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HOLD ON
TO CHUSHUL

WORLD 11
YEMEN: CLASHES BETWEEN
GOVT, SEPARATISTS KILL 50

AVENUE 12
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
LEARNING IS KEY

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Punish terror sponsor nations: PM

At BRICS summit, Modi also calls for reforms in UNSC, IMF, WTO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Advocating a tough stance against terrorism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged the international community to call out nations backing this scourge and they must be "brought to book." He also favoured reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Modi made these observations during his address at the Brazil-Russia-China-South Africa (BRICS) conclave. The virtual event was attended by heads of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa.

President Vladimir Putin hosted the high-powered conclave. Besides Modi and Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro attended the meeting. The 12th summit's theme was "Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth."

Incidentally, this was the second time Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping were coming face to face albeit virtually since the stand-offs started between the two nations in Eastern Ladakh in May.

During the first meeting at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on November 10, Modi in a veiled reference to China's expansionist policy said, "India believes that to improve connectivity it is important to



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses members during the BRICS summit, via video conferencing, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

PTI

respect the other's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Prime Minister Imran Khan was also present at that event.

Modi said, "Terrorism is the biggest problem facing the world today. We have to ensure that the countries that support and assist the terrorists are held accountable, and this problem is tackled in an organised manner."

The Prime Minister was apparently underlining the role of Pakistan in fanning cross-border terrorism in India and China's support to it.

He congratulated Russia for the finalisation of the BRICS counter-terrorism strategy under its leadership and promised that India will take forward the matter during its leadership next year.

With the world battling coronavirus pandemic, the Prime Minister highlighted India's contribution to the

international community during the crisis.

Modi said due to the strength of India's pharmaceutical sector, India was able to provide medicines to over 150 countries during lockdown. He assured the BRICS nations that India's coronavirus vaccine production and delivery ability will help mankind in the same way.

As India will be taking over the chairmanship of the BRICS in 2021, Modi announced that his country will promote digital health and traditional medicine among BRICS countries.

The summit held against the backdrop of the 75th anniversary of the UN, the leaders discussed intra-BRICS cooperation and key issues in the global context, including the reform of the multilateral system, measures to mitigate the impact of the ongoing

Covid-19 pandemic, cooperation in counter terrorism, trade, health, energy and people to people exchanges.

Modi highlighted his Government's flagship Atmanirbhar Bharat or Self-Reliant India campaign on the BRICS platform. The Prime Minister said the campaign will instill a comprehensive reform process, which can help India become a strong contributor to the global value chains in the post-Covid era.

"We have started a comprehensive reform process under the 'Self-reliant India' campaign. The campaign is based on the belief that a self-reliant and resilient India post-Covid can be a force multiplier for the global economy and make a strong contribution to the global value chains," Modi said.

He also called for urgent reforms in the United Nations

Delhi plans to shut down markets to contain Covid

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of alarming surge in coronavirus cases in the national Capital, the Delhi Government on Tuesday sent a proposal to the Centre seeking power to shut down markets which may emerge as Covid hotspots.

In another proposal sent to the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G), the Government sought to permit only 50 people to attend wedding functions now against the earlier limit of 200 people.

Addressing the media, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "Following the Central Government's guidelines and considering the marriage season, the Delhi Government earlier allowed 200 guests at the marriage functions. Earlier, this number was 50 but considering the recent spike in the number of corona cases, the Delhi Government has decided to withdraw this relaxation. I have sent the proposal to the L-G for his approval."

The CM said, "We witnessed massive crowds in some of the popular markets of Delhi before Diwali. In these markets, no social distancing was followed and due to this situation, the number of Covid-19 cases has surged significantly in the Capital. In the last order passed by the Central Government, it was noted that permission to impose local lockdowns in the State should be taken from the Centre. We have requested the Centre to permit shutting

Seeks Centre's permission, suggests 50 people cap on wedding functions

down markets if necessary."

Kejriwal thanked the Centre for providing 750 additional ICU beds for Covid patients in Delhi. He appealed to the people of Delhi to wear masks and follow social distancing norms to protect themselves from Covid.

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Centre unhappy at laxity in SOP implementation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Tuesday at a Press briefing expressed disappointment over laxity in the implementation of the Central SOPs in Delhi despite the national Capital having more than 4,000 containment zones.

He noted that now, an active case search and house to house surveillance need to be stepped up in Delhi.

The Centre's intervention follows emergence of "unprecedented situation" in Delhi, which, experts said, could worsen in coming weeks with Covid-19 cases rising to 500 cases per million population.

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People coming from Delhi to Noida to be randomly tested

Noida: People coming from Delhi to Noida will be randomly tested for Covid-19 from Wednesday, the administration of Gautam Buddha Nagar, adjoining Delhi, in Uttar Pradesh said.

DIP IN CASES, INDIA RECORDS 29,163

New Delhi: The number of new coronavirus infections reported in a day ropped below 30,000 after four months, taking India's COVID-19 caseload to 88.74 lakh, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 82,90,370 according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

SPUTNIK V COULD BE PRODUCED IN INDIA

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday suggested that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19 could be produced in China and India, which are members of the five-nation BRICS bloc.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank withdrawal capped

₹25,000 withdrawal limit till Dec 16, Govt announces LVB merger with DBS India

PTI ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday imposed a 30-day moratorium on Lakshmi Vilas Bank, restricting cash withdrawals at ₹25,000 per depositor, and simultaneously announced a scheme to merge the cash-strapped lender with DBS India.

Singapore's DBS will infuse ₹2,500 crore into DBS Bank India for the proposed merger with cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB).

The step was taken on the advice of the Reserve Bank in view of the private sector bank's

deteriorating financial health.

The Reserve Bank also superseded the board of LVB and appointed TN Manoharan, former non-executive chairman of Canara Bank, as its administrator for 30 days.

The RBI placed in the public domain a draft scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

DBS Bank India, in a statement, said the proposed amalgamation will provide stability and better prospects to LVB's depositors, customers and employees.

"To support the amalgamation, DBS will inject ₹2,500

crore (SGD 463 million) into DBIL if the scheme is approved. This will be fully funded from DBS' existing resources," it said.

LVB is the second private sector bank after Yes Bank which has run into rough weather during this year.

In March, capital-starved Yes Bank was placed under a moratorium. The government rescued it by asking state-run SBI to infuse ₹7,250 crore and take 45 per cent stake in the bank.

The Department of Financial Services, in a gazette notification, said LVB "shall not, without the permission in writing of the Reserve Bank of India, make, in the aggregate, payment to a depositor of a

sum exceeding ₹25,000 lying to his credit, in any savings, current or any other deposit account" during the moratorium period up to December 16, 2020.

However, the bank can make payment in excess of ₹25,000 to meet unforeseen expenses in connection with medical treatment of a depositor or any dependent person, or towards the cost of higher education of the person/dependants.

Besides, the Central ban can permit the bank to disburse more than ₹25,000 for payment towards obligatory expenses in connection with marriage or other ceremonies or any other unavoidable emergency.

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CAPSULE

PAEDOPHILE JE HELD, USED TO POST VIDEOS

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested a junior engineer of UP's irrigation department for sexual exploitation of children for last 10 years and selling videos and photographs of his nefarious acts on dark web to other paedophiles across the globe, officials said on Tuesday.

FREE SMARTPHONES IN ODISHA NAXAL HOTBED

Bhubaneswar: Striving to transform the Naxal hotbed in the "cut-off area" of Odisha's Malkangiri district into one of the developed places of the State, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday said smartphones will be provided free of cost to all households in the region.

BENCHMARKS SCALES ALL TIME HIGH

Mumbai: Equity indices rallied to all-time highs on Tuesday, driven by banking, finance and metal stocks, as encouraging data from another Covid-19 vaccine trial bolstered investor sentiment. After touching its lifetime peak of 44,161.16 during the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 314.73 points higher at its new closing record of 43,952.71.

3 DIE AFTER DRINKING SPOURIOUS LIQUOR

Firozabad: Three men died in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district on Tuesday allegedly after consuming spurious liquor.

Cong clears air, distances itself from 'Gupkar'

Party raps Shah for misleading statements

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday distanced itself from Gupkar alliance after Home Minister Amit Shah sought clarification from Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi about their stand on the agenda put forth by a conglomeration of leaders from the Kashmir valley.

In a series of tweets Shah termed Gupkar "gang" as an unholy alliance and said Sonia and Rahul must clarify their stand clear to people of India.

Hitting out at Shah, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "To spread lies, fraud and creating new illusions have become the way of the Modi Government. It's a shame that Home Minister Amit Shah is keeping aside the responsibility of the national security and is making false, misleading and mischievous statements on Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh... Congress party is not a part of Gupkar alliance."

Shah alleged that the "Gupkar Gang is going global" and wants foreign forces to intervene in Jammu & Kashmir.

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It's not a gang, but legitimate alliance: Omar, Mehbooba slam Amit Shah

PNS ■ JAMMU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's tweet labeling People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) as "Gupkar Gang" triggered a fresh war of words between him and two former Chief Ministers of Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, in the virtual world on Tuesday.

Reacting sharply, Omar tweeted, "We are not a 'gang' Amit Shah ji, we are a legitimate political alliance having fought & continuing to fight elections, much to your disappointment"

Continued on Page 11

Rain, wind help clean up Delhi's air to moderate

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Spurious rain and stronger winds improved the air quality significantly in the national Capital to the "moderate" category on Tuesday.

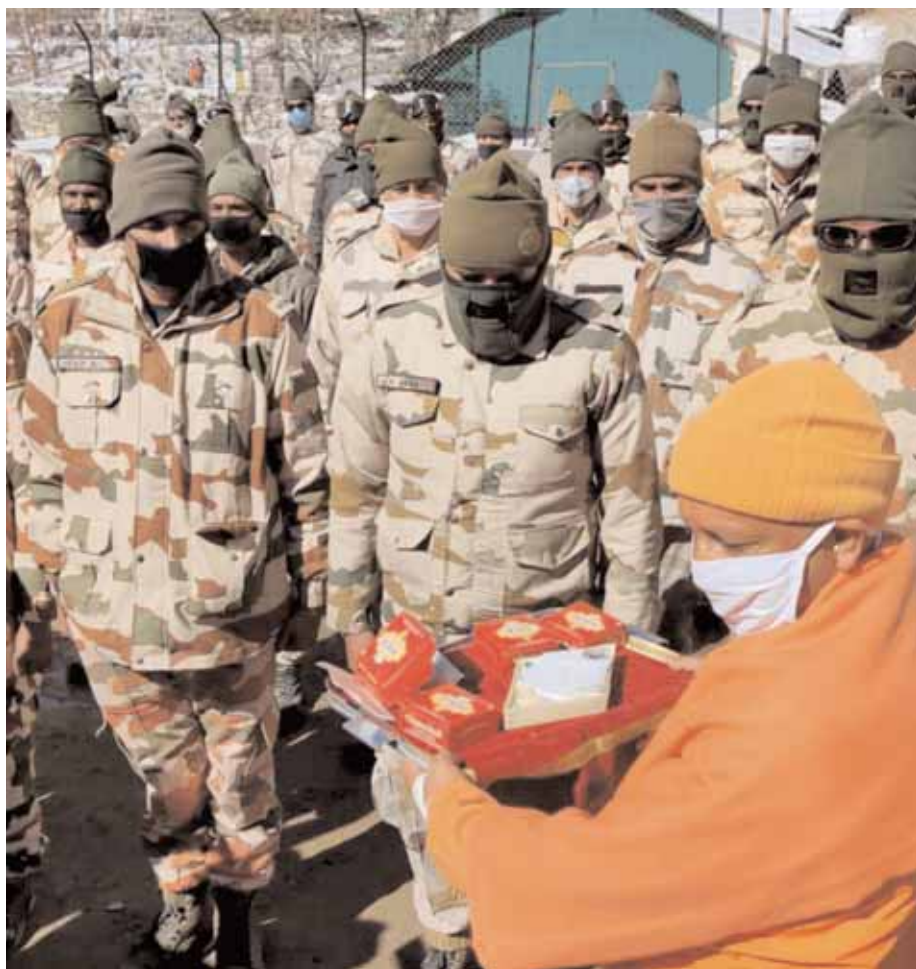
According to the Central Pollution Control Board's mobile application SAMEER, the city recorded an air quality index of 168, which falls in the "moderate" category, much better than Monday's AQI of 221, which falls in the "poor" category.

However, Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said the improvement will be short-lived and the AQI is likely to slip back into the "poor" category on Thursday.

The city's 24-hour average AQI was 435 on Sunday and 414 on Saturday. An AQI between 0 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".

"Surface winds are west-southwesterly and energetic, very favourable for pollutant dispersion. Rainfall along with stronger winds under the influence of western disturbance helped clean the build-up of pollution in the Indo-Gangetic Plain," it said.

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Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with ITBP personnel during his visit to Mana, last village from the India-China border, in Chamoli district, on Tuesday (Report on Page 2)

PTI

UP junior engineer in CBI net for alleged sexual abuse of children

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested a junior engineer of Uttar Pradesh irrigation department for alleged sexual exploitation of children for last 10 years and selling videos and photographs of his nefarious acts on dark web to other paedophiles across the globe, officials said Tuesday.

He is alleged to have victimised about 50 children in the age group of 5-16 years in the districts of Chitrakoot, Banda and Hamirpur, they said. The junior engineer is understood to have given details of his activities during preliminary questioning by CBI investigators.

He is believed to have told that he was silently operating in the adjoining districts of Hamirpur, Banda and

Chitrakoot for last 10 years preying upon poor children between 5-16 years of age, the officials said. He used to buy their silence using cash and gifts of electronic gadgets such as mobile phones, they said.

The modus operandi adopted by the accused helped him to keep away from the radar of investigating agencies. The newly set up special CBI unit handling online child sexual abuse has started tracking and apprehending paedophiles operating on the internet and busted his alleged activities after trailing him for days, the officials said. The junior engineer, a resident of Chitrakoot district, was arrested from Banda by the special unit of the CBI specialising in Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/Investigation (OCSAE) in one

such operation.

"Apart from the physical abuse of these children, the accused also allegedly recorded their acts using their mobile phones, laptops and other electronic devices. It was further alleged that these photographs and video films containing child sexual abuse material were published and transmitted by the accused using the internet," CBI spokesperson RK Gaur said. He was produced before a court which sent him to one day of judicial custody. "Searches were conducted at the residence of accused which led to recovery of cash of Rs eight lakh (approximately), mobile phones, laptops, web-camera and other electronic storage devices including pen drives, memory cards and several sex toys," Gaur said.

It is alleged that he was selling, circulating and sharing child sexual abuse material with other paedophiles globally using dark web and cloud services having servers abroad, the officials said. Dark web are internet websites, pages and material which are specially encrypted and remain hidden from search engines. "The scrutiny of the emails of the accused has revealed that he was allegedly in constant touch with several individuals (both Indian and foreign nationals) for the purpose of sharing child sexual abuse material. The accused has allegedly created and shared huge quantity of child sexual abusive material, over the years, through the internet using various social media platforms and websites over dark web," Gaur said.

Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile test-fired

New Delhi (PTI): India on Tuesday successfully test-fired the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system at an integrated test range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast, the defence ministry said. It said the missile "accurately and successfully" neutralised an air-borne target. It was the second successful test firing of the missile in the last five days.

"The flight test, second in the series, was conducted today at around 1542 hours from the integrated test range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha. "The test was carried out once again, against the high-performance jet unmanned aerial target called Banshee, which simulates an aircraft," the ministry said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO scientists on the successful test-firing of the missile. "Congratulations to @DRDO_India for two back to back successful test trials of Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile. First launch test on 13th Nov proved the Radar and Missile capabilities with direct hit. Today's test demonstrated the warhead performance on proximity detection," he tweeted.

Yogi lays foundation stone of guest house at Badrinath

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Praising the efforts of his Uttarakhand counterpart Trivendra Singh Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said that the two state had not only ended most of their disputes, but new tourism avenues were continuously being explored for the benefit of the devotees and tourists of both the states besides catering to visitors from other parts of the country and abroad.

The UP chief minister, who was speaking on the occasion of laying down the foundation stone of UP Tourism department's tourist guest house at Badrinath Dham, said that there were many property related disputes that were lingering on for the past 18 to 20 years but most of them had been successfully sorted out by the joint efforts of UP and Uttarakhand governments. "We will soon resolve the remaining ones," he added.

Going down the memory lane, Yogi Adityanath said: "Uttarakhand has been my birthplace and I have spent my childhood here. We (UP government) will ensure that the new guest house starts catering to the devotees and visitors before the next season."

It may be mentioned here that the 40-room guest house

will be constructed on one acre area at a cost of about Rs 11 crore as a green building.

To be constructed in the Garhwal style of architecture, it will have facilities like a restaurant, conference hall, dormitory and parking. Speaking further, Yogi said that visiting the four dhams of Uttarakhand always gave immense pleasure to the devotees and the visitors.

"I am coming here after a long time and feeling blessed after the darshans of Kedarnath and Badrinath Dham. The construction of the guest house has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic but our team of officers, with the support of Uttarakhand government, will ensure its timely construction," the chief minister said.

Besides this, the UP government also aims to dedicate the under-construction Bhagirath guest house at Haridwar to the devotees before the Haridwar Kumbh, scheduled early next year, he added. The UP chief minister also appealed to the Uttarakhand government for the renovation of the Taposthali cave of Yogi Raj Sundarnath Ji of the Nath Panth.

"The Devbhumi Uttarakhand has been the 'tapobhumi' of many saints, including Yogi Raj Sundarnath Ji. There is also a cave which was his place of worship near

the Badrinath Temple and the Uttarakhand government should also work for its renovation," he said.

Meanwhile, speaking on the occasion earlier, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said that both the states were working dedicatedly for the progress and prosperity of their people. "Our population is barely 1.25 percent of Uttar Pradesh's population but we share the same roots," Rawat said.

He said that during the previous regime in UP, the state symbolised goonda raj but Yogi Adityanath ensured that such perception was done away with. "Now, UP is fast progressing to become an 'Uttam Pradesh'," he added.

Yogi Adityanath also visited Mana village of Chamoli district along with Trivendra Singh Rawat and met the soldiers of Indo Tibet Border Police (ITBP), Garhwal Rifles and Border Road Organisation (BRO) at the bordering camps.

Exchanging sweets with the soldiers, the UP chief minister said that it was inspiring for the countrymen how jawans safeguarded the boundaries of the countries while facing all kinds of situations.

"Badrinath Dham is the centre of Sanatan Hindu religion and our brave soldiers are

UP govt eyeing big investments in domestic data centres

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is eyeing a major pie of the projected 5-billion dollar investment in domestic data centres till March 2025, and is hammering out a policy to woo private investors in the sector.

While the state has already received investment proposals of about Rs 10,000 crore in data centre projects by big companies — Adani, Hiranandani, RackBank — the government wants to further sweeten the investment climate with an exclusive policy framework to cater to the needs of the sector.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed the officials to draft an investor-friendly data centre policy to attract private investors and to usher in the state on the path

of digital economy. Underlining that the data centres played a major role in the development of the information technology (IT) sector and creation of a large number of direct and indirect jobs, the chief minister said the new policy should be prepared after holding discussions with all the stakeholders.

The state government will provide a host of incentives to the data centre developers so that their projects are completed within timelines.

The Yogi Adityanath government has already given approval to establish a data centre park near Greater Noida to generate employment opportunities for the youth in the state. The government gave approval to this high-profile project which will be set up by the Hiranandani group near Greater Noida on a 20-

acre plot, according to a government release. The project cost of the data centre park is over Rs 600 crore. The government has directed the officials to facilitate land allotment for the ambitious project and also enable its operation without any problem. The Hiranandani Group, the real estate developers of Mumbai, has earlier set up similar data centre parks in Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Since these data centres consume large amounts of energy, the government has also made adequate arrangements for uninterrupted power supply which will be provided through the Open Access Scheme. In the absence of adequate data centres, data is largely stored in locations outside the country but with this data park it will now be safely stored here.

of India and Tibet.

The UP chief minister was on a two-day visit to Uttarakhand from Sunday but due to the inclement weather, he had to stay back for one more day.

WHO praises UP govt's Covid mgmt strategy

Lucknow (PNS): The World Health Organisation (WHO) has showered praise on the Uttar Pradesh government for its COVID-19 management strategy that has helped in controlling the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"The UP government's strategic response to COVID-19 by stepping up contact tracing efforts is exemplary and can serve as a good example for other states," said Dr Roderico Ofrin, WHO country representative. The global health body appreciated the efforts made by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his government for the management of novel coronavirus infection, especially in tracking the high-risk contacts.

Over 70,000 front-line health workers worked across the state to reach out to high-risk contacts of coronavirus positive cases.

Acknowledging contact tracing as an essential public health tool for controlling the pandemic, Dr Ofrin said, "Systematic tracking of contacts through a proper mechanism is key, along with a well-trained health workforce, to implement the surveillance activities."

"The WHO team provided technical support to the state government to boost contact tracing efforts and strengthen

the capacity of field teams through training. Field monitors assessed the quality of contact tracing of 58,000 COVID-19 cases in 75 districts and found that 93 percent of the high-risk contacts were traced and tested. This exercise helped the government in strengthening contact tracing in 17 districts where more than 12 000 high-risk contacts were missed for testing," said Dr Madhup Bajpai, WHO-NTSP regional team leader, Uttar Pradesh Region.

In the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases, the state government has also issued an alert to all the districts and special precautions are also being taken in view of the upcoming Chhath Puja. At present, there are 22,603 active cases in Uttar Pradesh and the recovery rate stands at 94.15 percent

It may be mentioned that the government has increased testing to keep a check on novel coronavirus infection and has also requested the people of the state to remain alert and follow all the precautions.

Uttar Pradesh has already set a record in the country for carrying out the highest number of tests. On an average, more than 1.50 lakh Covid tests are being done in the state, again the highest in the country.

BJP MLA Kali Prasad attacked in Salempur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Just over giving passage to his cavalcade, unidentified persons allegedly attacked Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Salempur, Kali Prasad, police said on Tuesday.

A police official said, "The MLA was not injured but his security was stepped up and a case was registered."

As per reports, Kali Prasad was coming in his four-wheeler on Monday night while a procession was also passing by for the immersion of Goddess Lakshmi near Paran Chapra village of the area.

The procession had a tractor and two trolleys attached to it and two artistes were dancing on it while some people were also firing in the air to celebrate the occasion.

As per the MLA, his vehicle was behind the procession for some time but as soon as he

passed the tractor-trolley, someone fired from behind.

He had a narrow escape in the alleged attack. The MLA told the police that he did not have enmity with anybody.

Superintendent of Police Sri Pati Mishra said that following information about the incident, he reached the spot and inspected the vehicle.

The vehicle's glass was broken at the back side and small shreds of the glass were also recovered from inside the vehicle.

A forensic team was sent to the spot for a probe. On the basis of a complaint filed by the MLA, unidentified persons have been booked under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code.

Ten people have been taken into custody in connection with the case and further investigation is underway.

199 in fray in Council polls

Lucknow(PNS): A total of 199 candidates are in the fray for 11 seats of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council in the biennial polls for graduate and teachers constituencies to be held on December 1. The nomination process ended on Tuesday after the end of the last date for withdrawal of papers, Election Commission sources here said. A total of 215 candidates had filed their nominations for five graduate and six teachers constituencies and five nominations were rejected during scrutiny and 11 candidates withdrew their papers. The Election Commission sources said there were 22 candidates in Agra graduate seat, 16 in Allahabad- Jhansi graduate seat, 24 in Lucknow graduate seat, 30 in Meerut graduate seat and 22 in Varanasi graduate seat. There are 16 candidates in fray in Agra teachers seat, 15 in Bareilly-Moradabad teachers seat, 11 in Lucknow teachers seat, 15 in Meerut teachers seat and 12 in Varanasi teachers seat. The polling for these 11 seats would be held on December 1 and counting of votes would be taken up on December 3.

Two minor Dalit sisters killed in Fatehpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two Dalit sisters, both minors, were allegedly killed and their bodies were dumped in a pond in a village in Asodhar area of Fatehpur district, police said on Monday.

The local villagers claimed that the eyes of the two girls were gouged out and their legs were tied and they seemed to be also raped before the bodies were thrown by the killers to conceal the crime.

The villagers staged a protest for several hours and did not allow the police to send the body for post-mortem as the local officers denied any criminal conspiracy and said that the sisters had drowned. The villagers demanded that the post-mortem should be conducted in their presence.

After over five hours of demonstration, the bodies were sent for autopsy after the officers assured the villagers of proper action.

ASP in Fatehpur, Rajesh Kumar, said the bodies of Sumi (12) and Kiran (8), daughters of Dilip Dhoobi, a Dalit, were retrieved from the pond, late Monday evening. Both

the bodies had injury marks in the eyes, he said. The girls had gone to the field in the afternoon to get vegetables but did not return. The family members of the victims alleged that the assailants killed the girls after an unsuccessful attempt to rape them.

According to eyewitnesses, the legs of both the girls were tied with straw and their eyes were damaged.

Superintendent of Police Prashant Verma said that both the girls died due to drowning while breaking the water chestnut and there was a mild scratch in the eye.

In Bahraich, a 23-year-old man was beaten to death, allegedly by a group of people, for urinating in the open, police said on Monday. Three persons were detained in connection with the incident which took place in Khairi Dikoli village of the district on Sunday night. Suhail was urinating in front of his uncle's house. His neighbours, Ram Moorat, Aatmaram, Rampal, Sanahi and Manjeet, objected to it and beat him up with sticks, Superintendent of Police Vipin Mishra. Suhail was seriously injured and rushed to the district hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Owaisi a fresh challenge for SP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Asaduddin Owaisi, the Hyderabad AMP, derisively called a 'vote katva', has emerged as a fresh challenge for the Samajwadi Party, which perceives itself as the party in waiting to form the government in UP in 2022.

Owaisi-led All India Majlis-e-Mittehaddul Muslimen (AIMIM) won five seats in the recently concluded Bihar Assembly elections.

In Uttar Pradesh, which has 19.3 percent Muslim population, the minority votes have been the core support base of secular parties like Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress. The AIMIM had been making forays into UP since 2015 and had contested the 2017 Assembly elections. The SP, in 2017, had cautioned the Muslims against the AIMIM and described Owaisi as the 'new Jinnah' in the making.

In fact, 2017 saw the decimation of the Muslim representation in the state. While the BSP fielded 99 Muslim candidates, only five won. Out of the 57 Muslim candidates of the SP, only seven won. And the Congress saw only two of its 22



Muslim candidates emerging victoriously. The entry of Owaisi will further take away the Muslim votes from the 'secular' parties, thus rendering the Muslim vote useless in Uttar Pradesh, that so far was considered the swing vote.

A political analyst said, "The Owaisi factor in elections is now real. The 'Hyderabad ka mohalle ka leader' (Hyderabad's small leader) is now being dubbed as a 'king maker' and taking him lightly is likely to cost the opposition."

The Samajwadi Party, however, repeats its stated position and AIMIM is a Bharatiya Janata Party stooge and the sole aim of Hyderabad-based party is to divide the Muslims votes with the ultimate objective of benefiting the BJP.

