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LUCKNOW, THURSDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3



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Army enhancing LAC infra as parleys linger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the absence of any breakthrough in the standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh despite several rounds of talks, the Indian Army is rapidly enhancing its infrastructure, including pre-fabricated heated huts to sustain troops in winter months. These upgraded huts have adequate facilities like water and hygiene facilities.

Not willing to take any chances against the backdrop of little progress in reducing tension, the Army over the last few months was ramping up its logistical supplies. This process was undertaken to take care of troops which will remain deployed for the next few months at the LAC in Ladakh.

While the Army has sufficient stocks of winter clothing and boots, it has now completed the ongoing efforts to establish upgraded living facilities for troops deployed in Eastern Ladakh. This area receives up to 40 feet of snow after November every year and where temperatures fall up to minus 30-40 degrees.

The stand-off sites are located at a height of more than 15,000 feet in most of the places in Eastern Ladakh. Due to paucity of oxygen at such heights, the Army has taken precautions to deploy only acclimatised soldiers well versed in surviving at such



Indian Army sets up upgraded living facilities for troops in Eastern Ladakh

PTI

heights.

In fact, many additional troops brought to Ladakh after situation worsened in the wake of a bloody brawl in the Galwan valley in June are veterans of the Siachen glacier.

Giving details of the facilities now in place, officials on Wednesday here termed them as "excellent" and said the project was undertaken to ensure operational efficiency deployed in winters in that sector.

They said the altitudes in Ladakh range from High to Super High Altitude. Coupled with the wind chill factor, tem-

peratures dip down to minus 30-40 degrees. In addition, road access also gets affected for brief period of time.

Apart from the smart camps with integrated facilities which have been built over the years, additional state of the art habitat with integrated arrangements for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been recently created to accommodate the troops.

Also, troops in front line are accommodated in heated tents as per tactical considerations of their deployment. In

addition, adequate civil infrastructure has also been identified to cater for any emergent requirements.

Incidentally, the Chinese have also improved their lodging facilities at the LAC as they are also digging in for a long winter deployment. In October, personnel affiliated with state-run Chinese media had circulated visuals of the preparations being made in the region by the Chinese army ahead of winter. This included the provision of solar and wind-power facilities and 24-hour hot water supply.

Continued on Page 11

Prefabricated heated huts with facilities for troops to sustain winter months set up

SC allows UP govt to fill up 69,000 posts of teachers

Shiksha mitras to be given another chance for selection; CM Yogi welcomes apex court decision

PTI/PNS ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the Uttar Pradesh government to fill up vacancies of 69,000 assistant basic teachers in the state as per results declared by it in May.

A bench headed by Justice U U Lalit dismissed a batch of petitions including the one filed by the "Uttar Pradesh Prathamik Shiksha Mitra Association" challenging the Allahabad High Court's decision to uphold the cut off marks for selection of assistant basic teachers in the states.

The top court said it will be open to the state to give another chance to shiksha mitra to compete for selection as assistant basic teachers in the states.

The association had challenged the Uttar Pradesh government's order of January 7, 2019, by which the qualifying marks for the Assistant Teacher Recruitment Examination 2019 were fixed at 65 and 60 for general and reserved categories respectively.

Meanwhile, welcoming the Supreme Court order, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the selected assistant basic teachers would be given appointment letters at the earliest.

In a tweet, the CM asked the Basic Education Department to start giving appointment letters to the assistant basic teachers after taking permission from the Election Commission of India.

The model code of con-

duct is in place in UP because of Legislative Council elections for graduate and teachers constituencies across the state.

Any appointment needs approval of the Election Commission when the model code of conduct is in force.

In another statement, the CM said that the Supreme Court had put its stamp of

approval on the UP government's decision.

"As per the Supreme Court's directives, the shiksha mitras who have not got a chance will be given another chance by the state government," he said.

There are over 1.50 shiksha mitras across the state who monitor the primary schools in the villages.

Random testing in Noida for travellers from Delhi begins

PTI ■ NOIDA

Gautam Buddh Nagar health officials were on Wednesday deployed at two key Noida-Delhi borders where they started random Covid-19 testing of people coming from the national Capital.

The random testing of inward coming people was announced by District Magistrate Suhas L Y on Tuesday after a meeting with senior administration and health officials amid a spike in Covid-19 cases in Delhi.

Gautam Buddh Nagar Chief Medical Officer Deepak Ohri said teams of health officials are present at the borders at Delhi-Noida-Direct (DND) flyway and at Chilla — the two key entry points to Noida from the national Capital.

"We are conducting rapid antigen-based tests on people randomly so that traffic movement is not impacted. This is being done to check virus car-

riers and ensure that infection is contained in Gautam Buddh Nagar," Ohri, who was himself present at DND, told reporters.

Several health officials wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) are at the border locations along with policemen where they have set up desks for the rapid antigen-based test, which gives results in 15 minutes. Further action is taken based on the test result.

"If anyone is found positive, they are sent back to Delhi. Only those testing negative are allowed to enter Noida," Ohri said, adding all facilities for test and logistics are available at the borders.

He said a similar campaign will be carried out on Wednesday at Ashok Nagar, adjoining Delhi, and at Botanical Garden Metro Station, in Noida on Thursday. Suhas had on Tuesday said only a few randomly selected commuters shall be tested.

Continued on Page 11A health worker takes samples from a commuter during a campaign to conduct random Covid-19 rapid antigen-based testing of people coming from the national Capital at Delhi-Noida border on Wednesday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Twitter submits written apology for 'Ladakh in China' blunder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Social media giant Twitter has Apologised to a parliamentary committee for wrong geo-tagging of India's map and showing Ladakh as part of China. Twitter has promised to correct the error by the month-end.

The committee's chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Wednesday that the Twitter's submitted an affidavit signed by Damien Karien, Chief Privacy Officer of Twitter Inc.

The Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill had slammed Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and had sought an explanation by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit.

In its affidavit submitted before the parliamentary panel, Twitter has reportedly said the issue was "caused due to a software error combined with imperfect data resulting in an incorrect geo-tag".

Continue on Page 11

Avoid indiscriminate use of plasma therapy, warns ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As demand for plasma from recovered Covid-19 patients across the country continues to soar, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Wednesday cautioned that indiscriminate use of Convalescent Plasma Therapy (CPT) for treating virus infection should be avoided, suggesting it did not reduce mortality in Covid patients.

The CPT is one of several investigational therapies being tried in India in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Maharashtra, Odisha and Delhi, the three worst-affected States in India, have not only backed the therapy but have also set up plasma banks as well.

However, the country's apex medical research body did not prohibit its complete use. Instead, it issued Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) on plasma therapy and advised States to desist from its indiscriminate use.

"ICMR conducted an open-label phase II multicen-

tre randomised controlled trial in India across 39 public and private hospitals on use of convalescent plasma in the management of cases with moderate Covid-19 disease (PLACID Trial).

"It was concluded that, CPT did not lead to reduction in progression to severe Covid19 or all cause mortality

in the group that received CPT as compared to the group that did not receive CPT," said the ICMR in its new advisory.

"PLACID is the world's largest pragmatic trial on CPT conducted in 464 moderately ill laboratory confirmed Covid-19 affected adults in real-world setting wherein no benefit of use of CPT could be estab-

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 89,50,390

DEATHS: 1,31,483

RECOVERED:

83,74,708

ACTIVE: 4,42,185

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	17,52,509	46,102	16,23,503
Karnataka	8,65,931	11,578	8,29,188
Andhra Pradesh	8,57,395	6,899	8,33,980
Tamil Nadu	7,63,282	11,531	7,37,281
Kerala	5,39,920	1,943	4,68,460
Uttar Pradesh	5,16,616	7,441	4,87,221
Delhi	4,95,598	7,812	4,45,782
West Bengal	4,41,885	7,820	4,07,769
Odisha	3,10,920	1,628	3,01,777
Telangana	2,59,776	1,415	2,45,293
Rajasthan	2,30,180	2,089	2,09,058
Bihar	2,28,680	1,201	2,21,811
Chhattisgarh	2,15,413	2,646	1,93,943
Assam	2,10,865	970	2,06,608
Haryana	2,07,039	2,093	1,85,403
Gujarat	1,91,642	3,823	1,75,462



Stolen Ram, Lakshman, Sita idols back from UK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stolen over 20 years ago, three-foot-tall bronze idols of Lord Ram, Lakshman and goddess Sita of Vijayanagara period are now back from the United Kingdom to their home in Tamil Nadu.

Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Prahlad Patel on Tuesday virtually handed over the artifacts to the Tamil Nadu Government at the headquarters of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) here. The statues were stolen from the Vishnu Temple at Nagapatnam in 1978. They were restored to the Indian Government after a collector voluntarily offered to hand it back on discovering their true history.

The unnamed collector, who had acquired the statues in good faith, was informed about their dubious provenance by the London Met Police. On September 15, London Metropolitan Police handed over the statues to the High



Commission of India, London after they were recovered.

Patel praised the positive role played by the ASI, especially over the last six years, in getting back the masterpieces of the country's cultural heritage.

In August last year, the High Commission of India, London, was informed by India Pride Project that four antique idols of Lord Ram, Goddess Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman, were stolen from a temple built in Vijayanagara period in Tamil

Nadu and smuggled out of India, may be to the United Kingdom.

Forty-three of the 56 artifacts that have been restored after India's Independence were handed during the NDA Government, as per the ASI.

RJD raps Nitish for giving berth to tainted leader, seeks sacking

Tejashwi targets Mewalal on corruption charges

PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar's main Opposition RJD and its allies on Wednesday attacked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for appointing JD(U)'s Mewalal Choudhary as the Education Minister even though he faces corruption charges and was suspended from the party over the issue, and demanded he be sacked.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said Choudhary, a former vice chancellor of an agriculture university and a first-time Minister, faces serious charges under the IPC including cheating (section 420), and criminal conspiracy (120B).

"Has Chief Minister Nitish Kumar awarded Mewalal Choudhary for cor-

ruption and given him the freedom to loot?" he asked in a tweet.

Choudhary, 67, was suspended from the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) in 2017 after an FIR was registered against him over alleged irregularities in appointments during his tenure as the Vice Chancellor of the Bihar Agriculture University, Sabour in Bhagalpur district.

The FIR was registered against him in February that year on the basis of a report by the then VC over some anomalies in the appointment of Assistant Professors and junior scientists.

The BJP which was in the opposition during the grand alliance Ministry then had strongly raised the issue against Choudhary.

Chaudhary had left the job to contest the 2015 Bihar polls on a JD(U) ticket and was elected from Tarapur Assembly seat in Munger district. He retained his seat in the just-concluded State polls and has been made the Education Minister.

The probe has brought to light alleged irregularities in the appointment of 161 Assistant Professors and Junior Scientists in 2012. Tejashwi also took a swipe at the new NDA government for not appointing any Muslim in the cabinet.

They have made an accused, absconding in several cases of corruption, the Education Minister. But there is no minister from the minority community, Tejashwi said.

CAPSULE

UNHAPPY CONGRESSMEN FREE TO LEAVE: ADHIR Kolkata: Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Wednesday slammed party colleague Kapil Sibal over his Bihar poll debacle introspection remark, saying those unhappy with the party's functioning are free to leave instead of embarrassing it in public. Chowdhury stung Sibal for "giving sermons from AC rooms" and said disgruntled members may join other parties or float their own outfits.

PULWAMA: 12 CIVILIANS HURT IN GRENADE ATTACK Srinagar: Twelve civilians sustained injuries in a grenade attack by terrorists on a team of security force personnel in Pulwama district of Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in the Kakapora area of Pulwama, a police official said. He said the grenade missed the intended target and exploded on the road.

Continue high level of alertness, says Yogi ‘PM’s guidance helped in controlling virus’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the World Health Organisation (WHO) appreciated the Uttar Pradesh government for the action taken by it to control COVID-19, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath gave its credit to the people of the state and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving guidance.

Presiding over a high-level Unlock review meeting at his official residence here on Wednesday, the CM said that many countries and some states of India were now witnessing the second wave of COVID-19 and keeping this in view, a high level of alertness should be maintained and availability of ICU beds should also be reviewed.

Directing officials to strengthen the COVID-19 treatment system, the CM said that contact tracing and surveillance should be continued as before along with an extensive contact tracing of people coming from other states.

The CM said that as long as there was no effective medicine or vaccine for novel coronavirus infection, vigilance was the only protection.



Appealing to the people to celebrate Chhath inside their homes, the CM said that they could perform all the rituals of the festival inside their house by filling water in tubs and large vessels.

The CM also said that the coordinated efforts of Team-11 had given better results and the pace of its work should be continued in the same manner.

Directing the Integrated Command Control Centre

(ICCC) to keep operating at full capacity, the CM said that the role of the ICC was very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

He also asked the officials to conduct Covid testing on a random basis.

Directing officials to implement an effective system at paddy purchase centres so that the farmers did not have to wait to sell their produce, the CM said that arrangement should be

Focus sampling begins today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In order to check the rise of COVID-19 cases in the state due to the festival season, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to start the second phase of focus sampling tests in the targeted areas from November 19 to 30.

In this phase, the health teams will take random samples of the people and will try to identify the people with COVID-19 symptoms.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said here on Wednesday that in the second phase of the focus sampling, every day the health teams would take samples from different segments of population throughout the state.

“The sectors which will be covered in this phase are urban slums, jails and temporary jails, children protection home, Nari Niketans, orphanage, old-age home, hawkers, government and private offices, markets and weekly markets. During this phase, random sampling will also be done in schools and colleges of teachers and other staff. After taking permission from the parents, the students could also be included in the tests,” Prasad

made to issue slips to them. He also said that the farmers should get their payments within 72 hours.

The CM also directed officials to assess the damages to

said.

The first phase of random sampling was done before the Diwali festival which ended on November 13.

The WHO has appreciated the UP government's effort in contact tracing and surveillance due to which the spread of COVID-19 has been contained to a large extent.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, UP reported 2,390 fresh COVID-19 cases taking the tally to 5,16,616. The recovery rate went up to 94.31 per cent with 4,87,221 people recovering COVID-19, including 2,529 on Wednesday.

There are 21,954 active cases in the state out of which 9,672 are in home isolation, 2,163 in private hospitals and the rest in government-run Covid hospitals.

The death toll reached 7,441 on Wednesday evening with 29 fatalities during the past 24 hours.

At least 1,21,362 Covid tests were carried out on Tuesday. With this, the total Covid tests in the state reached 1,73,31,490, the highest in the country. Around 4,56,186 surveillance teams have so far visited 2.79 crore houses in the state and have checked the health of over 14.77 crore people.

wise review of the implementation

of the recommendations of the Uttar Pradesh Labour (Employment Exchange and Job) Commission.

He also ordered a district-

wise review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Uttar Pradesh Labour (Employment Exchange and Job) Commission.

He also ordered a district-

Dr lands in jail for fraudulently running a degree college

Kanpur (PNS): A doctor posted at the Reserve Police Lines in Kanpur Nagar landed in jail in Unnao on November 9 on charges of fraudulently running a degree college there and taking admission of students on seats in excess than permitted by the Kanpur university.

He was posted at the Kanpur Nagar district jail on COVID-19 duty but was absent since October 19.

With the information about his being lodged in the jail, the officials have started updating their documents.

It may be recalled that the erstwhile Chief Medical Officer Dr Ashok Shukla had posted Dr Surendra Kumar Singh at the Reserve Police Lines hospital here. Sources said that after his posting there, Dr Singh did not run the OPD even for a day. He would visit the hospital after every 10 days and return after signing the attendance register.

During the past one year, he did not run any OPD at the Reserve Police Lines hospital nor did he treat any patient despite putting his signature on the OPD register.

But he was found always

on duty due to his connivance with the staff of CMO office, source said.

On coming to know about the happening, the reserve inspector of Police Lines informed SSP Pritinder Singh while the jail superintendent apprised the district magistrate and CMO of the incident in writing.

It was stated that Dr Surendra Kumar Singh was the manager of Sardar Patel Bansh Gopal Sanatan Dharm Degree College at Hindpal Kheda Mahai, Bighapur, Unnao. It was alleged that against permission for 360 seats granted by the CSJM University in 2005, he had taken admission of 800 students (boys and girls) in his college. As 440 students were not allowed to appear in university examinations, they had lodged an FIR against the college manager Dr Surendra Kumar Singh and principal at the Bighapur police station.

The court sent him to jail when he surrendered himself there on November 9.

Commenting on the issue, CMO, Kanpur Dr Anil Mishra said he was aware that Dr Surendra Kumar Singh, being a government employee, was also running a degree college.

A detailed report would be sent to state administration soon, he added.

CS reviews Centrally-sponsored projects in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has expedited the execution of the Centrally-sponsored major infrastructure projects like the four-laning of the Jagdishpur-Ayodhya national highway, Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor project and development of certain districts as export hubs under the PM SVANidhi project.

Chief Secretary RK Tiwari on Wednesday reviewed the progress of the infrastructure projects through the PRAGATI platform.

To monitor the progress of the project, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2015 launched an ambitious multi-purpose and multi-modal platform PRAGATI (Proactive Governance and Timely Implementation) portal.

PRAGATI is a unique integrating and interactive platform. The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievance and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Central government as well as projects flagged by the state government.

For the four-laning of the 60-km section of the Jagdishpur-Ayodhya national highway, against the requirement of 52,000 acres of land, around 48,000 acres of land has been acquired and compensation has been distributed to the farmers.

The project is several years behind schedule. Its foundation stone was laid by Union Surface

Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in December 2016. The contract for the project was awarded by the NHAI more than four years later in March 2020 under Hybrid Annuity Mode under Bharatmala Pariyojana. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 1,530 crore.

On the progress of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, the chief secretary said 747 acres of land had been acquired and transferred to the DMIC. For the multi modal logistic hub (MMLH), against the requirement of 478 acres of land, 364 acres of land has been acquired and the rest of the 26 acres of land will be acquired by the Indian railways.

The MMLH is one of the key early bird projects identified under Dadri-Noida-Ghaziabad Investment Region (DNGIR) in Uttar Pradesh sub-region of Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) at Boraki in Greater Noida.

The logistics hub shall be positioned in Dadri to improve efficiency of operations of existing industries in the region as well as to improve the attractiveness of the region as an investment destination for various categories of industries and also warehousing and logistics operators.

The MMLH is strategically located between NH-91 and the Delhi-Howrah line in close proximity to the point of congruence of the Western and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and also the proposed freight corridor of Eastern

Peripheral Expressway. The total site area is approximately 293.8 Ha (725.6 acres). An additional area of 145.1 Ha (358.56 acres) is earmarked for future expansion.

The multi modal transport hub (MMTH) is also an important component of the DMIC project and the required land for the project has been acquired. The MMTH at Boraki and surrounding station area is being developed in Greater Noida spread over 412.7 acres for improved transport connectivity for DNGIR and upcoming UP-Sub Region, forming a catchment zone for the proposed transit facility.

A railway station is proposed at Boraki that shall be developed as a transport hub with a state-of-art railway terminus further supplemented by an interstate bus terminus (ISBT) and a Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) station alongside commercial activity to optimally capture the strategic location where various transport modes congregate.

The integrated railway hub is planned to be of world class standards, encompassing passenger facilities, commercial and institutional facilities (including office complex, shopping complex and hotels). The project is foreseen as the development of a modern and user-friendly regional railway terminal that will seamlessly integrate with an MRTS (interlinked with a large local habitation), ISBT and a business centre (equipped, among other things, with offices and business hotel accommodation).

Gangrape victim threatens to commit suicide

Lucknow (PNS): A gangrape victim has accused the police of providing protection to the rapists and threatened to end her life in Shahjahanpur.

The woman alleged that she had filed a gangrape complaint at the Kanth police station about two months back but despite registering a case, the police had not arrested any accused so far.

The victim also alleged that the police were exerting pressure on her to agree to a settlement and were threatening to send her kids to jail if she did not agree to it. Anguished over the working of the police and the threats from the accused, the victim sat on a dharna at the district magistrate's office on Wednesday, demanding the arrest of the accused. The woman also said that if the accused were not arrested, she would commit suicide. As the matter came to the knowledge of the police, woman police personnel somehow pacified the victim to end her dharna. Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar said the woman had registered a gangrape complaint whereas a case had also been registered against her husband. The ASP said both the matters were being investigated in an impartial manner and action would be taken according to whatever facts came to for.

In another case reported from Sitapur, a 13-year-old girl missing since Tuesday was found dead on Wednesday noon. It is suspected that she was sexually assaulted, killed and later her body was hanged from a tree to make it a case of suicide.

Circle Officer of Laharpur, Yadendra Yadav, Station Officer of mahila police station, Poonam Rani Dubey, and Station Officer of local Tambaur police station, Amit Singh Bhadoriya, rushed to the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. In Etah, a 14-year-old girl was gang-raped. She had gone with her 6-year-old brother to help him attend the call of nature when former village pradhan Rajeev and two of his accomplices, Akash and Anil Kumar, allegedly locked her in the toilet and gang-raped her last Monday in Aliganj area. The local police initially refused to register a case but when District Magistrate Sukhlal Bharti took cognisance of the incident, a case was registered.

Journalist, his wife battered to death in Sonbhadra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A journalist working as a correspondent for a Hindi daily and his wife were brutally beaten to death in Barwadih village of Sonbhadra, police said on Wednesday.

According to reports from Sonbhadra, the victim, Uday Paswan died on the spot while his wife, Sheeta, succumbed to injuries at a hospital in Varanasi on Tuesday.

The killing was the result of an old enmity with a former village head.

The deceased had approached the Kone police for security in view of threat to him and his family but no action was taken. Three police personnel have now been suspended for dereliction of duty.

Superintendent of Police at Sonbhadra, Ashish Srivastava, said on Wednesday, “Inspector of Kone police station, a sub-inspector and a constable have been suspended in this connection. Five of the six accused have also been arrested while the main accused, Keval Paswan, who is a former village head, is absconding.”

