COO — Chocolate, Coffee, Confectionery and New Category Development — Foods, ITC Ltd, said, "It is our endeavour to support the health of kids with our products and we are doing this in the 'Jelimals' way' — making this fun and engaging for both parents and kids much like our *Do the 5* video. We are delighted share hacks on how mothers can spice up the fun quotient for their children through exciting dishes, without compromising on the nutritional and health benefits".

Commenting on the collaboration, chef Kunal said, "Even in the most difficult times, food has been a comforter for children and adults alike. The disproportionate surge in search for interesting recipes, videos and experiments in the kitchen are all a testament to this analogy. With the lockdown, individuals got creative with the essential options available in their kitchen or in the fridge to cook-up exciting meals that would not only satiate hunger but also nourish the soul. Mothers especially have been exploring trendy variations to dishes or broadening their culinary creativity to make food exciting for children which has also become a mainstay during the lockdown."

LOOK WITHIN

Through his recent film, *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*, filmmaker, art historian and photographer BENOY K BEHL finds out that the purpose of yoga is to liberate us from the shackles of our innumerable desires

During this time of global health crisis and stress, Indian philosophy and yoga have become more relevant than ever. Yoga is the action part of Indian philosophy. It shows us the path, away from our fears and confusions of the world, to a century of peace, which can be found within. It points the way to love and harmony, which would be our best shields against the perils of



the virus as well as of general ill-health. Our balance and peace are the foundations of our immune system. If we can preserve that, we are much stronger and less susceptible to diseases.

Yoga quite literally means to unite oneself with the higher self, which is in us and is all pervasive. It means to join the subject with the object. To do this, we have to strip away the many layers of momentary sensory perceptions, which assail our senses. These keep us forever bound to the material world. Our perceptions must be detached from the external world to look within.

We live amid much turmoil and confusion in the material world. The state of mental and

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physical health has deteriorated considerably. It is estimated that 70 per cent of the costs incurred on health are on chronic diseases, like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and osteoarthritis. There are hardly any permanent solutions to these, either through medicines or surgery. Mental ailments

are also expected to reach epidemic levels very soon.

I have recently completed shooting my film, *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*. In an interview in the film, yoga and ayurveda expert from Santa Fe, USA, Padma Bhushan Dr David Frawley, shares, "What happened in the Western world is that we have been very good at pursuing the outer, material, media-based world. We have lost our connections to a great extent with the inner world of consciousness and direct perception. In Indian philosophy, our true state is that of *sukha* or eternal bliss. The purpose of yoga is to free us from our pain, to liberate us from the shackles of our innumerable

desires, which lead us nowhere at all, to awaken true knowledge within us and to help us to be in harmony with all that there is."

He elaborates further, "In the world today, we have reached a stage of tremendous fragmentation. Our language, science, is running after the particularised... We have reduced human health to very complex chemicals. The question is how do we integrate our perceptions and knowledge? How do we arrive at a holistic understanding of who we are as individuals? What is the nature of the universe? So yoga deconstructs our outer worldview of physical reality but restores our inner sense of the immortal, transcendent, overflowing universe of consciousness."

Dr Frawley believes that yoga is about uniting our individual mind with the universal consciousness which is full of bliss. He says, "Yoga takes us to true self-awareness. While doing yoga, we calm ourselves and realise that we are less affected by the noise and distractions of the ever-changing world around us. Step-by-step, we become aware, first of our bodies and then of our breath. It lets us take the control. In that moment, the transformation begins."

In another interview, Tulku Sherdor, director of Blazing Wisdom Institute, New York, highlights the importance of yoga. He

says, "I think that all of the yogic traditions of India are all pointing to this same vision. It's the path of reconnecting with what is most essential for our own being."

Minakshi Devi Bhavnani, yoga guru from Puducherry, shares that love is the essence of everything. "Love transcends all personalities and as long as the personality is involved, there is no love. It has to become a universal experience. I would ask Swamiji what is love? And he would say love is profound interest... To have profound interest, you must be capable of concentration. And if we can sustain that love, it becomes *dhyana*. We become one with that object of love. If we can sustain that long enough, then love would take us right into *samadhi*, where our individual self that seeks liberation is dissolved, like the salt is dissolved in the ocean," she says.