A SP leader said wherever the AIMIM had contested elections; it

had worked for polarisation of voters on communal, lines thus consolidating the Hindu vote behind the BJP.

"AIMIM allied with political chameleons such as Bahujan Samaj Party and Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) in Bihar, who have allied or been soft on the BJP on multiple occasions in the past. This raises doubts on his motives — that his efforts are essentially in opposition to the 'secular' parties whose main agenda since 2014 has been to defeat the BJP. By planning to go to West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, Owaisi doesn't help that perception of threat among anti-BJP parties," said a SP leader.

Political analysts feel that AIMIM has brought in a new angle to politics of Hindi belt states. Although the South still has parties that exclusively represent and cater to Muslim voters, North Indian parties are essentially divided between a Hindutva party BJP and a pool of 'secular' parties. Since the BJP always loses out on the Muslim votes and the 'secular' parties gain on them, Owaisi's entry in the Hindi belt evidently divides the Muslim vote.

Inspector suspended for inaction in rape case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Suicide by a rape victim due to alleged inaction by the cops in Bulandshahr led to the suspension of an inspector on Tuesday.

The girl was allegedly gang-raped and the inspector of Anupshahr police station, who was in charge of the investigation, was suspended for taking no serious action in the matter, police said on Tuesday.

Issuing the suspension order against Inspector Vijay Rathi, who was investigating the case, on

Tuesday, the senior superintendent of police ordered an inquiry into his role along with that of the circle officer, who was the immediate supervisory officer.

SSP Santosh Kumar Singh said that a one-and-half page suicide note was also recovered from the spot of the suicide.

He said that Superintendent of Police (Crime) Shivram Yadav was made the investigating officer to probe into the role of the incharge inspector and the CO. The investigating officer has been directed to submit the report in two days.

On the other hand, a report relating to abetment to suicide was registered on the complaint of the deceased's family in connection with the alleged rape and suicide case in which the accused and their family members have also been named. Meanwhile, a couple committed suicide in Lalitpur.

On Tuesday morning, his fam-

ily members went to the field but found the couple not working. They went towards their house and heard the cries of their daughter. As they went inside, they were shocked to see bodies of the couple hanging from the wooden log of their house. Lavkush's father Babu Lal Kushwaha immediately called the police. He failed to give and reason for the suicide. However some local villagers revealed that family dispute forced the couple to end their lives. A case was registered and the bodies were sent for post-mortem.

CITYBRIEFS

SILVER MEDAL

Pranjal Verma, a class XI student of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus I, has achieved a remarkable feat by winning the silver medal in 'Science and Maths Olympiad', organised online by International Society for Olympiad. Students of several schools from India and abroad participated in this contest in which Pranjal walked away with the silver medal.

SECOND PHASE

The five-day second phase of the 'Ready to Move In' scheme of UP Housing and Development Board commenced on Tuesday. Flats in four housing schemes of Vrindavan, eight schemes of Awadh Vihar Joyana and one in Rajajipuram will be sold to buyers on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Office of the Superintending Engineer

Etawah Circle PWD, Etawah

No. 4170/55रि-एडवा/2020

Date: 11/11/2020

Short Time E-Tender Notice(VIIth Call)

1. E-Tender is invited on behalf of Hon'able Governor of U. P from eligible contractors registered with U.P. P.W.D. for " Bridge Work" as below:

Sl. No	District	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Lacs)	Bid Security (Lacs)	Cost of Bid document (Rs.)	Time of completion (withrainy season)	Category of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State Sector (General)							
1	Auraiya	Construction of Minor Bridge on Pandu River at Beta to Purwa Lachi Road in km 1, in Dis. Auraiya	69.00	5.45	2000.00+300.00 +GST (414.00) =2714.00	06 Month	A,B,C
<p>Bid document/Tender details is available on website http://etender.up.nic.in. From 24.11.2020 to 01.12.2020 (upto 12:00 Noon) which can be downloaded from website. Filled Bid documents must be submitted/ uploaded on line on the above website on dated 01.12.2020 (upto 12:00 Noon). Technical bid will be opened on 01.12.2020 at 03.30 P.m.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div>(A.K. Jataw) Executive Engineer Construction Division, PWD Auraiya</div><div>(P.K. Jain) Superintending Engineer Etawah Circle, PWD Etawah</div></div> <p>UP- 157034 Date 12.11.2020 विज्ञापन नंबर एडवा 4170/55रि-एडवा/2020</p>							

OFFICE OF THE SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT LUCKNOW CIRCLE LUCKNOW Address:- Near Vikas Bhawan, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow						
Letter No:- 2853 RED/Tender/File No-15/20-21/J.E. (T)-Lucknow Dated - 11/11/20						
E-Procurement Notice						
1. THE SUPRINTENDNDNG ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT Lucknow Circle Lucknow on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids through tendering system from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP RED in appropriate class AB and C as the case may be. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works.						
S. No.	Name of the District	Name of work	Total Work cost (in Lakh) (excluding GST)	Bid security (EMD) (in Lakh)	Cost of Bid document including GST in rupees	Period of completion including rainy Season
1	Kheri	Construction of CC Road in Vill Belarparsua Majra , Gurgipura 530Mrs Block Nighasan	46.00	0.92	3500.00	6 Months
2	Kheri	Construction of CC Road in Gram Panchayat Banveerpur, 900 Mtr Block Nighasan.	47.00	1.48	3500.00	6 Months
3	Kheri	Construction of RCC Road and Drain in Suthra Barsola, 1250 mtr (Tikuniya), Block Nighasan	111.00	2.22	3500.00	6 Months
4	Kheri	Construction of CC Road from vill Keeratpur to Seema Chauki Keeratpur, 800 Mtr. Block Palla	55.00	1.10	3500.00	6 Months
5	Kheri	Construction of CC Road in Vill Keeratpur from Primary Viddyalay keeratpur to UP Viddyalay Keeratpur 800 mtr. Block Palla	60.00	1.20	3500.00	6 Months
6	Kheri	Construction of CC Road and Drain in Kamlapuri Colony 945 Mtr. Block Palla.	73.00	1.46	3500.00	6 Months
7	Kheri	Construction of CC Road in Vill Dalrajpur, 1078 Mtr. Block Ramiyabehar	75.00	1.50	3500.00	6 Months
8	Kheri	Construction of CC Road in Gram Panchayat Khairatiya Majra Rajunagar 2nd Part 854 Mtr. Block Ramiyabehar	50.00	1.00	3500.00	6 Months
2-	Name of Work as per table					
3-	Date of availability of the documents on websites:- 23-11-2020 to 11-12-2020					
4-	Last Date /Time for receipt of Bids through e-procurement- 11-12-2020 upto 12:00 Noon					
5-	Date of opening of bids through e-procurement - 11-12-2020 at 12:30 PM					
6-	The Employer has right to issue addendum/corrigendum as per ITB clause-10 on in which will not be published in any news paper. All prospective bidders are advised to keep regular watch and visit e-tender portal regularly					
For further details please log on to https://etender.up.nic.in and down load the bid document.						
SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT Lucknow CIRCLE, Lucknow For and on behalf of Governor of UP						
UP- 157022 Date 13.11.2020 विज्ञापन नंबरएडवा 4170/55रि-एडवा/2020 www.upgov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।						

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Dist admn discusses action plan for ‘second wave’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The district administration has geared up to prepare the action plan in view of the probable second wave of coronavirus infection. District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash held a high level meeting with the representatives of major city hospitals at collectorate on Tuesday. Officials from SGPGI, KGMU, RMLIMS and other hospitals attended the meeting.

He asked hospital authorities to gear up, adhere to Covid-19 protocols, maintain triage areas, keep extra ambulances ready and overhaul the entire system for the second wave. On complaints regarding treatment at Prasad and TS Mishra hospitals, he warned that no laxity would be tolerated.

Meanwhile, Additional CMO MK Singh said the Health department teams would visit five areas (Laxman Mela ground, Jhulelal Vatika and Kudia Ghat) for collection of samples

202 more test positive for coronavirus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 202 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Tuesday, taking the city tally to 67,534, while 219 patients recovered. The death toll stands at 941. The new patients included 27 from Gomtinagar, 20 from

Indiranagar, 14 from Rae Bareilly road, 15 from Cantt, 13 from Chowk, and 10 each from Talkatora and Madaon. There were seven deaths in the city and two of the deceased belonged to Lucknow while the rest to Bahraich, Prayagraj, Lakhimpur and Balrampur. Two patients died at KGMU,

including a 34-year-old woman from Bahraich and a 65-year-old man from Balrampur.

Across the state, 1,455 persons tested positive, including 119 in Prayagraj, 141 in Gautambuddh Nagar, 108 in Meerut and 75 in Varanasi, taking the UP tally to 5,14,270.

There were 20 deaths in the state, including two each in Meerut, Kanpur, Varanasi, Rampur & Sitapur and one each in Prayagraj, Bareilly, Barabanki, Lakhimpur Kheri, Basti, Pilibhit & Badaun, taking the toll to 7,412. Besides, 1,838 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 4,84,692.

during Chhath Puja celebrations on November 20 and 21.

“Women are expected to gather at these points in large numbers on November 20 evening and November 21 morning. Samples will be tested on these two days while targeted surveillance will be carried out in urban slums on November 19. Right now, the teams are carrying out targeted surveil-

lance at the airport and bus & railway stations,” he said.

People’s Health Organisation secretary Ishwar Gilada pointed out that the last six weeks have shown some important things. “The virulence of the coronavirus is on the wane, if the conditions existing pan-India are anything to go by. More and more infected patients (approximately 90 percent) are

asymptomatic and as a result, the requirement of oxygen support, beds, ICUs and ventilators has reduced across the country. Beds are easily available barring in places like Kerala and Delhi,” he said.

He further pointed out that infectivity has decreased and fewer people are getting infected. “As against 97,856 new infections across the country on

September 16, we have been recording less than 45,000 cases over the last few weeks and the country recorded 30,715 new cases on November 15 and 28,555 new cases on November 16,” he said.

He added that one more important thing is that India has gone past the peak on September 16. “To establish this, we had to wait for two to three weeks. In some places, we are close to herd immunity,” he added.

“Nothing much has changed regarding people’s behaviour and the number of tests but we still see less infections barring in Kerala and Delhi,” he said. He added that the Diwali impact on testing pan-India is around 20% less (on November 15 and 16), but the number of cases recorded is almost 25-30% less than that in the previous couple of days. “In fact, we are seeing such low numbers after July 14 with 29,842 cases. We may have a second wave or surge in cases, but it is not likely to be very high and touch the 98,000-mark,” he added.

Govt issues guidelines for re-opening of universities, colleges

Lucknow (PNS): The UP government on Tuesday issued guidelines for re-opening of private & state universities and colleges from November 23. Additional chief secretary Monica Garg said the classrooms would accommodate only 50 percent of students, with a maximum of 200 students with masks allowed in a room with complete adherence to Covid-19 protocols. In any open space, social distancing, masks, thermal scanning and availability of handwash must be ensured. A complete roster has to be maintained by the officials, employees, teachers and students. Fifty percent of the students will be allowed on rotation and teachers should be trained in online teaching. No outsiders will be allowed in the premises and a mixed academic calendar should be prepared for both online and offline teaching. The maximum capacity of the students in the lab should also be revised. Aged employees, pregnant women and those who are ill should not be doing any work which brings them in direct contact with students.

Heads of the institutions will prepare the SOPs looking into the spread of the disease and will also make the students, employees and teachers aware of the guidelines. There should also be a tie-up with hospitals in close vicinity. Teachers will prepare an elaborate strategy for their subjects, including the time-table, distribution of assignments and evaluation. Parents must make sure that their wards follow the Covid-19 protocols and refrain from physical presence in classes if they are not feeling well. The students will also be encouraged to download Aarogya Setu mobile app.

Students and employees staying in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the classes. Students will be entering and leaving the institutions in queues while ACs will be set to a temperature between 24 and 30 degrees. Covid-19 protocols also have to be followed in parking area, galleries and lifts. Hostels will also be re-opened but no symptomatic student will be allowed there while all protocols have to be adhered to. Students coming from various districts will have to be quarantined for 14 days. They will be kept away from dining areas, common and sports rooms while cleanliness in kitchens, dining halls and washrooms will have to be monitored. The students will be allowed in the dining areas in small batches while mess timings can be increased. Swimming pools will remain closed, cash exchange discouraged and six-foot distance maintained in the library while helplines will be established for mental health of the students.

Statues of six women to come up at Begum Hazrat Mahal Park

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Life-size statues of six women who played significant roles in the first war of independence will be installed at Begum Hazrat Mahal Park.

Apart from Begum Hazrat Mahal herself, others will be Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Laxmi Bai, Uda Devi, Jhalkari Bai and Avanti Devi.

Ahilyabai took part in the first war of independence in 1857 and she was also remained engaged in social reforms for other women. She also advocated education for women. Begum Hazrat Mahal led the counter-attack on the British. Uda Devi, Jhalkari Bai and Avanti Devi were the soldiers of Begum Hazrat Mahal’s women’s wing.

The idea was conceived by Lucknow Development Authority in the memory of these women and the project is expected to be launched in January next year.

District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash, who is holding the additional charge as LDA vice-chairman, said the idea is to honour these women who laid down their lives fighting against the British.

LDA chief engineer IS Singh said brief history of these women would also be mentioned. The park will be re-designed and efforts will be made to check the entry of undesirable visitors. Elaborate security arrangements will be made for the statues. The chief engineer said the inspection of would begin within a week and the cost of the project was yet to be estimated.

80% of Bhojpuri community to celebrate Chhath in homes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Eighty percent of the Bhojpuri community living in Lucknow will be celebrating Chhath Puja at their homes, national president of All-India Bhojpuri Samaj Prabhunath Rai said on Tuesday. Most of them will be using plastic tubs or inflatable pools to offer ‘arghya’. Chhath Puja celebrations will kick off on Wednesday with the ‘Nahai Khai’ ritual. Community members clean their houses and have a lunch of bottle gourd and gram lentils with a dessert made from jaggery and sugarcane juice. From November 19, there will be an arduous fast which will end on November 20 evening when they offer ‘arghya’ to the setting sun and then to the rising sun the next morning.

Rai said over 50,000 people are likely to reach the banks of Gomti river to offer ‘arghya’ despite his continuous appeal to the community members to stay at home and be safe. The district administration will be handling the entry to ghats while the organisation has only done the cleanliness part.

“People who stay indoors



Preparations underway for Chhath Puja at Laxman Mela ground on Tuesday

Pioneer

may also dig pits in the nearby parks and fill them with water to offer ‘arghya’. There are areas in Sarojininar and Chinhat which

have small ponds in the vicinity,” Rai said. He added that he would also celebrating the festival at his house and use an inflatable pool.

Kamlesh Dubey from the Bhojpuri community said they would celebrate by keeping a vessel on the terrace to offer ‘arghya’.

Three arrested on charges of theft

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of three accused on Tuesday, the Thakurganj police claimed to have worked out the theft cases in which two shops were struck in Thakurganj on Diwali night. The accused were identified as Abdullah, Dilshad (both of Thakurganj) and Mohammed Fazil of Talkatora. The police recovered Rs 8.5 lakh in cash and a motorcycle used by the accused.

The accused reportedly owned their crime and disclosed that they sneaked into a medical store and made off with Rs 7.5 lakh. They also told the police that they committed theft at different shops and houses in the past. The police said Abdullah is the leader of the gang that was active for a long time. The police claimed to have worked out as many as 17 cases of theft which took place in Thakurganj. The police



team was given a cash award of Rs 20,000.

In another success, a joint team of crime branch and Gomtinagar police arrested two persons on the charges of theft and recovered two luxury cars, Rs 16,700 in cash, cheque books and other documents from their possession. The accused were identified as

Alok Chaumal aka Lokesh of Jaipur and Somveer aka Soni Tanwar of Haryana. The police said Alok is the gang leader and he, along with his aide Satpal Singh Chauhan of Haryana and Deepak, would commit theft.

Meanwhile, cash and ornaments were stolen from the house of a retired bank manag-

er in Madaon. As per reports, Nand Kishor of Keshav Nagar, along with his family, had to go to his native house in Kanpur on November 14 to celebrate Diwali. When they returned on Tuesday, they found the house burgled. He said the thieves made off with Rs 50,000 and other valuables.

ROAD MISHAP

A 28-year-old man was killed in a road mishap in Para police station area on Tuesday morning. The victim was identified as Sumit Dhusiya of Secretariat Colony in Talkatora. As per reports, Sumit left his house around 6 am on Tuesday for some work and reached Dubagga. A few metres ahead of Old Para police station, a speeding bus knocked Sumit’s bike from behind. Due to heavy impact, Sumit suffered grievous injuries and died on the spot.

PM to address LU on Nov 25

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be addressing Lucknow University virtually on the occasion of its centennial celebrations on November 25, Vice-Chancellor AK Rai told mediapersons on Tuesday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will formally inaugurate the celebrations and he will be physically present on the occasion. The centennial celebrations are set to commence on November 19 and go on till November 25 while the convocation will be held on November 21.

Rai said cricketer Suresh Raina, who is also an alumnus of Lucknow University, would be present for the convocation ceremony. He said details regarding the presence of international alumni would be shared with the media later.

The university is gearing up to conduct the convocation with complete adherence to social distancing and other Covid-19 protocols. He spoke of how the university has produced gems in its 100-year history and that literary fests would be an excellent place to showcase that.

Man held for posing as Army officer

Lucknow (PNS): The Ayodhya police arrested an impostor masquerading as an Army officer after input provided by Military Intelligence (MI).

The impostor was identified as Sonu Lal Verma alias Rajveer and was found to have used multiple fake Army identity cards, stamps, Army uniforms and related items to cheat aspiring soldiers at various places. The police have booked him under sections 419, 420, 467, 471 and 140 of the Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code.

Reports said that around mid-October, it was learnt by MI officials through their sources that a suspicious indi-

vidual, Rajveer (pseudo name) was seen in and around Ayodhya in the uniform of an Army captain. Subsequently, all the details pertaining to the suspect were shared with the Special Operation Group (SOG) of Ayodhya police and a joint team led by Faizabad Circle Officer IPS Nipun Agrawal was formed under the supervision of Ayodhya DIG/SSP IPS Deepak Kumar.

The prime suspect was apprehended by Ayodhya police on Monday and two pairs of uniforms, six fake Army identity cards, two Army stamps, several Army badges, some documents belonging to aspiring candidates, etc. were

recovered from his possession.

During joint questioning of the suspect, it was found that Sonu was a former NCC cadet and graduate of Lucknow University. After graduation, he was working in a cloth store in Pune. He started impersonating as an Army captain in 2017 to lure aspiring soldiers, especially at the times of army recruitment rallies.

He has been to Nashik, Dehradun, Bareilly, Amethi, Agra, Lucknow and Ayodhya for targeting aspiring candidates. It is believed that he has cheated more than 10 such aspirants and received around Rs 7 lakh from them as a bribe for ensuring their selection.

Two Bangladeshi nationals arrested

Lucknow (PNS): The sleuths of the Anti-Terrorists Squad of Uttar Pradesh arrested two Bangladeshi citizens staying in the country with forged documents. They were identified as Mohammad Iqbal and Mohammad Farooq and were staying in the same house in Saharanpur city.

ATS sources said here on Tuesday said that these two arrested persons were conspir-

ing against the country. Both are natives of Chaatgaon area of Bangladesh. Both were deported from India in 2013 from West Bengal but they again entered the country illegally through agents.

Both acquired Aadhaar cards along with Voters ID and even applied for passports.

Meanwhile, in a tragic incident, a driver, trapped in his car, was charred to death when

the vehicle caught fire after crashing into a minibus on the Karnal-Meerut Highway in Shamli district.

The accident took place on Monday night when a crane carrying the mini bus collided with the car which caught fire. The doors of the car apparently got locked and the driver could not escape. The deceased driver could not yet be identified.



जीवन है अनमोल सड़क पर खतरा न लें मोल






सड़क सुरक्षा सप्ताह

18-24 नवम्बर, 2020

- ♦ वाहन चलाते समय मोबाइल पर बात न करें
- ♦ दोपहिया वाहन चलाते समय हेलमेट अवश्य पहनें
- ♦ तेज रफ्तार से वाहन न चलाएं
- ♦ सीट बेल्ट का सदैव प्रयोग करें
- ♦ नशे में वाहन न चलाएं
- ♦ बिना लाइसेंस के वाहन न चलाएं
- ♦ पार्किंग के नियमों का पालन करें
- ♦ ड्रिंकेटर का इस्तेमाल करें
- ♦ अपनी लेन में ही वाहन चलाएं

आइये, हम सब यातायात नियमों का पालन करने का संकल्प लें।

यातायात नियमों का उल्लंघन दण्डनीय अपराध है।




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परिवहन विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

Varanasi alert for possible COVID-19 surge in winter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Health department has been alerted by Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad to deal with the prevention of COVID-19 and its possible surge in winter. In this regard, a letter sent to all the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) in which it is said that special measures need to be taken for the prevention of COVID-19 in winter and RTPCR and antigen tests should be ensured as per the target set for the districts from time to time apart from doing the work of sample collection carefully so that cases of infection can be detected quickly.

The ACS (Health) has also

instructed the CMOs that on an average 25 contacts of each positive case should be detected and examined. The cases of ILI (Influenza Like Illness) and SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infections) coming to all government and private hospitals should be investigated. COVID-19 tests of all serious patients coming for treatment to the hospitals should be ensured. All ILI and other cases found in surveillance should be looked after. The Covid Help Desks should identify the patients with corona symptoms among the high risk groups in which changes of spread of COVID-19 are high such as vendors, auto rickshaw drivers, health workers, etc..

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that the government has instructed to carry out RTPCR tests for symptomatic persons even if their antigen tests are found to be negative. Along with this, the persons living in prisons, old age homes, child remand homes, women's protection homes etc. should be examined regularly. Health workers should be re-trained soon, so that they can get new/updated information. The practice of wearing masks, regular hand washing and maintaining social distance should be encouraged with the help of administration, police and civil society. Public and private health workers should be

enlisted for COVID-19 vaccination on priority. Cold chain preparations should be completed by December 15 in every district. There is sufficient number of all types of Covid beds in the state. Adequate number of tests should be done. Death from COVID-19 should be reviewed in depth. The patients kept in home isolation should be monitored regularly and ivermectin tablets should be made available to all the people who come in contact.

Also, it should be ensured that no person dies from COVID-19 during home isolation and a patient should be admitted to the hospital as soon as symptoms occur.

64 more test positive for Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 64 new COVID-19 positive patients have been detected in the district on Tuesday, increasing the total number of cases to 17,998. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 290. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 78 and out of them, 74 have been recovered from home isolation while four from the hospitals, increasing the number to 14,259 and 2,847 respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 17,106, leaving 602 active cases. The recovery rate is 95.04 per cent while mortality rate 1.61 per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 45 positive patients were found out of 2,122 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 3,74,125 and the results of 4,980 are awaited. Out of them, 3,56,146 were negative, while 17,979 positive. The total number of samples collected was 3,93,525. Under ongoing mass/ group antigen tests, all 252 tests at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura, 207 at Government Women's Hospital, 115 at CHC Shivpur, 95 at Swami Vivekanand Government Hospital,

Bhelupur, 225 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar and 205 at SSH BHU were found negative. Earlier, a male aged 86 from Chitaurpur succumbed to COVID-19 at SSH BHU while a male aged 51 from Jaipur died at Apex Hospital. With the addition of six new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,414 including 203 red zones. Two green zones have been converted into red zones again. There are 2,211 green zones with five new ones.

Under the 'Mission Shakti' campaign, a total of 5,489 women/ girls were mobilised at 177 places and 1,096 leaflets were distributed. A total of 1,289 women/ girls were sen-

sitised by the Anti-Romeo Squads at 142 places. Action was taken against four under 34 Police Act, one under 290 IPC, eight under MV Act, 11 under 151 CrPC, apart from warning 78 eve teasers. Apart from this, the police arrested 63 persons under Section 151 of CrPC, while challaned under Section 188 and took action under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act against seven persons. During checking at various points, 1,551 vehicles were challaned and four seized. Apart from this, ₹35,600 were realised from 460 vehicles while ₹16,000 from 580 persons for moving on the roads without wearing masks.

Orientation programme held at IIT-BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The orientation programme for new entrants in the academic session of 2020-21 was held on Monday at Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT, BHU). As an innovative response to the challenges posed by COVID-19, IIT-BHU added another dimension by conducting the virtual orientation programme through a digital platform with in-house expertise while practicing the SHOPS prescribed by the Government of India. This virtual orientation programme was attended by around 1,300 newly admitted students, large number of faculty members and other invitees. The programme began by offering garlands to the visionary founder of the institute Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya followed by the Kulgeet.

In his address to the new entrants, Director Prof Pramod Kumar Jain formally welcomed the students by saying that they have now become an integral part of IIT-BHU, the confluence of knowledge and character. He also said that the institute is eager to see the students on the campus, but in the greater interest of their health and wellbeing their academic activities will be



IIT-BHU Director Prof PK Jain addressing orientation programme through virtual platform in Varanasi on Monday

conducted through the online mode. He ensured the students that the institute is committed to their holistic growth through the evolutionary curriculum, vibrant co-curricular and extra-curricular life, and a variety of sports, cultural, science and technology, and media platforms. He also said that the new entrants, while basking in the glory of being an integral part of this institute, will certainly take it to new heights making the future generations look up to it with a sense of admiration. Simultaneously, the Director also assured the parents of the new students that the institute will offer the students a feel-at-home environment ensuring their multi-faceted growth.

The Dean of Academic Affairs Prof SB Dwivedi congratulated the students on their success in JEE-2020 and welcomed them to the IIT-BHU fraternity. He informed the students that their classes for the Odd Semester 2020-21 will be held through the online mode.

He extended his wishes to the students for embarking on a salient period of evolution in their life and stressed that the institute will enrich them academically so that they remain motivated for excellence, and be rewarded both personally and professionally. He said that the learning experiences of the students at IIT-BHU will be extremely rewarding and fulfilling.

Prof BN Rai, Dean of Student Affairs, welcomed the new entrants and introduced them to the numerous student activities held under the aegis of Student Gymkhana and Student Parliament.

He also invited them to associate themselves with the student councils and clubs. Prof Rajiv Prakash, Dean of Research and Development introduced the new entrants into the world of research, innovation, and told them that a number of entrepreneurial opportunities are waiting for them at IIT-BHU. Prof AK Tripathi, Dean of Resource and Alumni introduced the students with the glorious history of IIT-BHU by taking them through a visual journey of the league of noteworthy alumni. Prof Sunil Mohan, Chairman of JEE-2020 wished the very best to the new students on the block and motivated them to come forward and make the world their own.

The programme came a fitting end with all attendees singing the national anthem. The programme was hosted by Dr Bhawna Verma and it was managed by TLC Coordinator Dr NS Rajput and Co-coordinator Dr Ajit K Mishra, Dr Anurag Ohri and the TLC team.