Uday and Sheeta had gone to the Kone police station on Monday morning to pursue their demand for security. Late on Monday evening, when the couple were returning home on a motorcycle, they were attacked with sticks and rods. The couple cried for help but no one came forward. Uday died on the spot and Sheeta was admitted to hospital with serious injuries and died on Tuesday evening. The body of Uday was sent for post-mortem.

Srivastava said, “On the complaint of Uday's son Vinay Paswan, a named FIR against former village head Keval Paswan, his wife Kaushalya, sons Jitendra, Gabbar, Sikandar and his representative Ekhlaj Alam, has been registered under sections 147, 148 and 302 of the Indian Penal Code.”

Regarding the enmity of Uday with Keval and his family, Vinay informed the police that his father was also a farmer and worked as a correspondent with a Lucknow-based Hindi daily. He said Uday had a land dispute with Keval and cases had been lodged against both the groups in 2016, 2018 and this year too. Vinay said, “My father had also given a complaint at the chief minister's Janata Darbar in Lucknow. Despite directives issued from the CM Office, the Sonbhadra police did not pay any attention.”

the pioneer

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Aamna Nizam D/o Nizamuddin Alam, R/o 696-D, Mahfooz Manzil, 1st Lane Balda Road, Nishatganj, Lucknow here by declared that the my father's correct name is Nizamuddin Alam. This is for all purposes.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that in my son Subh Mishra his name mentioned as Ankit Kumar Mishra where as his correct name is Subh Mishra. His name should be corrected in documents. Om Prakash Mishra, R/o P-69, Sanjay Gandhi Puram Indira Nagar, Lucknow.

NOTICE

It is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main Secondary Examination Year 2017 and Roll No. 5113890 issued by CBSE has been lost. Saurabh Kumar Mishra, R/o P-69, Sanjay Gandhi Puram, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I Mamata W/o Mr. Subhash Chandra residing New Adarsh Colony post Fatehgarh Distt. Farrukhabad (U.P.). I have change my name from Mamata to Mamta Devi vide affidavit detail 12 Nov. 2020 beforecourt fatehgarh, Farrukhabad (U.P.)

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Diksha Khanna to Avika Khanna in all future purposes Avika Khanna D/o Vishal Krishna Khanna R/o C, 33/52-11 Flat No. A 305, Bansidhar Apartment Chhittupur, Sagra, Varanasi-221010 (U.P.)

सूचना

मैंने अपने पुत्र मयंक जेटली व पुत्रवधू भाव्या जेटली उर्फ इती सारखत को अपनी चल-अचल संपत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है और पूर्णतः संबंध विच्छेद कर लिया है, भविष्य में इनके द्वारा किये गये किसी भी कार्य की जिम्मेदारी मुझ पर तथा मेरे परिवार पर नहीं होगी। प्रेमानाथ शर्मा 49, N-ब्लॉक किदवाई नगर, कानपुर-208011

the pioneer

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Fahim Khan to Fahimuddin S/o Lallan R/o 77/15, Coolie Bazar Kanpur

NOTICE

I Arhaam Alam S/o Nizamuddin Alam, R/o 696-D, Mahfooz Manzil, 1st Lane Balda Road, Nishatganj, Lucknow here by declared that the my father's correct name is Nizamuddin Alam. This is for all purposes.

NOTICE

I, Anju Spouse of No. 15135706 P, Rank Hav (GD) Naresh Kumar R/o Vill-Dabadha, Post-Gurgaon, Distt-Gurgaon, Haryana, have changed my DOB from 04.05.1984 to 20.05.1990 for fall future purposes.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that my name "Mohammad Alam" in my daughter ("Mehwish Alam") ICSE pass certificate is written as "Mohd. Alam" whereas "correct name is Mohammad Alam" vide affidavit sworn in before notary Lucknow.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Vishal Khanna to Vishal Krishna Khanna S/o Vijay Krishna Khanna in all future purposes. Vishal Krishna Khanna R/o C, 33/52-11 Flat No. A 305, Bansidhar Apartment Chhittupur, Sagra, Varanasi-221010 (U.P.)

294 more test positive for coronavirus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow witnessed an increase in the number of coronavirus cases yet again with 294 testing positive on Wednesday. As many as 363 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 63,758 while the death toll stands at 947. The new patients included 29 from Gomtinagar, 23 from Rae Bareilly road, 22 from Cantt, 17 from Alambagh, 16 from Ashiana, 13 from Chowk, and 10 each from Talkatora, Vikasnagar & Hazratganj. There were five deaths in the city and two of the deceased belonged to Lucknow while the rest to Sitapur, Barabanki and Maharajganj.

Across the state, 2,390 persons tested positive, including 117 in Kanpur, 134 in Ghaziabad, 179 in Gautambuddh Nagar, 134 in Ghaziabad & 260 in Meerut, taking the UP tally to 5,16,616.



There were 30 deaths in the state, including three in Meerut, two each in Prayagraj & Varanasi, and one each in Kanpur, Bareilly, Agra, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar,

Hardoi, Gonda, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Bahraich, Hapur, Fatehpur, Amethi, Mirzapur, Sambhal, Kaushambi & Hamirpur, taking the UP toll to 7,441. Besides, 2,529

patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 4,87,221.

Meanwhile, nodal officer for Covid-19 at KGMU Dr D Himanshu said the number of deaths due to coronavirus at the hospital has decreased and there could be multiple reasons for that. "The number of people testing positive has decreased, which has resulted in lesser deaths. Earlier, over ten persons would test positive for coronavirus in the triage area, but now this figure has been reduced to one or two. Besides, we are now well-versed with the treatment protocol. Internationally too, the death rate has come down," he said. However, he said caution is required and it would take next two weeks days to see if the cases surge again.

Meanwhile, spokesperson Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences Dr Shrikesh Singh said they have tested over five lakh samples so

far. "We have been testing 4,000 to 5,000 samples per day on an average. We have tested over five lakh samples through RT-PCR method and we have been ranked third in the state in terms of the number of tests conducted," he pointed out. The lab was established at the hospital on April 10.

Dr Singh said the state government directed them to increase the testing and director Dr AK Tripathi set up a special task force for that. TruNat testing was started on June 18 and two machines were installed at the hospital.

On Wednesday, District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash directed the Covid hospitals to maintain the data of patients and ensure high-level treatment for their speedy recovery. He directed both Covid and non-Covid hospitals to test all their health workers to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Drive against land sharks, criminals will continue: CP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Newly-appointed commissioner of police (CP) DK Thakur asked personnel deployed at different police stations to hear the problems of people using the existing means and resolve the same at any cost. He said the police would work for the poor and maintain law and order.

He said his policing concept was simple and concise. "Address the problems of people at the root level and with all the care and sympathy, take preventive measures and do not delay investigation," he said. Thakur said the police worked well during the regime of his predecessor Sujeet Pandey and would do even better in the time to come. "The drive against land sharks and other criminals will continue. We will not give the public a chance to complain about police conduct and working at any cost," he added. Thakur said social media is a great challenge for the police in the present times and they would work effectively to deal with it. "An immense change has taken place during the last one decade. Now, the police have new challenges and we will work to the satisfaction of the public," he said. Terming media's role very important, he said hopes for cooperation. Thakur said the police would keep an eye on



Newly-appointed commissioner of police DK Thakur after taking charge

government-run liquor shops where owners indulge in adulteration. The state government appointed Thakur, who was holding the post of Anti-Terror Squad chief, in a late night development on Tuesday.

Though officials said the change of guard was an administrative decision, sources said the government was not happy with Sujeet Pandey in view of the issues including death of six persons due to consumption of hooch in Banthra recently.

Pandey has been made the ADG of Arms Training Centre in Sitapur. GK Goswami, who

had returned to home cadre after a successful stint in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), has replaced been made the new Anti-Terrorist Squad chief. Pandey had launched a stern drive against criminals confiscating properties of the aides of Mukhtar Ansari and Atiq Ahmad.

Thakur, who is known as a tough officer, has also served as SSP/DIG in Lucknow during the erstwhile Mayawati regime in 2012. Thakur has also had a stint in the CBI. He took charge as the CP of Lucknow in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Chhath: Stress on virus containment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Health department is gearing up for effective containment of coronavirus infection during Chhath Puja celebrations in Lucknow by increasing sampling and testing. A senior health official said that testing by transit teams will now be carried out round the clock, instead of just during the peak hours, at bus & railway stations and airport. Antigen testing will be increased across the district.

"We will be testing people arriving from other districts or other parts of the country. Reports of the samples collected by the transit teams show that 2-3 persons coming from various districts are testing positive for coronavirus. A review of the testing and contact tracing will also be carried out by District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash in a meeting which will be held at the Smart City office on Thursday and will be attended by all addition-



District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash taking stock of arrangements at Laxman Mela ground on Wednesday

al CMOs. Targeted sampling in urban slums will be carried out on Thursday," the official said.

On Wednesday, the DM visited Laxman Mela ground, Jhulelal Park, Gupteshwar & Dhobi ghats to take stock of the preparations for Chhath Puja celebrations. The DM directed LMC and LDA officials to ensure cleanliness and repair work. He said divers would be stationed near the

ghats to prevent drowning incidents.

He added that barricading would be done to help people maintain social distancing and female cops would also be deployed for security of women. The DM said as per the state government's directives, women would be encouraged to celebrate Chhath Puja at their homes or in close vicinity.

Brother duo mowed down by dumper

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two brothers were killed while another sustained grievous injuries in a road mishap in Banthra on Wednesday afternoon. The deceased were identified as Satpal and Mulk Raj while the injured was Raj Kumar (all of Hasanganj area in Unnao). As per reports, the brother trio visited a village in Banthra for the wedding of a girl in their family and were returning to Unnao on a bike which Satpal was driving.

When they reached the road stretch between Narayanpur and Ramdaspur in Banthra, a speeding dumper hit their bike. The impact was so intense that Satpal and Mulk Raj died on the spot while Raj Kumar went flying.

In another incident, a man undergoing treatment for a

liver disease jumped off the fourth floor of a private hospital on Wednesday afternoon. He was shifted to the ICU of the same hospital where his condition was said to be critical. Amit Saxena of Rajajipuram (E-block) worked with a company in the US and had returned home during lockdown. His family told police that Amit was a habitual drinker and his liver suffered damage as a result. On August 14, he was admitted to a hospital in Gomtinagar where he was administered treatment. The doctors asked him to quit drinking. However, as Amit could not stop consuming liquor, he developed a problem again and was admitted to a private hospital in Thakurganj on November 16. Around 3:30 pm on Wednesday, he went to the bathroom and jumped off.

15-year-old girl killed in road mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A class X girl student was killed in a road mishap in Gosainganj on Wednesday afternoon. As per reports, Faiza (15) of Rasoolpur village in the area was going to her school on a bicycle. When she reached Bhatani Ka Purwa, she was hit by a tractor-trolley from behind, killing her on the spot. The errant driver fled the scene, abandoning the tractor-trolley. Police reached


the scene on the information of the public and rushed the girl to a hospital where she was declared brought dead.

A pall of gloom descended on the house of the victim even as her mother Rukhsana fell unconscious hearing the news. Faiza was a ray of hope for Rukhsana after her husband died while working with a company in Saudi Arabia eight years ago.

Meanwhile, a joint team of crime branch and

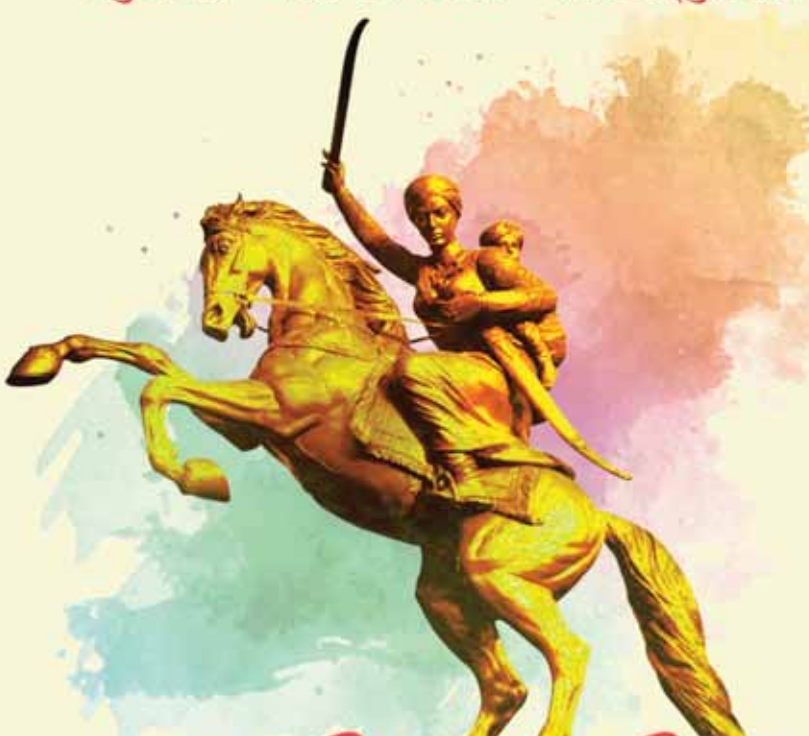
Mohanlalganj police nabbed a wanted criminal who was carrying a cash reward of Rs 25,000, and his aide during an encounter on Tuesday night.

The police said Sanjeev Sagar aka Banty of Rajajipuram suffered injuries in the leg while his aide Papu Yadav was given a chase and nabbed. The police recovered a country-made pistol. Sanjeev has been named in as many as 39 crime cases till date.



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Nag Nathaiya being held at Tulsi Ghat in Varanasi on Wednesday

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Nag Nathaiya celebrated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Internationally famous Nag Nathaiya was celebrated at Tulsi Ghat with traditional gaiety and great enthusiasm here on Wednesday late afternoon. Hundreds of devotees including women and children watched the rare scene of Lord Krishna sitting on the hoods of Kaliya Naag. The place in the river at Tulsi Ghat turned into Kalia Nag for a few moments. Though in view of COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided that only 100 persons apart from media personnel and volunteers would be allowed in view to maintain social distancing, hundreds of residents of

adjoining localities turned out there to see this famous festival.

The festival of Nag Nathaiya began around 3.30 pm with Lord Krishna playing ball with his sakhas (friends). During the play, the ball fell into Kalia Dah and Sakhas (friends) insisted on taking back the ball. Along the river at Tulsi Ghat, a tree of kadamb was installed. When the sakhas continued insisting for taking the ball back, Lord Krishna climbed on kadamba tree by saying "lehu gend main lyawat jai". Meanwhile, the Vyas team rented the air with Naradiya tune "Yah kahi Natwar Madan Gopala kudi pare jal mein

Nandlala" and Lord Krishna jumped into kaliya dah (river Ganga). Lord Krishna went into deep water.

The devotees watching the scene forgot that it was leela and became afraid of wrong apprehension for a while. Tulsi Ghat has turned into Braj and devotees as Brajwasis for a while. But after few minutes, Lord Krishna appeared while dancing on the hoods of Kaliya Naag and the entire place was rented with slogans like Bhagwan Krishan ki jai and Har Har Mahadev. The scene when Lord Krishna appeared from the deep water on the hoods of Nag, was rare and devotees watched unblinkingly and the

entire atmosphere has turned into devotional at Tulsi Ghat for a while.

Mahant of Sankat Mochan Mandir Prof Vishambhar Nath Mishra garlanded Lord Krishna. Kunwar Anant Narayan Singh presented ginni (coin) of gold as per tradition. It is said that Tulsidas started this festival over 450 years ago and since then it is celebrated each year. An elaborate security arrangement was made to ensure peaceful celebration and also avoid any untoward incident.

Not only Tulsi Ghat but also adjoining ghats were crowded with devotees in hundreds.

Four-day Chhath festival begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Rush of women was seen in markets during day hours to purchase sugarcane, various types of fruits and other articles as with the Nahay-Khay (bathing-eating) event, the four-day famous Dalla Chhath festival began here on Wednesday. Besides, hectic efforts are being made to keep the ghats clean. Many ghats, despite various regular efforts of NGOs, are still looked comparatively dirty like previous years when huge quantity of sludge and silt was collected there due to recent flood but contrary to that this time, due to sharp decline in water level, at many places the river went away far from stairs resulting in visible of huge quality of sludge there.

Chhath-related articles were seen being sold on roadsides at various places in almost



Women purchasing Chhath articles as the four days festival begins in Varanasi on Wednesday

Pioneer

all the main markets including Sagra, Lanka, Luxa, Godowlia, Chetganj, Maidagin, Jagatganj and many places in trans-Varuna areas. In recent times the festival has become very popular in the city as it is seen that lakhs of people turn up at ghats during the puja. However,

amidst the fear of spreading worldwide coronavirus pandemic, a large number of people have decided to celebrate the festival staying at home and avoid visiting rivers or ponds. Meanwhile, heavy weather conditions and brief spells of rain throughout the day have

increased the heartbeats of paddy growers as the rain at this time is very harmful for the Kharif crops still in the fields and could not be harvested yet. This region is famous for its high paddy production and the trans-Ganga areas are 'Rice Bowl'.

Meanwhile, resentment is also brewing among the local people over the apathy of local administration towards launching of cleanliness drive at various ponds and Shastri ghat of river Varuna where a good number of people are also expected to gather on Friday (November 20) evening and Saturday (November 21) morning when the 'vrati' women will offer 'aragh' to Surya Bhagwan during sunset and sunrise respectively. On Thursday, eating of gur-made-kheer (Karana) will be held on the second day of the festival.

69 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The number of COVID-19 cases has crossed 18K-mark in the district as 69 new positive patients have been detected on Wednesday, increasing the total number of cases to 18,067. The day also saw one more death, increasing the toll to 291. During the day, the follow-up negative reports

included 91 and out of them, 88 have been recovered from home isolation, while three from the hospitals, increasing the number to 14,347 and 2,850 respectively. The total number of patients who has been recovered so far is 17,197, leaving 579 active cases. The recovery rate is 95.18 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, 51 positive patients were found out of 2,648 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 3,76,901 and the results of 5,678 are awaited. Out of them, 3,58,903 were negative, while 18,049 positive. The total number of samples collected was 3,97,040.

Earlier, two males aged 72 and 47 from Pisachmochan and Manduadih respectively succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundaral Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of five new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,419 including 204 red zones. There are 2,215 green zones with four new ones.

Dev Deepawali to be celebrated at grand level

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

This year, the internationally acclaimed festival Dev Deepawali will be celebrated at a grand level at holy ghats from Assi to Rajghat on the auspicious occasion of Kartik Purnima on November 30. Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are also likely to attend the celebration.

It may be pointed out that all the 84 ghats of this holy city are glittered with the earthen lamps on the auspicious occasion while the religious and cultural programmes are organised at some ghats. The devotees in lakhs turn up at the ghats to have a glance of the beauty of ghats.

The descending of Ganga on the earth, glory of Lord Shiva, glory of Kashi, etc will be presented in the streams of the holy river through laser show and projection, the Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal informed while chairing a meeting convened late evening on Tuesday last at his office here to discuss the festival to be celebrated following the guidelines of COVID-19.

Agrawal directed officials to declare the routes approaching to Rajghat, Dashaswamedh Ghat and Assi Ghat as 'no vehicle zone' and added, the barricading should also be erected to control the rush. The streets of both sides of road from Rajghat to the airport should be identified and the barricading

be made from 8 to 10 metres inside from the road, he said adding, the pitfalls of important roads be covered up before the festival. The dividers should be painted and the street lights should be made functional, he directed further. The place be identified for the parking of vehicles and ensure the installation of CCTV cameras on the important routes where the same could not be installed till now. The divers should be deployed at important ghats and to ensure smooth boating in the river, the traffic system should be allied on the pattern of that implemented in Prayagraj during the Kumbh, he directed officers adding, the control room be opened to make announcement about

information at one place through loud speaker.

The route diversion plan should be prepared and made available to hotels and guest houses so as the tourists could be informed about the traffic system, he directed adding, the attractive decoration be made on the sands across the river besides lightening the earthen lamps. The DC also visited Bhaissur Ghat and adjoining ghats and issued directives to PWD officers regarding the arrangement in view of the festivals of Chhath and Dev Deepawali.

The IG Vijay Singh Meena, DM Kaushal Raj Sharma, SSP Amit Pathak and officers of the concerned department attended the meeting.

104 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Since Deepawali, the corona infection has again crossed 100 marks. As many as 104 more people were detected as COVID-19 within the last 24 hours on Tuesday night, while one person died.

In addition, 69 people became infection free. This is confirmed by Dr. Rishi Sahai, the Nodal Officer of Corona. He said that corona infection has started to increase once again. There were 149 cases of infection on Monday.

According to CMO Dr GS Bajpai, after 104 new cases were reported on Tuesday, the total corona patients in the district have increased to 25,395,

while 24,094 have become infection free.

On Tuesday, 10 persons from SRN Hospital, three from Beli and one from a private hospital were discharged after the report came negative, while home isolation of 55 people was completed.

The total number of deaths from corona in the district has reached 330 due to the death of one person. Total active cases are 968. Of them 165 are hospitalised. 110 people are admitted in SRN Hospital, 39 in Beli and 16 in private hospital. 803 people are in home isolation.

Meanwhile, an online public awareness campaign and Road Safety Week for protection from COVID-19 will be

observed from November 19 to November 24. In this regard, the principals of all schools have been apprised by the BSA. It is necessary to make the details of the activities conducted under his supervision available online and also inform the District Transport Officer daily.

According to District Basic Education Officer Sanjay Kumar Kushwaha, on November 19, awareness and swearing programme regarding road safety and traffic rules will be made online and offline by teachers. On November 19, slogan and poster competition related to road safety will be held. Essay competition related to road safety will be held on

November 20. On November 21, senior officials associated with the Transport and Traffic departments will be invited to the road safety programme, who will inform the children about the traffic rules.

Road safety rules and slogans will be demonstrated on the school premises on November 22. A quiz related to road safety will be conducted on November 23 and a speech competition will be held on November 24. It was stated in the instructions that according to these action plans, online activities should be done by the students and uploaded on the online group or portal of the school. Also, make the information available daily to the District Transport Officer.

Maurya lays foundation stone of ROB on Buxi Bundh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Wednesday laid foundation a long awaited railway over bridge on Buxi Bundh, Baghara. Two railway tracks—one from Prayagraj Junction to Prayag, and the other from Prayagraj Sangam (Prayag Ghat) to Prayag—were major obstacles for the road users for years together, and this over bridge will ensure smooth traffic movement on Buxi Bundh, otherwise people had to wait for hours at railway gate at times to see trains passing one after another.

Maurya reached the spot at

11 am where bhoomi puja was performed and then foundation stone was laid for the construction of this 800 metre railway bridge. This over bridge is scheduled to be lifted from the Irrigation department office on Buxi Bundh, and it will come down near the Children Hospital crossing, Hashimpur Road.

A good number of railway over bridges had been promised by the government in Prayagraj, and many of them have become operative including the ambitious Rambagh one, but for certain reasons this Buxi Bundh and the IERT over bridge projects had been swept under the carpet. Now with the

foundation laying of this Buxi Bundh over bridge, the local residents have pinned their hopes on early bhoomi puja of the proposed IERT over bridge.

JUHI BAGS AWARD: All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi for Technical Book Publishing Award Scheme in Hindi, Dr Juhi Shukla has been conferred this award alone for arts across India and the state, for which she was awarded a certificate, a cheque for ₹2 lakh, a shawl, and a green citation. This award was given to six persons from India in different fields including Geology, Environment, Mathematics,

Computer. Dr Juhi Shukla's 'Chitrakala ke Muladhara (vividh paksh) Fundamentals of Painting' (Miscellaneous aspects) which is about 300 pages of manuscript for art technique brought her this award.

PSYCHO KILLER HELD: A psycho killer Ramesh Passi has been arrested by the Kydganj police of Prayagraj on Wednesday. He had killed people without reason in Kydganj and Shankargarh areas of the district. The police recovered a sickle and a lathi from his possession.

According to the police Ramesh is mentally unsound.

Three charred to death as car catches fire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A car turned into a fire ball after an accident. Three totally charred bodies were taken out from this white WagonR near Jawain Canal in the trans-Yamuna area of Koraon in the early morning hours on Wednesday. The car had dashed against a babool tree before the fire which swallowed three lives.

The local residents woke up listening to the ear deafening impact. When they reached the spot the car was engulfed by the towering flames and people inside had lost all their movements. The police and fire brigade were informed, while the locals tried their best to douse the fire. When the fire was brought under control and

efforts were made to open the car doors, three completely charred bodies were found there. It was difficult, rather impossible to identify the accident victims.

The police tried to trace out the owner of the car through the chassis number, because the number plate had melted in fire. After tiring efforts the police could identify Anil Singh, and the driver Pintu Bharatiya. Anil Singh of Mahuari village under the Industrial Area police station of Naini was the owner of the car. He had fractured his arm, so the car was driven by Pintu Bharatiya. They had been to a marriage function, from where they were returning in early morning hours when this accident took place.

The police are suspecting

that the third person in the car might be the wife of Pintu, who is missing and the villagers are unable to tell about her whereabouts.

NCR EARNS FREIGHT REVENUE OF ₹ 1002.21 CR: North Central Railway also focusing on non-fare sources of revenue earning. As on November 17 2020, North Central Railway has earned originating freight revenue of ₹ 1002.21 crore in current financial year which is approximately ₹160 crore plus as compared to originating freight revenue in corresponding period of last financial year.

Besides continuing this positive trend in originating freight earning and minimising shortfall in revenue from passenger segment, North

Central Railway is also making all-round efforts to maximise revenue in non-fare revenue segment.

Till October in the current financial year, North Central Railway has earned revenue of ₹17.33 crore from licensing fee of railway land being used by non railway entities, inspection and maintenance charges of private sidings, way leave charges etc.

Similarly, revenue of ₹ 77.39 crore has been earned from sale of Railway scrap till October in current financial year.

Earning from all fare and non-fare sources are being monitored on daily basis and every possible step is being taken to maximise overall revenue generation on North Central Railway.

Mela police plan to set up 24 ghats for bathing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Preparations for Magh Mela have started in earnest with the mela police administration planning to set-up 24 ghats for bathing purpose of the devotees. The step was taken to promote social distancing in the mela in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Magh Mela will be commencing from January 14, 2021.

The police have also decided to conduct deepwater barricading up to five-kilometre on the banks of Sangam, so that the devotees and pilgrims get enough space for bathing. Mela police have also drafted a plan to set up a three km long river line for better movement of the boats.

The seers and saints, along with the mela police on Monday held a bhoomi puja on the site of the mela amid the recitation of shlokas and mantras. Beginning from today, the department would start setting up the reserve police line along with camp offices at the Magh Mela site.

About 13 police stations and 36 outposts would be set up as part of crowd management and security plans. The police department has also been to follow as well as enforce all COVID-19 safety norms like maintaining social distancing, wearing masks and checking daily sanitisation during the mela. Plans to deploy motorboat and water ambulances in the forthcoming Magh Mela is

also under discussion, said incharge of Jal Police, Kadedin Yadav.

A three-kilometre long river line will be set up from New Yamuna bridge to Sangam for deployment and ferrying of boats. Mela police have also drafted a plan to make an adequate arrangement at Airl ghat. The Jal police have sought four companies of flood PAC, 80 swimmers, one company each of NDRF and SDRF and adequate police forces for the safety and security of pilgrims arriving for the mela.

YOUTH SHOT AT, INJURED BY FRIEND: A sensational case has come to light on Tuesday evening in Veerashapur village, under the Sangpur police station of Pratapgarh district. A 27-year-old youth was shot at and injured by his friend over some trivial issue. On receipt of information, police reached the spot and got him admitted to the community health centre from where he was referred to the city's SRN Hospital after his condition deteriorated. The doctors of the hospital stated his condition was precarious.

Ramesh Verma (27) was standing in the street next to his house. Then his friend came and a dispute ensued between them over some trivial issues. After this Ramesh's friend shot him and injured. Ramesh fell on the ground bleeding profusely.

People around heard the sound of firing. The injured

Ramesh was taken to CHC where his condition became critical, doctors referred him to SRN Hospital of Prayagraj after first aid. Police are investigating the case.

Ramesh Verma, resident of Veerashapur village, under the Sangpur police station in the district, was standing in a street next to the house at around 8.30 pm on Tuesday. Then Shivam Singh, a resident of his village, also came there. They were having a conversation. After some time, there was an argument between them. During a verbal duel, Ramesh's friend shot at him. The bullet hit Ramesh's right shoulder and he fell on the ground bleeding profusely.

The firing caused panic in the village. Nearby people rushed to the spot where Ramesh was lying on the ground in a pool of blood. He was brought to the district hospital from CHC in a hurry. He was then referred to the Prayagraj's SRN Hospital after first aid at the district hospital.

BHARAT DARSHAN TRAIN REACHES SANGAM: Tourism services have already embarked upon in Unlock-5. On Tuesday, the Bharat Darshan train run by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) reached Sangam from Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu). Here the travelers took a bath in the Sangam. After this, the train left for Jabalpur. 002769 Bharat Darshan

train departs from Tirunelveli on November 12. This train after doing the rounds of Gaya and Varanasi reached Prayagraj Sangam at around 10:30 am. Ten buses plying outside the railway station brought the passengers to Sangam. Here they took a bath and made charity. After that these buses reached Prayagraj Junction again. The train left at 3:30. The train reached Tirunelveli on November 18 via Jabalpur, Satna and Itarsi. The total eight-day and seven-night package fare was ₹ 7,573. The package included breakfast, lunch and dinner, travel by local buses and lodging in Dharamshalas etc.

The last time passengers of this train came was in the first February of the corona period. Apart from the Sangam bath, the pilgrims were seen at Anand Bhawan, Bade Hanuman Temple and Shringerpur Dham. However, this time due to the COVID-19, the passengers were not brought to these places for the purpose of being vigilant.

A quarantine coach has been reserved to quarantine a person in the coach when he shows signs of corona during the journey. The Regional Manager of IRCTC said that a total of 480 passengers came in this sleeper class car. All coaches are being sanitised from time to time. Apart from this, the temperature of passengers is also being measured four times in a day, he added.



A signature campaign was oraganised by Childline titled" Childline se Dosti" to protest child labour on Wednesday.

Pioneer

Surge in COVID-19 cases in three Kanpur areas

Administration orders targeted sampling

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Development Officer Mahendra Kumar Singh on Wednesday said recently it had come to light that fresh COVID-19 cases were surfacing in the city and they were being reported from three prominent areas like Kalyanpur, Kidwai Nagar and Rambagh.

He said to keep the sudden rise in the spread of novel coronavirus under control, targeted sampling had been ordered.

He said as per the district administration directives, places where the COVID-19 cases were emerging would be monitored by a special surveillance team to be headed by the corporator of that particular area and have ANM and ASHA workers as part of the teams.

He said as part of the special monitoring, the RRT team of UHM Hospital was also being monitored to ensure that it was working in the desired manner.

131 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 131 more coronavirus positive cases on Wednesday evening. Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 131 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Tuesday evening and Wednesday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 29,294 cases. He said that 32 cases were discharged from hospital. He said four COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Wednesday evening keeping the death toll to 761. The CMO said at present 924 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 4916 samples were sent for testing in the city.

He said 20 RRT teams had been sent to the areas from where sudden emergence of COVID-19 cases had been reported.

He added that all the RRT teams had been assigned specific targets that they had to take at least 10 Covid samples per day.

He said COVID-19 patients who were hospitalised in different cities had used their Aadhaar card and thus it was showing Kanpur as the base city.

He said it had been decided that all those using Aadhaar cards need to provide alternative mobile number as well.

One of the team head, Krishna Dwivedi, said a case from Kanpur had been admitted to a hospital at Faridabad but in the record the local address was being shown.

He said special care was being taken to ensure that the three areas were put under special surveillance.

He said the district administration would be monitoring

the three area for the next couple of days and if the number of COVID-19 cases continued to rise, the district administration would seal the entire area concerned.

He said use of mask was being implemented more strictly and added that the police had been issued directives to ensure that if any person was found to be moving in a public place without a mask then strict action be taken against the violator.

Dr Singh said the team at the district administration level would be monitoring the private and government hospitals to see if the COVID-19 patients were being treated as per the protocol. He said all the private hospitals which did not possess the required infrastructure to treat COVID-19 patients would not be allowed to treat novel coronavirus positive patients.

He said people were being advised that in case of violation of norms by the private hospitals it should be brought to the notice of the district administration.

ALIMCO offers online facility for senior citizens

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) with the assistance of Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has launched online facility for senior citizens in a virtual programme organised on Wednesday.

Senior citizens can now avail of the online facility from the 10 centres of the country, including ALIMCO.

Under the new facility, they can get equipment as per their needs directly from ALIMCO against submission of their eligibility certificate. The BPL card holders or other needy persons can also get the benefit under this facility.

So far, this facility was available in special camps only.

Equipment provided by the ALIMCO include ordinary walking stick, wheelchair, hearing aid, mobile, spectacles etc.

During the virtual launch, Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry Additional Secretary Upma Srivastava, ALIMCO CMD DR Sarin and officers of other centres were present.

At the ALIMCO headquarters here, over a dozen beneficiaries were given equipment on Wednesday.

At the prosthetics and orthotics centre, senior citizens were examined and given equipment according to their requirements.

ALIMCO media incharge Sumit Tewari said due to COVID-19 pandemic, many equipment, including denture and goggles, would be distributed in due course as it was difficult to maintain physical distance now.

Indonesia seeks NSI help to develop its sugar industry

KANPUR (PNS): Indonesia has sought support of National Sugar Institute at Kanpur for taking its sugar industry forward.

The matter was discussed through video-conferencing between National Sugar Institute-Kanpur Director Prof Narendra Mohan and Indonesian Sugar Research Institute Director Muhammad Mustangin on Wednesday.

The Indonesian delegation desired to know the role of the NSI in growth and development of the Indian sugar industry. Mustangin said Indonesian sugarcane and sugar production was much lower and to cope up with sugar requirements, the country was importing sugar from Thailand and India. He said since the National Sugar Institute at Kanpur had played a pivotal role in the development of Indian sugar industry, his country would like to develop its institute on a similar model. He said Indonesia was also looking forward towards seeking support of the NSI in identifying the grey areas and modernisation of Indonesian sugar industry so as to be self-sustainable. He added that Indonesia also wanted that the NSI help in conducting skill development programmes.

Addressing the webinar Prof Narendra Mohan highlighted various activities of the NSI and broad areas to work upon. He said Indonesia would have to work on all fronts — farm and factory productivity, utilisation of by-products, energy and water conservation. He said the sugarcane yield and sugar recovery in Indonesia was about 50-55 tonnes/hectare and about 8.5-9.00 percent respectively, which was about 30 percent lower in comparison to India. It may be mentioned here that Indonesia is producing only about 2.5 million tonnes of sugar as against its domestic consumption of about 7.0 million tonnes and there is tremendous scope for improving the Indonesian sugar industry. He said there was acute shortage of specifically trained manpower in Indonesian sugar industry and thus the NSI could address the issue by conducting customised training programmes for in-service personnel.

Gkp-Hatia puja spl from tomorrow

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration has decided to run the 05028/05027 Gorakhpur-Hatia-Gorakhpur puja special train keeping in mind the rush of passengers during the forthcoming festivals. All coaches in this train will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said. The 05028 Gorakhpur-Hatia special train from November 20 to 30 in 11 trips will depart from Gorakhpur at 07:25 hours daily, from Chauri Chaura at 07:50 hours, from Gauri Bazar at 08:03 hours, from Deoria Sadar at 08:20 hours, from Bhatni Jn at 08:50 hours, from Bhatpar Rani at 09:02 hours, from Mairwa at 09:23 hours, from Siwan Junction at 09:50 hours, from Duraundha Jn at 10:05 hours, from Ekma at 10:23 hours, from Chhapra Jn at 11:30 hours, from Dighwara at 12:08 hours, from Sonpur at 12:45 hours, from Hajipur at 13:00 hours, from Bhagwanpur at 13:30 hours, from Goraul at 13:38 hours, from Muzaffarpur at 14:25 hours, from Dholi at 14:47 hours, from Khudiram Bose Pusa at 15:03 hours, from Samastipur at 16:05 hours, from Dalsinghsarai at 20:06 hours, from Bachwara at 17:03 hours, from Barauni at 18:35 hours, from Hathidah Upper at 19:08 hours, from Lakhisarai at 10:06 hours, from Kul at 20:20 hours, from Jamui at 20:50 hrs, from Jhajha at 22:18 hrs, from Jasidih

at 23.56 hours, from Madhupur at 23.25 hours, from Vidyasagar at 23.45 hours, on second day from Chittaranjan at 00.13 hours, from Kumardubi at 01.00 hrs, from Dhanbad at 02.43 hours, from Katrasgarh at 03.14 hrs, from Chandrapur at 04.30 hrs , from Bokaro Steel City at 05.10 hrs, from Kotshila at 05.40 hrs, from Jhalida at 05.53 hrs, from Muri at 06.20 hrs and arrive at Hatia at 08.10 hours. During the return journey, the 05027 Hatia-Gorakhpur special train will from November 21 to December 1 in 11 trips departs from Hatia at 16:50 hrs daily, from Ranchi Junction at 17.15 hrs, from Muri at 18.30 hrs, from Jhalida at 18.50 hrs, from Kotshila at 19.08 hrs, from Bokaro Steel City at 19.50 hrs, from Chandrapura at 20.25 hrs, from Katrasgarh at 21.02 hrs, from Dhanbad at 22.05 hrs, from Kumardubi at 22.47 hrs, from Barkar at 22.53 hrs, from Kulti at 23.11 hrs, from Chittaranjan at 23.41 hrs, on second day from Madhupur at 00.33 hrs, from Jasidih at 01.03 hrs, from Jhajha at 02.15 hrs, from Jamui at 02.34 hrs, from Kul at 03.05 hrs, from Lakhisarai at 03.11 hrs, from Hathida Upper at 04.01 hrs, from Barauni at 05.20 hrs, from Bachwara at 05.41 hrs, from Dalsinghsarai at 05.54 hrs, from Samastipur at 06.50 hrs, from Khudiram Bose Pusa at 07.11 hrs, from Dholi at 07.23 hrs, from Muzaffarpur at 08.10 hrs, from Goraul at 08.44 hrs, from Bhagwanpur at 08.57 hrs, from Hajipur at 09.55 hrs, from Sonpur at 10.10 hrs, from

Dighwara at 10.33 hrs, from Chhapra at 12.10 hrs, from Ekma at 12.33 hrs, from Duraundha at 12.51 hrs , from Siwan at 13.15 hrs, from Mairwa at 13.40 hrs, from Bhatparani at 14.06 hrs, from Bhatni at 14.50 hrs, from Deoria Sadar at 15.15 hrs, from Gauribazar at 16.00 hours, from Chauri Chaura at 16.10 hours and reach Gorakhpur at 17.25 hours. A total of 17 coaches, including nine of general second class, four of sleeper class, two of air-conditioned third and two of SLR/D will be attached in the train.

PUJA SPECIAL: The railway administration has decided to run 04022/04021 Anand Vihar Terminus-Muzaffarpur-Anand Vihar Terminus puja special train for additional convenience of passengers on the occasion of Chhath festival. All coaches in this train will be of reserved category and passengers will have to follow the Covid-19 guidelines, CPRO said. The 04021 Muzaffarpur-Anand Vihar Terminus puja special train will on November 19 depart from Muzaffarpur at 15.00 hours, from Hajipur at 16.15 hours, from Chhapra at 17.35 hrs, from Gorakhpur at 20.35 hrs, on the second day from Sitapur at 02.00 hours, from Bareilly at 05.32 hours, from Moradabad at 07.10 hours, and reach Anand Vihar Terminus at 10.00 hours. A total of 22 coaches, including 10 of general second class, eight of sleeper class, two of air-conditioned third and two of SLR/D will be attached in it.

Lucknow Jn-New Delhi Tejas to remain cancelled from Nov 23

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

As per a decision taken by the railway administration, the run of 82501/82502 Lucknow Jn-New Delhi-Lucknow Jn Tejas train will remain cancelled from November 23 till further notice, CPRO PK Singh said.

BLOCK TAKEN: On North Eastern Railway's (NER)'s Gorakhpur-Deoria Sadar section on November 18 and 19 between Sardaranagar and Chauri Chaura stations on level crossing number No 149 special and on November 22 and 23 between Chauri Chaura and Gauribazar stations on level crossing No 145-E a block has been taken due to the girder launch.

Consequently, the following trains will be run on diverted routes, CPRO PK Singh said. The 04185 Gwalior-Barauni special will on November 18, 19, 22 and 23 will run via the diverted route Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. The 04186 Barauni-Gwalior special on November 18, 19, 22 and 23 will be run via the diverted route Siwan-Thawe-Kaptanganj-Gorakhpur Cantt. The 02566 New Delhi-Darbhanga special will on November 18, 19, 22 and 23 be diverted via Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. The 04030 Delhi-

Muzaffarpur special train will on November 19 and 22 run via Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. The 04654 Amritsar-New Jalpaiguri special will on November 19 be diverted via Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan. The 00485 Jodhpur-Guwahati special will on November 23 be diverted via Gorakhpur Cantt-Kaptanganj-Thawe-Siwan.

GIRL HANDED OVER TO KIN: Railway Protection Force (RPF), North Eastern Railway (NER), makes constant efforts to protect passengers and provide them better travel facilities. In the same sequence, a 12-year-old girl had boarded the train No 04673 from Chhapra Jn alone while her family members were left at the station. However, the RPF post, Siwan, got the girl down at the Siwan railway station and handed her over to her family members. Similarly, a woman passenger travelling on train No 02004 left her mobile phone in the train which the RPF post, Lucknow, got and handed over to her brother. Meanwhile a nearly eight-year-old girl was found crying at the Gorakhpur railway station by RPF post, Gorakhpur. She was handed over to her parents by the RPF, Gorakhpur, through Child Line, Gorakhpur. Besides an

unclaimed suitcase was found in train No 05160 by the RPF maintenance team which was handed over to the passenger concerned through the RPF Aunrihar. Likewise the RPF maintenance team found unclaimed luggage in train No -02564 and handed it over to the passenger concerned. Besides the unclaimed luggage found by the RPF maintenance team in train No 02220 was handed it to the passenger concerned on information received from the helpline No 182. On the other hand, the RPF Azamgarh arrested two persons in a case of illegal tickets, recovered one e-ticket and two counter tickets from their shop and took action against them. The RPF Farrukhabad arrested two persons red-handed along with 14 drum railway signal cables worth ₹3 lakh. Necessary action was taken by arresting a railway personnel and another person involved in the case. Similarly the RPF Lucknow, recently got the luggage of a woman passenger which was left by her while travelling in train number 05007 and handed it over to it. On information received from the RPF Helpline No. 182 a hand purse which was left in the train No 02436 was recovered and handed over to the passenger concerned.

Chhath festival begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The four-day Chhath festival commenced on Wednesday under strict surveillance.

Kanpur Municipal Commissioner Akshay Tripathi personally supervised the arrangements made for the festival. He said the crowd which assembled were not allowed to violate the COVID-19 protocol.

He said children and aged persons had been barred from entering the places where the Chhath puja was to be performed.

He said that no cultural function was allowed at the ghats or at the canals where the puja rituals were to be performed.

He said special teams had been deployed at various ghats to ensure that not more than five people were in one boat.

He said people had been advised to remain in their containment zones and perform puja at their respective homes.

He said the community members had been roped in to ensure that the norms were not violated as new novel coronavirus positive cases had suddenly started increasing for the past couple of days and the district administration had taken it seriously.

It may be mentioned that Chhath is the most important festival of Biharis and Kanpur Nagar has over 10 lakh Biharis spread out all over the city.

The festival will continue for three consecutive days. The first day, celebrated as Nahay Khay, heralds the beginning of the festival, followed by khar-na which is a day of fasting for women in which not even a drop of water is consumed by

women.

The third day is offering obeisance to sunset where both men and women together stand in water and offer ardhya.