Weavers stage protest for restoration of old electricity flat rate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Reiterating their demand regarding the restoration of old electricity flat rate, the weavers on Tuesday staged a protest and threatened to intensify the agitation if the government failed in meeting the demand at the earliest.

We were in need of additional relief during the lockdown but instead of giving relief, the government made an additional financial burden on them ending the old electricity flat rate on power loom, the agitated weavers said while staging a protest at Shastri Ghat here under the banner of Bunkar Sanjha Manch, (Varanasi) Uttar Pradesh. The state government has introduced a new electricity rate per unit on the powerloom which is injustice to the weavers who are already in acute financial crunch, they said demanding, the government should restore the old flat rate electricity rate in the larger interest of



Weavers staging protest at Shastri Ghat in Varanasi on Tuesday

weavers.

The power connection of the weavers are being disconnected and the power officials are making their exploitation, the agitated weavers said, demanding the government to stop the exploitation as per its promise made to them. The smart meter has now turned

into a loot meter and thus the smart meter should be changed and a high-level inquiry be constituted to probe the irregularities in this meter, they demanded.

The farmers as well as agriculture were already in acute crisis and the three farmers bills added to their woes,

they said demanding, the government at Centre should withdraw these anti-farmer bills in the larger interest of the farmers and agriculture.

The weavers also submitted a memorandum to the district administration regarding their demands to be forwarded to the Chief Minister.

149 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Once again the Prayagraj city reported a total of 149 new cases of the coronavirus within the last 24 hours on Monday night. The number of COVID-19 patients soared above 100 after many days. However, the threat of this pandemic has not come down.

The number of patients has increased during the Deepawali festival. The Health department was also active during the five-day festival of Deepawali. During this people were also tested for coronavirus. So far, the number of patients infected with the pandemic in Prayagraj has already exceeded 25,000.

There was no decrease in the number of corona patients after Diwali. In the campaign conducted, there was a decrease in corona testing but there was an increase in the number

of patients. Samples of 1,912 people were taken, in which the report of 149 people came positive, that is, they were in the grip of corona. Now the number of corona patients has crossed more than 25,000.

According to the Department of Health, 83 corona patients also recovered. Among the recuperators, 14 patients were admitted to Covid hospitals, who were discharged from the hospital after recovering. In this way, 69 patients were allowed to remain in home isolation.

About 912 samples were examined. Of them, 149 were found corona positive. An infected patient died there.

Dr. Rishi Sahai, the Nodal and District Surveillance Officer for COVID 19, said that due to being discharged in most departments, fewer people were screened. Our team, like the former, continued to

conduct the corona test.

Meanwhile, in the neighbouring district Pratapgarh, corona virus infection seems to be less but not over. But people seem to be careless about this danger. Now CMO of Pratapgarh district, Dr AK Srivastava has also been hit by Coronavirus infection. The CMO has been isolated at his government residence in the city when the report came on Monday. Apart from this, 28 new cases have also been found in the district. Five of these are from the city and the rest from the region.

Several health officers of the district including the CMO went to the meeting of AD Health in Prayagraj on November 10. On the second day of coming from there, there was a pain in the body of the CMO. CMO's body pain increased. Simultaneously he started feeling tired. In such a

situation, he got infected with coronavirus when he got antigen test on Monday.

The CMO of Pratapgarh was sitting next to the CMO of Kaushambi who also attended the meeting. Kaushambi's CMO has also been found corona positive in the testing three days ago. CMO Dr. Srivastava said that my being infected means that everyone should be alert. The threat of corona has not mitigated. The slightest neglect of the guideline can put anyone at risk.

Coronavirus infection killed an elderly woman. On November 15, a 70-year-old woman from Bajjan village in Antu had fever and difficulty in breathing and took her to SRN Hospital. There the following day, her report found an infection of corona. She died on Monday during treatment. This is the 54th death due to corona in Pratapgarh.

Man accused of killing wife cannot be given custody of children: HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court has held that a man accused of killing his wife cannot be given custody of his minor children until he is acquitted by a competent court. The court also refused to grant visitation rights to the accused father to meet the children.

Justice JJ Munir gave this decision while dismissing a petition filed by one Awadhesh Gautam on behalf of his two minor children.

In the petition, Awadhesh had alleged he was falsely framed in the case and the minors were forcibly taken away by his in-laws and sent to an ashram in Uttarakhand.

The court interacted with one of the children, a 10-year-old boy, who was present in the court. The minor boy said that he and his sister were sent to a hostel run by an ashram by their maternal grandmother for studies and they did not want to live with their father.

During the course of hearing, the FIR in the murder case and the postmortem report of the mother of the two children were also placed before the court.

The court after hearing concerned parties declined to give the custody of the children to the father and observed, the totality of the circumstances on record shows that unless acquitted, it would not be appropriate to place the two minor children in their father custody. It is all the more so as the elder of the two minors, who can express an intelligent preference about the guardian he would like to be with, has ruled out the father. He is also fearful of the father.

However, the court said that if the father is acquitted in the case, it would be open to him to make an appropriate application, seeking custody of the children.

The court gave this decision on November 10 that came to limelight on November

13.

AU STUDENT LEADER ON HUNGER STRIKE: The indefinite hunger strike led by the student leader Ajay Yadav Samrat at the Allahabad Union University's Students' Union Building, demanding the restoration of the students' union is underway.

Taking up the issue of resumption of guest faculty at the site of the indefinite hunger strike, Ajay Samrat said that the results of the graduation entrance examination have been declared. The UGC also talked about starting a new session from November 1 while AU administration is struggling with a crunch of teachers. In such a situation, guest faculty should be reinstated to maintain the study level of students.

Apart from this, the issue of prohibition was raised against the lawful assembly of the women's hostel at the site. During this, demand for immediate restrictions arose. A letter was also written to the

National Commission for Women in this regard. Ajay said that in the women's hostel, there is a living proof of discrimination against women due to the needless and contrary to the rules imposed on the movement of female students.

While there is no such restriction in other departments and offices. Also, they demanded that the women's hostel be opened with immediate effect.

The protestors also handed over a memorandum to the acting Vice-Chancellor Prof. RR Tiwari and also DSW Prof KP Singh and Chief Proctor Prof RK Upadhyay.

During this, Navneet Yadav, Masood Ansari, Prakash Singh Yadav, Mohd Ovada, Golu Paswan, Mohd Salman Allahabad, Chandan Chaudhary, Mayank Prasad, Anand, Mohd. Zaid, Yashwant Yadav, Mohd. Salman among other people were present.

NCR GM reviews safety measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

General Manager North Central Railway Rajiv Chaudhry reviewed position of safety and other important works over NCR through video conferencing with PHODs of North Central Railway and Divisional Railway Managers Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra. The GM also launched two completely in house developed apps on Arbitration Tracking Module (ATM) and officers Rest House Allotment System (ORAS) on the occasion.

Web and mobile app developed on Arbitration Tracking Module will help in monitoring of pending cases and will expedite disposal of arbitration cases. Contractor/supplier can register on this app and place online request for arbitration and track progress of their case. With help of various Management Information System (MIS) tools available in this web and mobile based application, it will help in speedy disposal of existing



NCR GM Rajiv Chaudhry

arbitration cases and will also help in identifying system improvement items to minimise accrual of fresh cases.

The second completely in house developed app launched on Officers Rest House Allotment System (ORAS) will help in online allotment of all officer rest houses of North Central Railway. Through this web and mobile app applicant can make online application for any Officers rest houses of NCR. Allotment confirmation

to applicant shall be given through message using this app.

This app will make complete allotment process paperless and with online updation of occupancy in allotted rooms of different ORHs, this will also help in improving availability of rooms in Officer rest houses. GM Chaudhry commended DGM G NCR Mannu Prakash Dubey and officials from IT cell of North Central Railway involved in developing these apps through completely in house efforts and announced group cash award for the team. Both these apps are available for access and download through the link provided under E-Office(In-House) on NCR official website <https://ncr.indianrailways.gov.in> and mobile versions shall also be available on Google Play Store for which process has already been initiated.

During safety review, precautions to be taken during fog and winter season were discussed. To ensure that crew

working on trains are equipped with latest rules and guidelines for safe operations during foggy season, refresher training of all crew falling due upto March-2021 has already been completed. GM cautioned that fog has already set in and all laid down rules and instructions for safe and efficient operation and maintenance during foggy season must be followed without any exception. Trespassing incidents and efforts made by divisions to curb unauthorised crossing of railway tracks were also discussed during the meeting.

Chaudhry directed divisions to ensure that road surface on closed level crossing must be completely dismantled to mitigate chances of trespassing at these locations. He further added that trespassing location can be easily identified during patrolling of track and foot-plate inspections and directed divisions for taking immediate measures to stop unauthorised crossing of railway tracks at such locations.

Building of Atique's relative demolished

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Under the anti-mafia operation, the Prayagraj Development Authority officials with the help of the district administration and the police pulled down a building of Imran, brother-in-law of Atique Ahmad, in Chakiya area of the city.

Imran is also a dreaded criminal and is still absconding. The police have announced a reward of ₹ 25,000 on his head.

The bulldozers and JCB machines reached Chakiya on Tuesday morning, and the police force surrounded the building of Imran. Belongings were taken out from the house before pulling it down.

SUCCESS: Six-year-old granddaughter of the Allahabad BJP MP Dr Rita Bahuguna Joshi succumbed to burn injuries on Tuesday. The

child Kiya had sustained severe burn injuries on Diwali night while enjoying fireworks. Kiya, daughter of Mayank Joshi was the only granddaughter of the MP.

According to reports the whole family of Dr Rita Bahuguna Joshi was there at her Myor Road residence to celebrate the festival of lights. Kiya with some children reached the roof top to enjoy lighting and fire crackers. Other children left her alone there on the roof top, and her clothes caught fire, probably by a fire cracker. She cried for help, but her screaming sound could not reach the members of the family who were on the lower floor. After some time a person reached the roof top and found Kiya crying with severe burn injuries.

Little Kiya was immediately rushed to a local hospital, where her condition continued to deteriorate. Arrangements

were made to shift her to Delhi, but before starting her journey for Delhi, she left for the ultimate journey.

ELECTROCUTED: A power lineman got electrocuted on Tuesday morning near Amitabh Bachchan Road in Allahpur area, under the Georgetown police station. He died on the spot.

Harish Chandra Prajapati, 45, had been working as a lineman on contract basis for the past 15 years with Fort Road Power Sub-station. He had taken shutdown for repair work and was on the pole when somebody switched on the power supply. Harish received a severe shock and fell on the ground with burn injuries and died on the spot.

Officers, who reached on the spot, had to face the fury of the local residents. They were demanding immediate action against the employees who switched on the power supply

which electrocuted the lineman.

Receiving information about the incident family members of Harish Chandra Prajapati also reached the spot from Salori.

MISSING YOUTHS BODY FOUND: The body of a youth who was missing for three days in Masika village under the Industrial police station was found in the well on Monday night. When the news spread, the people of the village were shocked. A large number of villagers gathered on the spot. The villagers identified him as 35-year-old Bablu Bhartiya son of Munnalal Bhartiya, resident of Bajaha village. On receipt of information, police also reached the spot and sent the body for postmortem examination. Meanwhile, the family members of the deceased also reached the spot wailing and weeping on getting information.



District Magistrate City, Mr Alok Tiwari chairs Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas at Bal Bhawan, Phool Bagh on Tuesday.

Pioneer

DM directs officials to dispose of complaints within a week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, on Tuesday, directed the officials concerned to upload all the complaints received by them on the IGRS (Integrated Grievance Redressal System) portal and ensure that they were disposed of in a week.

Addressing the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas held on Tuesday, the district magistrate asked the officials to

launch a special drive against land sharks and free the land encroached on by them.

He said the objective of the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas was to redress the grievances of the people that had not been attended to for a very long time by the authorities concerned, on priority within seven days.

He said laxity in this regard would be dealt with strictly.

The district magistrate said the IGRS of UP was launched so that people having any griev-

ance could upload their complaint on the portal for redressal without having to visit various government departments and offices.

He said all those registering their complaints on the IGRS portal should also provide the mobile phone number and Aadhaar number and e-mail address.

DIG Pritinder Singh and several other officials from various departments were present in the Sampoorna

Samadhan Diwas.

The district magistrate settled quite a few cases then and there and earmarked the rest to the respective authorities, directing them to dispose of the complaints within seven days.

The issues that came up on the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas related mainly to property, crime, building plans, encroachments.

Others present were CDO, SDM and officials of various departments.

Union minister meets kin of youth killed in clash, gives ₹6 lakh aid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Union minister Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti, on Tuesday, met the kin of the youth killed in a communal clash in Wazidpur locality under Chakeri police station of Kanpur Nagar and extended financial help of ₹6 lakh to them.

Consoling the bereaved family members, she assured them of strict penal action against the killers.

It may be recalled that in a clash between members of two communities over a petty dispute in Wazidpur (Jajmau) late Sunday night, Pintu Nishad (22) was killed and many others, including some of his family members, were injured. After the clash, tension prevailed in the locality.

Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti was accompanied by UP Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana. She handed over to the family ₹1 lakh in cash and a cheque of ₹5 lakh.

She said the government would not tolerate such incidents and the police were initiating action against the cul-



Union Minister Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti visited the house of deceased Pintu Nishad in Wazidpur (Jajmau) on Tuesday.

Pioneer

prits to avert recurrence of the incidents.

Scientists advocate crop rotation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Crop rotation is a technique of planting crops in different areas of the field so that no single crop is planted at the same place for two or more years in a row. It helps in maintaining soil structure and nutrient levels and prevents soil-borne pests from getting a foothold in the fields.

Approximately 20 percent of the crop is destroyed by insects, diseases and weeds etc. every year in Uttar Pradesh. This includes loss of 33 percent by weeds, 26 percent by diseases, 20 percent by insects, 7 percent by insects of storage, 6 percent by rodents and 8 percent by other factors.

This was stated by head of CSAUAT soil department Dr SK Singh while addressing a virtual seminar on 'Crop Rotation and Pest Management' on Tuesday.

He said when a single crop was planted at the same place every year, the soil structure slowly deteriorated as the same nutrients were used time and time again. He said after a few years, the soil became unhealthy, drained of those specific nutrients and as a result insect pests that feed on the single crop and those

that spend their larval stage in the soil become more prolific as their food source remained and these pests become harder to manage every year as their population increased.

He said the significant problems caused by soil-borne pathogens in crop production in Uttar Pradesh included reduced crop performance, decreased yield and higher production costs.

Dr Singh said in many parts of the country, methyl bromide was extensively used to control these pathogens. He said in UP, it was becoming increasingly evident especially the soil-borne disease epidemics in crop production, high cost of chemical fungicides and development of fungicide resistance, climate change, new disease outbreaks and increasing concerns regarding environmental as well as soil health. He said this necessitated the use of integrated soil-borne disease management strategies for crop production.

Discussing crop rotation, Dr Singh said it was beneficial for four main reasons, first for plants that fixed nitrogen, secondly, alternating shallow-rooted and deep-rooted plants in a given area drew nutrients

from the soil at varying depths, thirdly soil-borne pests that fed on one family of plants were hindered because their food source was not in the same location every year and finally, farmers who practised crop rotation did not need to let beds or fields lie crop-free as often as they might otherwise.

He advised farmers to use a three-bed technique to maintain and rejuvenate the soil. He suggested that they rotate these groups of crops between three beds over three years.

He asked the farmers to plant the first group in the second group's bed the following year, the second in the third group's bed the next, and the third group in the first's bed the year after. He added that crop rotation did not replace the need to fertilise, mulch, and regularly test soil, but it helped in bringing the season to a bountiful close.

Dr Singh said that one of the major challenges to humankind was threat to food security due to emerging and invasive pests. He added that with increased global trade in agriculture it had increased the chances of the introduction of exotic pests.

He said insect pests on an average were estimated to cause 20 percent yield losses in principal major food and cash crops. He said pest whose status had been changing from minor to major or secondary to primary pest was termed as an emerging pest.

Others who spoke on the occasion were Dr Prabhakar Awasthi, Dr AK Singh, Dr Sunil Singh and others.

3 YOUTHS INJURED IN ROAD ACCIDENT

Three youths riding a motorcycle were seriously injured when a speeding mini bus knocked them down near the State Bank in Patara town under Ghatampur police station on Tuesday morning.

The injured, who included two brothers, were admitted to UHM Hospital.

The injured were identified as Ramkesh (25) and Raju (27), sons of Ramadhar Nishad of Sikandra in Kanpur Dehat, and Pradeep (20) son of Ramautar of Kadwatala in Deorahat.

They were returning from Padri Lalpur village of Patara town after celebrating Bhai Dooj at the house of Nishad's daughter.

71 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 71 more coronavirus positive cases on Tuesday evening. Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 71 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Monday evening and Tuesday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 29,163 cases. He said that 27 cases were discharged from hospital. He said one COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Tuesday evening keeping the death toll to 757. The CMO said at present 896 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 4578 samples were sent for testing in the city.

KNN working for top rank in cleanliness survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar Nigam has girded up its loins to win the top rank in Cleanliness Survey 2021 and for this it has worked out a comprehensive plan for making the city clean.

The KNN has decided to remove garbage for three hours at the night as well. It has also decided to impose fines on those dumping garbage on the roadsides.

The KNN has deployed 18 additional backhoes (JCBs) and tripper machines to carry out the cleanliness drive at night when the traffic is thin.

It may be mentioned here that Kanpur Nagar was ranked 25 in the previous Cleanliness Survey after which the KNN officials decided to work for a berth in the first five places.

During Diwali, people had dumped garbage on roads and with the festival holidays the city was in a perfect mess on account of massive garbage littered all over the city.

KNN rubbish department incharge A Rehman said due to massive garbage pushed out of the houses during pre-Diwali period, garbage had piled up all over city. He said with around 45 days left for the year to end, the KNN had decided to make the city sparkle clean in this period.

He said more workforce had been deployed and more safai karmacharis would be deployed to remove garbage at night.

He said when the traffic was thin it was convenient for the JCBs to operate properly without obstructing traffic.

He said people were also advised that they should not litter on roads. He said the KNN had decided not to allow burning of garbage on roads.

He said every day the safai karmacharis carry out cleaning drive from early morning but unfortunately the people dump rubbish on the roads after the cleaning had been done and thus the garbage remained lying on the roads.

He said the KNN had decided to impose fine if any house dumped debris and garbage on roadsides.

Congmen remember Lala Lajpat Rai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Congressmen assembled at Tilak Hall on Tuesday to pay tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai on his 92 death anniversary. Addressing the gathering, former MLA Bhoadar Narain Mishra said Lalaji played a significant role in India's Independence Movement and was a fierce patriot who died fighting for the country's independence. He said Lajpat Rai would be remembered for his bravery against Simon Commission.

He said when the Simon Commission visited India, Lala Lajpat Rai led a non-violent march to protest the it but sustained severe head injuries during an assault by the police officials. He did not recover from the blows received during the protest and died on November 17, 1928 following a heart attack.

Mishra said Lajpat Rai frequently contributed to several major Hindi, Punjabi, English and Urdu newspapers and magazines and had authored many books.

Many trains to be diverted

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

On North Eastern Railway (NER)'s Gorakhpur-Deoria Sadar section on November 18 and 19 between Sardaranagar and Chauri Chaura stations on level crossing number 145 special and on November 21 and 22 between Chari Chaura and Gauribazar stations on level crossing No 145-E a block has been taken due to girder launch. Consequently the following trains will be run on diverted routes, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said. The 04185 Gwalior-Barauni special train will run on November 18, 19, 21 and 22 be run via the diverted route Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. Likewise the 04186 Barauni-Gwalior special train will on November 18, 19, 21 and 22 be diverted via Siwan-Thawe-Kaptanganj-Gorakhpur Cantt. The 02566 New Delhi-Darbhanga special train will on November 18, 19,

21 and 22 will be run on the diverted route i.e. Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. The 04407 Darbhanga-New Delhi special train will on November 19 and 21 be run diverted via Siwan-Thawe-Kaptanganj-Gorakhpur Cantt. The 04030 Delhi-Muzaffarpur special train will on November 19 and 22 be run via Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan.

CANCELLED: Due to the ongoing farmers' agitation in Punjab the following trains will be cancelled and short originated, CPRO PK Singh said. The 05212 Amritsar-Darbhanga special train to run from Amritsar on November 18 will remain cancelled. The 05098 Jammu-Bhagalpur special train to run from Jammu Tawi on November 17 will remain cancelled. The 04674 Amritsar-Jaynagar special train to run from Amritsar on November 17 will be run from Ambala. This train will remain cancelled between Amritsar-

Ambala.

BID TO FACILITATE PASSENGERS: The railway administration for additional convenience of passengers on the occasion of upcoming Chhath festival will run the 04014/04013 Delhi-Saharsa-Delhi puja special train from Delhi on November 17 and from Saharsa on November 18 for a trip via Gorakhpur. All coaches in this train will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said. The 04013 Saharsa-Delhi puja special train will on November 18 depart from Saharsa at 22:15 hours, from Khagaria at 23:17 hours, the second day from Barauni at 00:25 hours, from Hajipur at 02:10 hours, from Chhapra at 03:25 hours, from Gorakhpur at 06:25 hours, from Sitapur at 11:25 hours, from Bareilly at 14:30 hours, from Moradabad at 16:10 hours, and will reach Delhi at 19:20 hours.

NER stands first in complaint disposal

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Aiming at customer satisfaction Indian Railways is providing better travel facilities to its consumers. Full care is taken to avoid any inconvenience to passengers at stations or in trains. If railway users face any kind of inconvenience at the station or during the journey then the railway administration is ready round the clock for looking into them. Complaints received through the RailMadad app, Helpline No 139, Security Helpline 182, SMS and web are being disposed of immediately. The

complaints received on the North Eastern Railway (NER) on November 14 were disposed of quickly and it stood first among all Zonal Railways in their disposal. On November 14 a total of 21 complaints were received on NER and four were already pending out of them 24 were disposed of in an average disposal time of only 37 minutes, CPRO PK Singh said. Thus 96 per cent of the complaints were disposed of. These complaints were related to parcels, air conditioning in trains, theft, overcharging, employee behaviour, medical assistance, cleaning of trains,

lighting in them and punctuality. Usually through the Rail Madad complaints regarding cleaning of trains, water system, air conditioning, light, fan, charging point, entry of unauthorised persons in reserved coaches, parcels, catering, medical aid, refunds, goods/parcels, overcharging, corruption and employee behaviour are received which the complaint cell and control room monitor the whole time so that grievances could be redressed in the shortest possible time. With the immediate disposal of complaints the goal of passenger satisfaction was achieved.

Arrangements made for cold weather patrolling

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Safe and secure rail movement is the top priority of the North Eastern Railway (NER). For the purpose regular maintenance of railway tracks is done and signals are examined carefully as a continuous process.

Keeping winter season and fog in mind several steps are being taken under a well-planned action plan to ensure safe rail travel. The testing of bolt holes of rail joints and jogged fish plates and lubrication is being done. Along with the distancing of LWR and CWR all shortcomings of the railway track are being removed. All arrangements have been made for cold weather patrolling

when the rail temperature falls below a certain limit in the cold weather. Patrol charts have been released. GPS trackers have been made available to all patrolmen get so that effective monitoring of patrolling and sharing of information can be done at a rapid pace. The temperature of the rail is regularly checked and its record is also entered in the register, CPRO PK Singh said.

A fog safe device has been provided on all engines. In addition sufficient quantities of cracker signal have also been supplied. On the signal sighting board across the track lime marking is being done. On the signal sighting board, WL board, fog signal post, on level crossings the lifting barrier a yellow/black luminous strip is being arranged for clear sighting. All the required works, including lime marking, have been completed in the three divisions of North Eastern Railway - Izzatnagar, Varanasi and Lucknow. Fog signal men working in fog are being trained again. Station master will check adequate visibility through VTO. In fog in place of red light in SLR redLED light with flasher tail light of approved design and flashing tail lamp are being used.

In terms of safety, the officers and supervisors at regular intervals as a safety drive by conducting surprise and night inspections are training and making the employees aware to be prompt and alert.

Two meet tragic end

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

Two persons were killed in separate road accidents in the district. According to a report, Narendra Kumar Verma (65), a resident of Kailashpuri under Mughalsarai Kotwali area, went to meet a friend on Sunday night. He was returning home on a motorcycle. When he reached near the fire station some unknown vehicle hit his motorcycle as a result of which he fell on the road. A large number of gathered there. He was taken to the State Women's Hospital, where the doctor declared him dead. Besides Sunnar Yadav (75), a resident of Godhna New Basti lost his life in another road accident on Monday.

Nagesh is new Hindalco COO

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Narishetti Nagesh took the charge as Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Hindalco, Renukoot cluster recently. Before joining Hindalco, Nagesh was working with Aditya Birla Group's state-of-the-art alumina manufacturing company, Utkal Alumina International as COO. He has played an important role in taking the company to new heights. Nagesh has a long experience of 34 years working in various positions in different companies of Aditya Birla Group. With Nagesh assuming charge as COO there is enthusiasm among the colleagues at Hindalco Renukoot Cluster and they are hopeful that under his leadership, the company will reach new heights. Among the priorities of Nagesh, who



has a special interest in cricket and had the degrees of B.Tech in Chemical Engineering and M.Tech in Plant Design, are the overall development of Hindalco and its surrounding rural areas. After taking charge, Nagesh visited various nearby villages to inspect the rural development works being run by Hindalco Rural Development Department and tried to understand the problems of villagers apart from their expectations from the Hindalco.

Boy killed in road accident

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A 12-year-old boy died in a road mishap in Jagdeeshpur village under Jamalpur police station on Monday. As per the received reports, some labourers had come in the area from MP for agricultural works. A boy Ramjeet also had come along with his grandmother, Dulraj Devi. The boy was crossing the road to go to the field when a car going to Chakia from Jamalpur on JK state highway hit him. After the accident the driver lost his control over the car and it stopped after hitting a heavy stone. The boy died on the spot. The irate mob organised a blockade which could be lifted following the intervention of the Chunar SDM and the CO.

GIRL HANDED OVER TO GUARDIANS: The personnel of Dankeenganj police outpost under Katra Kotwali handed over a missing girl to

her guardians on Monday. As per the reports, constable of Dankeenganj police outpost Tarique Khan found a five-year-old girl weeping in Beltar locality. She said her name was Vidya and her father's as Ajay but she could not tell her address. The police brought the girl to the outpost and tried to search for her parents. In between Madhuri, wife of Shankar Lal Keshari, a resident of Ramgarh under Pannuganj police station in Sonbhadra district, claimed the police outpost and claimed that the missing girl was her granddaughter. She said stated that she had come to at her relative's house in Mirzapur city and the girl went missing while playing. After being satisfied the girl was handed over to her guardians by the police.