The last day is usha ardhya in which sunrise is worshipped with consumption of special delicacies made for the occasion.

This then marks the closing of the festival. Prominent places where the Chhath puja was performed were Armapore, Panki, Dabauli, Gujaini, CTI and Naubasta.

Over a dozen passengers hurt as bus overturns



Private bus overturned in a pit in Ghatampur police area on Wednesday morning.

Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Over a dozen passengers, including some girl students, were injured when a private bus (UP71 C 8737) overturned and fell into a pit near Madri village under Ghatampur police station on

Wednesday morning.

The bus was going from Jafarganj in Fatehpur to Ghatampur and there were 25 passengers, including six girl students of Sardar Patel Inter College, in it.

The villagers rescued 15 passengers trapped in the bus

by the time police arrived.

According to the villagers, the bus was running in high speed and slipped as the driver applied brake due to the slit on the road and footpath after the heavy downpour. Injured students Priyanshi, Saloni, Rakhi and passengers Nuraina, Ayan,

Laxmi, Bachhraj, Kanti and Suresh Prajapati were admitted to a local private nursing home while three others were taken to the community health centre in Amauli. College principal said the students had gone to Amauli for Aadhaar card registration.

Maha Cong slams BJP’s ‘Cong part of Gupkar alliance’ charge

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Congress on Wednesday slammed the Opposition BJP over its former Chief Minister and senior party leader Devendra Fadnavis’ claim that the Sonia Gandhi-led party was backing the Gupkar agenda and demanded to know why the BJP did not quit the Jammu & Kashmir Government in 2017 when then Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti made controversial statements about Indian tri-colour.

Reacting to Fadnavis’ charge that the Congress was part of the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) which was demanding the reintroduction of Article 370 in the Constitution, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president and senior State minister Balasaheb Thorat charged that Fadnavis was trying to “mislead” people with a “false allegation” about his party’s involvement in the PAGD.

“The Congress was at the forefront of the Independence struggle. Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and other leaders have laid down their lives for the country. Patriotism in the

Congress’ DNA. No one should teach patriotism, least of it an organisation that supported the British during the freedom struggle. Mehbooba has made a controversial statement about national tri-colour. Fadnavis, who is part of RSS that had hoisted the national flag for 52 long years, is now talking about Mehbooba’s controversial remark,” Thorat said.

Thorat reminded that Mehbooba had made a similar controversial statement about the Indian national flag when she was the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir in 2017. “At that time, the BJP was part of the Mehbooba government in J & K. Then the Congress had demanded the resignation of Mehbooba as the chief minister then. Why did the BJP not quit the J & K government? The same BJP is now speaking against Mehbooba and making all kinds of false allegations against the Congress,” the State Congress chief said.

State Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant came down heavily against Fadnavis for the BJP’s “double-speak”. Through a tweet, Sawant asked the senior BJP leader: “Hon’ble Fadnavis ji, do you

have any explanation for the remarks of Mehbooba Mufti in 2017 when you were in power with her and she was CM? BJP did not leave the alliance then”.

Sawant recalled that the Congress had on July 30, 2017 demanded then Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti’s resignation over her flag remarks, saying no had the right to insult the tricolour.

“At that time, the Congress had said that Mehbooba had hurt the sentiments of the people and asked the BJP to explain what kind of freedom is being advocated by their coalition partner (PDP) in the Jammu and Kashmir government and the chief minister,” Sawant said “At that time, we had said that Mehbooba has no right to quote the example of the national flag in any form and hurt the nationalist sentiments by insulting it, what so ever may be her reasoning or context,” Sawant said.

Earlier talking to media persons attending the BJP’s Mumbai Executive Committee meeting held here, Fadnavis said: “Several parties have come together in Jammu and Kashmir under

the banner of the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD). Surprisingly, the Congress is also part of the PAGD. We would like to know if the Congress agrees with the Gupkar agenda”.

“The Congress is joining alliance with people who are making anti national statements and are supporting separatists,” Fadnavis said.

Hitting out at former chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba, Fadnavis said: “Abdullah says with help of China they will restore Article 370 in the Constitution. I am surprised such a senior leader is saying such a thing. It is quite disheartening Mufti says that if the Kashmir flag is not restored the Tiranga would not be hoisted in Jammu Kashmir”.

Justifying the BJP’s alliance with the PDP earlier, Fadnavis said: “The coming together of the BJP and PDP was a strategic alliance as Pakistan used to allege we cannot have democracy so we did that. Till PDP was with us they couldn’t dare to insult the flag now when they are doing so Congress is supporting them”.

Shah, Nadda to visit Bengal multiple times till polls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Taking the poll plunge tad early the BJP has decided to bring two of its topmost leaders to Bengal every month. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda have decided to take turns visiting Bengal several times every month till the end of the next year’s Assembly elections for which the saffron outfit has set a “bull’s eye-target” of “200-plus” seats out 294.

“We have been told that our national president JP Nadda ji will visit Bengal thrice and Amit Shah ji will come to our State twice every ... but the dates have not been finalized... We will announce the dates of their visit subsequently... naturally the party workers will be energized by their visit,” State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said.

The party top brass have handpicked senior BJP leaders Sunil Deodhar,

Vinod Tawde, Dushyant Gautam, Harish Dwivedi and Vinod Sonkar to supervise organization and campaigning in North Bengal, Rarh Banga

(Purulia-Bankura-Birbhum districts), Krishnagar-Nabadwip, Midnapore and Kolkata organisational zones in that order.

Meanwhile, reacting to the BJP’s declaration of winning 200-plus seats Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that the saffron outfit was trying to create disturbance in an otherwise peaceful state by importing outsiders who have no inkling of Bengali culture.

“Outsiders (read BJP central leaders) are being sent to Bengal to disturb the peace in this State,” Banerjee said while her party MP Sukhendu Shekhar Roy called BJP’s 200-plus seat target a “day dream”.

Roy said “there are some parties who are saying that as they have won 19 seats in 2019 Lok Sabha elections they will come to power in Bengal in 2021... but I must remind them how the Congress got 16 parliamentary seats from Bengal in 1984 but two years later in the Assembly elections they managed only 42 seats which can be translated to 6 Lok Sabha seats... so these parties should stop day-dreaming and creating disturbance in Bengal by bringing outsiders.”

Elsewhere in another incident of political killing a BJP workers was beaten to death by alleged Trinamool Congress men in Coochbehar district of North Bengal. The incident occurred during immersion of idols of Goddess Kali in Tufanganj area, sources said. The TMC has denied the allegations.

The victim a BJP booth secretary Kalachand Karmakar (55) was trying to pacify the members of the two clubs who were involved in a brawl. In the process he was badly beaten up, sources alleged saying he died in the hospital.

COMMUNAL TENSIONS, HATE SPREAD CASE

Mumbai cops summon Kangana, Rangoli for questioning next week

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After their failure to appear before them for questioning on two earlier occasions, the Mumbai police on Wednesday issued third summons to Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel to appear before them on November and 23 and 24 in connection with the investigations into an FIR registered against them for allegedly creating “hatred” and “communal tensions” between Hindus and Muslims.

In fresh summons issued to the two sisters, the Bandra police summoned Kangana to appear before them on November 23, while they asked Rangoli to remain present at the police station for questioning on November 24.

This time around, the Bandra police have also summoned Kangana’s aide Amruta Dutta for questioning in the same case on November 25.

The Bandra police had issued first summons to Kangana and her sister Rangoli on October 26 and 27. However, the two sisters had bought time from the police by saying that they would not be able to respond to the summons as they were busy with their brother’s wedding. Subsequently, the Bandra police issued fresh summons to Kangana and Rangoli to appear before them on November 10 and 11.

Apart from facing the charge creating “hatred” and “communal tensions” between Hindus and Muslims, the two sisters also face the allegation of attempting to trigger disaf-

fection among the people against the Maharashtra government. In addition, Munawwarali Sahil A Sayyed – on whose complaint a case has been registered against Kangana and Rangoli—has also accused the two sisters of indulging in sedition (section 124 A of IPC). Complainant Sayyed’s was recorded by the Bandra police last month. It may be recalled that on October 17, the Bandra police had registered FIR against Kangana and Rangoli after Metropolitan Magistrate Jaidev Ghule of Bandra 12th court ordered investigations under section 156(3) of CrPC into a complaint filed against Kangana and her sister Rangoli Chandel by Bollywood casting director and fitness trainer Munawwarali alias Sahil A. Sayyed.

Sayyed had among other things alleged that both Kangana and Rangoli had ad tried to create “hatred” and “communal tensions” between Hindus and Muslims and that Kangana had tried to lower the image of Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and created disaffection among the people against the Maharashtra government.

“Perused the complaint, heard the advocate of the complainant along with the documents filed on record. On prima facie perusal of complaint and submission I have found a cognizable offence has been committed by the accused,” Magistrate Ghule had noted, while directing the Bandra police to register an FIR against Kangana and her sister Rangoli.

“All allegations are based upon comment on electronic media that is twitter and interviews. The accused used social media like twitter and thorough investigation is necessary by the expert. All offences alleged and levelled against the accused are cognizable. Search and seizure is necessary in this case, in such circumstances I have found it to be proper to pass order under Section 156(3) of CrPC,” the Magistrate had ruled.

Among other things, the section 156(3) of CrPC read with section 190 empowers to Magistrate – upon receiving a complaint of facts and upon information received from any person other than a police officer, or upon his own knowledge that such an offence has been committed any magistrate empowered under 190 can order an investigation to into a complaint.

Apart from trying to create “hatred” and “communal tensions” between Hindus and Muslims, the complainant’s case is that the accused number 1 (Kangana) – through her one of her tweets – had allegedly tried to lower the image of chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and the state government agencies but also create disaffection among the common people against the Maharashtra government.

He alleged that Kangana had falsely portrayed a picture that the Maharashtra government was responsible for the demolition of some portions of her bungalow which were demolished by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which is

an autonomous body.

In his complaint filed before the metropolitan magistrate’s court under 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence; language etc, Sayeed charged that Kangana was “creating” divisions between Hindu and Muslim artists. He also alleged that Kangana was “maliciously bringing religion in almost all her tweets and went onto give examples like lynching of Hindu Sadhus at Palghar, calling the BMC as “Babur Sena” and claiming that she was the first person to make a movie on Chhatrapati Shivaji Mahajan and Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi.

“She has gone to such an extent that she has blamed Jamaatis for spreading corona virus etc, thereby trying to create hatred and communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims. She is well aware that she is a well known actress and has a big fan base so her tweets will be seen and will reach to many people,” Sayyed had told the court in his complaint.

In the case of Kangana’s sister (accused number 2) Rangoli Chandel who is her sister as well as her manager, the complainant had alleged that Rangoli had made an objectionable tweet to spread communal hatred and animosity amongst Hindus and Muslim community through her tweet “ Make the Mullas and secular media stand in line and shoot them down, F---k, the history may call us Naazis who cares”.

Congress, LF approach Muslim religious leaders against AIMIM

Kolkata: The Left Front and Congress Committee president Adhir Chowdhury and state Opposition Leader Abdul Mannan met Muslim religious leader Toha Siddique of Furfura Sharief and appealed to the community to stand by the secular forces.

Calling the AIMIM a B Team of the BJP Chowdhury also the Congress leader in Lok Sabha said, “We met Toha Siddique and appealed to the minority community through him not to get confused by the forces who are B-team of the

BJP” Alleging that AIMIM chief Asadudding Owaisi’s sole aim was to divide the minority votes in Bengal, Chowdhury iterated “AIMIM is the B-team of the BJP, whose sole aim is to divide the Muslim votes and cause damage to the secular parties.”

AIMIM have been eyeing 35 out of the 76 seats which the Left-Congress alliance had won from Malda, Murshidabad and North Dinajpur in 2016 Assembly elections. “AIMIM’s main target is not Trinamool Congress --- and definitely not

the BJP --- but the Left-Congress alliance which are really fighting the saffron communalism in India,” a senior Congress leader said. According to pollsters the minorities create a deciding edge in about 125 seats in the State.

In a related development the State Chief Electoral Office in response to an Election Commission’s query has informed the top poll panel that it will need adequate number of central forces to conduct the next year’s elections. *PNS*

5 lakh challans issued to mask rule violators in Delhi

New Delhi: Intensifying their vigil in markets and public places, the Delhi Police issued 1,712 ‘challans’ on Wednesday for violation mask rules, taking the total figure on this count till date to 492,380.

Fines for violating mask rules tops the number of challans issued on various other violations like spitting or social distancing violation.

The total number of challans issued for spitting has been 3,326 and a total of 36,855 challans were issued to

those found violating social distancing norms till date, according to the Delhi Police data. A total of 532,573 challans have been issued for various violations of Covid guidelines.

The Delhi Police is also recording the violation to eliminate any dispute or claim by the offender later. Major eemphasis is being kept on busy markets, like Sadar Bazar, Lajpat Nagar, Sarojini Nagar and many others, which attract heavy footfall. November is turning out to be the most challenging



month for the national capital in managing the Covid-19 pandemic. As the city added a humongous amount of cases and deaths amid the festive season, an alarming 20 per cent of cases and 16 per cent of deaths have occurred in only 17 days of this month so far. As per official records, 103,228 cases and 1,250 deaths due to corona have been reported between November 1-16 while 4,147 patients recovered during the same period. Last seven days alone saw 44,210 cases and 823 fatalities.

Deaths in Maha go up to 100, infections 5,011

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After the downward Covid-19 trend witnessed for the past five days, the Coronavirus deaths shot up to 100 on Wednesday, while 5,011 people tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of Maharashtra.

A day after the Covid-19 deaths plunged to 68 deaths and infections dropped to 2840, there was once again a spurt in the deaths and infections in the state.

With 100 fresh deaths reported on Wednesday, the total Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra mounted from 46,102 to 46,202.

Similarly, with 5011 fresh infections, the total infections in the state jumped from 17,52,509 to 17,57,520.

As 6,608 more people were discharged from various hospitals the number of people discharged from the hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year went up to 16,30,111 The recovery rate in the state rose marginally from 92.64 per cent to 92.75 per cent.

Of the 100 deaths reported, Pune accounted for a maximum of 19 deaths, followed by 16 deaths in Mumbai, 8 each in Solapur and Nagpur, 7 in Nashik, 6 in Bhandara, 5 each in Thane and Chandrapur, 4 in Satara, 3 each in Raigad, Jalgaon, Beed and Yavatmal, 2 in Palghar and one death each in Nandurbar, Kolhapur, Sangli, Latur, Osmanabad, Nanded and Buldhana. In addition, one person from outside the state



died in Maharashtra.

With 16 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 in Mumbai climbed from 10,599 to 10,615, while the infected cases rose by 871

to trigger a jump in the total infections from 270,660 to 271,531. Meanwhile, the number of “active cases” total cases rose from 81,925 to 80,221.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

Tender Notice No. 5120202021 **E-TENDER NOTICE** **Date 16.11.2020**

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering) /North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India. Invites E-Tenders by Two Packet System on prescribed form for the following work up to 13:30 hrs. on the tender opening date. The details of the Tender are as under:-

SN	Tender No.	Name of work	Approx Cost	Earnest Money
1	153	Formation Widening and Miscellaneous works in connection with 160 kmph in the section of ADEN/MZP.	₹ 395.17 Lac	₹ 3,47,600.00
2	154	Combined work of Formation widening & Miscellaneous works in connection with 160 kmph and cess repairs & Miscellaneous work in CAR-CPU section under ADEN/CAR.	₹ 317.64 Lac	₹ 3,08,800.00

Completion Period:24 Months, **Date of Opening of tender:**16.12.2020, **Eligibility Criteria for similar work:**Earth worn in formation

Note:-1. E-Tender forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. 2. The complete information along with tender document of above E-tenders are available on Website www.ireps.gov.in up to 13.30 on the due date of tender opening. 3. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 4. Rates entered into financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entry in any other form/latter head if attached by vendors shall be straightaway ignored and shall not be considered. 5. The tenderers shall submit a certificate as given in tender document as "Annexure" in standard format without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. 6. The supplier/contractor of goods and/or services would be subject to GST Act and Rules as applicable from time to time. 7. Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body.8. This tender notice has also been uploaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in 9. Payment of earnest money deposit (EMD) in respect of e-tendering shall be accepted through bet banking or payment gateway only. 10. In case of any difficulty helpline available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 11.Tender on line can be submitted up to 13.30 hrs. of tender opening date. 12. The tender offer shall be made online through two packet system i.e., (i)Technical Bid & (ii) Financial Bid. 13. The Tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part-I) of GCC July, 2020 mandatorily, otherwise offer will be considered as incomplete offer and accordingly shall not be considered.

1228/20 (SP)

North central railways
 www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in
 @CPRONCR

BIHAR POLL DEBACLE

Adhir flays Sibal for introspection call



PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

Infighting within the Congress intensified on Wednesday with Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury slamming party colleague Kapil Sibal over his Bihar poll debacle introspection remark, saying those unhappy with the party's functioning are free to leave instead of embarrassing it in public. He lashed out at Sibal for "giving sermons from AC rooms" and said disgruntled members may join other parties or float their own outfits.

But then even former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram went public saying the party may have contested more seats in Bihar than it should have. "The Congress was given 25 seats where the BJP or its allies had been winning for 20 years. The Congress should have refused to contest from these seats.

The party should have fielded only 45 candidates," he said against the backdrop of Congress being billed as the weakest link in the RJD-led mahagathbandhan.

He, however, said: "I am more worried about the by-poll



results in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. These results show that the party either has no organisational presence on the ground or has been weakened considerably."

For his part, wondering why Sibal was not seen campaigning for the Congress during the Bihar elections, Chowdhury said, "Speaking without doing anything doesn't mean introspection."

"Kapil Sibal could have raised the issues inside a party forum instead of making such embarrassing remarks in public. He is a senior leader and has access to the party's top brass.

"Those who are unhappy with the functioning of the party have the freedom to form a new party or join one if they feel that the Congress is not the right place for them," Chowdhury, a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), told reporters here.

His comments came in the backdrop of Sibal criticising the Congress leadership

for the party's abysmal performance in the Bihar elections, where it bagged only 19 of the 70 seats it contested.

Sibal was part of a group of 23 senior Congress leaders who had written to party chief Sonia Gandhi in August, giving suggestions on ways to revive the grand old party.

"He seems to be very concerned about the Congress and its need for introspection. Earlier also he had spoken about it in public. But he was not seen campaigning for the party in the elections in Bihar or other states that went to polls last year.

"Instead of giving sermons sitting in AC rooms, he should work on the ground. Lecturing others without doing anything won't help. Only calling for introspection without doing anything on our own is of no use," Chowdhury said.

Senior Congress leader from Bihar, Tariq Anwar, an AICC general secretary, had earlier called for introspection.

Besides Chowdhury, other senior Congress leaders have also lashed out at those calling for introspection. While Rajasthan Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot had criticised Sibal, saying his statements had hurt the sentiments of party workers across the country, senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid has termed such colleagues "doubting Thomases" and said they suffer from periodic pangs of anxiety.

NIA raids PFI offices in Bengaluru

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at 43 locations in Bengaluru city including four offices of Social Democratic Party of India, political wing of Popular Front of India (PFI), relating to rioting and violent attacks on DJ Halli and K G Halli Police Stations in Bengaluru on August 11 this year. The searches yielded incriminating materials including weapons.

The cases pertain to large scale rioting by people armed with lethal weapons causing injuries to police personnel, destruction of public and private property including DJ Halli and KG Halli police station buildings and public and private vehicles. The riot led to fear and panic in the nearby areas and was intended to cause terror in the society.

"During the searches, incriminating materials relating to SDPI / PFI as well as certain instruments for attacks like sword, knife and iron rods among others were seized. The NIA said in a statement here.

Further investigation is going on in both the cases, the agency further said.

So far, 124 accused persons have been arrested in DJ Halli Police Station case and another 169 have been nabbed in connection with KG Halli Police Station case, it added.

The cases, FIR No. 195/2020, DJ Halli Police Station dated August 12 and FIR No. 229/ 2020, Police Station KG Halli of August 12 were re-registered as RC- 34/ 2020/ NIA/DLI and RC-35/ 2020/ NIA/ DLI respectively.

32% jump in daily Covid-19 infections in India in 24 hours



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With a 32 per cent one-day jump in the number of new coronavirus infections, India recorded 38,617 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the case load over 89 lakh on Wednesday.

India also saw 474 Covid-related deaths during the period, taking its overall fatalities to 1,30,993. So far, the country has recorded a total of 89.12 lakh Covid cases so far since the January outbreak.

However, in a breather, India's daily Covid-19 recoveries have outpaced the new infections for over 1.5 months now, while less than 50,000 fresh coronavirus cases have been reported for 11 straight days, said the Union Health Ministry.

A total 44,739 COVID-19 patients recovered the previous

day as against 38,617 new cases, it said.

This translates to a net reduction of 6,122 in the active Covid-19 caseload which now stands at 4,46,805 and comprises merely 5.01 per cent of the total cases as on date, it said.

"India has continued the unbroken trend of the daily new recoveries outpacing the daily new additions for more than 1.5 months. The country also reported less than 50,000 new daily cases for the eleventh continuous day," the Ministry said.

"Apart from the successful dissemination of COVID appropriate behaviour among the varied population groups, this trend assumes wider significance as many countries in Europe and America continue to see a surge in their Covid-19 positive numbers," it said.

The total recoveries surged to 83,35,109 on Wednesday, pushing the national recovery rate to 93.52 per cent.

According to the ministry, 10 States and Union Territories (UT) contributed 74.98 per cent of the new recoveries. Kerala saw the highest number of recoveries at 6,620. Maharashtra registered 5,123 daily recoveries, while Delhi reported 4,421 recoveries.

Ten states and UTs contributed 76.15 per cent of the 38,617 new cases. Delhi recorded 6,396 cases, Kerala 5,792 and West Bengal 3,654. Of the 474 fatalities reported the previous day, 78.9 per cent were from 10 States and UTs. With 99 deaths, Delhi reported 20.89 per cent of the new fatalities followed by Maharashtra (68 deaths) and West Bengal 52.