DM VISITS OLD AGE HOME: District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Patel celebrated Diwali at an old age home with the senior citizens in

Vindhyachal. The DM distributed traditional items of festival, including the clay lamps, oil, sweets, 'lai', 'gatta' etc at a locality in Jalalpur under City Kotwali in the morning. In the evening after disposing of the official works at his camp office he went to the old age home situated at Vindhyachal. On the way the DM preferred to purchase the items for Diwali from the aged shopkeepers. After purchasing them the DM visited old age home and distributed items among the inmates there. He interacted with the inmates and directed the officials concerned to take proper care of them. He directed the officer concerned to ensure that the eye test of each inmate was conducted and free spectacles should be provided to them. During his visit to the old age home the DM was accompanied by ADM (Finance and Revenue) UP Singh and a probation officer Girish Dubey.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first phase of the Malabar exercise took place in

“The two carriers, along with other ships, submarines and aircraft of the participating navies, would be engaged in



A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega-naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships.

Apart from Vikramaditya and its fighter and helicopter air-wings, the Indian Navy is also deploying destroyers

Last month, India announced that Australia will be part of the Malabar exercise

The invitation by India to the Australian Navy for the exercise came two weeks after foreign ministers of the 'Quad' member nations held extensive talks in Tokyo with a focus on enhancing their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The Malabar exercise started in 1992 as a bilateral drill between the Indian Navy and the US Navy in the Indian Ocean. Japan became a permanent member of the exercise in 2015.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Professor Mulholland said while 2020 had been a quiet



This means ensuring we have the resources to continue immunisation campaigns for all vaccine-preventable diseases, even as we address the growing Covid-19 pandemic," Fore said.

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After consideration of pros and cons, competent authority in the CRPF has approved deployment of medical officers and paramedical staff from various formations of the paramilitary, they said.

Apart from those detailed

CRPF headquarters has further directed its units not to grant leave to the medical officers and paramedical staff kept in reserve without the approval of the Medical Directorate of the paramilitary force

The ITBP-run Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre at Chattarpur has 10,000 beds capacity and the other one at Delhi Cantt. has provision for 1,000 beds, including 250 ICU beds.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The special panel of the Congress was formed in August to assist Sonia Gandhi on organisational and operational matters.

member of the group Ahmed Patel. The only agenda was the signature campaign. Some members made a brief critical reference to Sibal's comments and said that the party chief should take note of his frequent comments against the party on public fora. It was decided that such issues to be taken up in the

The Bihar poll debacle has once again brought up a public blow-out among its top leaders after Kapil Sibal's open criticism of the party leadership. Sibal had called for "experienced minds, experienced hands and those who understand political realities" to revive the organisation. He also

Sibal was one of the 23 Congress leaders behind the "dissent letter" that caused an all-out clash within the party in August but changed little except for key letter-writers being shunted out. The letter had sug-

In a Facebook post that started with an Urdu couplet of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, former union minister Khurshid, who is among the leaders considered close to the Gandhi family, said if the mood of the electorate is resistant to

The favourite panacea of "doubting Thomases", introspection and collective leadership, might do no collateral damage but is a bit overestimated, Khurshid asserted.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Secretary

The Union Health Ministry also noted India's increased capacity to conduct Covid-19 tests on a daily basis. Evaluating India's testing capabilities as compared to other nations, the Secretary said, "in terms of Covid-19 tests con-

reported from 10 states and UTs. Delhi, which saw a surge in new cases over the last few days, reported only 3,797 new cases yesterday, followed by West Bengal which reported 3,012 new cases. Kerala recorded 2,710 new cases.

India's Covid-19 daily case count dropped to an average of 30,000, Government data released on Tuesday showed

Also, India's positivity rate is declining continuously and its death rate is low as compared to the rest of the world, said the official. India's Deaths per Million Population is also amongst lowest in world; stands at 94 deaths per million population, he added.

About the progress of vaccines, VK Paul, NITI Aayog member added that the one of the Serum Institute is in the third phase. Meanwhile, at least five vaccines are under trial in India, out of which two are in the third phase, he added. As per the Ministry data, 75.14 per cent of the new cases are being

1-	the S.E. Prayagraj Circle with UP PWD in class A specified in Clause 3 of	
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5	Prayagraj	Erection, Main Bridge and Approach
3-Time allowed for completion		

Hours: 6-NG prospective bidders are required to upload all the information on the tender portal <http://etender.raj.nic.in> and submit the document other than technical documents on or before this regard shall not be entertained.

date 25-08-2020 2(2) and 2(3) of the Bidding and the bidder will be responsible for the same.

Executive Engineer, Co-ordination Officer, Prayagraj Mela Authority, Prayagraj (Kumbh Mela), U.P. P.W.D.

Notice Inviting E Tender

F.P.V.V.U. on behalf of Government of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate online bids from the eligible and approved Contractors registered & C as the case may be. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

List of Tender invited

Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs.)	Cost of Bid Documents (Rs.)	Time of Completion/ Period of Maintenance	Address of Executive Engineer Executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer	Address of D.M.
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2020-21)								
ance & Dismantling of Mahaveer Pontoon each Link Road	45.00	425000.00	2000/-300/- +GST	30 day 3½ month				
ance & Dismantling of Triveni Pontoon Bridge Link Road	52.00	460000.00	2000/-300/- +GST	30 day 3½ month	Executive Engineer, CD-4(KM) P.W.D., Prayagraj	Superintending Engineer, Prayagraj Circle P.W.D. Prayagraj (U.P.)	Chief Engineer, Prayagraj Zone, P.W.D., Prayagraj (U.P.)	D.M. Prayagraj (U.P.)
ance & Dismantling of Kali Pontoon Bridge Link Road	55.00	475000.00	2000/-300/- +GST	30 day 3½ month				
ance & Dismantling of Gangoli Shivala / Bridge and Approach Link Road (Expected-01)	41.50	407500.00	2000/-300/- +GST	30 day 3½ month				
ance & Dismantling of Old G.T. Pontoon each Link Road (Expected-02)	43.50	417500.00	2000/-300/- +GST	30 day 3½ month				

Each work item as mentioned in columns no. 7, including rainy season. 4-Website <http://etender.up.nic.in> may be referred for detailed terms and conditions (FBs) (FBs). Website <http://etender.up.nic.in> may be referred for detailed terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bids (IFB). 5-Bid document will be available online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from 20-11-2020 to 26-11-2020 upto 12:00 Hours. Bids must be submitted <http://etender.up.nic.in> on or before 12:30 Hours on 26-11-2020. Technical Bid received online will be opened on 27-11-2020 at 10:30 Hours. Bids not received online will not be opened. Digital Signature is mandatory. 6- Bidders are required to upload the documents on the e-tender portal as per the instructions on Prashni shall have to upload technical sheet E1 after submission. Scan copy of technical sheet E1 shall be then upload on e-nic.in by the bidder. Bidder shall not upload any document other than technical sheet E1 on e-tender portal. If the bidder is uploading any document on E1 on e-tender portal, the document uploaded on one-tender portal shall not be considered for technical evaluation and claim of contractor is voided. 7- The prospective Bidders have to upload all the basic information and required document on Prashni as per Ge No 879/11/23-7-2020 for the invitation. Prashni in which a bidder has not upload information and document on Prashni technical evaluation and the tender shall not be considered for the bid. Contacted to the Contracted Consultant for the details of the documents to be uploaded in the final stage of the tender. 2020-2021. No claim of contractor shall be entertained. This is Certified that I have checked the Bid document and it is correct in all respects.

U.P.: 156962, Date : 12.11.2020
 विज्ञापन वेबसाईट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

(M.K.Singh), Superintending Engineer
Prayagraj, Circle, U.P. P.W.D Prayagraj

India should again become global knowledge superpower: VP

Agartala: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said that the new National Education Policy (NEP) aimed to make India a global knowledge superpower and underlined the need for the country to again become a 'Vishwa Guru' in education.

He said that the NEP draws inspiration from the ancient Indian education system which

focused on developing holistic and well-rounded personalities and thus seeks to make Indian education holistic, multi-disciplinary, and practical.

"The ancient education system always taught us to live in harmony with nature and respect all beings and non-beings. Our education was practical, wholesome, and complementary to life," Naidu

said while virtually addressing the 13th convocation of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Agartala.

Calling upon higher education institutions and universities to make India a thriving hub of knowledge and innovation, the Vice President advised them to take up cutting-edge research in various fields, establish synergy with

industries and other similar institutions, and turn campuses into exciting centres of creativity and research.

Recalling the advice of former President APJ Abdul Kalam to the youth to dream big, he asked the students to set goals and then strive hard to achieve them.

"You will succeed if you work with dedication, disci-

pline and sincerity without wavering from your chosen path. Students, researchers and academicians, therefore, cannot afford to remain in a world of status quo. They have to constantly learn, update themselves, and innovate every day."

The Vice President also urged the corporate sector to identify key research projects in

various sectors and fund them under the CSR initiatives.

"Enhancing public and private investments in research is of vital importance for creating a knowledge-driven society."

With about 65 per cent of the country's population comprising youth, the Vice-President called for fully channeling their energies and creating the right ecosystem for

promoting entrepreneurship among them.

Naidu asked all students to spend some time in villages to understand the challenges faced by rural India. Terming agriculture as 'our basic culture', he called for making farming a viable and profitable activity.

Agartala NIT's Chairman of Board of Governors Dr

Subhash Chandra Sati, Director Prof HK Sharma and others participated in the virtual event.

In the convocation 24 PhD scholars, 181 MTech and 14 MBA students, 24 MSc and 20 MCA passouts were among 857 students who received their degrees. Gold medals were given to 25 students for meritorious achievements. **IANS**

Rita Bahuguna’s granddaughter dies of firecracker burn

IANS ■ PRAYAGRAJ (UTTAR PRADESH)

Six-year-old granddaughter of BJP MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi succumbed to burn injuries on Tuesday morning.

Kiya had sustained 60 per cent burn injuries while bursting crackers on the roof of her house on Monday evening.

She was admitted to a private hospital for treatment and the family was making arrangements to shift her to Delhi for advanced treatment in an air ambulance on Tuesday.

Kiya was the only daughter of the MP's son Mayank Joshi and his wife Richa Joshi.

CBI grills BSF officer on cow smuggling

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In a major development a senior BSF official facing charges of cow-smuggling was questioned for several hours by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Cows worth several thousand crores were smuggled out to Bangladesh in 2016-17 when Satish Kumar a senior commanding of the BSF posted here, sources said.

The CBI had earlier raided Kumar's residence at Salt Lake. According to sources Kumar who appeared at the Nizam Palace of the central agency was asked as to whether other influential persons were involved in the racket or not. He was reportedly avoiding certain questions, sources said.

Karnataka to set up development board for Lingayat community

Bengaluru: Karnataka would soon set up a development board for the betterment of Veerashaiva-Lingayat community in the southern State, an official said on Tuesday.

"Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa directed state chief secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar to constitute a Karnataka Veerashaiva-Lingayat Development Board for the socio-economic improvement of the dominant community in the state," a Social Welfare department official told IANS here.

The decision to set up the board came three days after Yediyurappa on Saturday directed the department to

form a Maratha Development Authority with Rs 50-crore corpus for the welfare of Marathas living in the state.

The dominant Lingayat community is estimate to account for 16 per cent of the state's 7-crore population.

Incidentally, Yediyarappa is considered the tallest Lingayat leader in the state though the community is considered economically and socially backward.

"Veerashaiva-Lingayats form a large community in the state, many of whom are economically, socially and educationally backward," Yediyurappa said in a note to Chief Secretary TM Vijay

Bhaskar. "The board will work for the overall development of the community," said the Chief Minister.

Several Lingayat legislators of the ruling BJP, opposition Congress and JD-S urged Yediyurappa to set up the board for the Lingayat sect, whose members are more than other communities across the state.

Congress lawmaker M.B. Patil and JD-S senior legislator Basaraj Horatti also urged the Chief Minister to make 16 per cent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the Lingayats, as Maharashtra has done for Marathas in the neighbouring state. **IANS**

Migratory birds begin to arrive at Aligarh’s Shekha Jheel

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

Migratory foreign birds have began arriving on Shekha lake in Aligarh from siberia, eastern Europe, China and the Philippines for dating .After dating , they return to their respective countries with their new born in February .

The Forest department has found after its survey on Shekha lake that this year 5600 foreign birds have already arrived and 43 rare species of Migratory birds have already been identified by forest department . Though these

migratory foreign birds are busy in dating but they have no security at all from hunters and stray dogs . In this connection , District Forest Officer told, " survey on Shekha lake was under taken through binocular system . Till moment we have calculated that 56,00 foreign birds have arrived on Shekha lake which belongs to 147 species . Among them 43 are rare species of Migratory birds . These migratory birds have been provided complete security and required environment for their dating in a free atmosphere".

Andhra registers 1,395 new Covid cases, tally 8.56 lakh

Amaravati:Andhra Pradesh has registered 1,395 new Covid-19 infections, increasing the state's tally to 8.56 lakh, even as 2,293 more recoveries outnumbered infections on Tuesday.

Krishna district accounted for the highest number of cases in the past 24 hours, 260, followed by West Godavari (247), East Godavari (214), Guntur (199), Chittoor (137) and Visakhapatnam (75).

Among other places, Anantapur (58), Kadapa (52), Srikakulam (37), Vizianagaram (35), Nellore (32), Prakasam (31) and Kurnool (18).

With the new additions, Kurnool's tally is inching closer to the 60,000-mark.

East Godavari continues to



shoulder the highest number of cases at 1.2 lakh.

Meanwhile, nine more patients succumbed to the virus in the past 24 hours, taking the state's death toll to 6,890. Chittoor continues to be the district with the highest number of Covid deaths at 812.

However, the southern state is consistently recording an impressive number of recov-

eries every day.

On Monday, 2,293 more patients recovered from the disease to increase the total number of recoveries to 8.32 lakh.

Of the 8.56 lakh cases, active cases currently stand at 16,985. In the past 24 hours, Covid-19 tests fell to 66,778 samples. The state has so far conducted over 92.6 lakh tests. **IANS**

Priyanka questions Yogi on Mission Shakti

Lucknow: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday questioned the women empowerment programme 'Mission Shakti' launched by the Yogi Adityanath Government.

In a tweet, Priyanka asked the Chief Minister to explain how successful 'Mission Shakti' has been in UP.

"From the reports of crime against women UP, it is clear that women are not safe in the state.

A number women have ended their lives because no one has responded to their problems," she said.

Priyanka also listed about ten incidents of crime against women in UP.

Priyanka has been regularly lashing out at the growing incidents of crime against women in the state and has been criticizing the Yogi Adityanath government on the issue. **IANS**

Rare surgery at JNMC

Aligarh: A baby girl from Khurja, Uttar Pradesh with a very rare case of cyanotic congenital heart disease now has a brighter future thanks to help from a dedicated team of cardiothoracic surgeons of the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (JNMC), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

Kanika, was born five months ago with cyanotic congenital heart disease, a rare cardiovascular problem.

Bail plea of Kerala CM’s former Secretary Sivasankar rejected

Kochi: A court here on Tuesday refused to grant bail to IAS officer and Kerala Chief Minister's former Principal Secretary, M. Sivasankar.

Sivasankar was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on October 29 in the gold smuggling case and is being questioned by the financial probe agency.

His judicial custody ends on November 26 and prior to that, reports indicate he will be continue to be questioned by the various national probe agencies.

Heated arguments had taken place at the Principal Sessions Court with counsel for Sivasankar arguing that he was being pressurised to name high-flying ruling front political leaders, but the prosecution denied the claim.

The prosecution, however, cited several pieces of evidence against

Sivasankar and it was these the court relied on to dismiss his bail plea.

The ED even contended that Swapna Suresh, the prime accused in the gold smuggling and Life Mission cases, was being used by Sivasankar who knew everything what was happening.

The Customs had arrested P.S. Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, on July 5 for allegedly smuggling gold in a diplomatic baggage destined for the Consulate. Swapna, who was also an ex-employee of the Consulate, and her associate Sandip Nair were also arrested by the National Investigation Agency from Bengaluru.

Vijayan removed Sivasankar as his Principal Secretary and then as IT Secretary after it surfaced that Swapna and Sivasankar were allegedly close friends. **IANS**

Maha Cong collects 60L farmers' signatures against Central farm laws

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As part of the ongoing agitation Against the Central farm laws, the Maharashtra Congress has collected signatures of a staggering 60 lakh farmers to demand repeal of the "anti-farmer" Central farm laws.

A petition carrying 60 lakh signatures was handed over by Revenue minister and State Congress President Balasaheb Thorat to the Congress' in-charge for Maharashtra HK Patil. "No other party has ever carried out such a massive campaign and collected such a large number of signatures," a state party statement said.

"Today, we handed over the signatures of 60 lakh farmers in the state to Shri HK Patil ji who will

hand over the petition to Congress president Sonia Gandhi," Thorat said. These signatures--along with a statement signed by farmers across the country -- will be handed over by the Congress to President Ramnath Kovind in New Delhi on November 19.

"These 60 lakh signatures show the huge opposition of the farmers to this law. Maharashtra's fight against agricultural laws has become a role model for the country," Patil said

Speaking at a function organised at Tilak Bhavan here, Thorat said: "During the recent weeks, we carried out agitations against the new agriculture laws. We organised a virtual rally of Maharashtra farmers -- which was attended by 50 lakh farmers".

"It is not a small task to sub-

mit a petition with 60 lakh signatures. It is a historic campaign. These unjust laws should be repealed. Maharashtra has always been a guiding state for the rest of the Country. We intend to protect the interests of farmers by enacting a better agricultural law than Punjab," Thorat said. .

Thorat said that under the leadership of late Indira Gandhi, a green revolution took place in the country and the agricultural sector was transformed. "But the present BJP government has continuously worked to weaken the farmers and the agricultural systems of the country," he said.

Apart from Thorat and Patil, prominent among those present at the function organised at Tilak Bhavan were Energy minister Dr. Nitin Raut, Medical Education

Minister Amit Deshmukh, Mumbai Guardian Minister Aslam Shaikh, Mumbai Congress President Eknath Gaikwad, Former Minister Naseem Khan, Former MP Hussain Dalwai and State party working President Muzaffar Hussain.

It may recalled that on September 30, the Maharashtra government had stayed the notification issued by it in August to implement the three ordinances issued by the Centre that had preceded the farm Bills which have now been enacted and set up a Cabinet sub-committee to study the implementation or otherwise of the "anti-farmer" central farm laws which have evoked vociferous protests from farmers across the country.

The ruling Congress and NCP,

which are two constituents of the MVA government in Maharashtra, have come out in the open about their opposition to the farm laws, while the Shiv Sena is also very much with the two of its ruling partners in the state in its reservations in implementing the three farm laws in the state.

Talking to media persons earlier on Tuesday, Thorat said that the state government would soon come out a law that would nullify the adverse impact of the three newly passed laws --the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment & Protection) Assurance and Farm Service Act, 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 -- would have on the farmers in the state.

Scrap NEET for medical colleges in TN, for PG courses too: Stalin

IANS ■ CHENNAI

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) President MK Stalin on Tuesday demanded scrapping of NEET for medical college admissions as the Centre had allowed for separate entrance tests in its 11 such institutions in Tamil Nadu.

Similarly, in medical colleges in Tamil Nadu, admissions for postgraduate courses should not be made based on National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) scores,

he said.

Stalin urged Chief Minister K Palaniswami to write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this subject so that admissions to postgraduate medical courses could be made and 69 per cent reservation quota implemented for the same.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly also urged Palaniswami to hold counselling for admissions to special medical courses for government doctors with 50 per cent reservation.

Maha pays homage to Balasaheb Thackeray on his death anniversary

Mumbai: Top leaders from various political parties and commoners paid homage to the founder-patriarch of Shiv Sena, the late Balasaheb Thackeray on his eighth death anniversary here on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray led the state along with his wife Rashmi Thackeray, son and Minister Aditya Thackeray besides ministers, leaders of other parties, and paid floral tributes at the late leader's memorial at Shivaji Park.

In a message, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said: "A heartfelt tribute to Balasaheb Thackeray whose leadership,

eloquence and contributions will rule forever in the hearts of the Marathis."

Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar said the late Balasaheb Thackeray's work as "an effective orator, cartoonist and political commentator" are of special significance and political activists are reminded of his ever-vigilant attitude.

Similarly, Congress leader and Minister Ashok Chavan paid homage to the memory of Bal Thackeray.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis saluted the late leader who remained com-

mitted to his thoughts and speeches while Prasad Lad described him as the "Hindu Hriday Samrat, Nationalist, enlightening leader".

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena spokesperson Sandeep Deshpande questioned why despite coming to power since one year, the Maha Vikas Aghadi government has failed to construct a memorial to Balasaheb Thackeray at the site near the Shivaji Park.

Scores of Shiv Sainiks and followers converged at the Shivaji Park and offered their tributes to the late leader who passed away at the age of 86 on November 17, 2012. **IANS**



Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal shrouded in smog in Agra on Tuesday

Nitish hemmed in

BJP's surprise picks for two deputy CMs are intrinsic to its goal of widening its social base and winning a verdict on its own in Bihar



After its own stupendous showing and the decimation of its alliance partner in the Bihar Assembly elections, there were questions galore about whether the BJP would have its own Chief Minister or continue with its nominee and Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar. The latter himself was believed to have offered to give up his position, considering his party was undeserving of the chair. But the BJP held on to Nitish, partly because it wanted to claim high moral ground, that of not dumping a regional ally in distress. It certainly didn't want to appear power-hungry or absolutist. And partly because his hold on Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) and Mahadalits is still intact and the BJP needs the façade of an inclusive rainbow to best its performance and become the single largest party convincingly next time, the last tag having been proudly claimed by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in this bout. Besides, so long as the RJD is focussed on belittling Nitish, it would be able to quietly go about its own gameplan. That doesn't mean it has allowed Nitish a free run but has cleverly encircled him with its chosen few and even removed its once deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi, who had a comfortable equation with the former. In fact, Nitish has his hands tied up badly with the BJP naming not one but two Deputy Chief Ministers — Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi. By moving Sushil Modi, who has in no small way contributed to the party's growth in the State over the years, to Delhi for a Central assignment, the BJP is clearly resetting the entire template of the State. The Assembly verdict has been a close call and it certainly doesn't want past baggage but is keen to start out on a clean slate, the sole aim being taking down the RJD and forming a Government on its own. Sushil Modi is too strong a leader with opinions that perhaps would not be conducive for the growth of lesser known but more efficacious leaders. And from the looks of RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav's popularity, his youth following, his dalliance with a resurgent Left and his prioritising economic justice for all Biharis instead of bartering away caste privileges, the challenges are quite big. Both Prasad and Devi are low key leaders, who have risen from the ranks and have worked the grassroots, the kind favoured by the BJP's top duo of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to do their bidding, and can expand the party's network without drawing unnecessary attention. Tejashwi reaped the benefit of being an underdog in this election but now that all lenses are trained on him, the BJP wants to lie low. Prasad is not even a mass leader but has moorings in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He has been instrumental in the party doing well in the Muslim-dominated Seemanchal region, perceived to be a RJD stronghold. Some say that he has some appeal among bordering districts with West Bengal and may be deployed for the Assembly polls there. Renu Devi has obviously been a concession to the women voters of Bihar, who swung the verdict in the BJP's favour. Besides, Prasad belongs to Other Backward Castes (OBC) while Devi is EBC, a fact that will help the BJP claim representative caste credentials on its own than rely on JD(U) in the future. The announcements should come as no surprise, considering that they are in line with the Modi-Shah duo's earlier chief ministerial choices in Haryana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Manohar Lal Khattar, Devendra Fadnavis and Vijay Rupani were chosen above popular State leaders simply because the central leadership wanted a continuity of command and strategy. Besides, some BJP insiders believe that if an election has been won in the name of Modi, he should make the final call.

The BJP is not happy with statistics, something that it bases its strategies on. Mathematically, the RJD increased its vote share to 23 per cent compared to the BJP's 19 per cent while contesting lesser seats than last time. Its galloping support among non-Yadav voters, particularly its rainbow coalition that split the upper caste vote, and its messianic appeal among the classless poor have given furrowed brows to the BJP. So the Hindu vote in Bihar, too, is not as cohesive as the party would want it to be. Hence the choice of two earthy faces as Nitish's deputies, who, given their consistency in winning successive elections, have proven that they have their ears to the ground. Most importantly, the BJP wants to tell its rank and file that the organisation is not status quoist and that it not only rewards gritty performers with posts but also grooms them into leadership positions. This also helps it posit itself vis-à-vis the dynastically privileged Tejashwi or even Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Chirag Paswan. The BJP further realises that it needs the likes of Prasad and Devi to hold its own against the Left parties, which not only guarded their votebanks but came together with the RJD-led alliance to trounce the BJP-JD(U) in Bhojpur and Magadh regions bordering Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Tejashwi's co-optation of the Left may be the glue for a larger anti-BJP alliance. And though it is allowing Nitish the top post in the last days of his political career, the BJP is making sure that governance is at its bidding. Five years are too short for a turnaround and the BJP certainly doesn't want to waste any seeding efforts. As for Nitish, apart from being a seventh time Chief Minister for the record books, there are no expectations of *sushashan* anymore. He will at best be a visage of respectability as the BJP pulls all the strings. Nitish is seemingly powerful and actually powerless. Perhaps this is his worst political compromise yet. For it is not just about survival. It is about never being able to prove himself worth it.

Vaccine on the cards

With several firms announcing good news on a COVID-19 vaccine, have we turned a corner on the pandemic?



2021 at least one if not more vaccines would have been released in the market.

That said, we must temper our enthusiasm slightly as most vaccines so far require incredibly super-cold chain transportation requirements. The Pfizer vaccine needs temperatures below -80 degrees centigrade to be stable, the Moderna one, a very cold but slightly more reasonable -20C. It will be difficult to manage such a cold chain vaccine delivery system, particularly in a country the size of India, but one could assume that harder vaccines will be developed which India's existing cold chain infrastructure developed for fish, meat and vegetables will be able to manage. However, even if such a vaccine is developed relatively soon, one should beware that it might take several months to inoculate most Indians living in large metropolitan areas even if we take advantage of producing companies like the Serum Institute. Safely manufacturing and deploying over a billion doses of the vaccine, even if global suppliers help with patents and manufacturing, could take years. But getting the vaccine out there as soon as possible will, according to some virologists, dramatically speed up the herd immunity process. It is not surprising that stock exchanges across the world have been on the upswing as have reports from bodies looking at economic growth. After almost a whole year of doom and gloom, even a bit of positive news is enough to set the markets rocking. And make no mistake, all these reports are very positive. Yet, we would have to be cautious until we get the nitty-gritties of how exactly the vaccine will be administered.

opinion08

Hold on to Chushul

Any agreement with China, which is about a piecemeal disengagement, is unacceptable. Surrendering one's trumpcard is a monumental folly



ASHOK K MEHTA

A disengagement deal on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, whose ingredients have been leaked, is being considered by the Government. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar mentioned it in mid-October as a confidential Chinese proposal and Army Chief Gen Naravane recently likened it to a work in progress. It apparently involves vacating the strategic Chushul heights on Kailash range — a critical bargaining leverage superbly created by the Special Frontier Force (SFF), which must not be frittered away in a piecemeal limited disengagement for Chinese withdrawal from the Fingers area.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is speaking the obvious: "We need a strong military to deter aggression." We have one but it can checkmate Pakistan, not China. Prime Minister Narendra Modi knows that due to economic recession, the modernisation of armed forces will be grounded. So he is boosting soldiers' morale by celebrating Diwali with them, riding the Arjun tank and acclaiming his Government's record in defence reforms. But defence allocation under his watch has been the lowest as a percentage of GDP, which has been declining since his Government came to power. Singh should be informed that *shastra puja* (worshipping weapons) alone will not add to deterrence.

If a limited disengagement and not a full and complete disengagement and de-escalation is implemented, it will be at an extraordinary strategic cost. China has been insisting that Chushul heights be vacated as part of a partial disengagement limited to north and south bank of Pangong lake. Colossal confusion prevails about the exact contours of the withdrawal as to whether it will be across all intrusion points in East Ladakh or just the Pangong Lake region. The strategic heights gained by SFF must not be vacated as these are on the Indian side of the LAC and were in our possession in 1962. An infantry brigade fought on these heights but withdrew prematurely, first to Chushul and then in panic to Leh. India must not repeat the Himalayan blunder for painting political success after a pounding from the opposition for loss of ter-



ritory. China has already pushed India into a corner by imposing unequal terms during the initial disengagement, which separated troops from friction points culminating in the Galwan clash.

The Indian Army was forced back from positions it held earlier in Galwan, Hot Springs and Gogra; buffer zones were created on the Indian side of the LAC even as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) failed to faithfully disengage from all the flashpoints. The Chinese have refused to discuss Depsang, where it has intruded 18 km and blocked Indian patrols. On its part, the PLA has managed to creep forward towards its 1959 claim line and annexed territory. In the proposed disengagement plan, China wants vacation of Kailash range for withdrawal from the Fingers area.

What is incentivising India to de-induct from the commanding heights overlooking the PLA Moldo garrison and from where, on a clear day, one can see the Aksai Chin road that China has illegally constructed? It could be the difficulty of supporting a Brigade on and along these heights in the harsh winter to follow where temperature is already minus 30 degrees centigrade and will go down to minus 40 degrees centigrade. The snow will be different from what the soldiers are used to in Siachen, which has been made

“THE STRATEGIC HEIGHTS GAINED BY SFF MUST NOT BE VACATED AS THESE ARE ON THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE LAC AND WERE IN OUR POSSESSION IN 1962. INDIA MUST NOT REPEAT THE HIMALAYAN BLUNDER FOR SCORING POLITICAL SUCCESS”

habitable and defensible over nearly four decades of occupation. If sustenance of troops is the compulsion, a smaller force can be kept and turned over as is being done on Saltoro Ridge in Siachen. Withdrawal from Kailash range should never be part of any limited Chinese proposal on disengagement.

The Chushul heights are a countervailing advantage in forcing withdrawal from Depsang and becoming the pivot of any tradeoff in an overall disengagement and de-escalation agreement, which is return of status quo ante, April 2020. PLA is occupying Black Top post close to the Mukhpari post on Kailash range. Chinese soldiers are conscripts, who normally do not man posts at an altitude of 17,000 feet. The Chinese are facing a greater degree of difficulty in their occupation of heights in areas near the Kailash range. The three-step withdrawal plan limited to both banks of Pangong Lake area reportedly consists of the following:

- Removal of heavy weapons from both banks of the lake
- Full vacation by PLA from North Bank in Fingers area, back to the original Finger 8. The Indian Army similarly will pull back to its permanent location at Dhan Singh Post near Finger 3. Area between Fingers 4 and 8 will be converted to buffer zone (another buffer zone on Indian side).

(c) Indian Army will vacate Chushul heights and PLA, Black Top. Withdrawal will include dismantling of structures on North Bank like barracks, fortifications, jetties.
(d) A verification and monitoring mechanism has been included.

Apparently, a more authentic version of the selective disengagement was discussed on November 6 during the eighth round of military commanders' talks, which were described by India as "candid, in-depth and constructive in which views were exchanged on all friction points along LAC in the western sector of India-China border areas." It was also the first time that the two Generals held a one-on-one, which is very rare with Chinese interlocutors. The ninth round of the commanders' talks is expected later this month so that withdrawals can begin by mid-December.

The Government relies on leaking information through its civil and military officials to test ideas. So while some newspapers have reported that disengagement is confined to the Lake area, North and South Bank, others have said it covers all friction points, including Depsang. In other words, it is a full and complete disengagement. With trust and faith gone with the wind after Galwan, fear is that once you pull out from the Kailash range, its re-occupation will not be easy given that terrain and PLA's duplicity. The strategic heights have shifted the balance of military advantage and bargaining potential to India. In 2005, India came close to withdrawing from Siachen in an agreement with Pakistan. With complete breakdown of trust, Army Chief Gen JJ Singh said: "Indian Army will withdraw if ordered. But don't ask it to re-occupy Siachen." Since then any withdrawal from Siachen is enveloped in silence.

Two former Northern Army Commanders, Lt Gens HS Panag and DS Hooda, have said that vacating Chushul heights without full restoration of status quo ante will be squandering a strategic asset. Any agreement with China, which is about a piecemeal disengagement, must be unacceptable. Nothing should be left to later or a separate phase of withdrawal. Surrendering one's trumpcard *ab initio* is a monumental folly.

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

SOUND BITE

The ancient education system always taught us to live in harmony with nature and respect all beings and non-beings. Our education was complementary to life.



Vice-President
—M Venkaiah Naidu

The Open Acreage Licensing Policy is a market-friendly policy which is driving self-reliance in the energy sector.



Union Minister
—Dharmendra Pradhan

I am honoured to be the British Fashion Council's Ambassador for Positive Change while I'm living and working in London over the next year.



Actor
—Priyanka Chopra

Being Serena is very close to my heart. It captured my life during some of the most unforgettable and challenging moments in a really honest way.



Grand Slam champion
—Serena Williams

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Release Kerala scribe

Sir — Kerala-based journalist Siddique Kappan has been denied interim bail by the Supreme Court (SC). Arrested on October 5, he was on his way to meet the Hathras rape-murder victim's family when he was confronted by the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Police. After denying relief to Kappan, the SC issued a notice to the UP Government and sought a response on the plea seeking his release.

The apex court was hearing a plea filed by the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) challenging Kappan's arrest. Arguing for the journalist, senior advocate Kapil Sibal said that the FIR does not disclose any offence committed by him. And while a plea for interim bail had been filed, other journalists were not allowed to meet him in jail.

The brutal torture and gangrape of the Dalit girl had got national attention. The victim succumbed to her injuries a few days after the incident and was cremated in the dead of night by the police. Her family was not allowed any access to her body and the UP Government and police were widely criticised for violation of human rights and

due legal processes.

Her death triggered protests across India. Kappan, along with a few other journalists, was on his way to meet the family when he was arrested. He must be given bail immediately. For he was just doing his duty as a journalist, gathering facts, and had not even filed a biased report. The voice of the media should not be stifled like this in a democracy.

And it is a crying shame that none of the other journalists in the national media is coming out in support of Kappan. Why are they so afraid?

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

A legendary actor

Sir — The legendary Soumitra Chatterjee was a man of many

parts. He was a screen actor, a theatre doyen, a playwright, a poet, a literary figure, a painter, an intellectual and a cultural icon. Eulogised as Satyajit Ray's protégé and alter ego, he enriched the cultural life of West Bengal and India. Ray brought out the best in Chatterjee. But it may be worthwhile to say that Chatterjee brought out the best in Ray, being the perfect vehicle for the latter's



control of the Republican Party, its nature and direction. Its members need to lick their wounds and start to look at how they can return to their true nature and ignore the worst of their voices. Accept the 2020 decision, look to work with the other side, especially with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic as so many are dying, and rebuild a healthy social and economic environment.

Dennis Fitzgerald
Melbourne, Australia

creative expression. His acting career spanned over six decades and he starred in over 300 films. *Apur Sansar*, *Abhijan Charulata*, *Aparichito*, *Ashani Sanket* and *Dekha* are among the works that have made movie buffs idolise him.

At one level, he breathed life into characters struggling to cope with the perennial conflict between personal urges and social mores. At another level, he played the roles of characters in quest of opportunities to realise their potential in an independent India. He had that indefinable edge that made him a great actor. His was a screen presence people could relate to, love and admire. He had a great zest for life and retirement was the last thing on his mind. In West Bengal, Chatterjee and Uttam Kumar shared all the popularity between them. It is a sad part of history that he is not in the frames made by Ritwik Ghatak, even though he acted in films made by acclaimed directors like Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha and Ajoy Kar. He will be missed.

David Milton
Maruthancode

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Govt needs to drive the change

People will remember a Government only when it brings about changes which leave a long-term impact on public life



SHSHANK SAURAV

Recently, a video of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari surfaced on social media in which he was seen criticising the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) officials for inordinate delays in project execution. Things have come to such a pass that people who supported the NDA Government in the past are also raising dissenting voices over efficiency issues. Infrastructure development is the key to economic development and the Government, too, has acknowledged this fact in various statements. However, as per a recent report issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), the cost overrun in delayed projects is over ₹4.29 lakh crore (20.85 per cent of the original cost). Cost overruns are not only a colossal waste of public money, they also result in potential opportunity cost for all stakeholders in the form of delayed availability of assets for public use. To put things in perspective, as on December 2013, one-third of the infrastructure projects of PSUs were delayed and cost overruns were 19.7 per cent of the original budget. It is the same under the NDA Government and most of these projects were delayed due to the time taken in getting regulatory approvals. Even the Government is aware of the problem and a June 2019 report by KPMG highlights all these issues and remedial measures which are largely related to project management. India's "Ease of Doing Business" ranking is improving consistently but at the same time Government undertakings are struggling to get necessary approvals for implementation of projects.

It is necessary to set quantifiable and measurable goals to evaluate the performance of any individual or department. The Government prepares the "Output Outcome Framework Report", which is part of the Budget document but it is not discussed in detail in the media and the focus is always on tax rates, exemptions and so on. This report talks about financial outlays on various schemes and their expected outputs/outcomes. This document includes the phrase, "targets not amenable," at various places, which means that people preparing the Budget were not sure what they wanted to achieve out of the expenditure. Governments across the world are facing an unprecedented revenue crisis and, therefore, it is necessary to take a look at the measures taken by the Centre in this direction. In the previous year, the Government introduced the "Sabka Vishwas" scheme to settle indirect tax cases and boost falling revenues. As per the Finance Ministry, approximately ₹3.6 lakh crore was locked up in disputes and the Government received applications worth approximately ₹89,800 crore under the said scheme. Though the Government claimed to realise ₹39,000 crore from the scheme, it actually received only about ₹15,000 crore because the rest of the amount was already pre-deposited by assessee. In a nutshell, this scheme was not a success despite desperate calls made by the Government to prevent its failure.

This year the Government introduced the "Vivad se Vishwas Scheme" to unclog the courts and realise the Income Tax revenue locked in litigation. As per Annexure 5 of the Receipt Budget of 2020, ₹8.02 lakh crore of Income Tax demand was under dispute as on March 31, 2019. As per a statement given in Parliament by the Minister of State for Finance, Anurag Thakur, the Government was able to realise merely ₹9,538 crore till September 8. This is despite the fact that the CBDT Chairman had specifically instructed the officials to close all the declarations filed in this scheme within the stipulated period. He set August 31 as the upper time limit for closing all the matters.

Given the current status, this well-intended scheme is also bound to fail because of the indifferent attitude of tax officials. The intent of the scheme was to achieve the twin objectives of tax collection as well as litigation minimisation, but it appears that none of them are going to be achieved. Just to cite an example, declarations filed by the assessee are not considered valid even if the Income Tax Department is at fault in matters relating to service of documents to the assessee. S/he is statutorily eligible to avail the benefit of the scheme. If things are not moving even after giving representation to higher authorities, including the Revenue Secretary and the CBDT Chairman, then it is easy to guess the level of effort required to correct the mess which we are in. The citizens will not get benefit from a noble intention unless that is implemented in the true spirit by our bureaucracy.

The ruling party should consider the fact that winning an election with the help of social engineering is one thing but bringing capable administrators into the Government is altogether different. People will remember a Government only when it brings changes which create a long-term impact.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant)

I INFORMED THE GOA POWER MINISTER THAT I WILL BE DEBATING WITH HIM ON THE TOPIC OF KEJRIWAL POWER MODEL VS GOA ELECTRICITY MODEL.

—AAP MLA
RAGHAV CHADHA



I DON'T HAVE AN ISSUE DEBATING WITH THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE POWER PROBLEMS OF DELHI AND GOA. NOT SOMEONE UNRELATED TO IT.

—GOA POWER MINISTER
NILESH CABRAL

Unshackle the CBI

It is time to nullify the general consent-giving power of the States to the investigation agency for probing Central Government organisations on their turfs



J GOIKRISHNAN

India's premier investigation agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), is now passing through the worst crisis it has ever faced in all the years of its existence. In the past, the agency has often faced allegations (especially when handling politically-sensitive cases against Opposition or rival party leaders), of working at the behest of its political masters at the helm of affairs at the Centre. To the extent that it has often been called a "caged parrot" by the judiciary and the media. However, now the woes of India's premier investigation agency seem to have multiplied with eight non-BJP ruled States banning its entry into their territory. The CBI is the Central Government's anti-corruption agency and its main activity is to check corruption or illegal activities in Central Government departments, Central Government PSUs, banks and so on. However, the major problem with the CBI is that it is governed by an archaic law called the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946 (DSPE Act). This law has a curious provision that allows State Governments to withdraw the "general consent" to it. In such a case, the CBI needs directions from the High Court or the Supreme Court on probes related to the State investigating agencies.

As a result of this provision, the CBI has been blocked by Punjab, Kerala, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Mizoram. This is the first time in the history of the agency that so many States have banned it from their turfs. As a result, the CBI has had to approach courts in order to be able to conduct raids and investigations in these States. This restriction even stops the CBI from conducting investigations at Central Government offices in these States. Probes into complaints of petty bribery in Central Government organisations in these States are subject to permissions of the local governments. Needless to say, this is a big hurdle in the working of the CBI.

When in 2018, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) left the BJP-headed NDA, the Andhra Pradesh Government used this special provision in the DSPE Act and blocked the CBI from entering the State, sensing political vendetta. It was only in mid-2019 that the position changed after the BJP-friendly YSR Congress regime came to power. Similarly, during the probe in the Saradha scam, when the CBI summoned the Kolkata Police Commissioner, the West Bengal Government ruled by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) also did the same and refused it permission. Anyway, in the end, the State could not block the probe in the Saradha Scam, as the investigation was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court. The agency also got support from the Supreme Court in arresting the Kolkata Police Commissioner, which had earlier been prevented by the State administration.

Now, it faces the same situation with the eight States and will have to knock on the door of the courts just to be able to do its duty. So what is the remedy of this peculiar situation? The answer is simple: The archaic DSPE Act will have to be amended by the Central Government. The amendment, if it ever passes muster in Parliament, will empower the CBI to register or probe any case related to the Central Government in any part of the country without requiring the

“EVER SINCE THE DILUTION OF THE PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT IN 2018, THE CBI HAS BEEN FACING A BIG HANDICAP. SECTION 13(1)(D), WHICH GAVE THE AGENCY ITS POWERS, WAS SCRAPPED. THE 2018 AMENDMENT OF THE ACT PUT TOO MANY RESTRICTIONS ON THE CBI EVEN FOR A BASIC PROBE. AS PER THE NEW RULES, THE CBI HAS TO GET A SANCTION FOR STARTING AN INVESTIGATION AGAINST OFFICERS UNDER SUSPICION. THIS MEANS GETTING A SANCTION FROM THE SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE SAME ORGANISATION WHERE CORRUPT PRACTICES HAVE BEEN SPOTTED



general consent of the States. The CBI should have been empowered long ago. Particularly after 2013, when the Gauhati High Court first questioned the validity of the agency. Even though the next day the CBI was saved by a stay order issued by the apex court, this incident should have been an eye-opener for the Central Government to either amend the DSPE Act or bring about a new Act empowering the CBI.

But for the past seven years nothing happened to ameliorate the situation and the CBI's administrative Ministry, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), which is under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has not yet taken a call to settle this vexed issue.

Ever since the dilution of the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2018, the CBI has been facing a big handicap. Section 13(1)(d), which gave the agency its powers, was scrapped. The 2018 amendment of the Act put too many restrictions on the CBI even for a basic probe. As per the new rules, the CBI has to get a sanction for starting an investigation against officers under suspicion. This means getting a sanction from the senior officers of the same organisation where corrupt practices have been spotted. Will a senior officer, particularly one who is in cahoots with corrupt officers, give sanction to probe his/her junior? Plus, even if the senior officer is honest, the moment the CBI applies for sanction to probe graft in the organisation, others will come to know of it, corrupt officers will cover

their tracks and the trail will go cold.

When these amendments were brought about, the Government said in Parliament that they were needed to protect officers. These changes were mooted by the UPA Government in 2012, when it was facing the heat of a huge anti-corruption wave in the country. It is intriguing why the BJP Government, despite being in power for many years, has carried forward the Congress-led UPAs policy which diluted the powers of the CBI.

The amendments have opened a Pandora's Box as many accused people and companies, facing trial or appeal in corruption cases, have approached High Courts around the country arguing that they should also get the benefit of the now diluted Prevention of Corruption Act of 2018.

The CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are appealing in the Delhi High Court against the 2G case trial court's verdict, which surprisingly acquitted all accused persons and companies. From October 5 onwards, a daily hearing is being held on the appeal and for the last 30 days, all the accused are arguing that they have filed a case in another Bench seeking the favours of the provisions of the new Prevention of Corruption Act, though they were charged under the old Act. This has affected ongoing trials too.

Though the law is very clear on this aspect that the charges are based on the laws that were prevalent at the time of the commission of the crime, this amendment has delayed many cases

across India. The CBI was once slammed by the Supreme Court for dragging its feet in the Jain Hawala case. In the 1997 judgment in the case filed by journalist Vineet Narain, the court laid down guidelines to ensure independence and autonomy of the CBI and ordered that the agency be placed under the supervision of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and be freed from executive control or interference. But we have seen the spirit of this landmark judgment sabotaged in the infamous tussle between the CBI Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana in 2018.

Even though the Supreme Court has given many judgments on sanction for prosecution, all Governments have been eager to protect senior officers from the Joint Secretary level and above in corruption cases. And the dilution of the Act in 2018 completely sabotaged the spirit of many landmark judgments on Sanction for Prosecution of high level officers.

Laws are an evolving process and it is time for the Central Government to bring appropriate amendments in the archaic DSPE Act of 1946. It is time to nullify the general consent-giving power of the States to the CBI for probing Central Government organisations on their turfs. The Central Government must also analyse what it achieved by diluting the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2018 and its impact on the prosecution of corrupt people.

(The writer is Special Correspondent of The Pioneer)

As COVID cases rise, the next 15 days are crucial

An urgent action plan is mandatory while integrative and coordinated efforts from all stakeholders are required to respond to a looming threat



RAJINDER K DHAMIJA

In spite of global efforts to contain and mitigate the Coronavirus outbreak, the world is still battling the pandemic, with a number of countries facing recurrent peaks. Our own national Capital has been grappling with an upsurge of COVID-19 cases with the start of the winter season, which usually sees the city enveloped in smog.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of COVID-19 patients (7,000 to 8,000 cases daily) in the last three weeks due to the dangerous cocktail of an early winter and Coronavirus fatigue. The last saw huge crowds mill around markets, restaurants and private parties. This is the third surge of cases following the first peak in late June and the second peak in September. This is

actually in line with my prediction of multiple waves of COVID-19 happening in India, in these columns in June. This also reflects our understanding of different peaks occurring in various parts of India at different times.

This has been the trend across the globe with the pandemic behaving in a similar way, be it in America where the cases rose sharply in one State and then moved across gradients to affect another State. Many countries in Europe, too, have experienced a similar phenomenon of multiple waves of the pandemic at different times.

It is not just the number of new cases that is worrying. The more devastating factor is the number of daily deaths, almost one hundred in the last week itself in Delhi. So far, the national as well as Delhi's COVID-19 case fatality rate has been reported to be one of the lowest in the world with an improving recovery rate. However, since the cases are surging, the number of daily deaths is bound to rise, too, owing to the fragile healthcare system, which is buckling under the pressure of the rising infections.

It was expected that cases will go up with the double whammy of crowds during the festival season along with the increased infectivity of the Coronavirus due to the surge of influenza-like illnesses in the winter months. However, the air pollution has made matters worse.

Pollution not only hampers the capacity of our lungs to clear the Coronavirus infection but particulate matter or pollutants can also facilitate its transmission by acting as a vehicle for large droplets which tend to stay suspended longer and lower down in the environment. These can infect more people.

There is enough evidence now that there is a direct relation between high PM2.5 levels and increased infectivity of the Coronavirus as shown in studies from China, the UK and Italy during this pandemic. It is also pertinent to know that the new positive cases being reported as of now are the reflection of exposure and infections which occurred in the previous weeks. There is a lag between exposure and clinical symptoms due to the incubation period of the viral infection, which is anything between two to 14 days for the

SARSCoV2 virus. Therefore, the new positive cases represent the infections occurring five to seven days preceding the reports.

Similarly there is a lag between exposure, clinical symptoms and the need for ICU admissions and assisted ventilation and fatalities in severe cases of COVID-19. This period is usually 10 to 14 days.

It is important to understand this lag period as the number of deaths being reported today is reflective of infections occurring at least two weeks ago, since deaths lag behind infections by weeks.

This is an important implication as the number of new positive cases is bound to increase tremendously in the coming two weeks post-Diwali due to compounded effects of over crowding, air pollution, bursting of crackers and the cold weather. It is quite predictable that the coming two weeks will be crucial, both in terms of new positive cases, the number of fatalities and the unfolding of a serious situation. Therefore, an urgent action plan is mandatory and integrative and coordinated efforts from all stakeholders are required to respond to this looming scenario.

First, containment and mitigation measures, which slow down the spread, are the only options in the face of the unrelenting infection phase, while augmentation of infrastructure in terms of ICU beds and trained manpower in critical care, are crucial to prevent deaths. Provision of ICU beds is not the solution unless we have enough trained manpower to manage the severe COVID-19 patients and run these critical care facilities.

Moreover the fundamentals of containment and mitigation remain the same, including sanitising, masking and distancing. We all know the drill but it is crucial to enforce behavioural changes like in the case of driving laws.

Second, since the positivity rate in Delhi (15 per cent) is too high, which is more than three times than the national average, there is no other option but to scale up testing to contain the spread of the infection. This needs to be brought below five per cent consistently to ensure adequate testing is being done.

There has been more of the rapid antigen testing in Delhi and fewer RT-PCR tests, a formula which

needs to be reversed. Ideally all the tests should be RT-PCR tests, which are more sensitive and would pick up more cases. Moreover anyone who undergoes the test should remain in quarantine till they get the results to limit transmission of the infection.

There needs to be a two-stage house-to-house cluster sero surveillance, as is being done in countries with robust healthcare systems. This ensures identification of people with symptoms of COVID-19. The RT-PCR testing for them confirms active infection and measures the quantum of past infection through antibody testing.

This strategy would not only mitigate cases but also help policymakers plan a public health response in the coming months. We need to act aggressively and quickly to save lives and avoid preventable deaths. The time to act proactively is now to save each and every life in the coming weeks. The fact remains that the virus is here to stay and the vaccine is still miles away.

(The writer is Head of Neurology Department, Lady Hardinge Medical College and SSK Hospital)



FOREIGN EYE



CREATE JOBS, NOT ANXIETY

COVID exposes the key Government role in maintaining the total level of spending in the economy at a level that keeps the country as close to full employment as possible. In the UK there will be an estimated million under-25s looking for work soon. Rishi Sunak's kickstart job-creation scheme is too small and reliant on private firms to help. Time is running out to act and ensure that a generation is not sacrificed on the altar of ideology. (The Guardian editorial)

Benchmarks scale new highs on vaccine boost

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices rallied to all-time highs on Tuesday, driven by banking, finance and metal stocks, as encouraging data from another Covid-19 vaccine trial bolstered investor sentiment. A recovering rupee added to the buying momentum, traders said. After touching its lifetime peak of 44,161.16 during the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 314.73 points or 0.72 per cent higher at its new closing record of 43,952.71.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty touched a fresh intra-day high of 12,934.05. It finally finished 93.95 points or 0.74 per cent up at its lifetime peak of 12,874.20.

Tata Steel was the top gainer among the Sensex constituents, surging 6.24 per cent, followed by SBI, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, L&T, Maruti, IndusInd Bank and HDFC.

On the other hand, NTPC, HCL Tech, ONGC, Infosys, ITC, PowerGrid and Hindustan Unilever were among the major laggards, dropping up to 2.69 per cent.

Wall Street vaulted to lifetime highs in the overnight

session after US-based biotechnology giant Moderna said its COVID-19 vaccine candidate was found to be 94.5 per cent effective in Phase 3 trials.

The announcement came just a week after Pfizer and BioNtech said their COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19, based on preliminary data.

“The market hit the all-time high, factoring yesterday’s trading holiday, led by banking stocks and investors rejoicing about the news of another vaccine to end the pandemic. This week, global markets started well, however today, it experienced mixed sentiments owing to increase in virus cases and tighter restrictions in the western world.

₹ RISES BY 16 PAISE TO 74.46 AGAINST \$

The rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 16 paise to settle at 74.46 against the US dollar as positive news on coronavirus vaccine boosted appeal for riskier assets.

Besides, a weak dollar overseas also supported the local unit.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit

opened strong at 74.43 against the US dollar and later touched a high of 74.38 in day trade.

The local unit finally closed at 74.46 against the US dollar, registering a gain of 16 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.62 against the US dollar. Forex market was closed on Monday on account of Balipratipada.

GOLD RISES MARGINALLY, SILVER GAINS ₹451

New Delhi:Gold prices rose marginally by ₹3 to₹50,114 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday amid choppy trade and rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at ₹50,111 per 10 gram in the previous trade.Silver prices jumped ₹451 to ₹62,023 per kilogram from ₹61,572 per kilogram in the last trade.Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi were trading marginally up by ₹3 on choppy global gold prices and rupee depreciation. The spot rupee was trading around 12 paise weaker against the dollar for the day,” HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

States pay 38 bps more to borrow in latest round

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The States have paid the highest price for their debt at the latest round of market borrowing on Tuesday where-in the cost of debt has gone up by 38 basis points (bps) to 6.65 per cent, according to a report.

At Tuesday’s auction of state development loans (SDLs), nine States raised ₹8,716 crore, taking overall borrowings to ₹4.72 lakh crore or 93 per cent of the target, by 28 States and two Union Territories since April 7, Care

Ratings said in a note after the auctions.

The entire notified amount was raised at the auction.

At ₹4.72 lakh crore of market borrowings, these States have raised 49 per cent more than the borrowings in the same period last fiscal when they had raised ₹3.16 lakh crore. According to the borrowing calendar, the states have borrowed ₹5.07 lakh crore in the first three quarters.