SC issues notice on pleas against election of Jaishankar to RS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notices on a batch of petitions challenging the election of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to Rajya Sabha from Gujarat.

The pleas have also raised the issue of Election Commission's power on issuance of separate notifications for holding by-polls for casual and regular vacancies in Rajya Sabha.

One of the petitions against Jaishankar has been filed by Congress leader Gaurav Pandya.

A bench comprising Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal that a date be fixed for hearing these matters.

"We will give you short date and it will be listed on non miscellaneous day," the bench said in a hearing conducted via video conferencing.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Jaishankar, accepted the notice.

Earlier, the top court had said that it would like to give an authoritative pronouncement on the issue of EC's power on issuance of separate notifications for holding by-polls for regular and casual elections to fill vacancies in Rajya Sabha.

The pleas pertained to 2019 Rajya Sabha by-poll on two seats from Gujarat and both seats were won by BJP candidates.

Nitish's richest colleague and Edu Min faces 4 serious cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the midst of a controversy, Bihar's Education Minister Mewa Lal Choudhary, the richest Minister in the Nitish Kumar Government Cabinet with assets worth ₹12.31 crore, has himself declared one criminal case and four serious cases against him.

Besides Choudhary, animal husbandry and fisheries minister Mukesh Sahni has declared five criminal cases and three cases of serious nature under the IPC. BJP's Jibesh Kumar has also declared five criminal cases and four cases of serious nature under the IPC. There are five others who have self-declared criminal cases of varying nature against them.

According to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), six (43 per cent) of the ministers have declared serious criminal cases against themselves, according to the ADR. Serious criminal

cases are non-bailable offences with over five years of imprisonment. Eight or 57 per cent of the ministers face criminal cases, it said. The ADR said that affidavits of two out of six ministers analysed from the JD(U), four out of six ministers analysed from the BJP, one minister analysed from the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and one from the Vikasheel Insaan Party show criminal cases against them.

As many as 13 (93 per cent) ministers are crorepatitis with their average assets pegged at Rs 3.93 crores while six (43 per cent) of them have declared serious criminal cases against themselves. Ashok Choudhary, is the minister with the lowest declared total assets worth Rs 72.89 lakh, it said. As many as 13 (93 per cent) are crorepatitis with their average assets pegged at Rs 3.93 crores, the report said.

According to the report, eight of the 14 newly sworn-in ministers in Bihar have

declared criminal cases against themselves. Four (29 per cent) ministers have declared their educational qualification to be between 8th and 12th standard, while 10 (71 per cent) ministers have declared having an educational qualification of graduate or above, the poll rights body said.

A total of six (43 per cent) ministers have declared their age to be between 41-50 years, while eight (57 per cent) ministers have declared their age to be between 51-75 years. Out of 14 ministers, two are women, it added. A 14-member council of ministers, headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, was on Monday sworn in by Governor Phagu Chauhan.

The Bihar assembly elections for 243 sets took place on October 28 (for 71 seats), November 3 (for 94 seats) and November 7 (for 78 seats). The National Democratic Alliance won the elections after securing majority.

Riyadh-New Delhi GoAir flight makes emergency landing at Karachi airport

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A GoAir flight was diverted and landed in Karachi International airport on November 17, due to a medical emergency with a passenger on board suffered cardiac arrest and later died. The original flight route was Riyadh-New Delhi.

A 30-year-old male passenger fainted and died of cardiac arrest on board flight G8-6658A. "The passenger was



administered all possible medical help on board. He was declared dead after landing at Karachi, Pakistan," an official said. After the emergency, the aircraft landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi early on November 18 and the body of the deceased has been brought to the national capital. There were 179 passengers in the plane.

In a statement on Wednesday, GoAir said the plane was diverted to Karachi airport due to a medical emergency onboard as a passenger reported unwell.

The airline's staff immediately attended to the passenger and he was administered with Cardio pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) till landing at Karachi airport, the release said.

"Upon arrival, a dedicated medical services team along with doctors and the airline's staff attended to the passenger, however, it was observed that the passenger had unfortunately succumbed, in spite of being administered with all necessary medical assistance," the statement said.

GoAir also said that it rendered all the requisite assistance to the passengers onboard and also provided the required assistance to the family of the deceased.

India pulled out of RCEP as concerns not addressed: Jaishankar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) last year as joining it would have resulted in fairly negative consequences for the country's economy, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

In an address at an online discussion organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies, Jaishankar also forcefully pressed for reform of the United Nations, saying one or two countries must not be allowed to halt the process for their "perpetual gain".

On the proposed free trade agreement between India and the European Union, Jaishankar said New Delhi was looking for a "fair and balanced" pact.

Asked about the RCEP, the external affairs minister said India withdrew from it as a number of key concerns flagged by it were not addressed.

His comments came three days after 15 Asia-Pacific economies signed the RCEP agreement creating the

world's largest free trade area.

"Essentially, we saw that a number of our key concerns were not addressed. We had to then take a call whether you enter a trade agreement if your major concerns are not addressed or do you take a call saying this is not in my interest," Jaishankar said during an online discussion organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies.

"We took a call that given the way it is currently, it is not in our interest to enter this agreement because it would have fairly immediate negative consequences for our own economy," he said.

The RCEP deal sealed on Sunday comprised 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and five of the bloc's dialogue partners -- China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

"Because you are negotiating does not mean you have to suspend your ability to calculate at the end of the negotiation. I think we made those calculations. Very frankly, what we did with regard to RCEP is not a generic position vis-a-vis

trade," said Jaishankar.

India was part of the RCEP negotiations for nearly seven years. The unresolved issues included inadequate protection against import surge, lack of credible assurances to India on market access, non-tariff barriers and possible circumvention of rules of origin by certain countries.

Referring to the long-pending India-EU free trade agreement (FTA), Jaishankar said: "We want a fair and balanced FTA", but added that what is fair and balanced is a subject of negotiation.

"I recognise that an FTA with Europe is not an easy negotiation, probably in the world, it must be the most difficult negotiation. It is a very high standard FTA," he said.

The FTA talks have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector.

Launched in June 2007, negotiations for the proposed agreement have witnessed many hurdles as both sides have major differences on crucial issues.

नगर विकास सहकारी बैंक लि					
पंजीकृत कार्यालय-162, रेलवे गंज, हरदोई-241001					
कब्जा नोटिस (अचल सम्पत्तियों के लिए)					
सेक्योरिटी इंजेशन एण्ड रिकॉन्स्ट्रक्शन ऑफ फाइनेंसियल एसेट्स एण्ड इनफोर्समेंट आफ सिक्युरिटी इंट्रेस्ट 2002 की धारा 13 (12) के साथ पंढित सेक्योरिटी इन्ट्रेस्ट (इनफोर्समेंट) नियमावली 2002 के नियम 8 एवं 9 में प्रदत्त शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुये खातों के सामने उल्लिखित तिथियों को बैंक के प्राधिकृत अधिकारी द्वारा डिमांड नोटिस जारी किया गया, जिनमें कहा गया था कि उक्त नोटिस के 60 दिन के भीतर बकाया राशि को चुकता कर दें। ऋणी/गारन्टर द्वारा बकाया राशि चुकता न कर सकने पर एतद्द्वारा ऋणी/गारन्टर एवं आम जनता को सूचित किया जाता है कि अधोहस्ताक्षरी ने खाते के सामने उल्लिखित तिथियों से उक्त अधिनियम की धारा 13 (4) के साथ नियम 8 एवं 9 के अन्तर्गत प्रदत्त शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुये नीचे उल्लिखित सम्पत्ति पर प्रतीकात्मक कब्जा कर लिया है। ऋणी/गारन्टर को विशेष रूप से एवं आम जनता को एतद्द्वारा सावधान किया जाता है कि इस सम्पत्तियों का किसी भी प्रकार से संव्यवहार न करें। सम्पत्तियों के सम्बन्ध में किया गया कोई भी संव्यवहार नगर विकास सहकारी बैंक लि को देय राशि व उस पर देय ब्याज व अन्य व्यय प्रभार के शर्तों के अधीन होगा। सम्पत्तियों का विवरण जिस पर प्रतीकात्मक कब्जा किया गया है।					
क्र. सं.	ऋणी का नाम एवं पता	सम्पत्ति का मालिक	बैंचक सम्पत्ति का विवरण	मौग नोटिस की तिथि तथा बकाया राशि (रु.)	कब्जा तिथि
1.	श्री विकास वर्मा पुत्र श्री गंगा चरन ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई माधोगंज, तहसील-बिलग्राम, जिला- हरदोई	1. श्री विकास वर्मा पुत्र श्री गंगा चरन, ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई माधोगंज, तहसील- बिलग्राम, जिला- हरदोई। 2. श्री गंगा चरन पुत्र श्री लक्ष्मण, ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई माधोगंज तहसील- बिलग्राम, जिला- हरदोई	1. भूमि सं० 00059, 19/1422 फा/0.1330 हे० में 1/5 भाग, ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई परगना-मल्लावाँ, तहसील- बिलग्राम, जिला-हरदोई-241 303-सम्पत्ति मालिक श्री विकास वर्मा 2. भूमि सं० 94/0.2650 हे० में 1/2 भाग, ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई परगना-मल्लावाँ, तहसील- बिलग्राम, जिला- हरदोई-241 303-सम्पत्ति मालिक श्री विकास वर्मा 3. भूमि सं० 57/0.3320 हे० में 2/3 भाग, ग्राम-रसुलापुर, पोस्ट-भिठाई, परगना-मल्लावाँ, तहसील-बिलग्राम, जिला-हरदोई-241 303-सम्पत्ति मालिक श्री गंगा चरन	20.07.2020 रु. 18,33,665.00 + दिनांक 30.06.2017 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
2.	सवित्री एव सुशील कुमार पुत्र श्री राजेन्द्र कुमार ग्राम गौरहिया पोस्ट गोडाराव, हरदोई	सवित्री एव सुशील कुमार पुत्र श्री राजेन्द्र कुमार ग्राम गौरहिया पोस्ट गोडाराव, हरदोई	भूमि सं० 00087 /39/1407फा/0.2560 हे० ग्रा० गौरहिया पो० गोडाराव, हरदोई	02.07.2020 रु० 57,095.00 + दिनांक 31.03.2015 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
3.	शिवसागर शुक्ला पुत्र श्री रामशंकर शुक्ला निवासी-तिलकपुरवा पो. गोडाराव जिला-हरदोई	शिवसागर शुक्ला पुत्र श्री रामशंकर शुक्ला निवासी- तिलकपुरवा पो. गोडाराव जिला-हरदोई	भूमि सं०00083 /1343फा/0.2530 हेक्टेयर स्थिति ग्रा० व पो० गोडाराव परगना- गोपामऊ तहसील व जिला-हरदोई	02.07.2020 रु० 1,93,637.00 + दिनांक 30.03.2015 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
4.	मै० छोटे लाल ब्रिक फिल्ड पार्टनर- विलेश कुमार एवं प्रेमसागर ग्राम भीरीघाट पोस्ट कछीना तहसील सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	मै० छोटे लाल ब्रिक फिल्ड पार्टनर- विलेश कुमार एवं प्रेमसागर ग्रा० भीरीघाट पो० कछीना तह० सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	भूमि सं. 00366/1.0990 खाता सं. 441, गाटा सं. 1467/0.2260, 2897 मि/0.0890, एवं खाता सं. 442 की गाटा सं. 2897 मि/0.1770, 2902/0.158, 2906/0.200 व खाता सं. 443 की गाटा सं. 1195ट/0.1770, 1315/0.3920, 1468/0.0760, 1544/0.1260, 2272/0.1770, 2276/0.1320, 2918व/0.4680 हेक्टेयर स्थिति पतसेनी नगर क्षेत्र परगना गोपामऊ सण्डीला-हरदोई	18.07.2020 रु० 27,85,369.00 + दिनांक 31.12.2012 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
5.	अशोक कुमार पुत्र श्री छोटेला राम भीरीघाट पोस्ट कछीना तहसील सण्डीला जिला-हरदोई	अशोक कुमार पुत्र श्री छोटेला राम भीरीघाट पो० कछीना तह० सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	भूमि सं. 00366/1.0990 खाता सं. 441 गाटा सं. 1467/0.2260, 2897मि/0.0890, एवं खाता सं. 442 की गाटा सं. 2897मि/0.1770, 2902/0.158, 2906/0.200 एवं खाता सं. 443 की गाटा सं. 1195ट/0.1770, 1315/0.3920, 1468/0.0760, 1544/0.1260, 2272/0.1770, 2276/0.1320, 2918व/0.4680, हेक्टेयर स्थिति पतसेनी नगर क्षेत्र परगना गोपामऊ सण्डीला-हरदोई	18.07.2020 रु० 15,53,003.00 + दिनांक 31.12.2012 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
6.	कृष्ण कुमार पुत्र श्री छोटेला राम भीरीघाट पोस्ट कछीना तहसील सण्डीला जिला-हरदोई	कृष्ण कुमार पुत्र श्री छोटेला ग्रा० भीरीघाट पो० कछीना तहसील सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	भूमि सं. 00366/1.0990 खाता सं. 441 गाटा सं. 1467/0.2260, 2897मि/0.0890, एवं खाता सं. 442 की गाटा सं. 2897मि/0.1770, 2902/0.158, 2906/0.200 एवं खाता सं. 443 की गाटा सं. 1195ट/0.1770, 1315/0.3920, 1468/0.0760, 1544/0.1260, 2272/0.1770, 2276/0.1320, 2918व/0.4680, हेक्टेयर स्थिति पतसेनी नगर क्षेत्र परगना गोपामऊ सण्डीला-हरदोई	18.07.2020 रु० 1,42,150.00 + दिनांक 30.06.2014 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
7.	प्रेमसागर पुत्र श्री छोटेला ग्रा० भीरीघाट पोस्ट कछीना तहसील सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	प्रेमसागर पुत्र श्री छोटेला ग्रा० भीरीघाट पो० कछीना तह० सण्डीला जिला- हरदोई	भूमि सं. 00366/1.0990 खाता सं. 441 गाटा सं. 1467/0.2260, 2897मि/0.0890, एवं खाता सं. 442 की गाटा सं. 2897मि/0.1770, 2902/0.158, 2906/0.200 एवं खाता सं. 443 की गाटा सं. 1195ट/0.1770, 1315/0.3920, 1468/0.0760, 1544/0.1260, 2272/0.1770, 2276/0.1320, 2918व/0.4680, हेक्टेयर स्थिति पतसेनी नगर क्षेत्र परगना गोपामऊ सण्डीला-हरदोई	18.07.2020 रु० 8,54,522.00 + दिनांक 31.03.2011 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
8.	सतीश श्रीवास्तव पुत्र श्री रामनारायण 226 ऊँचा थोक, हरदोई	1. सतीश श्रीवास्तव पुत्र श्री रामनारायण 226 ऊँचा थोक, हरदोई 2. उमा देवी पत्नी दशरथ मिश्रा निवासी- लक्ष्मी फाम सेल्स महात्मागांधी मार्ग हरदोई	भूमि सं० 243 मकान एरिया 528 वर्ग फिट ऊँचा थोक, नगर पालिका परगना, बंगर , हरदोई एवं भूमि सं० 71 एरिया 55.31 वर्ग मीटर स्थिति अशराफ टोला, महात्मागांधी मार्ग, हरदोई	05.08.2020 रु० 14,97,490.00 + दिनांक 30.06.2016 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
9.	मै० लक्ष्मी टुडरॉ प्रो० उमा देवी पत्नी दशरथ मिश्रा लक्ष्मी फाम सेल्स महात्मागांधी मार्ग हरदोई	सतीश श्रीवास्तव पुत्र श्री रामनारायण 226 ऊँचा थोक, हरदोई 2. उमा देवी पत्नी दशरथ मिश्रा निवासी- लक्ष्मी फाम सेल्स महात्मागांधी मार्ग हरदोई	भूमि सं० 210 गाटा सं० 34/210 एरिया प्लाट 750 वर्ग फिट की आंशिक भूमि घियर महोलिया खास स्टेशन रोड, रेलवेगंज परगना, गोपामऊ हरदोई एवं प्लाट एरिया 15.32 वर्ग मीटर स्थिति अशराफ टोला, महात्मागांधी मार्ग, हरदोई	05.08.2020 रु० 23,11,735.00 + दिनांक 29.09.2017 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
10.	महेश पुत्र श्री रामलाल निवासी- चक मजरा नन्हे पोस्ट पुराबहादुर, हरदोई	महेश पुत्र श्री रामलाल निवासी- चक मजरा नन्हे पो० पुराबहादुर, हरदोई	भूमि सं० 525/235/22470 हे० का 1/2 भाग स्थिति- ग्रा० नन्हे, परगना गोपामऊ, हरदोई	02.07.2020 रु० 6,03,147.00 + दिनांक 31.03.2018 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
11.	वेद प्रकाश मिश्रा पुत्र श्री जगदेश्वर मिश्रा मो० आजाद नगर जिला- हरदोई	वेद प्रकाश मिश्रा पुत्र श्री जगदेश्वर मिश्रा मो० आजाद नगर जिला- हरदोई	1. भूमि सं० 236 एरिया 125.88 वर्ग मी० हरदोई देहात परगना बंर जिला-हरदोई 2. भूमि सं० 841/0.101 हे० एवं 842/0.190हे० का 1/3 भाग स्थिति मंशुरनगर, पो०-हरियावाँ परगना- मंशुरनगर, जिला- हरदोई	02.07.2020 रु० 15,33,920.00 + दिनांक 30.06.2015 से ब्याज	13.11.2020
दिनांक : 19.11.2020			स्थान : हरदोई	प्राधिकृत अधिकारी	

BJP's challenge in J&K

By contesting the Kashmir local body polls unitedly and tactically, the Gupkar alliance has public goodwill on its side



The BJP's gameplan in the Valley, ever since the abrogation of Article 370 and in keeping with its organisational formula, has been to build an alternative political structure conducive to its narrative. One that had necessitated its crackdown on existing elected leaders, all of whom had supported integration with India but insisted on a special status, and justified their detention as "anti-nationals." Former Chief Ministers, Ministers, MPs and MLAs were out of sight for a year. Then it hoped to supplant mainstream leaders by seeding local ones, following the ground-up, pyramidal method, as true representatives and prioritised empowerment of local bodies. It began its doorstep connect, telling people that the big parties had availed the benefits of Kashmir's erstwhile special status and funds but had not passed them on to or done nothing for the people. In fact, Union Home Minister Amit Shah went so far as to say that the people had lost out on the dividends of democratic governance. The BJP systematically went about propping "friendly" candidates and hoping that with the mainstream parties at bay, it could chaperone any electoral exercise on its terms and get a mandate. But that was not to be. As the BJP found itself at the receiving end of a popular counter-challenge, it had to let go of the Valley's leaders. People rejected attempted electoral processes, making them conditional on the release of their chosen representatives. Only 7,528 of the 19,582 *panch* and *sarpanch* seats in Kashmir went to polls in 2018 and the BJP couldn't fill over 12,000 seats that are still empty, affecting local administration. Now there is an undeclared civil disobedience, with more local youth drawn to militancy and local businesses resorting to economic boycotts. There has been a spike in hitback killings of BJP leaders and *sarpanches*. The BJP's attempt to raise a mainstream party, the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP), drawing rejects from the big parties, lacks credibility. Rather late in the day, the Government realised that it could not show transformative intent till it got some kind of mediatory presence of local parties. Which is why it released mainstream leaders and decided to hold elections to District Development Councils (DDCs) and the remaining panchayat seats. What it didn't realise was that the political vacuum it created did not have enough suction power for it and had ended up lionising National Conference leaders Farooq and Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti instead. All of them had been BJP allies before and are now its sworn enemies post the abrogation and downgrading of Kashmir as a Union Territory. And all of them have, despite their differences and incendiary speeches, decided to contest the DDC elections as a common front, sharing seats depending on their mutual strengths. The Gupkar alliance, driven by the NC and PDP, also comprises the People's Conference, Awami Ittehad, Awami National Conference, CPI(M) and J&K People's Movement. They are fighting for the restoration of Article 370 and statehood, a tall order really, but emotional enough to submerge the BJP's pet development agenda with that of Kashmiri identity. They have claimed the high moral ground by choosing to fight the BJP democratically, through elections, and even making common cause with Jammu and Ladakh. The Dogras of Hindu-dominated Jammu and Ladakhis are not too happy about their local culture and privileges being swept away under the new land rules, which allow outsiders to buy non-agricultural land. The implied demographic colonisation will certainly find some resonance as a poll plank.

This explains Shah's belligerence, once again slandering the "Gupkari gang" as anti-India, intent on foreign intervention in Kashmir. He even called out the Congress for aligning with it, though the latter insisted that it was not part of the alliance but was contesting on its own. This was not just bluster but a careful strategy. At one time, the BJP was counting on a political boycott and minimal voter turnout to sail through and have its way. But now with all mainstream parties participating, its leaders appearing like martyrs to a cause, the BJP suddenly has an electoral challenge at hand with them fighting unitedly and tactically. Understandably, it is trying hard to split the negative vote. The JKAP can hardly play spoiler. So by buttonholing the Congress for betraying the national will on scrapping of Article 370 and siding with the alliance, it clearly wants a four-cornered contest. There was talk of Congress joining the alliance but realistically, the party, given the sentiment on Kashmir, won't go beyond a seat adjustment of sorts. Its spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said as much. Clearly, the BJP has been outsmarted by the alliance. It had not bargained for its constituents going against their grain to participate in a political process that would legitimise the Centre's move to scrap special status. But Kashmir parties have realised that their movement would be defeated if they allow the BJP to capture the political space uncontested. A neat BJP win would push them further to the fringes. Besides, elections would also be an opportunity for them to rebuild their votebases, something which had drifted away hopelessly. And should the verdict go their way, it would help them become politically relevant and deservedly get a position to call the shots. The PDP is apparently in talks with Sikh groups, Gaddi and Sippi (Dogra) leaders, Kashmiri Pandits, Gujar, Bakewal as well as Scheduled Caste and OBC leaders to craft an umbrella appeal, aware that the BJP has justified the reintegration on the ground of helping tribals, women and Dalits. In the end, the BJP has misread the pulse and created its own enemy.