With this, the states have already borrowed 93 per cent of the targeted debt, with the

average weekly borrowing being ₹14,328 crore, ranging between ₹5,200 crore and ₹32,560 crore.

According to Madan Sabnavis, the chief economist at the rating agency, cost of borrowing rose this week with the weighted average cost coming in at 6.65 per cent, which is 38 bps higher than last week and is the highest in the last six auctions.

The increase in yields at today’s auction can in part be attributed to the expectations of additional supply of gov-

ernment securities following the Centre’s latest stimulus package which can lead to higher market borrowings, Sabnavis said.

Although weighted average cost has declined after the RBI introduced OMOs in SDLs last month, the extent of decline has narrowed from 30 bps on October 13 to 15 bps today, he said.

But this is still very low considering that Kerala had in April paid 9.96 per cent for its first borrowing.

The RBI has so far pur-

chased SDLs of ₹20,000 crore via OMOs through two auctions held in late October and early November.The spread between the 10-year state debt and G-Secs this week stood at 67 bps. Nearly 50 per cent of the SDLs on Tuesday and 40 per cent of issuances so far carry a tenure of 10 years.

States have been resorting to higher market borrowings to meet the shortfalls in their finances consequent to the sharp fall in revenues due to the pandemic and the resultant lockdowns.

Report: SBI set to offer ₹5,000 crore loan to Adani coal project in Australia

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The State Bank of India is set to offer a ₹5,000-crore loan to Adani Enterprises Ltd’s Australian mining company, now renamed Bravus Mining & Resources, as per media reports. As per media reports, the loan agreement between SBI and Adani Group is nearly done and a ratification is expected from the bank’s executive committee soon.

This could mark the resurgence of an earlier controversy. SBI and Adani had entered into a memorandum of understanding in 2014 for a \$1-billion loan. The loan was not executed after it became a political controversy.

Opposition parties had questioned the loan agreement at a time when the mining project was mired in controversy. The Opposition had pointed out that five leading global banks - Citibank, Deutsche Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland, HSBC and Barclays - had declined to fund the project citing a decline in coal mining in Australia.

SBI had then walked back on the loan agreement stating that it was only an MoU and no money had been lent to the company. Media reports quoted earlier sources as saying that six years later, there is a better understanding on the future of the project.

“Much water has flowed in

the last 5-6 years. The concerns raised in 2014 are no longer there.

“Most of the local regulatory approvals are in place and the company is expected to start producing coal from 2021 onward,” said a source close to the development, the reports said.

Financial Times had earlier reported that the Adani Group’s total outstanding debt came to more than \$30 billion as of November 11, according to data from Dealogic, including \$7.8 billion worth of bonds and \$ 22.3 billion in loans. High debt is nothing new among Indian conglomerates but the Adani Group’s rapid expansion has raised concern.

PM Modi pitches India as investment destination for urbanisation, mobility

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday pitched India as the most attractive investment destination for those looking to invest in urbanisation, mobility, innovation and sustainable solutions. Speaking at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum, he said India and some African nations will witness the biggest wave of urbanisation over the next two decades.

The post pandemic world has to be rebuilt around people and cities will have to be made more liveable, he said adding post-Covid restart will not be possible without a reset of mindset, process and practices.

Modi said his government will deliver 10 million affordable houses before the 2022 deadline. As much as Rs 2 lakh crore is being invested in 100 smart cities, he said adding that of this, projects worth Rs 1.4 lakh crore have been completed or are nearing completion. “If you are looking to invest in urbanisation, India has exciting opportunities for you. If you are looking to invest in mobility, India has exciting opportunities for you. If you are looking at investing in sustainable solutions, India has exciting opportunities for you,” he said. These opportunities, he said, come along with a vibrant democracy, business-friendly environment and a big market.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	12,932.50	12,944.05	12,797.10	12,874.20	93.95	
TATAMOTORS	152.5	159.35	152.2	158	9.15	
TATASTEEL	506	530.95	501.7	521.6	29.4	
HDFCLIFE	638.7	674	635	672.5	36.4	
SRIN	231.85	241.6	231	241.35	11.7	
ADANIAPORTS	368.5	386.75	366.25	378.4	12.3	
SHILPE	841	866.9	836.3	865.25	24.8	
BAFINANCE	4,398.70	4,503.95	4,345.00	4,501.70	126.9	
HDFCBANK	1,385.80	1,412.60	1,380.60	1,408.80	39.1	
AXISBANK	613.15	630.9	609	629	15.85	
IT	23,525.80	24,095.05	23,400.00	23,900.00	386.75	
MARUTI	6,865.00	6,996.90	6,863.00	6,987.00	134.75	
INDUSINDBK	777.9	793.75	772.25	784.6	14.15	
HINDALCO	210.3	216	210.1	212.85	3.55	
KOTAKBANK	1,771.80	1,802.00	1,764.50	1,797.00	26.45	
HDFC	2,339.90	2,364.75	2,307.40	2,344.85	33.6	
COALINDIA	128.3	129.3	127.2	128.7	1.6	
WIPRO	347	350.5	343.7	347.5	4.3	
TITAN	1,297.00	1,304.80	1,277.30	1,299.00	12.2	
M&M	639	646	633.65	637	5.65	
NESTLEIND	16,950.00	17,065.85	16,853.05	16,975.00	136.85	
SUNPHARMA	517	523.4	514.05	517.5	3.5	
BHARTIARTL	490.9	494.95	481.25	484.5	3	
BAJAJFINSV	7,361.00	7,407.60	7,251.00	7,379.00	43.45	
ECHERMOT	2,540.55	2,564.00	2,491.15	2,555.00	14.45	
TECHM	848.55	856.5	839	847.5	3.55	
GRASIM	846.9	853.5	835.55	841.55	2.95	
ASIANPAINT	2,206.40	2,221.90	2,182.00	2,189.00	4.4	
ICICIBANK	490.5	493	478.15	487.75	0.85	
GAIL	431.4	434.5	428.25	429.5	0.25	
UPPL	94.3	95.3	93.05	93.5	0	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3,034.00	3,048.90	2,996.45	3,041.20	-0.7	
ULTRACEMCO	4,910.00	4,979.00	4,896.00	4,905.15	-3.05	
TCS	2,695.00	2,695.00	2,650.05	2,661.25	-9.1	
DISAB	3,460.00	3,490.00	3,395.00	3,433.00	-11.95	
RELIANCE	2,085.00	2,085.00	1,985.00	1,994.80	-7.5	
CIPLA	747.4	751.9	734	742.95	-2.8	
ITC	189	189.4	186.4	187.7	-0.9	
BRITANNIA	3,541.00	3,550.00	3,504.40	3,509.70	-17.65	
POWERGRID	187	189.25	185.85	187	-1	
HINDUNILVR	2,220.35	2,220.35	2,172.00	2,175.50	-12.2	
JSWSTEEL	343.9	350.5	339.6	339.95	-2	
INFY	11,447.5	11,450.00	11,126.5	11,255	-8.2	
HCLTECH	837.95	837.95	814	816.2	-14.3	
DREDDY	4,875.00	4,878.05	4,770.00	4,785.00	-87.05	
ONGC	72.7	73.3	71	71.25	-1.4	
IOC	87	87	84.5	84.95	-1.7	
NTPC	91.75	92.4	88.25	88.6	-2.3	
HEROMOTOCO	31,464.00	31,448.00	3,001.00	3,004.00	-81.7	
BPCL	415	415	392.1	395.3	-17.55	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	29,608.60	29,745.65	29,529.65	29,689.10	245.95	
ADANITRANS	339.3	373.4	339.3	367	29.35	
ADANIGREEN	1,028.95	1,059.00	1,021.05	1,059.00	50.4	
ICICIPRULI	435.6	451	434.15	449.7	16.15	
AMBUJACEM	261	272	260	267.9	8.9	
BANDHANBNK	350	354.9	347	353	9.45	
SIEMENS	1,380.00	1,411.00	1,365.55	1,405.95	36.7	
NMDC	94.95	97.1	93.5	96.2	2.2	
MARICO	374.4	381	372.5	379.25	8.55	
INFRACEL	182.9	186.75	181.4	184.95	3.5	
BANKBARODA	46.7	47.9	46.7	47.55	0.9	
INDIGO	1,620.40	1,670.00	1,585.75	1,645.00	30.05	
HDFCAMC	2,510.00	2,524.40	2,480.00	2,497.00	45.35	
DMFAT	2,374.15	2,507.95	2,374.15	2,416.00	41.85	
ICICIGI	1,299.95	1,338.60	1,290.00	1,317.55	21.65	
ACC	1,671.30	1,723.90	1,671.30	1,695.00	26.95	
PETRONET	255	260.25	254.5	258.35	4.1	
NAUKRI	3,847.00	3,948.20	3,801.20	3,945.00	60.6	
DLF	185.45	190.7	184	187.35	2.75	
HAVELLS	835.05	849.6	830.55	839	3.5	
COFAL	1,522.90	1,542.00	1,503.80	1,533.10	20.85	
PCPL	103.1	104.65	101.65	103.45	0.95	
IGL	435.2	442	429.6	439.1	3.85	
PNB	29.6	30.2	29.4	29.85	0.25	
UCL	1,029.45	1,047.90	1,027.00	1,034.35	8.15	
MCDOWELL-N	558	567.35	554	559.9	4.1	
BAJAJHSDNG	2,715.00	2,776.00	2,653.00	2,716.15	9.05	
TATACONSUM	518	521.85	513.1	517.8	1.65	
CADILAC	432	433.95	426	430.4	1.15	
AUROPHARMA	858.6	875.9	848.45	854	1.85	
MOTHERSUNI	129.75	132.5	125.8	130.05	0.05	
GICRE	128.4	128.4	124.25	126	-0.85	
SBICARD	795	795	780.3	784.2	-5.35	
CONCOR	416.85	416.85	401.95	409	-3.7	
BERGEPAINT	655	655	639.55	646	-9	
GODREJCP	686	689.45	679.45	679.3	-6.4	
DAKUM	522.2	522.2	509.5	511.9	-5.25	
ALOKM	2,710.00	2,712.00	2,667.00	2,678.00	-27.6	
OFSS	3,090.00	3,111.90	3,050.00	3,074.00	-33.6	
PIDILITIND	1,596.45	1,597.40	1,556.15	1,563.00	-17.95	
LTI	3,050.00	3,058.50	2,986.00	2,998.10	-39.75	
BIOCON	435.05	436.35	422.9	428.5	-5.85	
HINDPETRO	221	223.4	215.65	216.4	-3.1	
MUTHOOTFIN	1,188.00	1,193.50	1,156.00	1,166.80	-20.9	
PGHH	10,899.90	10,923.35	10,580.00	10,659.00	-192.75	
BOSCHLT	11,968.00	11,968.10	11,585.05	11,635.00	-214.6	
HINDZINC	228	228.6	222.5	224	-4.7	
ABBOTINDIA	15,550.00	15,550.00	15,250.00	15,270.00	-325.55	
LUPIN	915.25	915.3	885.5	886.9	-19.35	
TORNTPHARM	2,720.05	2,740.00	2,639.05	2,653.50	-74.55	
PEL	1,470.05	1,470.10	1,385.20	1,408.70	-46.8	

BSE 500									
Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
IDEA	9.11	10.02	9.1	9.29	SAIL	35.35	36.85	35.35	36.7
TATASTEEL	504.7	530.8	502	522.8	HAVELLS	39.8	40.9	39.8	40.3
SBIN	231.95	241.5	231.1	240.2	SUNTV	825	849.6	825	844.2
RELIANCE	2084	2084	1985	1992.9	BALKRISIND	426.6	428	415	416.2
TATAMOTORS	151.7	159.1	151.7	158	BLISSGVS	169.8	170	166	167.5
BAFINANCE	4386	4593.7	4346.25	4487.85	TORNTPHARM	2730	2740	2636.6	2649.8
MARUTI	6853	6905	6853	6918.5	DELTAACORP	135.15	136.7	130.25	132.4
HDFCBANK	1386.55	1412.35	1380.48	1408.2	NAUKRI	3850	3946.1	3803.5	3929.75
INFY	1138	1144.8	1112.9	1123.85	HAL	780	786	761.6	779.9
ICICIBANK	487	493.15	478.45	486.2	TITAN	1293	1304.45	1277.85	1301.6
AXISBANK	613.6	638.0	609.3	628.8	PETRONET	254.5	260.1	254.5	259.35
HDFC	236	236.45	230.8	234.75	INDIANCE	128	134.95	125.2	134.1
INDUSINDBK	771.55	793.6	771.5	784.05	GMM	3430	3570	3390	3525.35
LUPIN	915	915.25	885.6	887.95	BATAINDIA	1370	1379	1348.3	1376.6
ADANIGREEN	1025	1059.1	1023.5	1058.75	CANBK	92.05	93.75	92	94.25
ADANIGAS	246.8	293.8	242.45	292.9	BAJAJ-AUTO	3044	3047	2995.25	3045.5
LT	1061	1096.7	1061	1081.25	IDFCFIRSTB	33.75	34	33.35	33.55
RLBANK	207.9	213.25	206.2	212.3	ADANIPOWER	36.55	37.75	36.4	37.5
HDFCLIFE	636.5	673.75	635.4	670.05	SBILIFE	842	866.8	836	862.7
BAJAJFINSB	7399	7399.45	7255.1	7364.7	SRF	5141.25	5175	5036.65	5057.6
PFIZER	5139.1	5139.1	4935.2	4950.2	BHEL	28.5	28.6	28.1	28.25
ITC	188.7	189.35	186.4	187.8	REC LTD	114	115.75	112	115.45
INDMHALCO	209.75	215	209.75	213.45	MINDTREE	1355.5	1367	1336.8	1340.35
BPCIL	415.95	415.95	392.35	404.25	KALPAPOWR*	284	299.6	284	297.3
HCILTECH	832	836.15	814	815.25	RAYMOND	288	304.4	284.3	294.8
SUNPHARMA	515.55	523.15	514.45	518	BEL	97.6	97.6	95.85	96.15
KOTAKBANK	1771	1801.95	1765.65	1796.7	BLUEDART	4205.25	4292	4001	4226.9
HEROMOTOCO	3118	3145	3001.5	3030.8	SIEMENS	1371.15	1410.55	1366.4	1407.85
TCS	2685	2690	2650.35	2667.05	NOCIL	146.9	147.7	142.35	142.9
M&M	636.25	645.9	633.45	633.65	PEL	145.6	1463.8	1385.55	1411.4
GODREIND	390	402	390	395.45	NCC	39.05	40.2	39.05	39.75
AUROPHARMA	858	875.85	848.55	855.25	BOMDYEING	65.5	69.45	64.85	68.7
Cipla	748	751.8	734.2	742.5	IFIL	94.8	112.5	94.8	112.5
JSWSTEEL	343	350.5	339.75	340.85	VIPIND	308	326.9	307.5	325.2
MGL	861.15	873.25	856.25	869.75					
ADANIANT	373	404.8	371.2	394.1					
APOLLOHOSP	2288	2241.15	2267.1	2307.55					
BANDHANBNK	349	354.9	348.75	352.85					
DRREDDY	4897	4897	4773.75	4785.3					
ADANIPORTS	367	386.65	366.25	379.55					
COALINDIA	128.5	129.35	127.25	128.7					
IOC	87	87.3	84.5	84.9					
BHARTIARTL	490	496.45	481.5	484.6					
ACC	1658	1723.45	1658	1691.5					
NTPC	91.5	92.3	88.35	88.65					
HINDUNILVR	2211	2215	2171.2	2176.35					
BRITANNIA	3530.1	3550	3504.6	3510.5					
FEDERALBNK	57	58.55	57	58					
ILBHSFIN	315.35	320.7	312.55	314.85					
LICHSGFIN	184.15	184.7	175.45	180.45					
MOTHERSIMP	130	132.45	126	130					
GODFREYPROP	1002.9	1055.15	997.7	1032.9					
ECHERMOT	2540	2565.04	2494	2545.8					
MRF	71854	7424.64	71854	7420.14					
WIPRO	347	350.35	343.55	348.85					
POWERGRID	187.55	189.25	185.85	186.8					
ESCORTS	1396.1	1433.6	1396.1	1422					
MUTHOOTFIN	1182.15	1194.2	1156.2	1166.75					
HDFCAMC	2502.55	2522.95	2480.15	2503.65					
TATAPOWER	56	58.15	55.95	57.65					
SPIICEJET	56	59.9	54.8	59.1					
SBICARD	791.2	794.45	780.1	782.6					
DLF	184.1	190.6	184.1	188.2					
VEDL	108.8	110	106.1	107.35					
APOLLOTYRE	164.8	174.65	164.5	173.15					
ONGC	72.5	73.25	71.7	71.3					
FRETAL	68.2	71.25	67.65	68.7					
DMART	2396	2505	2390	2423.3					
DABUR	521	521	509.25	511.5					
NMDC	94.4	97.05	93.5	96.6					
PVR	1300.1	1327.95	1289.3	1300.55					
INDHOTEL	114.6	122.65	114	120.5					
INDHOTEL*	221.5	223.3	215.55	217.7					
AMBUJACET	259.55	271.95	259.55	268.05					
DIVISLAB	3468	3484.7	3395.65	3428.25					
JKLAKSHMI	339	355.95	334.05	355.2					
TECHM	845.3	856.2	831.1	845.3					
NESTLEIND	16900.1	17061.75	16846.75	16983.2					
UPL	431.4	434.2	428.2	429.5					
SHEREECAM	23500	24057.5	23462.55	23993.95					
JUSTIDIAL	625	655.45	607	638.6					
ADANITRANS	340.65	340.65	340.65	367.75					
ZEEL	195.4	195.4	187.9	189.6					
L&THT	70.05	71.2	69.55	70.45					
PIDILITIND	1590	1593.3	1556.2	1561.95					
JINDALSTEL	217.5	230.4	217.3	228.95					
PAGEIND	22200	22794.6	21885.45	22707					
ULTRACEMCO	4901	4977.35	4895.05	4907.7					
GAIL	94	95.25	93	93.55					
ASHOKLEY	91.3	93.15	91.2	91.75					
INDIGO	1620.4	1669.75	1586.4	1643.3					
BANKBARODA	46.55	47.9	46.55	47.55					
TATACONSUM	516.3	521.65	513.4	518.25					
SHK	122.95	133.35	114.6	131.4					
COLPAL	1513.2	1542.1	1505.3	1531.7					
IBREALEST	63.4	63.85	59.8	60.05					
GLNMARK	487	491.8	480.75	486.95					
ASTER	1301.25	1547.7	1301.25	1481.7					
LAURUSLABS	291.95	291.95	277.5	279.35					
M&FMIN	143.2	146.9	143.2	145.35					
SUZLON	3.85	3.85	3.49	3.83					
CDLALHC	431.1	433.95	426	429.7					
SRTTRANSFIN	872	879.65	856.3	861.2					
JUBLFOOD	2500	2532.55	2462.15	2522.85					
ASIANPAINT	2189	2222.7	2182.45	2186.95					
GRASIM	840.1	853	836.25	842.5					
PNB	29.85	30.15	29.4	29.8					
TATAMTRDVR	65	69.9	64.75	69.1					

NOV 17

BSE Sensex

43,952.71

IF TRUMP DOES NOT COOPERATE WITH TRANSITION PROCESS

More ‘may die’ of Covid: Biden

Washington: President-elect Joe Biden has warned that many more Americans “may die” if incumbent President Donald Trump does not cooperate with the transition process and hamper the incoming administration’s ability to tackle the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

According to media projections, Democrat Biden has won the November 3 presidential election. Biden has 306 votes in the electoral college, surpassing the 270 threshold needed to win.

However, Trump, a Republican, has not conceded and instead alleged election fraud without presenting any significant evidence. The Trump campaign has also mounted legal fights in a number of battleground states where he lost.

“More people may die if we don’t coordinate,” Biden said in his home state of Delaware on Monday, responding to a question on President Trump refusing to concede the election and

the outgoing administration not co-operating in the transition process.

The US Government agency that launches transition process — the General Services Administration (GSA), headed by a Trump appointee — has yet to recognise Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris as winners.

The Trump-appointed administrator of the General Services Administration has so far refused to take the legally necessary step to begin the transition process, which would give Biden’s team a budget, intelligence briefings and access to federal agencies.

“A vaccine is important. It’s of little use until you’re vaccinated. So, how do we get the vaccine, how do we get over 300 million Americans vaccinated? What’s the game plan? It’s a huge, huge, huge undertaking to get it done, prioritise those greatest in need and working our way through, and also

cooperate with the World Health Organisation and the rest of the world in dealing with this,” he said.

“So they (Trump administration) say they have this ‘Warp Speed’ programme that not only dealt with getting vaccines, but also how to distribute this.

The number of COVID-19 infections in the US has reached new heights in recent days, surpassing 160,000 cases in one day for the first time since the outbreak began. More than 247,000 people have died in the US do the disease.

Dr Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious diseases expert, has warned that the country faces “a very challenging and ominous situation” as it approaches winter.

Calling nationwide vaccine distribution a “huge undertaking”, Biden said that if his team had to wait until 20 January - his presidential inauguration - until they could begin work on the

distribution programme, they would be behind by “over a month, month and a half”.

Biden said coordination is important “now, or as rapidly as we can get that done,” and said that “it would make it a lot easier if the President were to participate.”

“I am hopeful that the President will be mildly more enlightened before we get to January 20,” he said.

“The idea the President is still playing golf and not doing anything about it is beyond my comprehension,” Biden said.

Biden also criticised Trump for failing to work with Congress to negotiate a measure to aid businesses and unemployed Americans as the pandemic rages heading into the winter.

Biden was also asked about his thoughts on Trump’s tweet over the weekend where he first seemed to acknowledge that Biden had won the election. However, soon after Trump

said he would not concede, and that he had won.

He called Trump’s refusal to acknowledge he lost the election, despite calls to do so from both sides, “totally irresponsible”.

“I interpret that as Trumping-ism, no change in his modus operandi. And I think the pressure will continue to build,” he said.

The President-elect said that he is having a lot of meetings with world leaders on the telephone and he can get into negotiating with them about things that are going to be done. They are calling with some degree of enthusiasm everyone from a holy father to prime ministers across the globe.

“So we are moving along knowing what the outcome will be and ... but I find this more embarrassing for the country than debilitating for my ability to get started,” Biden said. **PTI**

Certain elements inside Pak military had links to al-Qaeda: Obama on Osama raid Joe Biden advised against Laden raid

Washington: Barack Obama has said that he had ruled out involving Pakistan in the raid on Osama bin Laden’s hideout because it was an “open secret” that certain elements inside Pakistan’s military, and especially its intelligence services, maintained links to the Taliban and perhaps even al-Qaeda, sometimes using them as strategic assets against Afghanistan and India.

Giving a blow-by-blow account of the Abbottabad raid by American commandos that killed the world’s most wanted terrorist on May 2, 2011 in his latest book “A Promised Land”, the former US president said that the top secret operation was opposed by the then defence secretary Robert Gates and his former vice president Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

I decided we had enough information to begin developing options for an attack on the compound. While the CIA team continued to work on identifying the Pacer, I asked Tom Donilon and John Brennan to explore what a raid would look like,” Obama writes in his memoir.

The need for secrecy added to the challenge; if even the slightest hint of our lead on bin Laden leaked, we knew our opportunity would be lost. As a result, only a handful of people across the entire federal government were read into the planning phase of the operation, he said.

“We had one other constraint: Whatever option we chose could not involve the Pakistanis,” he wrote.

“Although Pakistan’s government cooperated with us on a host of counterterrorism operations and provided a vital supply path for our forces in Afghanistan, it was an open secret that certain elements inside the country’s military, and especially its intelligence

services, maintained links to the Taliban and perhaps even al-Qaeda, sometimes using them as strategic assets to ensure that the Afghan government remained weak and unable to align itself with Pakistan’s number one rival, India,” Obama revealed.

Despite all the risks involved, Obama and his national security team opted for the second option, but not before multiple rounds of discussions and intensive planning.

“Joe (Biden) also weighed in against the raid, arguing that given the enormous consequences of failure, I should defer any decision until the intelligence community was more certain that bin Laden was in the compound.

“As had been true in every major decision I’d made as president, I appreciated Joe’s willingness to buck the prevailing mood and ask tough questions, often in the interest of giving me the space I needed for my own internal deliberations,” Obama wrote. **PTI**

Australia, Japan to bolster defence ties amid China’s rise

Tokyo: Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison is in Japan to hold talks with his Japanese counterpart, Yoshihide Suga, to bolster defence ties between the two US allies to counter China’s growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region amid a transition in American leadership.

The two countries are close to concluding a Reciprocal Access Agreement, a legal framework to allow their troops to visit each other’s countries and conduct training and joint operations.

Morrison and Suga are to hold talks later Tuesday and may conclude the deal. They are also expected to discuss the coronavirus and the economy,

Japanese officials said.

If signed, it will be Japan’s first such agreement since the 1960 status of forces agreement with the United States, which set bases for about 50,000 American troops to operate in and around Japan under the Japan-US security pact. Japan is committed to maintain and deepen its 60-year-old alliance with the US as the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy and security, but has in recent years sought to complement its regional defence by stepping up cooperation with others, especially Australia, amid China’s growing maritime activity that has spread from the East and South China seas and beyond. **AP**



Pro-democracy protesters take cover with inflatable ducks and umbrellas as police fire water cannons during an anti-Govt rally near the Parliament in Bangkok on Tuesday **AP**

In the book that hit the stands globally on Tuesday, America’s first Black president described the various options of killing bin Laden once it became increasingly clear that the elusive al Qaeda chief was living in a safe hideout on the outskirts of a Pakistani military cantonment in Abbottabad.

“Based on what I’d heard,

UN official warns of humanitarian disaster if Afghan peace talks fail

Kabul: The UN’s top official for refugees said on Tuesday that if the Afghan peace process collapses and violence continues, there will be a humanitarian disaster as thousands of displaced people struggle to survive the pandemic amid the harsh winter.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi told The Associated Press at the end of a four-day visit to Afghanistan that if the fighting continues, there will be more internal displacement.

“If this peace effort collapses then we could see a big humanitarian disaster in the country that is for sure, I hope it won’t,” he said.

Violence and chaos have increased in Afghanistan in recent months even as government negotiators and the Taliban are meeting in Qatar to find an end to decades of relentless war. The two sides have made little progress.

“I think we need to be ready for everything here, we need to be ready for more humanitarian issues,” Grandi said. **AP**

NATO chief warns of high price if troops leave Afghan

Brussels: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned on Tuesday that the military organisation could pay a heavy price for leaving Afghanistan too early, after a US Official said President Donald Trump is expected to withdraw a significant number of American troops from Afghanistan in the coming weeks.

“We now face a difficult decision. We have been in Afghanistan for almost 20 years, and no NATO ally wants to stay any longer than necessary. But at the same time, the price for leaving too soon or in an uncoordinated way could be very high,” Stoltenberg said

in a statement.

He said the conflict-ravaged country “risks becoming once again a platform for international terrorists to plan and organize attacks on our homelands. And ISIS (Islamic State) could rebuild in Afghanistan the terror caliphate it lost in Syria and Iraq.”

The US decision comes just days after Trump installed a new slate of loyalists in top Pentagon positions who share his frustration with the continued troop presence in the war zones. The expected plans would leave 2,500 troops in Afghanistan after mid-January. **AP**

Centre unhappy at laxity in SOP implementation

FROM PAGE 1

The Covid-19 number is likely to increase, said Bhushan as he noted that Delhi was testing very less in June at around 5,776 tests per day. Niti Aayog member Dr VK Paul, who was also present at the media briefing, said the Ministry is ensuring that 16 people are being traced for every positive case in Delhi. “We are attempting to increase the number of ICU beds in Delhi to over 6,000, against 3,500 right now. That will put us in a safe

zone,” he said adding that house to house surveys will also be conducted in containment zones.

“This will also be undertaken in other vulnerable areas. Total 7,000-8,000 teams will be put on this,” he added.

Increasing ICU beds to over 6,000, doubling coronavirus testing capacity to 1 to 1.2 lakh per day and augmenting homecare support as well as health care staff are among a slew of measures the Centre may implement in the national Capital in view of

sharp surge in cases.

A decision has also been taken to increase house-to-house surveillance of active cases in containment zones and other vulnerable pockets for which 7,000-8,000 teams will be put on this exercise, a hike from the existing 3,000 teams that are currently involved, said Bhushan on Tuesday. The Health Ministry also said that besides increased ICU beds, more RT-PCR testing and quarantine contacts are some of the efforts they are taking to

ensure the situation in Delhi is contained. Bhushan added, “Since the month of October, the number of cases is at a record high. Though fewer cases have been detected in the last 48 hours, but we cannot come to a conclusion now, right now.”

But the Health Ministry is preparing for a more serious situation in Delhi, should it arise, said the Ministry.

Paul said: “If cases go up, we will ramp up our capacity to monitor people in home isolation to 40,000 at any

given time. We have kept a plan along with the Delhi government ready.”

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday had constituted multi-disciplinary teams to visit all private hospitals in Delhi to check the status of compliance issued by the health ministry for testing and treating Covid-19 patients and also to contain the spread of the infections in the Capital. The teams will start their visit immediately and submit their report within two days.

CONG CLEARS AIR...

The conglomerate of regional and national political parties in Jammu & Kashmir was formed defending the restoration of the Article 370, scrapped last year.

“Congress and the Gupkar Gang want to take J&K back to the era of terror and turmoil. They want to take away rights of Dalits, women and tribals that we have ensured by removing Article 370. This is why they’re being rejected by the people everywhere,” he said. Shah said Jammu & Kashmir has been, is and will always remain an integral part of India and the people of the country will no longer tolerate an unholy ‘global gathbandhan’ against India’s national interest.

“Either the Gupkar Gang swims along with the national mood or else the people will sink it,” he said.

The Home Minister also questioned Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi whether they support the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD). “The Gupkar Gang also insults India’s Tricolour. Do Sonia Ji and Rahul Ji support such moves of the Gupkar Gang? They should make their stand crystal clear to the people of India,” he said.

Hours after Shah’s tweets, Surjewala in the statement in Hindi said, “Congress party is not a part of Gupkar alliance. Hitting out at the BJP Government at the Centre, the Congress leader said, “To spread lies, fraud and creating new illusions have become the way of the Modi Government. It’s a shame that Home Minister

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Amit Shah is keeping aside the responsibility of the national security and is making false, misleading and mischievous statements on Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Surjewala in the statement in Hindi said, “Congress party is not a part of Gupkar alliance or People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration.”

While asserting that the Congress is fighting the DDC elections in Jammu & Kashmir he said, “The Indian National Congress favours democratic elections in Jammu & Kashmir and for this purpose the Congress is contesting the District Development Council elections.... in a democratic manner.”

Welcoming Shah’s statements on the Gupkar alliance, BJP leader and Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told a Press conference that his remarks are appropriate as PDP’s Mehbooba Mufti had made it clear that she will not raise the national flag until the separate flag of Jammu & Kashmir is restored.

Prasad also claimed that NC leader Farooq Abdullah had once stated that he will seek China’s support for the restoration of special status of Jammu & Kashmir. On August 4 last year, a day before abrogation of Article 370 was announced, political parties in Kashmir, except the BJP, met at Abdullah’s residence on Gupkar Road in Srinagar. They had also issued a joint statement defending Article 370. The con-

stituents of the conglomerate besides the NC and the PDP also include the CPI(M), the Jammu and Kashmir People’s Conference and the Awami National Conference.

The Congress recently announced that it will have a seat-sharing arrangement with the PAGD for the forthcoming elections to District Development Councils in Jammu & Kashmir. Abdullah is the PAGD’s chairperson and PDP chief Mehbooba is vice-chairperson. Veteran CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami is the alliance’s convener while People’s Conference leader Sajjad Gani Lone is its spokesperson.

IT’S NOT A GANG...

Following in the footsteps of Omar, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also posted a series of tweets targeting BJP top brass. She wrote, the “BJP’s stale tactic of dividing India by projecting themselves as saviours and political opponents as internal and imagined enemies is far too predictable now.”

In a separate statement, the National Conference also rejected the allegations made by the Home Minister as a bout of frustration on account of PAGDs participation in the DDC elections.

Fueling the debate, Omar tweeted, “Only in J&K can leaders be detained & called anti-national for participating in elections & supporting the democratic process. The truth

is all those who oppose the ideology of the BJP are labelled ‘corrupt & anti-national’.

“I can understand the frustration behind this attack by the Hon’ble Home Minister. He had been briefed that the People’s Alliance was preparing to boycott elections. This would have allowed the BJP & newly formed King’s party a free run in J&K. We didn’t oblige them.”

On the other hand, Mehbooba Mufti also commented on her twitter handle by claiming, “Love jihad, tukde tukde and now Gupkar Gang dominates the political discourse instead of (issues) like rising unemployment and inflation,” she said.

The PDP chief also wondered whether fighting elections in an alliance is also anti-national now. “BJP can stitch as many alliances in its hunger for power but somehow we are undermining national interest by putting up a united front,” she said.

“Old habits die hard. Earlier BJP’s narrative was that the tukde tukde gang threatened India’s sovereignty and they are now using ‘Gupkar Gang’ euphemism to project us as anti-nationals. Irony died a million deaths since it’s BJP itself that violates the Constitution day in and day out,” she tweeted.

DELHI PLANS TO...

Kejriwal said, “The Central Government, Delhi Government, AIIMS, ICMR, DRDO and all the agencies are

working together to tackle the corona situation of the Capital. But we would not be able to combat the situation without the help of the citizens. It is very important for every citizen to follow the safety guidelines. I appeal to all the citizens of Delhi to always wear a mask and maintain social distancing.”

On Monday, Health Minister Satyendar Jain had said there was no chance of re-imposition of lockdown in the national Capital since the third wave of the coronavirus has peaked out in the city.

Jain had also said the virus cannot be contained through lockdown and that people should protect themselves by wearing face masks. Delhi has witnessed a spurt in coronavirus cases since October 28 when the daily rise breached the 5,000-mark for the first time and it crossed the 8,000-mark on Wednesday.

On Thursday, 104 coronavirus-related deaths, the highest in over five months, were recorded in the city. On Monday, Delhi recorded 3,797 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally in the national Capital to over 4.89 lakh, even as 99 new fatalities pushed the toll to 7,713. These relatively low numbers of fresh cases came out of the 29,871 tests conducted on Sunday.

RAIN, WIND HELP...

It also said effective stubble fire counts with sufficient potential estimated from SAFAR-multi-satellite prod-

ucts are significantly reduced to around 98.

“Boundary layer wind direction is North-westerly. However, since the fire-related emissions have significantly reduced, a significant impact is not expected. Stubble burning share in PM2.5 in Delhi’s air is almost negligible and estimated at a marginal three per cent for today,” SAFAR said. It, however, said the significant AQI improvement will be short-lived.

LAKSHMI VILAS...

The amount disbursed during the emergency situation shall not exceed the sum of ₹5 lakh or the actual balance lying to the credit of the account of such depositor, whichever is less, the notification said.

Also, if a depositor maintains more than one account in the same capacity and in the same right, the total amount payable from all the accounts together cannot exceed ₹25,000.

RBI said the financial position of LVB has undergone a steady decline, with the bank incurring continuous losses over the last three years, eroding its net worth.

In the absence of any viable strategic plan, declining advances and mounting non-performing assets (NPAs), the losses are expected to continue, it said, adding the bank has not been able to raise adequate capital to address issues around its negative net-worth and continuing losses. Further, it is

experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and low levels of liquidity. It has also experienced serious governance issues in recent times.

The bank was placed under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework in September 2019 amid soaring NPAs. Shareholders of LVB had in September ousted seven directors, including its MD and CEO, and auditors at the bank’s AGM. The truncated board sought to assuage investors stating that the bank’s liquidity situation was comfortable and assured the depositors that their monies were safe. The bank’s troubles started after it shifted its focus to lend to large businesses from SMEs. Its loans of nearly Rs 720 crore to the investment arms of Malvinder Singh and Shivinder Singh, former promoters of pharma major Ranbaxy and Fortis Healthcare, against fixed deposits (FDs) of Rs 794 crore made with the bank in late 2016 and early 2017, also turned the bank turtle.

LVB had sought the RBI’s nod to amalgamate itself with Indiabulls Housing Finance and Indiabulls Commercial Credit in May 2019 to meet its capital requirements. However, the deal could not get regulatory approval because of the RBI’s aversion to let realty-focused entities into commercial banking. On June 15, 2020, the bank had signed a preliminary, non-binding letter of intent with Clix Group for a possible merger. LVB posted a

net loss of Rs 836.04 crore in the year to March 2020. The bank had recorded a net loss of Rs 396.99 crore during the second quarter ended September of this fiscal, up from Rs 357.17 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Net NPAs or bad loans stood at 7.01 per cent of the net loans at end of September 2020, as against 10.24 per cent as on March 31, 2020 and 10.47 per cent by September 2019.

Started by a group of seven progressive businessmen of Karur under the leadership of VSN Ramalinga Chettiar in 1926, the bank had expanded with 566 branches and 918 ATMs in 19 states and 1 union territory. DBIL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore (DBS), which in turn is a subsidiary of Asia’s leading financial services group DBS Group Holdings Limited and has the advantage of a strong parentage. “DBIL has a healthy balance sheet, with strong capital support. As on June 30, 2020, its total Regulatory Capital was Rs 7,109 crore (against Capital of Rs 7,023 crore as on March 31, 2020),” RBI said in a separate statement. “The RBI invites suggestions and objections, if any, from members, depositors and other creditors of transferor bank (LVB) and transferee bank (DBIL), on the draft scheme, which may be sent to the address mentioned in the Notice,” it added. The suggestions and objections will be received by the central bank till November 20, 2020. The RBI will take a final view thereafter, it said.

SKILLFULLY YOURS

Compounding social-emotional learning skills with academic development forms a high-quality learning experience and surrounding which empowers students to be more effective contributors in their classrooms, says RAJESH KUMAR SINGH



Social and emotional abilities are considered as a relevant index to reckon how well an individual can align to his or her surroundings, adjust to modifications and, eventually, how successful she or he will be in life. Most children have school as their place where deficiencies in their abilities can be addressed before they take up the role of being active zone members of the society. As a matter of fact, core development characteristics such as conscience, emotional stability, sociability and agreement can be as or more vital than cognitive intelligence in deciding future employment. In accordance to the competencies with regard to the life outcomes it can be difficult for educators to work out efficacious methods to structure, teach and assess the social emotional skills.

Compounding these skills with academic development forms a high-quality learning experience and surrounding which further empowers students to be more effective contributors in their classrooms today and among their peers and professional life

tomorrow.

Teachers and administrators at schools now have a high emphasis for social emotional learning skills. The educating faculty is specifically eager to render expert, training and support necessary for efficaciously implementing this new programme, to provide the students with holistic development. The new curriculum will promise improved students social behavior, learning and development. Given the recent assistance that Social Emotional Learning has received in the education community, it may just be a matter of time before it turns out to be a general teaching practice, widely adopted.

Developing an emphasis on this programme in schools will be grounds to an effective and supportive area for students to openly share their creative ideas, ask out questions without any shame and learn academic concepts while structuring lifelong abilities. The general uplifting of social emotional learning will require a step by step alteration in pedagogy. In the due process, the system can shape out a

An open mind with an active sense of self awareness, aids the students to develop their emotions, acknowledge their strengths along with a frame of mind working towards creativity

holistic education system to bring up socially responsible citizens, who are highly equipped to work in a group and create a better world. How social-emotional learning

Skills aids students in their holistic development:

Self-awareness: An open mind with an active sense of self awareness, aids the students to develop their emotions, acknowledge their strengths along with a frame of mind working towards creativity. Therefore an individual can assess one's limitations and positives.

Self-management: Today managing yourself is vital. All students must have the general cognition for managing their personal traits like emotions, life goals, manage stress and control impulses.

Social awareness: It is critical at times to view things from other people's perspective, displaying empathy, and appreciating diversity of culture.

Relationship skills: All students need to have active skills for communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. This aids students to constitute a healthy and pleasing relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms.

Responsible decision-making: It provides the students with the

learning of how to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations and settings.

Although the vast majority of education department will agree that Social Emotional Learning is important, but it has for long remained on the sidelines. In the past educationists have focused on academics, as opposed to the development of the whole child.

All schools currently are mostly multicultural and multilingual with students belonging to diverse social and economic backgrounds. Educators and community agencies need to render students with contrasting motivation for engaging in learning, behaving positively, and performing academically. Social and emotional learning will work as a ground or a foundation for safe and positive learning, eventually deepening the students' noesis to succeed in school, professionally, and in general life.

The writer is Educationist and Chairman of Kurwar Educational Foundation

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If we want to survive this economic collapse, new mandatory school subjects should be eCommerce, Chinese, spirituality and aesthetics.
— Robin Sacredfire

New high for VIT

The Engineering and Technology subject areas (General engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering) of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) are ranked among the top eight Universities in India and among the Top 501-600 universities in the world in the recently released World University Rankings by Subject 2021 by the Times Higher Education (THE), UK.

The Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) Computer Science is ranked one among the top four Universities in India in the THE World University Ranking by Subject 2021.

VIT Computer Science has been ranked in the band

of 301-400 universities of the world in the ranking.

The weightings for subject rankings (in Computer Science and Engineering and Technology) are teaching (learning environment)-30%, research (volume, income and reputation) — 30%, citations (research influence) — 27.5%, International outlook (staff, students and research) — 7.5% per cent and industry income (innovation) — 5%.

The Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking uses 13 calibrated performance indicators to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons, and all data are independently audited by professional services firm. THE World University Rankings, an international ranking agency lists the top universities globally.

Memorial quiz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Sweden India Nobel Memorial Quiz (SINMQ), one of India's most prestigious and eagerly awaited quiz contests for college students organised by the Embassy of Sweden in New Delhi along with the Consulate General of Sweden in Mumbai, is back in an all-new, digital avatar designed for the new normal.

Registrations for participation are open on www.swedenindia.com for the quiz which goes live on November 20, 2020. semi-finals and finals of the SINMQ will be held on December 7 and December 9, respectively.

The first prize winner will take home a prize of 100 000 INR!

In 2020, when most educational institutions are closed due to COVID and students are studying from home, the competition is between individuals as against the norm of three-member college team since 2008.

Over and above the winner, top 100 students will also win exciting prizes, including exclusive merchandise. Certificates will also be provided to the finalists.

The quiz is powered by Quizworks and curated by quiz-master Raj Dam, and will test the students' knowledge on Alfred Nobel, the Nobel Prize and Nobel Laureates. There would also be general questions around Swedish Innovations, industries, history, society and culture.

The SINMQ is conducted since 2008 as a part of the Sweden India Nobel Memorial Week, which is in 13th year.

More than just a placement hub

MBA is not just meant for giving industry training to learners but it is also about equipping students with the knowledge that is necessary for taking the sector beyond, by presenting innovative solutions to the perennial problems, says DR RAMAKRISHNAN RAMAN

Ranking agencies rank B-schools based on several parameters, but students who aspire to pursue an MBA still look at placement opportunities provided by the B-school as one of the most important parameters while they decide to select a B-school — to pursue their Master of Business Administration (MBA). This being the case, should B-schools become placement hubs and focus and trumpet about placement statistics? Should B-School focus on churning out people who are 'just coolies' of the corporate world? Shouldn't the B-School shape the mindset of students to become *Atma Nirbhar* or entrepreneurs? These are some questions that must be pondered.

Indian B-schools must think out of the box to be able to face the Industry 4.0 revolution. Being employable is an inherent requirement of an MBA graduate. The selection process, the pedagogy and syllabi must ensure students are industry-ready and also learn the way industry works. But in doing so, blindly joining the rat race model will be detrimental for B-schools. MBA is not just meant for giving industry training to learners but it is also about equipping students with the knowledge that is necessary for



taking the industry beyond, by presenting innovative solutions to the perennial problems.

B-schools must ensure that the MBA programme helps students to continuously learn and apply the learning for bringing a change in the organisation, in society, and the nation at large. In order to achieve this, B-schools must focus on imparting knowledge related to innovation and skills that can help them take the entrepreneurial journey. Structured courses on design thinking and problem solving must become mandatory subjects in the MBA curriculum. In short, the MBA curriculum must

not only focus on creating coolies for the corporate world but also give exposure to the emerging aspects of the management discipline and must kindle the fire in the graduates to be job creators and not job seekers.

B-schools have a humongous task in making the aspirants realise that the MBA programme is for making them hone their leadership abilities, learn team building skills, learn negotiation skills, learn the art and science of problem solving and critical thinking, and several other skills and knowledge needed to lead the industry. Hence, they must understand that B-schools must not be looked as a power house

for placement. There is a need to change the mindset of students and make them understand this aspect and it's a tall order claim.

They must ensure that the desire to become entrepreneurs is seeded into the minds of students. The opportunities that are available for an entrepreneur, the lucrative career along with the chance to create a bright financial stability, must be shared and showcased to them. B Schools must focus on launching programs which focus on Innovation & Entrepreneurship and must also make it clear that no placement is given to the students at the end of the programme.

Students who join such programmes must be encouraged to kick-start their start-up and must be given all the support needed to do so. The programme must have subjects like design thinking, problem solving, global mega trends, etc along with management disciplines like financial management, organisational behaviour, marketing management and others.

The writer is Director — Symbiosis Institute of Business Management — Pune & Dean — Faculty of Management — Symbiosis International (Deemed University).

For a bright career

The LED design sector has both job and self-employment opportunities. There are many electronic companies which offer placement in this field, says NK MOHAPATRA

LED lighting plays a pivotal role in uplifting the look of your home or workspace. Whether it's about giving a modern look to the interior design or contemporary look to the exterior design, lighting has become a significant component when you think of decorating your house, shop or office. Novelty in the LED lighting industry are emerging every day to meet the contemporary decorating needs of the masses.

Now who is behind the concept of designing smart lighting systems that complements your space? They are LED light designers who have the perfect knowledge to design decorative LED lights and give a sophisticated look to any defined space. As the LED lighting industry is changing rapidly, new career opportunities are coming up for students who are keen to make a career in this emerging field. Generally, courses related to LED lighting are not included in any college curriculum. However, there are some institutes offering short-term courses related to this. But, after doing this course, you can start a career as an LED engineer or designer in LED



manufacturing and designing companies.

Those who want to learn the lighting design essentials can undergo two to three months of certification course. Given the skill gap and the need of the lighting industry, Electronics Sector Skills Council of India formed under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and National Skill Development Corporation offers a short-term course in this field via its different training partners. The candidate should have BTech or BE or Diploma in Electrical, Electronics, Optical or Mechanical Engineering for doing such short-term courses.

Career Opportunities: This sector has both job and self-employment opportunities. There are many renowned electronic companies in the country, where one can easily get job in this field. In the field of LED lighting, skilled freshers can get jobs on a package of ₹2.5 lakhs per annum. Further, your salary depends upon the company's policy and your performance.

Entrepreneurship opportunities: In addition to jobs in the field of LED lighting, there are also good opportunities for entrepreneurship. After engineering most of the youth are coming into this field and starting their business in LED lighting. Due to the Self-Reliant India campaign and the Startup India campaign of the Government of India, youth are getting attracted towards it in every state of the country. Youth can also avail startup business loans from the bank to start their business. Low-cost traders can start the business of making lamp components. For starting a new business, at least required ₹4 to ₹5 lakhs initially.

The writer is CEO — Electronics Sector Skills Council of India

Pratham Test Prep students shine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anushka Chaturvedi, a student of Pratham Test Prep, scored an All India Rank 3 in the recently declared results of the Delhi University's Joint Admission test (DU-JAT). Around 18,000 students from all over the country in pursuit of admission to undergraduate management programmes at DU had appeared for the computer-based admission test.

Out of the total students appearing for the test, Anushka will get admission to the prestigious institution Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies (Delhi University) under BMS. This test being the only medium to get admission to top colleges in DU for management programmes,

makes it one of its kind special.

"The level of the exam this year was moderate to difficult. Harmandeep Singh Sahni, who secured the rank 1 under the PwD category, is also eligible for admission to Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies. As expected, history repeated itself, when four out of the top 10 ranks were obtained by our students. The other bright minds who secured the rankings among the top 10 list include Sarthak Bindal (AIR 4) and Anirudh Gupta (AIR 7). Manan Jain who secured AIR 11 is among the total 60 out of the top 100 students in the DU-JAT entrance exam who have made us proud with their diligent efforts," said Ankit Kapoor, Managing Director, Pratham Test Prep.

Stories to help children adapt to new normal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After restricted outings for more than nine months, along with the adults, kids are also moving towards a new normal, adapting to the new routine, new ways of studying, socialising, playing, and keeping themselves occupied. In an attempt to make the transformations fun and easy, the Children's Books division of Navneet Education Limited has launched two new books, titled, *Till We Hug Again* and *Mylo Discovers The Real Superheroes*, under the *Mylo The Mongoose* series.

Commenting on the launch of the new books, Shailendra Gala, Managing Director, Navneet Education, said, "We at Navneet have undertaken various projects to ease the transition to the new normal. Addition of new books to the Mylo series is one of the several efforts to help children accept the sudden changes in their lives. It is known that picture books help children learn faster and we used the same technique to teach them the norms of new normal."

Commenting on the launch of the new books, Priyeta Gosalia, Publication Head, Children's books,

Navneet Education, said, "Navneet is known for providing top-notch, engaging, content for children. We have received an exceptionally good response for our other books in the series. With the current scenario, where the lockdown is affecting everyone, we believe it is also our responsibility to help children deal with the difficult situation better, with curated content. We hope to receive a similar, heart-warming response, on our new books."

Mylo Series are picture story-books about social-emotional issues that can help kids think deeply about feelings and social issues.

Top honours for Amrita

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four scientists of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham have been featured in the ranking of top 2 per cent scientists in the world in their respective fields published by Stanford University of the US. Dr Maneesha Ramesh, Dr Shanti Nair, Dr R Jayakumar and Dr. Madhav Dutta figure in the ranking in recognition of the quality of their research.

Dr Maneesha Ramesh, from Amrita Center for Wireless Networks &

Applications, Amrita School of Engineering (Amritapuri Campus), has been recognised as among the world's top scientists in the field of networking, telecommunications, artificial intelligence and image processing.

Dr Shanti Nair and Dr R Jayakumar, both from the Center for Nanosciences & Molecular Medicine, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences (Kochi campus), figure in the Stanford list for their work in the areas of polymers, nanoscience and nanotechnology.

The silver lining of the present pandemic is that it has given immense opportunities for the banking, financial services and insurance sector to bring about a change in the way that it functions today, says ANKIT SHYAMSUKHA



FUEL YOUR PROGRESS

Post the great recession in 2018, the Indian banking industry witnessed unprecedented growth until about a couple of months before the COVID-19 outbreak. As the entire economy has come to a halt, an intimidating slowdown has now been making the entire scenario worse. However, the silver lining of this crisis is that the unprecedented times have given the immense opportunity for the Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector to bring about a fundamental change in the way that it functions.

The time is just apt for players in the BFSI space to reinvent themselves and test newer business models that are more digitally-driven. By leveraging advanced technologies and digitising their existing set of offerings, they can alter their age-old processes with newer, more optimised workflows.

Considered a pivotal sector that can further accelerate the growth of the country, the manpower requirement in the BFSI industry has also risen to fuel that progress.

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has reported that the projected human resource requirement between 2008 and 2022 is estimated to reach over 4.2 million. Now, let us explore the various aspects of the BFSI industry, its career prospects, and the kind of skills required to fulfill the skill requirements for job roles within.

INSURANCE OFFICER

An Insurance Agent develops relationships with potential customers to sell them insurance. Insurance Agents describe and explain different types of insurance and coverages to customers, offering recommendations on which policy to choose. Insurance Agents may work in different areas including auto, home, life, or health insurance coverage.

PERSONAL BANKER

Personal bankers work in retail banking branches and assist customers with various banking or financial needs. Such needs may include opening checking and savings accounts, obtaining mort-

The time is just apt for players in the BFSI space to reinvent themselves and test newer business models that are more digitally-driven

gage and auto loans, and investing in banking products-certificates of deposit (CDs), money markets, and other commercial banking products. They may also help the customer with retirement planning. While investment bankers work mostly with institutional investors, personal bankers work primarily with everyday people.

FINANCE ANALYST

Not just in terms of technology, we are moving to a world where financial services are advancing at the speed of light. Here, the demand for a financial analyst will grow further, setting to be one of the most highly demanded jobs in the financial industry. The job entails researching macroeconomic and micro-economic scenarios, gathering financial information along with company fundamentals, to graft dynamic growth plans. Here, dexterity over the economic variances of the world and analytical insights are required.

STOCKBROKERS

They are registered specialists

associated with brokerage firms or are independent brokers. Independent brokers are responsible for buying and selling stocks and other similar securities for retail as well as institutional patrons. The job is usually carried out in exchange for a set fee or commission.

REMUNERATION

The salary package for freshers in the industry is expected to have ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 per month. A seasoned professional can also earn lots of incentives, like a seven-30 per cent share in sales depending on the level of a task accomplished.

SKILLS REQUIRED

The most required specific skills are proficiency in sales, stock market knowledge, mathematical aptitude, mutual fund awareness, and knowledge about banking operations. Other soft skills like good communication skills and confidence also add value to your curriculum vitae.

The writer is CEO, ICA Edu Skills

‘It’s time for teachers to upskill themselves’

Broadening teachers’ skills is not just about assisting them with change; it is also about continually updating their professional knowledge about teaching practices, says RISHABH KHANNA

The traditional teacher training programmes and course work have failed to prepare teachers for the 21st century. Left with no choice, our teachers are dependent on on-the-job learning. The absence of skills or gap between education and demands of a teacher’s job profile continues to be a big obstacle facing a teacher’s career. This is the major reason why teaching has become the last career choice. From being inaccessible to inadequate and outdated, teacher education continues to be a popular topic of debate among academicians and curriculum experts.