Champion Lewis

Lewis Hamilton can rewrite the Formula 1 record book but he is quietly changing the dynamics off the field too



proved that sticking the best driver in the best car isn't enough.

More importantly, Lewis also proved wrong the theory that Formula 1 drivers have to have immense family wealth and a connection with the top echelons of motorsports to succeed. A mixed-race child, who grew up in government housing in a lower middle-class part of England, he is now the winningest driver in the sport and has equalled Michael Schumacher's seven world titles. If he resigns with Mercedes-AMG next year, as he is almost certain to do, it is a matter of when and not if he will win 100 Formula 1 races and a potential eight world titles. However, as Michael Schumacher himself said in an interview over a decade ago, records are meant to be broken and one day even Lewis' success might be under threat. In this severely disrupted year, Formula 1 races have been fascinating to watch. Lewis, once famous for his partying ways, dedicated himself to racecraft and admitted that he had barely met friends or family except enjoying the company of his pet bulldog, Roscoe. But he is not just a champion on the race track, he has taken a strong stand on issues such as racism through the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. He got his team, Mercedes-AMG, to change its cars and associated infrastructure from the traditional silver livery to a black livery as well as got his fellow drivers to kneel at the start of the season, proving that some athletes and sports stars can provide leadership. After winning the race in Istanbul, he called out Formula 1 for ignoring human rights issues in many countries it races in as well as the need for the sport to become more sustainable. Lewis Hamilton is not just a star on the race track, he is a star off the track as well.

opinion08

Apolitical nobility

The serving US military top brass has shown admirable restraint in not kowtowing to the political establishment, especially one that has thrown caution to the winds



BHOPINDER SINGH

In the United States of America, the civilian post of Defence Secretary is a political appointment even though it is usually held by former combatants, who have the domain experience and perspective. Yet it calls for trapeze jugglery as the former Defence Secretary and legendary warrior-scholar, General James Mattis, noted, "Remember that the Defence Department stays outside of politics for a reason. There's a long-standing tradition, why you do not want the military to be engaged in politics." With such apolitical and professional instincts, the likes of James Mattis were not expected to survive long with the infamous Donald Trump fickleness. And they didn't – Mattis joined the revolving door of axed veterans, who couldn't lower their discourse to match the President's impetuosity and crassness.

Mattis's predecessor as Secretary of Defence, Ash Carter, was an international affairs academician, who had spent over 37 years in the Pentagon working across the political divide, and he always believed that the "profession of arms is honour and trust" and that Trump's brazenly political expectations, interference and insistence would infect the apolitical ways of the US military. Recently, Trump fired his fourth Secretary of Defence Mark Esper and appointed his fifth, Christopher Miller. As the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Department of Defence, the fifth appointee in less than four years is a self-explanatory narrative of Trump's whimsicality, impatience and unprofessionalism. Except that the timing of this particular change, just after Trump's electoral debacle, but before Biden's formal take-over, has sent dangerous signals – because with Trump, anything is possible.

Given his vanity and desperation, fears that he could deploy the US military, in a last-ditch effort of his final two-month tenure, are real. For long, Trump has dangled and invoked the military as a political prop for self-aggrandisement and even as a tool for domestic governance. What gives credence to conspiracy theorists is the tentative relationship that Mark Esper had with the Commander-in-Chief, Trump, especially when the former combatant had disagreed with the idea of using the military during civil unrest. Embarrassingly for



Trump, Esper opposed the Insurrection Act of 1807 by stating the institutional belief, "I say this not only as Secretary of Defence, but also as a former soldier, and a former member of the National Guard. The option to use active duty forces in a law enforcement role should only be used as a matter of last resort, and only in the most urgent and dire of situations." Earlier also, Esper had weighed in favour with the professional view of the "uninformed" fraternity in dissuading Trump from hastening the process of troops withdrawal from Syria and Afghanistan – as this urgency was Trump's personal and political commitment, but contrary to the institutional and sovereign interests. However, for Trump, who can readily trade military values of restraint and apolitical stances in favour of his political self-interest, professionals like Esper are a burden and not an asset. Replacing Esper with a professionally lacklustre but an avowedly Trump-loyalist has not helped optics either.

Even though the Trump tenure has compromised and forced many casual liberties on the US military ecosystem, it would not be a cakewalk to get the institution to "fall in line" politically, despite these unprecedented changes. The US military folk have repeatedly shown the spine, moral courage and constitutionality in words and actions to "call out" signs of danger. Foremost among them has been

EVEN THOUGH THE TRUMP TENURE HAS COMPROMISED AND FORCED MANY CASUAL LIBERTIES ON THE US MILITARY ECOSYSTEM, IT WOULD NOT BE A CAKEWALK TO GET THE INSTITUTION TO 'FALL IN LINE' POLITICALLY. THE MILITARY FOLK HAVE REPEATEDLY SHOWN SPINE AND MORAL COURAGE

General Mike Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had earlier unknowingly become victim of a political "photo-op" by Trump during the civic protests, pursuant to which he issued a very public and honest regret that his presence had created an unwanted and wrong perception of military involvement in domestic politics. Later, Milley went further and bluntly denied that he gave permission to use his image in the Trump re-election campaign. Now, as Milley watched the ensuing drama of the untimely change of Secretary of Defence – which is essentially beyond his professional mandate or control – he still chose to word a very deliberate and reassuring message when he said in the midst of the new Secretary of Defence Christopher Miller, "We do not take an oath to a King or a Queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual!" Milley passionately beseeched that duty was only to the Constitution, which he called the "moral north star" for the institution. His statement that the military "will protect and defend that document regardless of the personal price" was immensely loaded and cautionary against any attempt to politicise or misuse the military. Milley joined the ranks of his illustrious predecessor Marine General Joseph Dunford in managing the political expectations of Trump, whenever things started going adrift.

Esper had alluded to the necessary public perceptions of apolitical anchorage when it came to matters military, when he had spoken about getting "ambushed" in the photo-op. "Look, I do everything I can to try and stay apolitical and try to stay out of situations that may appear political," he said, adding, "Sometimes, I'm successful, and sometimes I'm not as successful." This time that effort to stay steadfast, without succumbing to politicisation of the US military, has led to his ouster but in that sacrifice, Esper may have saved the US military from unimaginable portents of a partisan force. The serving top brass of the US military themselves have shown admirable restraint in not kowtowing to the political establishment, especially with a dispensation that has thrown caution to the winds in terms of diluting, denigrating and politicising the institution. The military invests incalculable emotions in professional character or what we call *izzat*. As General Norman Schwarzkopf of Operation Desert Storm fame once said, "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy." In this melee, it is that apolitical nobility and almost Chetwodian ethos that have been upheld by the US military's top brass, despite the price to some.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

SOUND BITE

There are pros and cons to India joining the RCEP. But the debate has never taken place in Parliament or among the people or involving the Opposition parties.



Congress leader
—P Chidambaram

Few countries would be willing to join a coalition that excludes players like China. They all want to do business with Beijing.



Singaporean PM
—Lee Hsien Loong

I got so angry that my (mental health) story was twisted into so many different things. Did I go and get help? Yes I did. But I'm not ashamed. I feel better and understand things now.



Singer and actor
—Selena Gomez

I think there are a couple of teams: CSK certainly needs a little bit of restructuring ahead of next year's Indian Premier League.



Former India fast bowler
—Ajit Agarkar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pak's pathetic bid

Sir — The timing of the intense exchange of fire along the Line of Control (LoC), following ceasefire violations by Pakistani forces and Islamabad's release of a "dossier" with so-called evidence of terror against it allegedly sponsored by India, has led to speculation about the intention of our neighbouring nation's leadership. The exchange of fire along the LoC on November 13 killed nine people on the Indian side while retaliatory firing by the Indian armed forces destroyed several bunkers and logistic facilities on the Pakistani side.

There is speculation that both developments were part of Islamabad's trite efforts to influence the incoming US administration, led by President-elect Joe Biden, on the Kashmir issue and Indo-Pakistan relations. The administration of President Donald Trump had imposed some of the harshest sanctions on Pakistan, including the suspension of security assistance worth billions of dollars since 2018 for its support to terrorist groups.

Maybe that is why Pakistan is trying to taint India's image too. Thankfully, its "terror dossier" found few takers in the world

Political parties need to clean up their act

The Supreme Court has declined to pass orders on the plea by retired civil servant SN Shukla, representing a non-governmental organisation (NGO), for barring tainted politicians from contesting elections. The court refused, shifting the onus of enacting laws to bar criminal politicians from contesting polls to the Parliament.

The Supreme Court has taken the right decision. The main role of the courts is to interpret the law as it exists. Convictions and acquittals should be based on the violation or observance of laws. Lawmakers, cutting across party lines, are likely to oppose any idea to bar criminals from contesting polls. If consensus prevails among the lawmakers to cleanse the political space and keep it free from tainted politicians, it may not be difficult for the Parliament to pass the necessary law.

It is naive to expect political parties not to give tickets to people with criminal records, especially "bahubalis (henchmen)" they have used symbiotically from time to time to garner votes for themselves.

community. Its latest gambit has come at a time when Prime Minister Imran Khan is grappling with pressing domestic issues, from severe economic distress, joblessness to greater cohesive efforts by the Opposition to unseat him.

Khan should focus on setting his own house in order instead of making futile attempts to stir the Kashmir pot, just to keep his

seat. That's not working anymore.
N Sadhasiva Reddy
Bengaluru

Keep schools shut

Sir — Schools provide the ideal environment for the spread of COVID-19. Studies have shown that children and teenagers can catch and spread COVID-19 just as easily as adults. Moreover,

children, once infected, carry high viral and extremely contagious loads, which they can pass on to their parents and others. If schools were to reopen without the necessary Coronavirus precautions and protocols in place, it is highly likely that students would play a much larger role in spreading this pandemic than has occurred previously. Second, everyone needs to



Expeditious disposal of criminal cases with convictions can keep tainted people away from the political arena. The apex court's ruling should kickstart a debate on the move to enact laws to bar people with criminal records and cases from contesting polls. The Representation of People's Act needs to be amended.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

know the basics. The school community — students, parents, school staff and all people these groups are connected to — needs basic information on COVID-19 transmission and how to reduce it through established procedures. Moreover, many Government schools do not have access to sufficient running water to ensure that the children can wash their hands frequently. In addition, there are a very limited number of functional toilets in most Government-run schools. Who will ensure that the children are washing their hands frequently or wearing their masks all the time and maintaining social distancing?

Which parent would like to take the risk of sending their son/daughter to school when the pandemic has not yet died down? The right time for re-opening schools would be January, once the winter is over and the expected surge of cases is on the wane. The Education Ministers of various States should take a note of this.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

Send your feedback to:
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FIRST COLUMN

Adopt politics of principles

We need to shun those leaders who have a price tag because they can compromise at any time and in any situation, provided the sum is right



VIJAY BAHADUR **PATHAK**

Every person on this Earth is an independent political unit, because politics influences all walks of life and its impact can be felt everywhere. Theoretically, politics is pure because it is meant to bring prosperity and positivity. But it has become tainted as it is being influenced by caste, creed and religion. It is believed that voting is by and large fair and not manipulated. But the truth is that manipulation still continues. An electoral process gets influenced much before the voter enters the polling booth because caste and creed guide his/her voting decision rather than the welfare of society. This can best be summarised in the words of Deen Dayal Upadhyay who said, "Voting without principle leads to irrational politics." This is true because unprincipled politics leads to exploitation of all values of life — social, economic and religious.

To prevent such an unfortunate situation, the foundation of politics has to be re-evaluated, reformed and reconstructed. This is possible only if transformation begins from the villages as they are where the soul of India lives. However, change is possible only if the politics of principle takes the place of opportunism, money power, muscle power and other trappings that lead to corruption.

We need to shun those leaders who have a price tag because they can compromise at any time and in any situation, provided the figure is right. Rejecting such leaders is the cornerstone of principled politics. This requires introspection because the problem is not outside, but within. There is a huge difference between our desires and what we practise. This distinction is the bulwark of a strong democracy. However, there is a dichotomy. We want our democracy to be flourishing, mature and progressive but our voting is influenced by hatred, vengeance, caste, religion, sect, relationship with a particular person, selfishness or profit. This duplicity is the root of political degeneration.

We need to keep in mind that the person, who is contesting the election, is not the only one who is political but every individual voting for him/her is a political unit, too. The statement of Greek philosopher Aristotle that "man is a political and social animal" is very relevant here. Therefore, every person has a role in spreading political purity. There is a need to discipline oneself. The spirit should be that we are making a choice not to rule, but to prevent and eliminate negative politics. This route is difficult because it can lead to both, defeat and victory. But in both cases there should be a sense of satisfaction. Because, if one wins and is able to transform politics then it is good for society. And if one fails, this should give one the satisfaction that s/he tried to bring change. This is no less than a victory. But the fact remains that politics should be principled and a small section of people does support this line of thinking. If one sticks to it, this number will swell and one day India will witness political change.

In India, as in other democracies, transparent voting forms the bulwark of democracy. But our voting is influenced by caste and religion. This is a negative way of voting and we end up electing a corrupt person with a criminal record as our representative. If s/he is corrupt, we have ourselves to blame because we elected that person. This can be best summed up through a Hindi proverb which says, "Boya ped babul ka, aam kahan se hoye (How can we expect a harvest of mangoes when we have planted an Acacia tree)?" Or, as the Biblical proverb says, "As you sow, so shall you reap."

We elect a criminal to be our leader and then we expect him/her to do something good for society. It is just wishful thinking on our part to expect a corrupt MP/MLA to shed his/her personal greed and ambition and start working for the betterment of society.

In a democracy, the responsibility of nation-building lies with the people, too. If the Parliament is the temple of democracy, the gram panchayats are its power centres. It is the panchayat which is the root of our democracy because this is the place where India's heart lives. But unfortunately we neglect these power centres. A beginning has to be made from these village units and for that we need to change the thinking process of our democracy and village empowerment. The politics of money should be replaced with politics of transparency. In Uttar Pradesh, the panchayat elections were usually contested on an individual basis. Money and local influence used to play an important role in the election of members and the village head. The time has come to boycott those who wish to become *pradhans* on the basis of muscle and money power. One way to cleanse the system is to give party symbols to those who are contesting panchayat elections. The beginning will be made by the BJP, which has decided to field candidates at the village-level elections. Other political parties can follow suit, too.

It is believed that India's nationwide thinking cannot be "one" because this country is a nation with different beliefs and lifestyles. However, unity in diversity is a greater truth than India. In spite of different foods, religions, cultures and life philosophies, the entire nation is "one" because the desire to build a prosperous, capable and empowered India is one.

(The writer is vice-president of UP BJP and MLC)

WE ARE YET TO HEAR THE PARTY'S VIEWS ON OUR RECENT PERFORMANCE IN BIHAR. MAYBE THEY THINK ALL IS WELL AND IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL.
—CONGRESS LEADER
KAPIL SIBAL

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



HAD KAPIL SIBAL GONE TO BIHAR AND MP, HE COULD HAVE PROVED THAT WHAT HE IS SAYING IS CORRECT. MERE TALK WILL ACHIEVE NOTHING.
—CONGRESS LEADER
ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY

Time for a hate-free world

Faith needs to be negotiated with empathy for the marginalised and the culturally-different by breaking through the glass ceiling of Europeanism and replacing it with cosmopolitanism



PRASENJIT **BISWAS**

Sigmund Freud's diagnostic work, entitled *Civilization and its Discontents*, explains how civilisations spawn neurotic responses. The French principle of *laïcité* (secularism) places the huge demand of strict separation between State and religion. Freud's theory of neurotic response arises from the inability to follow such difficult and hard commands of civilisations. Essentially it means that France, as a State, has no other way but to respond with angst to the terrorist act of killing of a teacher, which precisely is an act of Freudian discontent, may be even neurosis. The subject of neurosis is necessarily misplaced or displaced. France's specific problem with its principle of *laïcité* is that it finds the core values of Islam incongruent with the French national ethos. If freedom of expression in secularism involves the right to offend symbols of other religions by calling them antithetical to French national culture, it marks the effacement of a minority religion like Islam in the public space. This is how France cannot uphold a true *laïcité* by overriding the faith of erstwhile colonised Arabs from the Maghreb and other minorities, who comprise a diverse Muslim populace. So *laïcité* takes the form of political secularism that creates a hierarchy in which it decides which religious faith is acceptable and which one is not. Secularism, then, acts as a rule of the majority over minority faiths. This creates an apparent conflict between the majority world view and minority religions.

Placing the burden of tolerance on a particular religion after offending its symbols is certainly unwarranted in a secular State. This is a failure to establish equality between religions as well as a failure to ensure freedom of conscience. This also justifies reactive violence on a populace for their failure to come to terms with the offence committed on their faith. The French version of secularism, placing the demand on the State to remain strictly separated from religion, cannot heal the wounds of history of the erstwhile colonised.

The long history of colonisation of Black Africans and Arabs by France impacts the present shape of French secularism to create marginality and radical Islam together in the people from erstwhile French colonies. Political secularism lives through such contrarian moments of extremism and radical religious politics arising from a history of colonisation. Here, one needs to draw a distinction between "political secularism" and "secularism of values." Secularism of values differs from political secularism as it promotes an attitude of "neither pro, nor anti-religion." Political secularism polarises this secularism of values into something that is anti or against some practices of a particular religious group.

An attitude of neutrality towards religion does not stop the French State from turning against it, or turning selectively in favour of a religion. This brings into picture the logic of uniformity of symbols in public space that does not allow a difference of religious symbols. Political secularism relegates religions to the private, or at most to community spaces.

If the freedom of every religion in France is taken literally in *laïcité*, why is it so very hard for Muslims to follow their symbols or to ensure their faith? Derogation of the Prophet in any way cannot be considered as consistent with the practice of hard secularist neutrality. Secular neutrality of "neither for nor against" is supposed to remain neutral to the way a religion practises its belief. Instead of such a principled stance, what the French *laïcité* does is to allow the way a religion is reflected in the mirror of French State or public.

In effect, exercise of legal indemnity towards

FRANCE HAS TO OVERCOME THE PRESENT ANTAGONISM BY BUILDING MORE BRIDGES WITH MUSLIMS ON ITS SOIL AND DISPELLING THE IMAGE OF BEING AT WAR WITH ISLAM. MACRON CANNOT AFFORD TO BECOME A MASCOT OF RIGHT-WING ISLAMOPHOBES. A LIBERAL STATE ULTIMATELY NEEDS TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENCES AND RETURN TO UNIFYING NATIONALISM THAT PROMOTES LOVE AND CO-BELONGING



a distortion of symbols or image of a faith is a licence to undermine the specific character and practices of a particular faith or religion. This is projecting a wrong image of a religion in the public space. Taken to its extreme, French secularism posits religious identities into an adversary by allowing an underlying "war on religion" or by allowing a derogation of religious symbols. Such an outcome cannot be fully legit in a pluralist democracy. Seemingly France tweaks its legal, political and juridical concepts attached to secularism to legitimise constraints upon those religions that are considered as outliers. Hence the law of secularism is no guarantee for religious freedom, it rather is a way of tweaking and moderating religious expressions within limits of French neutrality.

Are certain identities, then, to be treated as antithetical to the principles of *laïcité*? Is treating every religion in an equal manner a way of cutting it to size by downplaying its core belief structure? In French President Emmanuel Macron's language, "no totem or taboo", referring to religious symbols. Is it then, a hard secular knock at others? Is there a secularism-inspired separation of the self and other as part of State policy? This is a denial or acceptance of the select values of religion, mixed with the secular cause, a certain fragmentation of *laïcité* itself. Rejection of the turban or the hijab interestingly turns an outsider's gaze on French secularism that continuously undercuts the line of strict separation.

This creates a political issue of adjustment between a religious victim's perception of being denigrated and the demand placed on him/her to not show difference of identity in the public sphere. This also turns French *laïcité* into a "misuse of secularism to stigmatise people." Clearly President Macron's statement, "Islam is a religion in crisis all over the world" or a highly visible crackdown on Islam as a religion border on a near anti-

Islam positioning that goes against the grain of neutrality and freedom of conscience.

A *mea culpa* anti-Islam version of French secularism has its internal victims. The French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) stated, "We are sometimes targets of anti-Muslim acts but others are also victims of hostile acts. In the face of these provocations, we must remain decent, serene and clear-sighted." If the public sphere is not supposed to carry the remnants of any such *mea culpa* version from any side, as per French secularism, the exact opposite has happened. Stigmatisation, racial othering and lampooning of the doctrines of faith assume the garb of French *laïcité*. So what remains unresolved is this lack of criticism against an anti-Islam stance of President Macron, often known as "Macronism."

This Macronist secularism misdirected against a religion arises from the French President's political secularism that wrecks equality of faiths. It further causes an emotional and grief-based solidarity that provides a fulcrum for new laws for monitoring schools and mosques in Muslim areas of France. Acquiescence by Saudi Arabia to the Macronist stance on Islam in terms of his "counter-terrorism and deradicalisation" measures strengthens the pre-emptive fixing of the guilt on Muslim immigrants in France, especially if they are of Arab origin.

The deficits of *laïcité* cannot be supplemented by such externalisation of an anti-Islam stance. Should secularism turn Islamophobic, it brings back an image of an anti-Semite European world view, which ultimately undermines the secularism of values by a version of political secularism.

France has to overcome the present antagonism by building more bridges with Muslims on its soil and dispelling the image of being at war with Islam. Macron cannot afford to become a mas-

cot of Right-wing Islamophobes. A liberal State ultimately needs to accommodate differences and return to unifying nationalism that promotes love and co-belonging. Faith needs to be negotiated with a special ecumenism and empathy for the marginalised and the culturally-different by breaking through the glass ceiling of Europeanism and replacing it with cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism in Europe places the demand of adopting a value-neutral position to both one's own religion as well as to other religions. Catholic churches of France, irked by a certain mockery of their faith, filed cases on *Charlie Hebdo*, but, unlike Islamists, never indulged in terror attacks. However, Islamists and certain conservative clerics create an atmosphere of backlash on the slightest slight of their religious symbols. Islamic nation States, too, are particularly intransigent towards people of different faiths and compel them to comply with codes of Islam in everyday life.