If teachers want to get high paying jobs, explore career opportunities and get international qualifications and certifications, upgrading their skills is the key.

The changes in the demand for skills from students continues to have profound implications for the competencies which teachers need to acquire to effectively teach these skills to their students. We are not living in an era when teaching a fixed syllabus of content was at the centre of education. Today, the jobs are changing and so are the expectations from teachers. Teachers are expected to follow differentiated pedagogical practices. Unlike the curriculum cantered education approach, today, focus is on learner.

We can say that the kind of education needed and taught today requires teachers to constantly advance their professional knowledge and skills. Teachers need to stay updated with the advancements in different fields, skills in demand, future of work and potential careers for students. They are required to be agents of innovation because innovation is critically important for generating new sources of growth through improved productivity and efficiency.

In order to be most effective, learning environments should ensure that learning is social and often collaborative; be highly attuned to students’ motivations; make learning central and encourage engagement; be acutely sensitive to individual differences, and promote connections across activities and subjects, both in and out



Rishabh Khanna
Cognitive scientist & founder of Suraasa

of school. A 21st Century teaching professional is expected to have passion, strive to improve, be ethical, value professionalism, aim for high standards, have enquiring nature, a quest for learning and be adaptive and resilient. They need to have people management skills, facilitative skills, technological skills, pedagogical skills, reflective skill and thinking dispositions, communication skills, innovation skills and social and emotional intelligence.

Online learning was already on the rise even if we don’t take the pandemic effect into account and it is expected to popularise more among learners. The pandemic has triggered the behavioural change. Upskilling the teachers is of utmost importance to guide them on best practices when it comes to online teaching methods.

The issue of upskilling teachers is both complex and multi-dimensional. A central foundation for improving teaching is a deep understanding of advancements in learning and its prospects. How children learn has transformed greatly over the past years, however, it has not had a profound impact on teacher practice as majority of teachers continue to interpret new ideas through established beliefs.

In an increasingly connected world, world class organisations are looking for a new breed of professionals with a Global Mindset. The 21st Century leadership requires managers who can see things differently and make the right decisions in a global context.

To operate effectively internationally requires new set of competencies including global intelligence and intercultural competence. Together these two competencies prepare managers with the ability to appreciate the differences and similarities between cultures and what these mean for business globally.

Gone are the days when a successful leader or manager could do well in his/her

career with good analytical and communication skills. In the globalized world of today, though communication and analytical skills are important there is much more critical intelligence that is essential for thriving.

A recent report from the World Economic Forum identifies the following as required in a post-Covid era. These include Contextual Intelligence, Ethical and Moral Intelligence, Emotional and Social Intelligence, Digital Intelligence, Generative/Innovative Intelligence and Transformative Intelligence.

Each of these need to be enhanced, through a continuous exposure to what is happening around the globe.

MIND IT

Managers and leaders need to be constantly be aware of things that happen around the world in the backdrop of these critical competencies. This would help them to prioritize and take relevant decisions. They also need to be aware of cultural subtleties and nuances to successfully do business in a global context.

A recent research by Harvard University identified Global Intelligence as a key leadership skill for the 21st century manager. This has been validated by another study conducted at the Cornell

University, where three groups of individuals were given the famous Duncker candle problem. One group was people who had a single country experience and exposure, the second group had a two-country exposure and the third group was exposed to multi-country experiences.

The results were astounding, the ones who had the multi-country exposure had a much greater percentage of success in solving the cognitive problem in comparison to the other two groups. Corporations across the world are

looking for multi-talented, multi-faceted individuals who bring diverse competencies as above to solve challenging problems in a VUCA world, represented by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. These competencies along with global awareness have become the need of the hour and future oriented business schools conscientiously embed international experiences as part of the curriculum.

This is not just about visiting different places. It goes much beyond towards an immersive experience which encompasses dimensions of politics, economics, business and culture of these different countries. Participants going through such

an experience are aware and more open to global challenges and gradually evolve into globally forward professionals.

Fast forward into their careers, when they are exposed to perplexing global challenges, the unique experiences in diverse global environments, enhances their cognitive skills and helps them to connect the dots from divergent perspectives.

This unique ability to see problems from a global bird’s eye view can be a game changer for the successful manager of the future.

The writer is Professor Christopher Abraham, CEO & Head, Dubai Campus, S P Jain school of Global Management



The University of Sheffield is offering two international LLM scholarships worth £4,000 towards tuition fees for two outstanding students.

Eligibility: You must be an overseas student for fee purposes; have an academic offer from us to study the full-time LLM (includes Sheffield LLM, LLM Corporate and Commercial Law and LLM International Law and Global Justice pathways); have an application number

Scholarship applications will be considered together with your application for admission.

Successful applicants will be notified before the end of July 2021.

How to apply: You must complete the International LLM Scholarship application form, including a 2,000 word essay. Essay topic ‘Law alone cannot address all social problems’. Discuss.

Application deadline: The last date to apply is June 11, 2021.

The University of Saskatchewan invites applications for International Baccalaureate (IB) Excellence Awards for the academic session 2021/2022. **Award:** To provide an

award amount of \$20,000 to all selected students.

Eligibility: Undergraduate degree in all the subjects offered by the university. Applicant must meet the following criteria: International students (non-Canadian citizens paying differential tuition) completing a full IB diploma entering any direct-entry college at the U of S will be considered for an IB Excellence Award.

Recipients are eligible to receive the International Baccalaureate Excellence Awards in addition to a Guaranteed Entrance Scholarship. Indian students can apply.

Students must also submit the necessary supporting documents such as: Academic transcript; Copy of passport

Admission requirements: For taking admission, candidates must check all the entry requirements of the university.

English language requirements: If English is not your first language, then you will need to show that your English language skills are at a high enough level to succeed in your studies.

How to Apply: By applying online for undergraduate admission, students will be eligible for consideration.

Application deadline: The last date to apply is February 15, 2021.

VIDEO MAKING/EDITING AT FAST BRIDGE: INNOVATION CONSULTING

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹25,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098271
Deadline: November 26, 2020

ONLINE TEACHING (PYTHON) AT TEKIE

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹12,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098274
Deadline: November 26, 2020

CONTENT WRITING AT EDUCATION10X

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098270
Deadline: November 26, 2020

FINANCIAL ANALYST AT FINLENDER

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹6,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098278
Application deadline: November 26, 2020

HR AT PAISSO

Location: Panchkula, Chandigarh, Mohali
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098280
Application deadline: November 25, 2020

OPERATIONS AT SHIKSHA EVAM KALYAN SAMITI

Location: Ranchi, Sahebganj
Stipend: ₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098281
Application deadline: November 25, 2020

DIGITAL MARKETING AT AFFINITY WEB MEDIA

Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6098282
Application deadline: November 22, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

‘Students resilient in face of COVID-19 disruptions’

A survey finds that students are eager to return to the way things were prior to the present gobal pandemic

In a survey conducted by the IC3 Institute, 83 per cent of Indian and Nepalese high school students surveyed reported that they remain optimistic about the future despite the current challenges being faced by the post-secondary education system as well as industries due to COVID-19.

The survey focused on 2,252 high school students from India and Nepal, with 80 per cent of the population surveyed comprising of Indian students. The survey asked key questions about the impact of COVID-19 on students’ current and future plans; the decisions students are making about their higher education options; how prepared they feel for the future world of work; and whether schools are enabling students to develop key 21st-century skills.

Despite current geo-political conflicts as well as perceptions of a less-welcoming stance towards international students, the US still remains a top choice for students as a desti-

nation for higher education, with two-thirds of all students selecting it as a top destination (75 per cent), followed by the U.K. (67 per cent), Canada (64 per cent), Australia (41 per cent), and Singapore (32 per cent).

As students prepare for the world of work, the survey finds that while parents continue to play a role in decision-making, media is also a key influencer. In addition, students are more motivated by their passion for and interest in a career and their sense of fulfillment rather than by salary alone.

Dr. Rajika Bhandari, president-CEO of the IC3 Institute, said: “At a time when India has just released its first new National Education Policy in 34 years that emphasises the school-to-work transition and the importance of aligning academics with career and vocational training, the findings offer a window into whether the large number of Indian and Nepalese youth are prepared for their educational and professional futures, especially when both college and careers have been disrupted by COVID-19.”



IN BRIEF

RESKILL TO STAY RELEVANT, SAYS WEF REPORT

By 2030, half of South Asian youth will not be able to find jobs due to lack of skills as per a report by UNICEF. An estimated 54 per cent of South Asian youth leave school without the necessary skills to get a decent job in the next decade. Recently, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published the Future of Jobs Report 2020 and some shocking statistics were revealed. In the next five years, automation and a new division of labour between machines and humans will disrupt 85 million jobs around the world.

Working remotely is here to stay for

the foreseeable future and workers will be expected to change careers and pick up new skills consistently to adapt to new labour trends. In fact, 94% of business leaders report that they expect employees to pick up new skills on the job. The report also states that an estimate of 97 million jobs may emerge from these new labour trends, roles like data analysts, process automation specialists, IoT specialists, robotics engineers, strategic advisors will emerge while roles like relationship managers, door to door sales, accounting and bookkeeping will be obsolete.

LAUNCH OF HIGH-SPEED LONG-RANGE ETRANCE NEO

The IIT Hyderabad-incubated start-up PURE EV is going to launch Etrance Neo, its high-speed long-range model, on December 1, 2020. The new model offers a higher pickup and longer range combined with modern aerodynamics.

The Etrance Neo offers

a pick-up speed of 0 to 40 kmph in five seconds. Its 2,500 Wh-patented battery offers the vehicle a range performance of 120 KM for a single charge in eco-mode. The scooter chassis is designed for higher speeds at par with the conventional ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) two-wheelers.

Highlighting the unique features of Etrance Neo, Rohit Vadera, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, PUREV start-up, said: “The new model has better aerodynamic features for additional improvements in powertrain efficiency. The vehicle has faster pickup and longer range.”

SRM MCHRC AT THE FOREFRONT OF COVID BATTLE

The facemask is a life mask, says Pro Vice Chancellor (Medical) Lt Col Dr A Ravi Kumar of SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCHRC), Kattankulathur. Speaking to press personnel at a meet organised at SRM MCHRC, he emphasised on the importance of staying and following safety measures in order to prevent the second wave of COVID 19.

SRM MCHRC is now in the process of conducting the third phase of the COVAXIN shot which will be administered to nearly

1500 volunteers. The first phase human trials at SRM MCHRC began in July with 30 volunteers.

Present for the press meet were SRM MCHRC’s Pro VC (Medical) Lt. Col. Dr A Ravi Kumar, Dean (Medical) Dr A Sundaram, Medical Superintendent Dr K. Thangaraj, Dr R Balamurugan, Deputy Medical Superintendent and Director (Communication) R Nandakummar.

“The third phase will see the efficiency of the vaccine. The result will be known only by February,” the Pro VC tells you.

Earned right to be in Test squad: Pucovski



Australian batsman Will Pucovski celebrates after scoring double hundred for his state team Victoria during Sheffield Shield. CA/Twitter

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Fast-rising Australian batsman Will Pucovski feels he has "earned the right" to be in the red-ball squad for the series against India and is better prepared to make his Test debut compared to a couple of seasons ago.

Pucovski, who was named in a 17-member extended Australian

Test squad for the four-match series against India, is coming off back-to-back double hundreds in the Sheffield Shield.

Despite missing the opening two rounds of the competition, he has scored 495 runs so far this season in three innings and is currently the tournament's highest run-scorer.

"This time it feels like I've earned the right to be here, and

I'm pretty pumped to take the challenge on of playing India if I do get the chance," Pucovski said on *SEN Radio*.

The 22-year-old was first named in the Test squad for the 2019 Sri Lanka series but stepped away from the game, citing mental health concerns.

It is the first time since then that Pucovski has earned a Test squad call-up.

Paine, Labuschagne, others airlifted to NSW

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Cricket Australia on Tuesday airlifted players, including Test skipper Tim Paine and star batsman Marnus Labuschagne, to New South Wales from Adelaide in an attempt to save the series against India as a coronavirus outbreak in South Australia threatened the upcoming summer.

As Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania closed their borders to South Australia on Monday, the country's cricket board brought players from Australia's white-ball, Test match and Australia A squads into Sydney from

Adelaide to ensure that the upcoming fixtures of the 300 million dollars season remain unaffected.

"CA has taken a proactive approach and mobilised a number of people across the country over the past 24 hours to shore up our men's domestic and international schedules," CA's interim chief executive Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"I would like to thank the players and staff for their understanding regarding the changes to their travel schedules and for their commitment to ensuring the summer of cricket is a huge success."

Besides Paine and

Labuschagne, the list of players relocated include their colleagues Matthew Wade, Travis Head and Cameron Green among others.

Despite the spike in Covid cases and developments related to it, CA maintained that the Adelaide Oval will host the first Test of the summer against India from December 17.

Hockley added, "CA will continue to monitor the situation in South Australia and the resulting border restrictions around the country."

"As ever, we will remain agile in addressing the challenges presented by the pandemic and remain more confident than ever of hosting a safe and successful summer across all formats."

"I feel like I'm in a much better place to take the opportunity if it presents itself now, than I may have been a couple of years ago."

"I was 20 a couple of years ago and I'm 22 now. I've played 15 or 20 more first-class games, and I've put a stack of work in off-field to make sure my life and my cricket is in a really good place," he added.

Very few young Australian cricketers have generated the

kind of buzz that Pucovski has managed. His sensational form in the Sheffield Shield has led several Australian greats to call for his selection in the team.

Talking about what has changed since the last call up, Pucovski said: "Probably the difference in feeling is you're excited, but you're ready to do a job this time."

"Whereas last time, not that I wasn't ready, but I was probably

just so excited to get picked for Australia that I didn't think too much about the job at hand," he added.

Pucovski's inclusion has set up a competition with fellow opener Joe Burns, who is feeling the heat after a disastrous start to the first-class summer.

But head coach Justin Langer and skipper Tim Paine both have hinted at persisting with the experienced Burns.

Williamson, Boult rested for WI T20s

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson and pace spearhead Trent Boult will miss the upcoming T20 series against the West Indies to concentrate on Test matches, selectors said on Tuesday.

However, the Black Caps have added an exciting element to the 13-man T20 squad in the form of South African-born debutant Devon Conway, the stand-out domestic batsman in recent seasons.

Coach Gary Stead said Williamson and Boult were sitting out the three T20s — beginning in Auckland in November 27 — to keep them fresh for the two Tests against the West Indies in December.

"We've had to make a decision on Kane and Trent to prioritise the Test matches, given how important they are to our red-ball team and the fact they both played such big

roles in the recent IPL while also managing injuries," he said.

Stead said the New Zealanders focused on the five-day format because they were a realistic prospect of making the World Test Championship final after posting an upset 2-0 series win over India earlier this year.

He was looking forward to seeing Conway on the international stage, predicting the 29-year-old would "soak up" the experience.

The left-hander, who became eligible to play for New Zealand in August, replaces fellow power hitter Colin Munro, who is playing in Australia's Big Bash League.

Fast bowler Kyle Jamieson is the only other new cap in the T20 squad, while the Test side is the same one that faced India in February.

Virat and Co undergo Test match simulation during training

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The limited-overs competition awaits them first but Indian players, led by captain Virat Kohli, seemed focussed on next month's Tests against Australia as they practised in simulated long-format match conditions complete with pacers using red and pink balls here on Tuesday.

All the top batsmen and bowlers, who are in all the three squads, were seen taking part in the practice session.

The likes of senior pacer Mohammed Shami and youngster Mohammad Siraj were seen bowling to Kohli in a video posted on Twitter by the captain himself.

"Love Test cricket sessions," the tweet from Kohli read.

The star batsman will feature in just the opening day-night Test, starting December 17 in Adelaide, before flying back to India for the birth of his first child.

The video showed the players using the centre strip of the ground with proper Test match field and a batsman at the non-striker's end, which is a deviation



from traditional net sessions.

Given that the players were kept busy by the IPL for the last two months, the white-ball training has taken a back-seat.

Opener KL Rahul facing the pink ball was an indicator that he is in line to be picked for the first Test.

In another video, posted by the BCCI, Shami was seen bowling in tandem with youngster Siraj.

The 30-year-old Shami, who took 20 wickets from 14 matches for Kings XI Punjab in the IPL, is a part of all the three squads.

India will rely heavily on him

during the four-match Test series starting with the day-night pink ball game in Adelaide.

Siraj, who is only in the Test squad, followed his senior teammate and was seen sending down a few deliveries as other senior players watched him bowl.

The 26-year-old, who has played one ODI and three T20s, took 11 wickets from nine matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the recent IPL.

"The master and his apprentice. When @MdShami11 and Siraj bowled in tandem at #TeamIndia's nets. Fast and accurate!" the BCCI tweet read.

On Monday, the star studded batting line-up was seen gearing up for the lively Australian pitches with the traditional tennis ball training after competing on the slow UAE tracks during the IPL.

Carey hoping to reclaim T20 spot against India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Wicketkeeper-batsman Alex Carey on Tuesday said he is hoping to regain his place in the Australian T20 side for the series against India after having worked on "little technical" aspects of his game under Ricky Ponting during the recent IPL.

Carey had the opportunity to work with Ponting in the UAE during his time with Delhi Capitals.

"...My first opportunity to be part of IPL and to have Ricky as head coach of Delhi and a few other familiar faces in the squad made it a really enjoyable couple of months," Carey told reporters during a video conference.

"I was lucky enough to work with him through the World Cup last year and formed a good relationship. He was an amazing player, and is an amazing coach, and he picks up on little things really quickly," he added while talking about his maiden IPL experience.

The 29-year-old was dropped from Australia's T20 side before the final match of a series against England in September due to poor form. In the IPL, he played just three matches, scoring 32 runs.

Australia and India will lock horns in three T20s starting December 4 after a three-match ODI series, which begins on November 27.

"We had a lot to talk about and although I didn't play a lot of games it gave me a lot of opportunity to train and just work on a few little technical parts of my game which will hopefully help me grow and develop and have a successful summer," he said.

Carey had hit his maiden international century in Australia's series-clinching ODI win over England.

However, in the preceding T20 series against England, he had to make way for Matthew Wade in the third T20I after scoring just three runs in the first two games.

He had an equally forgettable outing in South Africa in February last year where he scored 7, 14 and 27 in three T20 innings.

"I guess my numbers in the past few T20s probably allowed the opening of the door for Wade to come in. I never like being left out of any team but it's allowed me to go away and develop," he said.

"If it's a lower-order role or back up the top of the order, I'm doing everything I can to get back into that team and it's something I want to do."

"Since then I felt like I finished off that UK tour really strongly and took a lot out of the IPL working with (Ponting)."

With the rescheduled T20 World Cup just 12 months away, Carey is hoping to get his place back in the T20I series against India.

"I think it's a great opportunity to continually work out the best line-up. Although it's 12 months away, you want to hone in on some specific roles and getting some form going into that World Cup."

"Coming up against England recently and India soon, we're playing the best in the world so it's a great indicator of where our T20 cricket is at."

"I think it's a great opportunity to continually work out the best line-up. Although it's 12 months away, you want to hone in on some specific roles and getting some form going into that World Cup."

Eng tour of Pakistan set to be postponed

PTI ■ KARACHI

England's much-awaited tour of Pakistan for a short T20 series early next year is set to be postponed to October due to unavailability of top players and matters related to costs.

According to media reports the tour, which was tentatively scheduled for January-February, is expected to be moved to October before the T20 World Cup in India.

"The problem arising is that early next year England will be engaged in series with Sri Lanka and India and some of their T20 specialist players are also signed up for the Big Bash in Australia," a source aware of the developments said.

"The other problem is the costs involved in England touring Pakistan."

"As it is just a three-match series with Karachi the likely

venue, the costs of flying the English team by a chartered flight after holding a training camp in Dubai does not make it cost effective for the England board," he said.

He said both the boards had discussed the more viable option of shifting the series to October as that would allow the full England T20 team to stop over in Pakistan for the short series before flying to India," the source said.

England has not played in the country since 2005 due to security reasons and when the Pakistan and English boards confirmed they were considering a short tour, it gave a big boost to Pakistan cricket.

"Even the PCB didn't want a 'C' team from England playing early next year as it is a big series and a breakthrough for Pakistan cricket."

Pakistan is also due to host South Africa early next year for two Tests and three T20Is.

BCCI announce MPL Sports as Team India kit sponsor

NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Tuesday formally announced MPL Sports apparel and accessories as the official kit sponsor and merchandise partner of both the national men's and women's sides as well as the U-19 team, replacing Nike.

The deal was cleared by the Board's apex council on November 2. Nike had a five-year deal during which they paid ₹370 crore from 2016 to 2020.

As per the newly-inked strategic partnership, MPL Sports, the sports merchandise brand from Mobile Premier League — an e-sports platform has entered into a three-year agreement from November 2020 to December 2023.

MPL Sports' association with the BCCI begins with India's tour of Australia, which will see Team India sporting the new jerseys.

CSA member council appoints interim board

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Cricket South Africa's member council on Tuesday made a U-turn and appointed the nine-member interim board ahead of the much-anticipated England series, just days after rejecting it citing technicalities in terms of CSA's Memorandum of Incorporation.

"Acting President of Cricket South Africa (CSA), Rihan Richards today confirmed that the Members' Council of CSA has appointed the Interim Board in terms of the CSA Memorandum of Incorporation (MoI), with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for the immediate future of CSA," the board said in a statement.

"The appointment fol-

lows a frank, honest and constructive engagement held between representatives from the Members' Council and the Interim Board. Everyone agreed on the way forward and to collaborate, strictly in accordance with the relevant legal framework."

The interim board, which was appointed by Sports Minister Nathi Mthethwa, will run the administrative body for the next three months.

CSA member councils refusal to recognise the interim board had earlier thrown England's upcoming white-ball tour in jeopardy.

The England team has reached South Africa for three T20Is, starting November 27, followed by as many ODIs from December 4 to 9.

Thiem too good for Nadal

AFP ■ LONDON

Dominic Thiem earned a crucial victory at the Nitto ATP Finals on Tuesday, as he overcame Rafael Nadal 7-6(7), 7-6(4) at The O2 in London.

In a meeting between the top two players in Group London 2020, Thiem saved two set points in a marathon 72-minute opener and held his nerve after failing to convert three consecutive match points as Nadal served at 4-5, 0/40 in the second set. With his seventh win in nine matches against Top 10 players this year, Thiem is now 2-0 in round robin play and has boosted his chances of reaching the semi-finals in London for the second straight year.

Earlier, Daniil Medvedev defeated Alexander Zverev in straight sets.

Russia's Medvedev won 6-3, 6-4 against his German opponent to join Novak Djokovic on top of the Group Tokyo 1970.

Zverev hit four double faults in his first two service games, and never found rhythm with his second serve going. Medvedev won 79 per cent of his second-serve return points (15/19) on way to his one-hour, 29-minute victory.

Medvedev is high on confidence having beaten Zverev in the Rolex Paris Masters Final a few days back.

"Confidence is the key, for sure. Winning an (ATP) Masters (1000) always helps the confidence," Medvedev said.

"I knew that I can play good. It was

Hope Aus Open and possibly ATP Cup goes ahead in 2021: Djokovic

London: Novak Djokovic said on Monday he hopes the Australian Open goes ahead "for the sake of tennis," admitting the sport faces a challenging time as it gears up for the 2021 season.

The world number one is playing in the ATP Finals in London at the end of a coronavirus-truncated season but the new campaign is due to start in just seven weeks' time.

Djokovic, who beat Argentine debutant Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-2 in his opening match at London's O2 Arena, said he had "not noticed much of a doubt" over whether the tournaments would go ahead.

"I want to play in Australia, Australian Open," added the Serbian, who is an eight-time

winner of the season-opening Grand Slam and the reigning champion.

"I'm not sure about the ATP Cup and the tournaments before, because obviously you have to leave quite in advance, actually, I think two-and-a-half or three weeks prior to the first match."

"So let's see how that goes. But I'm just hoping for the sake of tennis and sake of players that we will have the Australian Open and also the possibility of the ATP Cup and a couple more tournaments at least."

The plan for Australia would reportedly involve more than 500 international tennis players arriving in Victoria and undergoing two weeks of mandatory quarantine.

The players, many of whom travel with large entourages, would be restricted to hotels but have access to tennis courts. Once they had completed quarantine and twice tested negative for Covid-19, they would be able to move freely around Victoria.

a little bit shaky from both of us in the beginning from one (point) of view, but from the other (point) of view, I think there were some unbelievable points. To be honest, the intensity of the match was one of the most [intense] I had in my career."

Medvedev is the first Russian to compete at the ATP Finals in consecutive seasons since Nikolay Davydenko made five straight appearances from 2005 to 2009.

Fifa reviewing use of VAR

Wants to make it simpler and more affordable

AFP ■ LONDON

Fifa announced on Tuesday that it was reviewing use of video referee assistance (VAR) across the game with a view to simplifying it and making it more affordable for "all levels of football."

The 'Innovation and Excellence' working group of the world football body will present a "recommendation" for the implementation of this reform — dubbed the "VAR 'light' concept" — to Fifa and IFAB, the International Football Association Board which is the guarantor of the laws of the game.

The report "aims to create more affordable VAR systems to enable the use of VAR at all levels of the game."

"The working group identified variable cost factors, talked about the

potential quality decrease and the minimum requirements for such a technology setup," Fifa said in a statement.

VAR is currently only in place in major competitions and leagues and has not been used for the group stage of the Uefa Nations League. This summer, the Women's Champions League only had VAR for the final, a limitation that drew criticism from several players.

Fifa also said it was considering "the development of semi-automated offside technology to make the review process for offside incidents as efficient as possible."

It has also solicited the technology market to come up with way of improving "the visualisation of close offside incidents."

IOC won't make vaccine mandatory for Tokyo Oly

AFP ■ TOKYO

Athletes won't be required to take a coronavirus vaccine to compete at the Tokyo Olympics, IOC chief Thomas Bach said on Tuesday, adding that mandatory shots would be "going too far."

Bach, who is in Tokyo to bolster confidence in the pandemic-postponed event, said taking a vaccine would be a "free decision" for athletes and others involved in the Games.

"There are too many issues to consider. This is a question of private health," the International Olympic Committee president said, during a tour of the Olympic Village.

"It is a question also of (the) health conditions of each and every person. It's a question of availability."

However, the IOC will "appeal" to athletes and others to be vaccinated, Bach added, calling it a "sign of respect" for other competitors and the Japanese hosts.

Tokyo 2020 was put back by a year to start next July because of the coronavirus, becoming the first Olympics to be rescheduled in peacetime. Bach and Japanese organisers have sounded a confident note that the event will go ahead — buoyed by recent positive vaccine trials and a successful international gymnastics event in Tokyo this month.

Bach said the organising committee would take "all the necessary precautionary measures, so that athletes can relax and feel safe."

On Monday, he said the IOC would look to help athletes secure shots if they are available and approved.