The value-neutral and secular cosmopolitan European culture allows for acceptance of symbols of religious traditions as a universal heritage of mankind. The French version of secularism insists on the separation of the sphere of faith from the sphere of common and shared public life, that is supposed to extol virtues of tolerance and unconditional respect for the other. It is here that reactions to freedom of aesthetic and artistic representation of religious symbols and prophets is supposed to be beyond any dogmatic condemnation.

France stands for not restricting freedom of satirisation or artistic freedom to be unconstrained by religious dogmas. It is here that French *laïcité* ensures that France will not side with any faith, be it Islam, be it Sikhism or Christianity in allowing freedom of choice, conscience and individuality to all people.

(The writer is a philosopher and political analyst based in Shillong)

The Forest Rights Act is not serving its purpose

The law's implementation suffers due to the lackadaisical and target-oriented approach of the Tribal Affairs Ministry, which is just content with settling claims



VK **BAHUGUNA**

The conservation of forests in India has been a bone of contention for more than a century now, ever since the creation of a Forest Department in 1864. The British enacted the Indian Forest Act in 1865 and amended it in 1878 with detail prescriptions on how to control and scientifically work forests. The 1878 Act was again modified in 1927 and today it forms the basis of management of forests in the country along with the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

The struggle for access and control of forest resources by tribals intensified after the forests of princely

States were declared as reserved and protected areas. In 1989, the Government set up a dispute settlement mechanism at the district level with a committee consisting of a Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Forest Officers and the Sub-Divisional Tribal Welfare Officer. But this committee remained either non-functional or did not do its job. The problem kept festering, with rival political interests taking centrestage after the Supreme Court's order in 2003 on eviction of all encroachments on forest lands. After the General Election of 2004, the United Progressive Alliance enacted the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. It recognised that forest rights on the ancestral lands of the tribals and their habitat were not adequately provided, resulting in historical injustice to the Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, who are integral to the very survival of the ecosystem.

For the last 14 years, the process of vesting forest rights is under way

under the provisions of the Forest Act. As per the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, as on June 30, a total of 42,52,124 claims had been filed. Of this 41,03,001 were individual claims and 1,49,123 were community ones. A total of 19,09,249 individual claims comprising over 16.69 lakh hectares (ha) of forests were settled and vested with the people. And 76,383 community claims over 35.22 lakh ha of forests were vested with the beneficiaries. Thus forest rights of tribal people and traditional forest dwellers on around 52 lakh ha of forests stand settled.

Now the question is, what is happening to these people? In the tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh, in the districts of Jabalpur, Seoni, Mandla, Umeria, Balaghat and Dindori, I met representatives of local NGOs, Jai Bharati Siksha Kendra, Kalyan Ashram and Bharat Vikas Parishad and a large number of tribal people, and discussed the implementation of the Act. On the positive side, in well-stocked forests, where *mahua*, *chirongi* and so on are available, the people have raised their



income. At one place in Dabra Khurd in Jabalpur district, the management of 42 forest resources out of 75 has been transferred to 12 village communities. But these 3,500 ha of forests, from the point of view of the management, have become a no man's land as neither is the forest department doing anything, nor do the communities have the wherewithal to manage them because of lack of funds and capacity. The proposal for the creation of a Van Dhan Centre by communities is being tossed between the Collector's Office and the Divisional Forest Officer. Another

proposal of the Dabra village community for preparation of the micro plan, as per the provision of the Act, has not been forwarded by the Tribal Welfare Department of Madhya Pradesh to the Centre, for funding under the tribal sub-plan, in the last two-and-a-half years.

Grassroot workers put this down to corruption in the Tribal Welfare Department where a huge amount of funds remains unutilised. Hence, out of frustration, social workers are leaving these communities in the lurch.

The villagers of Dabra Khurd are asking for *tendu patta* auction rights because in the existing process, the Joint Forest Management (JFM) committees get a part of the sale money and not the Community Rights Committees. The viability of continuing JFM committees in these areas is being questioned and there is talk of replacing it with a better, people-centric strategy.

There is confusion in these villages regarding the management of forests as the local forest officers feel that they

are not allowed to operate in these areas and the people also do not approach them due to lack of mutual trust. While the local Chief Conservator of Forests has agreed to hold a meeting with the people to develop a model for the management of Non-Timber Forest Products, politics is making the people root for more individual rights. They are not focussing on managing community rights. It is ironical that 86 per cent of the growers in India are marginal farmers with less than two ha of land. The basic aim of the enactment of this Act has, therefore, succeeded only partially.

The Act's implementation suffers due to the lackadaisical and target-oriented approach of the Tribal Affairs Ministry. It is just content with settling claims. The objective of this Act is to help both, the people and the ecosystem they are a part of. The Union Government must consider making the Forest Department responsible for preparing a micro plan and building the capacity of the people for managing the forests.

One major decision warranted is to continue JFM in other forest areas with second-generation reforms but in areas where the forest right Act is being implemented, it should be replaced with community forest management, with the communities having the freedom to manage the resources with the technical support of the Forest Department.

Grassroot level NGOs should be made stakeholders for more transparency and to support the communities in capacity-building. The basic flaws in the Act's implementation must be rectified by making the Forest Department the nodal agency for the execution of management and development of resources jointly with communities. This is so that a single point delivery system with accountability exists.

There is a need for policy intervention by the Centre so that 52 lakh ha of forests produce sufficient resources for the people while remaining ecologically viable.

(The writer is a former civil servant)

MARKETS MAINTAIN RECORD RUN

Sensex ends above 44,000 for first time

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks scaled record highs for the third straight session on Wednesday as investors accumulated banking, auto and engineering stocks amid firm global cues and unabated foreign fund inflows. The BSE Sensex vaulted 227.34 points or 0.52 per cent to close above the 44,000-level for the first time at 44,180.05. Intra-day, it touched its lifetime high of 44,215.49.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 64.05 points or 0.50 per cent to end at its all-time high of 12,938.25, after making an intra-day record of 12,948.85.

M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, soaring 10.76 per cent, followed by L&T, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv, SBI, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, HUL, ITC, Titan, TCS, Bharti Airtel and Infosys were among the losers, shedding up to 2.07 per cent. According to traders, largely positive cues from global markets and persistent foreign fund inflows buoyed market sentiment. Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 4,905.35 crore on Tuesday, according to provisional exchange data.

Global equities held steady after the recent rally fuelled by encouraging COVID-19 vaccine trials, though the steadily rising coronavirus cases weighed on risk sentiment.

Domestic equities continued to maintain their northward move mainly led by rebound in financials and automobiles, said Arjun Yash Mahajan, Head Institutional Business at Reliance Securities.

₹ rises for 3rd day, up 27 paise to 74.19 per \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee continued its winning run for the third session in a row on Wednesday, spurting 27 paise to settle at 74.19 against the US dollar amid unabated foreign fund inflows and a weak greenback overseas.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 74.49 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day high of 74.09 and a low of 74.52. It finally closed at 74.19 against the greenback, registering a rise of 27 paise over its previous

Vedanta Ltd-Vedanta Resources SPV bids for BPCL

Major foreign player too in race

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mining conglomerate Vedanta has put in a preliminary expression of interest (EoI) for buying the government's stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), for which a major foreign player too is said to be in race.

A special purpose vehicle floated by the BSE-listed Vedanta Ltd and its London-based parent Vedanta Resources submitted an EoI before the close of deadline on November 16.

"Vedanta's EoI for BPCL is to evaluate potential synergies with our existing oil and gas business," the company said in a statement. "The EoI is at a preliminary stage and exploratory in nature."

Sources in the department handling the sale said the EoI has been put in by a special purpose vehicle or SPV floated by Vedanta Ltd and Vedanta Resources.

They also stated that a

major foreign player was among the three-four entities whose EoIs were received by the close of the bidding on November 16.

The other potential investors are foreign funds but their identity was not immediately disclosed.

The government is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in India's second largest fuel retailer as part of plans to raise a record Rs 2.1 lakh crore from disinvestment proceeds in 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021).

But share price of BPCL has plunged by nearly a fourth since the time the strategic sale was approved in November last year.

At Wednesday's closing price of Rs 383.20 on BSE, the government's 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL is worth just over Rs 44,000 crore. Also, the acquirer would have to make an open offer for buying another 26 per cent stake from the public, which would cost about

Rs 21,600 crore.

Vedanta's interest in BPCL stems from its USD 8.67 billion acquisition of oil producer Cairn India nearly a decade back.

The company produces oil from oilfields in Rajasthan which are used in refineries such as those operated by BPCL to turn them into petrol, diesel and other fuels.

The government had at the close of bidding stated that "multiple"

EoIs had been received. It, however, did not reveal the identity of the bidders.

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), which is handling the strategic sale, had tweeted on November 16 that the transaction advisors for the sale of government's 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL have reported receiving "multiple expressions of interest."

"The transaction will move to the second stage after scrutiny by TA," he had said. TA stands for transaction advisor.

RMSI Cropalytics earns laurels at Nasscom Awards

New Delhi: Agri-tech start-up RMSI Cropalytics has been recognised by NASSCOM as one of the top 50 emerging software product companies who would be the future trendsetters from India, as part of NASSCOM Emerge 50 Awards 2020.

With Zinnov as knowledge partner, the award nomination categories included – FinTech, health tech, retail tech, logistics and supply chain, SaaS, enterprise, IoT hardware and devices, strategic sector and cybersecurity. RMSI Cropalytics received the award for its path breaking product PlnNCER" under the Bharat category, which recognizes innovative solutions that solve some of the toughest problems of India in a scalable manner using technology.

PlnNCER" (Profiler for Insured Crop Exposure and Risk) provides government and agri-sectors, crop acreage and yield estimates faster, more accurately and at higher resolution, using satellite, drone and AI/ML technologies.

Crop Yield estimation in India has historically been an exercise in averaging and approximation. The non-availability of good acreage and yield data hampers many sectors in decision-making. On winning this prestigious award, Roli Jindal, Co-Founder RMSI Cropalytics, said, "Our work for the agri sector made us realise how poorly visible agrarian

distress is. Bringing together our skills in hazard-vulnerability assessment and advanced predictive modelling, we are creating this platform that will make crop yield estimation parametric and structured, and make agri-distress hotspots visible in near-real time for decision-makers."

"We aim to develop PlnNCER" into a global platform such that any government agency, research scholar, farm lending or insurance company, agri-input company or trading company may, using satellite imagery, estimate crop acreages, assess crop health and derive crop yield estimates for their area of interest, on demand" said, Pushpendra Johari, Director, RMSI Cropalytics.

Expressing her thoughts at the award ceremony, Debjani Ghosh, President, NASSCOM, said, "Indian product industry is gradually becoming an innovation partner of enterprises embracing digital transformation in recent years. Companies and start-ups have shown tremendous resilience during the current pandemic and is in the midst of pivoting to newer business avenues, supported by a range of government initiatives. Deep technology is no longer something brewing out of an R and D facility, but a tangible, exciting prospect, enriching lives and enhancing the country's innovation potential."

PM to inaugurate three-day Bengaluru Tech Summit today

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi would inaugurate Karnataka's flagship annual

technology event - Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020 (BTS2020) - on Thursday via video-conferencing. The event is to take place from November 19 to

21.

It is being organised by the government of Karnataka along with Karnataka Innovation and Technology

Society, the state government's Vision Group on information technology, biotechnology and startup, and Software Technology Parks of India.

"We have made elaborate arrangements to make BTS a grand success as the event sessions are going 100 per cent virtual," Deputy Chief

Minister and the Minister for IT, BT and S&T C N Ashwath Narayan said after visiting the BTS2020 facilitating centre set up here.

BSE 500

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	12,860.10	12,948.85	12,819.35	12,938.25	64.05	
M&M	637.2	709.95	637	703.25	66	
TATAMOTORS	158.85	178.8	158.55	173	15	
BAIJAFINANSV	7,372.00	7,845.00	7,320.40	7,841.00	475.65	
INDUSINDBK	780	834	775	830.5	46.35	
IT	1,080.90	1,154.25	1,070.15	1,143.85	62.95	
SBIN	239.4	253	237.9	252.6	12.4	
BAIFINANCE	4,475.00	4,678.00	4,464.00	4,659.50	171.5	
ADANIPORTS	382	395.2	382	391.9	12.25	
EICHERMOT	2,526.00	2,630.00	2,513.70	2,615.00	73.3	
ICICIBANK	488	499	486.25	497.35	10.95	
HINDALCO	212.45	220.25	210.55	218.3	4.75	
KOTAKBANK	1,791.50	1,849.80	1,784.15	1,828.00	31.35	
MARUTI	6,979.95	7,070.00	6,948.00	7,057.50	76.05	
ONGC	71.65	72.1	70.9	72.05	0.75	
AXISBANK	625	640	622.05	634.15	5.35	
GRICOR	841.55	851.7	838.25	848.95	6.05	
DIVISLAB	3,440.00	3,462.00	3,410.40	3,466.00	19	
IOCL	84.5	85.45	84.2	85.4	0.45	
HDPC	2,336.70	2,369.40	2,320.30	2,360.00	11	
SHREECEM	23,989.75	24,134.70	23,756.00	24,093.70	103.95	
ULTRACEMCO	4,904.50	4,940.00	4,860.00	4,927.00	17.95	
CIPLA	747.3	752	733.5	744.8	2.25	
ASIANPAINT	2,185.00	2,210.00	2,166.10	2,194.00	6.35	
GAIL	93.7	94.65	92.8	93.8	0.25	
HDPCFANK	1,403.00	1,419.00	1,399.05	1,409.05	0.55	
JSWSTEEL	338.95	346	338.35	341	0.05	
RELIANCE	1,993.25	2,006.50	1,960.10	1,991.20	-2.05	
HCTECH	819	819.9	800.25	814	-1	
COALINDIA	128.75	128.85	128.55	128.4	-0.3	
NTPC	88.7	89.55	88.1	88.35	-0.35	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3,055.80	3,055.80	3,003.90	3,030.00	-12.15	
SBILILE	863.75	868.7	864.8	859.5	-3.65	
BRITANNIA	3,507.80	3,521.95	3,445.00	3,495.5	-15.25	
HDCLIFE	672.5	676.1	661.2	665.2	-4.85	
UPL	430	430	424.05	425.75	-3.9	
WIPRO	349.75	352.35	341.8	345.5	-3.2	
POWERGRID	186.8	189.7	184.75	184.95	-1.85	
SUNPHARMA	514	518.35	509	512.95	-5.45	
NESTLEINDIA	16,950.00	16,969.40	16,671.85	16,800.00	-182.85	
TATASTEEL	518	523.8	510.65	517	-5.7	
INFY	11,285.50	11,332.70	11,014.5	11,112.5	-124.5	
TECHM	844	844.9	830.15	834.8	-10.45	
BHARTIARTL	483.95	485	471.1	477.8	-6.75	
HEROMOTOCO	3,041.85	3,048.95	2,943.70	2,989.00	-42.3	
ITC	186.8	188.45	182.75	184.6	-2.75	
TCS	2,661.00	2,664.20	2,607.05	2,626.00	-40.05	
TITAN	1,301.95	1,303.00	1,267.00	1,281.00	-20.95	
REDREDDY	4,785.00	4,795.00	4,675.00	4,704.00	-80.15	
HINDUNILVR	2,170.00	2,170.00	2,125.90	2,134.90	-42.7	
BPCL	394.45	394.45	377.35	383.1	-11.55	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	29,685.00	29,817.35	29,520.10	29,790.95	101.85	
MOTHERSUMI	130.35	139.45	129.15	137.25	6.65	
ADANITRANS	370.9	407.7	370	384.05	15.4	
INDIGO	1,640.20	1,712.00	1,625.00	1,712.00	68.3	
SBICARD	784.4	818.5	779.6	814	31.05	
BANKBARODA	47.15	49.9	47	49.25	1.7	
PNB	29.8	31.25	29.6	30.75	0.9	
BANDHANBANK	352.95	363.5	348.3	362.1	9.45	
IGL	441.5	453.8	441.35	450.3	11.3	
INFRAELITE	185.5	190.85	184.55	189.8	4.3	
NMDC	96	97.95	95	97.8	1.75	
PEL	1,411.00	1,443.00	1,399.90	1,436.00	25	
BAJAJHLDNG	2,712.95	2,765.00	2,690.20	2,760.00	47.05	
ADANIGREEN	1,068.70	1,098.00	1,032.05	1,076.00	17.55	
HINDZINC	223	230	220.6	227.6	3.45	
SIEMENS	1,407.00	1,433.00	1,386.20	1,428.60	21	
NAUKRI	3,930.00	3,988.60	3,875.00	3,982.00	56.75	
ICICIPRULI	448.45	456.65	443.35	451.15	6.2	
TORNTHPHARM	2,650.00	2,687.75	2,593.00	2,685.00	28.8	
DLF	192.5	194.5	186.3	190.35	2	
BERGEPAINT	638.55	652.9	637.6	652.5	5.5	
MUTHOOTFIN	1,170.00	1,186.00	1,163.10	1,175.85	8.95	
ALKEM	2,708.00	2,710.00	2,677.00	2,697.35	19.55	
GODREJCP	678	684.9	673.25	682.8	3.75	
CONCOR	408.75	409.4	396	408	1.95	
LTI	3,010.00	3,107.00	2,990.05	3,012.00	14.05	
PFC	103.2	105.8	102.9	104.45	0.45	
MCDOWELL-N	561	564.9	554	562.25	2	
PIDILITIND	1,567.80	1,575.00	1,553.55	1,566.00	1.15	
OFSS	3,050.05	3,173.00	3,045.25	3,070.00	1.35	
CADILAC	429.8	435.8	425.65	428.65	-0.2	
PETRONET	259	262.5	255.95	259.9	-0.45	
PGHH	10,645.05	10,754.40	10,500.00	10,597.00	-21.7	
TATACONSUM	518.3	524	514	517	-1.3	
ACC	1,694.80	1,709.80	1,672.15	1,687.45	-7.35	
GICRE	126.05	127.1	124.6	125.25	-0.8	
LUPIN	885	886.5	872	882	-5.6	
MARICO	379.05	379.25	370.3	376.5	-2.55	
UPL	1,038.80	1,049.95	1,025.00	1,031.65	-7.1	
HAVELLS	837.2	843.15	832	838.9	-5.8	
COCLAL	1,530.00	1,532.95	1,507.60	1,521.00	-12.45	
BIOCON	429.8	429.8	419.7	424.35	-3.8	
BOSCHLTD	11,666.00	11,689.95	11,265.05	11,510.00	-111.15	
ABBOTINDIA	15,349.00	15,425.00	15,050.00	15,100.00	-180.15	
DABUR	513	514.15	504.45	505.15	-6.5	
HDFCAMC	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,461.00	2,465.00	-39.9	
ICIGICI	1,320.10	1,325.00	1,277.65	1,307.95	-21.25	
HINDPETRO	216.7	216.75	211.6	213	-4.7	
AUROPHARMA	852	859.4	830.1	837	-18.6	
DMAT	2,420.00	2,420.00	2,360.85	2,379.00	-53.15	
AMBUJACEM	267.2	267.7	260.65	261.5	-6.55	

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	IRCTC	355.1	1369.8	1350.95	1365.3	FSL	76.45	77.6	75.2	76.65	JUBILANT	691	700.3	690.4	697.3
TATAMOTORS	158.6	174.95	158.6	173.55	NTPC	88.65	89.65	88.15	88.3	INFIBEAM	81	82.75	80.85	82.5	ISEC	456.25	469.35	450.05	458.55
SBIN	240	252.9	238.05	252.05	CHOLAFIN	323.7	340	317.15	334.8	SBILILE	869	869	847.25	857.7	MPHASIS	1314.9	1318.75	1300.5	1314.8
BAIFINANCE	4474.1	4678.1	4462.85	4655.4	SIEMENS	1401	1432.7	1387.35	1427.3	GRAPHITE	180.1	187.9	180.1	184.95	NLCINDIA	50	50.3	49.05	49.3
LT	1081	1154	1079.35	1147.75	DCBBANK	91.25	93.5	90.05	92.35	SUZLON	3.7	3.9	3.64	3.67	METROPOLIS	2040.35	2065	1989	2040.3
M&M	641	709.8	637.7	705.6	SOUTHBANK	6.62	7.41	6.53	7.25	GMRINFRA	24.6	25.8	24.35	25.6	GESHIP	246.75	251.75	239.45	250
INDUSINDBK	782.9	833.95	774.8	828.5	BOSCHLTD	11690	11690	1132	11506.75	T13BBRDGST	28.5	29.8	28.4	29.15	UBL	1041.7	1049.85	1025.05	1030.2
RELIANCE	1997.45	2006.65	1961.82	2007.7	BALKRISIND	1615	1664	1615	1644.05	ABBOTINDIA	15340	15425	15090.1	15108.3	INDIANB	64.3	66.1	63.65	65.1
HFDCBANK	1411	1418.85	1399.7	1408.5	FINOLEXIND	602.2	640.1	602.2	611.75	PIDILITIND	1568	1574	1554.15	1563.15	ENGINEERSIN	70.1	71.15	70.1	70.7
ICICIBANK	212	222.9	210.65	221.25	KSB	530	533.95	521.65	530.4	GODREJCP	679.7	684.75	673.75	683.2	SANOHI	8801.75	8103.35	7972.1	8014.9
ICICIBANK	489	499	486.65	497.45	PETRONET	251.1	262.35	256	258.25	MINDAIND	367	377.25	360	367.9	OIL	92.1	93.6	92	93.15
ADANIGAS	301.9	351	301	343.75	TATAELXSI	1516.45	1552	1512.15	1546.75	BOMDYEING	68.9	69.35	66.75	67.7	BAJAJELEC	563.9	574.9	559.6	570.6
AXISFINSV	7396	7849.75	7319.5	7778.25	NESTLEIND	16949.95	16957.05	16678.05	16865.75	SHK	131	134.85	126.55	132.1	IRCON	81	83.45	81	82.4
BAJAJFINSV	626.45	640	622.2	636.2	HSCIL	45.6	40.5	43.2	43.9	COLPAL	1525	1530	1508.45	1521.25	SUMICHEM	275	280	275	277.4
MARUTI	6990	7068	6950	7055.3	ICICIPRULI	449.45	456.5	443.45	455.05	PRESTIGE	257.5	274	257.5	271.55	TRIDENT	7.5	7.81	7.5	7.56
TATASTEEL	518.4	523.9	510.2	517	BLISSGVS	167.8	167.8	162.25	164.5	SYNGENE	575.65	579.65	567.2	573	HATHWAY	28.5	31.35	28.5	31.3
INFY	1129	1132.1	1101.4	1110.6	GLENMARKT	486.9	487	478.7	482.65	SOBHA	309.9	317.8	305.45	314.1	NATOPHARM	917	917	881	898.8
HINDUNILVR	2172	2172	2126.05	2131.25	CENTURYTEX	315	339.9	315	339.9	NBCB	25	25	24.35	24.5	OFSS	3040	3149	3040	3080.5
IDEA	9.24	9.56	9.11	9.2	VIPIND	326.45	356.7	320.7	350.4	BAIAHLDNG	2715	2765	2685.55	2752.05	POWERINDIA	1010.05	1047.9	990.2	1004.95
AUBANK	899	944.6	873	894.4	PRSMJOHNSN	83.45	84.7	82.6	83	CROMPTON	294	297.45	288.9	296	MEGH	77.6	78.9	76.25	78
TCS	2665	2665	2608.05	2625.9	TATACONSUM	519.45	524	514.2	516.65	UNIONBANK	25.15	25.75	24.85	25.65	JINDALSAW	66.2	67.8	65.75	66.75
KOTAKBANK	1796	1849	1783.95	1830.15	BIOCON	429.7	429.7	419.85	423.05	BLUEDART	408.5	425.56	405.5	415	JSWENERGY	61.7	62.1	60.15	61.05
ANANDGREENT	1080	1098	1031.65	1079.15	FRETAIL	68	68.95	67.85	67.95	SHREECEM	24015.4	24100.95	23750	24058.2	VBL	747	778	745.7	772.35
BANDHANBANK	350.15	363.5	348.55	361.55	ICIL	84.55	85.5	84.25	85.25	RELAOX	752	755	738.35	741.95	MINDACORP	70	72.4	69.65	69.85
TORTPHARM	2695	2695	2594.5	2677	PVR	1299.95	1313.9	1275.25	1298.3	KEC	337	344.95	328.95	337	KPITTECH	107.1	107.55	103.25	103.95
ASTRAL	1465	1594.15	1375	1396.55	NATIONALALUM	36.9	37.3	35.65	35.9	TRENT	740.05	764.95	740.05	763.35	GREAVESCOT	74.05	75.25	73.75	74.95
ASHOKLEY	91.45	96	91.2	95.1	IDFCFIRSTB	33.55	34.7	33.55	34.3	CGCL	250.35	263	248.1	260.15	PARAGMILK	109	111.5	109	109.35
DREDDAY	4785.3	4794	4675.84	4703.25	NEC	39.75	41	39.35	40.4	AMARAJABAT	835	843.1	827.65	835	RADICO	454.85	455.6	452.15	453.2
BHARTIARTIL	481.7	484.85	471	478.5	CADILAHC	431.7	435.65	425.85	428.7	FORCEMOT	1105.55	1180.1	1105.55	1150.9	ORIENTCEM	70	72.35	69.75	71.4
SRSFINANS	860.9	930.8	849.25	925.95	ABB	989.9	1090	989.9	1078.85	CREDITACC	721.6	783	720	731.6	PHILIPCARB	155.35	157.45	154	154.6
TATATPOWER	57.9	61.2	57.8	60.65	ALOKTEXT	22.9	23.05	22.9	22.9	KEI	347	367.5	346.2	365.05	BIRLACORP	764	773.85	759.15	763.55
BPCL	395	395	377.45	383.2	SUNTV	420.9	420.95	416.25	417.45	BTC	1282	1330	1282	1301.45	DEEPAKERT	142.4	143.25	140.5	141.85
SPIICEJET	60.5	67.2	60.25	66.35	TIINDIA	759.8	763.1	740.25	760.65	CONCOR	409.1	409.15	396	408.3	ASTRAZEN	4360	4413.2	4323	4360.55
MFSL	624	630.6	612.45	619.2						ICICI	1324.4	1324.4	1278.3	1309.75	DISHTV	10.55	10.55	10.21	10.65
CIPILA	745	751.65	733.75	743.35						JCTVRE	8156	8156	777	808.55	BLUESTARCO	691.05	719.4	691.05	714
ICLICTECH	819.7	819.7	800.6	814.1						HYTHROCAR	1036	1059	997.2	1000.4	GUJALKA	319.9	324.5	317.6	322.5
LICHSIFIN	315.95	333	313.1	331.4						HINDCOPPER	116	118.8	114.05	117.35	SCI	52.8	53.05	51.9	52.25
NAVINFILOR	2621	2621	2578.55	2604.75						IRB	116	118.8	114.05	117.35	NIACL	315.45	116.45	113.05	114
BANKBARODA	47.15	49.85	46.95	49.6						AJANTPHARM	1561	1579.4	1541.3	1549.8	KTKBANK	44.75	45.9	43.9	45.35
DLF	107.35	109.4	106.2	108.85						INOXLEISUR	270	270	265.95	268.25	PGL	5885	5950	5761.6	5891.1
VEDL	192.9	194.75	186.2	190.85						LINDENDIA	934.35	942	882.85	904.95	TATACOFFEE	103.6	104	102.4	102.55
ITC	186.75	188.35	182.8	184.05						STLTECH	145	149.7	144.5	145.5	CAPPL	483.95	485.95	464.65	487.55
ZEEL	189.4	192.1	186.2	190.45						VRILGO	186.85	192.6	182	188.45	BSOFT	183.9	185.55	182.65	184.95
HFDC	2340	2369.25	2320.65	2363.6						GALAXYSURF	1920	2013.7	1920	1996.15	HUDCO	33.7	33.9	32.8	33
EICHERMOT	2524	2629	2514	2612.3						ARVINDPHAS	137.1	142.5	136.2	141.1	KPRMILL	804.95	809.95	786.1	793.9
HFDCCLIFE	677.5	677.5	661.1	665.1						CARERATING	49.2	49.8	439.3	446.1	GULFOILUB	709.55	745	702.4	742.9
IBULHSGFIN	174	182.85	172.1	181.7						EIHOTEL	84.7	85.7	83.45	87.4	KNRCON	260	286	260	281.8
FEDERALBNK	58	62.5	57.25	61.9						ITI	121.3	127	121.3	126.25	VAKRANGEE	26.75	27.95	26.45	27.7
MOTHERSUMI	130	139.35	129.2	136.95						MARICO	78.9	779.5	370.6	377.1	KRBL	252	255	248.95	249.8
M&MFIN	144.85	158.45	144.8	156.5						ALKYLAMINE	3313.25	3337.8	3244.55	3307.45	VARROC	301.8	307.7	296.55	304.6
HEROMOTOCO	3032.1	3049.6	2944.25	2983						SWANENERGY	134.5	139	133.05	137.4	GSFC	64	65.35	63.8	64.95
PNB	74199	75414.45	72364.1	75041.3						LEMONTREE	30.55	32.3	30.55	32.2	COCHINSHIP	339.5	340.05	335.7	338
KFNB	37.95	31.25	29.6	30.8						SPANDANA	749	803.45	743.8	776.8	BRIGADE	218	228	216	218.6
HINDALCO	213	220	210.85	219.4						HAWKINCOOK	5075	5139.95	5015	5081.55	ECLERX	716.95	717.3	699	708.5
ADANIPOORTS	382	395.35	382	391.05						ASTERDM	158	177.4	158	172.1	SIS	385.75	390.8	378.6	382.8
COALINDIA	128.5	128.8	125.85	128.25						POLYCAB	931	931	921.9	927.15	VINATIARGA	1129.9	1134.45	1112.5	1123.45
TATAMTRDVR	69.1	77.9	69	75.85						WABAG	185.05	197.3	185.05	192.85	AEGLISLOG	228	231.1	221.2	231.1
ADANIANT	393	404.75	387.6	394.25						EDELWEISS	58	60.5	56.4	60.5	TATAMETALI	581	587.45	559.95	562.8
POWERGRID	186.8	189.65	184.75	185.35						ALKEM	2705	2707.9	2677.5	2696.55	JSL	62.9	64	61.95	62.3
L&TGH	70.7	74.4	70.1	74.15						SUNTECK	268.05	272.95	264.7	271.05	FDC	326	331.6	324	330.85
ADANITRANS	371.6	407.7	369.9	386.25	UPL	428	429.5	424.1	426.4	SRF	5001	5028.5	5001	5028.65	GMDCILTD	45.95	46.7	45.35	46.25
ASIAPAINPT	2188	2210	2166.75	2196	ESCORTS	1420	1438.05	1406.85	1424.75	GNFC	192.2	195	191.25	192.8	KCEMENT	1920	1939.75	1895.05	1901.05
LUPIN	887.95	887.95	872.05	884.65	TVSMOTOR	463.1	485.7	463.1	479.45	ATUL	6460.1	6560	6325	6504.05	PTC	54.2	54.8	53.85	54
WIPRO	349	351.55	341.85	345.2	GODREJPROP	1039.95	1072.55	1032.9	1061.25	CEATLTD	1130	1146.05	1130	1140.15	MAHSEAMLES	242.35	252.85	240.1	250.8
TECHM	843	843.75	830.5	836.05	RAIN	104.1	112.55	103.75	110.25	HEIDELBERG	206.3	206.4	201	211.95	IFBIND	777.35	794.7	751.7	798.25
APOLLOHOSP	2300	2327.4	2281.9	2290	VOLATAS	776.9	781.85	767	770.4	FORTIS	141.9	143.25	139.35	139.6	JSILSHAS	120.5	124.8	120	122.65
TITAN	1300	1301.6	1267.1	1279.65	INFRAST	186.5	190.7	184.55	190.1	REPOCHOME	246	248.35	237.05	238.05	SUNDRMFASST	497.5	517	497.5	507.95
HINDPETRO*	217	217	211.6	213.85															

Trump fires top Homeland Security official

Sacked official had contradicted Prez claims of election fraud

Washington: President Donald Trump has fired a top Homeland Security official who contradicted his claims of voter fraud and asserted that the November 3 election was the most secure one in America's history.

Trump, who has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of fraud, announced on Twitter on Tuesday that he has fired Christopher Krebs, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at the Department of Homeland Security.

Trump, Republican, has refused to concede to President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, and has made unsubstantiated



claims of voter fraud.

"The recent statement by Chris Krebs on the security of the 2020 Election was highly inaccurate, in that there were massive improprieties and fraud - including dead people voting, poll watchers not allowed into polling locations, 'glitches' in the voting machines which changed votes from Trump to Biden, late voting and many more," Trump said in a tweet, repeating unsubstantiated claims of election fraud.

"Therefore, effective immediately, Chris Krebs has been terminated as Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security

Agency," he said.

Krebs is the latest official to be dismissed by the US president following his defeat, with Defence Secretary Mark Esper also shown the door amid reports Trump doubted the Pentagon chief's loyalty.

There is speculation that before Trump leaves office in January, CIA director Gina Haspel and FBI director Christopher Wray may also be sacked.

Following his dismissal, Krebs, a former Microsoft executive appeared to have no regrets.

"Honored to serve. We did it right. Defend Today, Secure Tomorrow. #Protect2020," he tweeted, President Trump said that the only thing secure about the election was that it was virtually impenetrable by foreign powers.

"On that, the Trump administration takes great credit. Unfortunately, the Radical Left Democrats, Dominion, and others, were perhaps more successful," he said. **PTI**

Deadline near for hand tally of presidential race in Georgia

Atlanta: Election officials across Georgia are staring down a Wednesday deadline to complete a hand tally of the presidential race in the state.

The hand recount of nearly 5 million votes stems from an audit required by a new state law and wasn't in response to any suspected problems with the state's results or an official recount request. The law requires the audit to be done before the counties' certified results can be certified by the state.

The deadline for the counties to complete the audit is 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, ahead of the Friday deadline for state certification. The hand count is meant to ensure that the state's new election machines accurately tabulated the votes and isn't expected to change the

overall outcome, state election officials have repeatedly said.

Going into the count, Democrat Joe Biden led Republican President Donald Trump by a margin of about 14,000 votes. Previously uncounted ballots discovered in two counties during the hand count will reduce that margin to about 13,000, said Gabriel Sterling, who oversaw the implementation of the state's new voting system for the secretary of state's office.

Once the results are certified, if the margin between the candidates remains within 0.5 per cent, the losing campaign can request a recount.

That would be done using scanners that read and tally the votes and would be paid for by the state, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has said. **AP**

China has no theological basis to pick the next Dalai Lama: US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China has no theological basis to pick the next Dalai Lama, according to a top US diplomat, asserting that the Tibetan Buddhists have successfully picked their spiritual leader for hundreds of years.

"I travelled to Dharamshala, India to speak to the Tibetan community that were assembled there in exile and to tell them that the US is opposed to China picking the next Dalai Lama," Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Samuel D Brownback told reporters on Tuesday during a conference call, recalling his visit to India in October.

"They have no right to do that. They have no theological basis to do that. The Tibetan Buddhists have successfully picked their leader for hundreds of years, if not longer, and they have the right to do

that now," he said in response to a question.

Brownback said the US supports that religious communities have the right to pick their own leadership.

"That certainly includes the next Dalai Lama. So we've pushed back against that. We're going to continue to push back against that. We think that's completely wrong of the Chinese Communist Party to assert that they have that right," he said.

The 14th Dalai Lama, now 85, has been living in India ever since he fled Tibet in 1959 following a Chinese crackdown on an uprising by the local population. The Tibetan government-in-exile operates from Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. Over 1,60,000 Tibetans live in India.

Brownback accused China of one of the worst religious persecution situations in the world today, if not the worst.

"It will not help them in their fight on terrorism," he said, adding, that the Chinese are trying to sell it to the world that this is an effort to prevent terrorism, but they're going to create more terrorists.

"The answer to terrorism isn't locking up everybody. The answer to terrorism is religious freedom, allowing people to freely practice their faith, and they won't fight you as much. If the Chinese weren't at war with faith, they would have a more open society, but they'd also have a more satisfied citizenry that seeks to practice their faith and be left alone and left in peace," he said.

He called on China to stop their war on faith, which will not be successful anyway, but against the Uyghurs, against the Tibetan Buddhists, against the Christian house church, against the Catholic Church, against Falun Gong.

UK's Labour roiled by feud over anti-Semitism and Corbyn

London: The leader of Britain's main opposition Labour Party said on Wednesday that he won't readmit ex-Labour chief Jeremy Corbyn to the party's parliamentary caucus, accusing Corbyn of weakening efforts to stamp out anti-Semitism.

Labour leader Keir Starmer said his predecessor had "undermined and set back our work in restoring trust and confidence in the Labour Party's ability to tackle anti-Semitism." Corbyn will continue to sit in Parliament, but as an independent lawmaker. Labour has been grappling with allegations that anti-Semitism was allowed to fester under Corbyn, a long-time supporter of Palestinians and a critic of Israel who led the party for almost five years from 2015.

Corbyn was suspended from the party last month in the wake of a scathing report by Britain's equalities watchdog. The Equality and Human Rights Commission said Labour officials had failed to stamp out anti-Semitism and committed "unlawful acts of harassment and discrimination."

After the report was released, Corbyn accused opponents of exaggerating the problem for "political reasons" — a statement that got him suspended from the party.

On Tuesday, Corbyn issued a statement saying that concerns about anti-Semitism in Labour were not exaggerated, and the party must "never tolerate anti-Semitism or belittled concerns about it." **AP**

Burkina Faso moves ahead with vote despite extremist attacks

Kaya, (Burkina Faso): A change in Burkina Faso's electoral code means results from this month's election will be considered valid even if people can't vote in parts of the West African country that are overrun by Islamic extremist violence.

Candidates like Tegawende Ouedraogo, who ran and lost in 2015, fear the change could cost them the election. The 38-year-old is based in one of the hardest hit areas in the country, Sanmatenga province.

The province accounts for almost 10% of the more than 2,000 fatalities due to violence this year, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project and thousands of people might not be

able to vote.

"When a tire bursts, people run away. There might be rumors of attacks and people will not go to polling stations," he said.

Burkina Faso will go to the polls on November 22 to vote in presidential and legislative elections marred by ongoing violence. Attacks linked to Islamic militants have ravaged the once peaceful nation, forcing more than 1 million people from their homes and making swaths of land inaccessible. It now threatens to undermine the legitimacy of the elections.

Burkina Faso's main political parties voted to change the law in July, making the election valid based on the areas where

people can vote, instead of previously requiring ballots to be cast across the country. Candidates whose supporters are mainly in villages unreachable due to violence fear they won't get the numbers they need to win legislative seats.

The new law signifies the government's inability to secure the nation said, Chrysogone Zougmore, president of the Burkinabe Movement for Human Rights, a local advocacy group.

"In certain regions, a lot of Burkinabe will be denied their right to vote," he said. Communities in the hardest hit regions, in the Sahel, north and the east, already feel marginalized, which could exacerbate tensions, he said. **AP**

Pak parliamentary committee passes CPEC Authority Bill

Islamabad: A parliamentary committee has cleared with majority vote the "China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020" which was blocked by the Opposition members during the last meeting, a media report said on Wednesday.

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Development presided over by ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Junaid Akbar took up the government bill on Tuesday. After a detailed discussion, the committee agreed to decide the fate of the bill through voting.

The Opposition members said their objections over the creation of the CPEC Authority

(CPECA) had not been addressed and the creation of a new authority would affect CPEC projects instead of expediting them.

The USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is fully funded by Beijing under the multi-billion One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. India has protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar said the CPECA would have no powers as all work would be carried out by the line ministries and added that the authority's operations would not be in conflict with the working of the line ministries. **PTI**

Taiwan refuses to renew pro-China news channel's licence

Taipei: Taiwan's government refused to renew the broadcast license of a leading pro-China cable news channel on Wednesday, prompting complaints of political interference.

The National Communications Commission cited repeated violations of rules on accurate reporting in saying it had rejected CTITV's application to renew its license. The channel is owned by the Want Want China Times media group, which also publishes one of Taiwan's main newspapers and has long been associated with a Beijing-friendly political view, partly attributed to its extensive business interests in China. **AP**

FROM PAGE 1

AVOID INDISCRIMINATE USE OF PLASMA THERAPY, WARNS ICMR

"It is speculated that convalescent plasma having low concentration of specific antibody against SARS-CoV-2 may be less beneficial for treating Covid-19 patients as compared to plasma with high concentration of such antibodies," said the guidance note.

"This ICMR advisory, therefore, embraces the principle that a potential donor for convalescent plasma should have sufficient concentration of antibody working against Covid19," it added.

The ICMR's advisory noted that a potential donor of CPT can be a male and female—who have never been pregnant can only donate plasma, it said. The donor should be in the age group of 18-65 years who after 14 days of symptom resolution - testing negative for Covid-19 is not necessary, can donate plasma.

For the potential recipient, the ICMR said that donor can be in the early stage of Covid-19 and the therapy should be administered between 3-7 days from onset of symptoms, but not later than 10 days. There should be no IgG antibody against Covid-19 by appropriate test and informed consent has to be taken.

It also highlights that presence of antibodies against Covid-19 in a potential recipient makes transfusing convalescent plasma a futile intervention.

"CPT, therefore, should only be used, as advised by ICMR NTE, for management of Covid-19 when specific criteria are fulfilled," it said.

The Advisory came after Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting to assess the Covid situation in Delhi wherein it was discussed to issue SoP for plasma therapy and plasma administration for treatment of Covid-19 patients immediately.

TWITTER SUBMITS WRITTEN APOLOGY FOR 'LADAKH IN CHINA' BLUNDER

"In the last few weeks, we have worked towards resolving the geo-tag issue in a manner wherein Leh as well as other cities in the Union Territory of Ladakh will now accurately show with their respective city name, State and country.

"In addition to this, we are also reviewing the geo-tag for various other cities in Jammu & Kashmir. This work is already in progress and we are targeting November 30, 2020 to complete this exercise," it added.

Appearing before the panel, chaired by Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India had "begged apology", but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by

Twitter Inc, not by its 'marketing arm' Twitter India.

"Twitter has now given us a written apology on an affidavit for Ladakh being shown in China," Lekhi said.

"They have apologised for hurting Indian sentiments and have sworn to correct the error by November 30, 2020," she added.

Twitter had come under heavy criticism and faced a backlash from social media users after its geotagging feature displayed "Jammu & Kashmir, the People's Republic of China" in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The Indian Government on October 22 had warned Twitter about its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect towards the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

RANDOM TESTING IN NOIDA JFOR TRAVELLERS FROM DELHI BEGINS

"This is being done in order to assess the spread of infection and would help in issuing advisories to employers and organisations, where a large number of people work and commute between Gautam Buddha Nagar and adjacent areas, so that the spread of infection is contained to a large extent," he said.

Gautam Buddha Nagar has recorded 20,566 cases of Covid-19 including 73 deaths, with 1,236 active cases, according to official data on Tuesday.

However, Delhi has recorded over one lakh new coronavirus cases and around 1,200 deaths between November 1 and November 16 while nearly 94,000 patients recovered during the same period, according to official data.

The national Capital has witnessed a sudden spike in Covid-19 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 November 11.

DEPOSITORS' MONEY SAFE: LAKSHMI VILAS BANK ADMINISTRATOR

First it was the cooperative bank PMC in 2019 and then private sector lender Yes Bank this March. While Yes bank has successfully been revived under the guidance of State Bank, the PMC resolution is still a far cry.

"We're closely monitoring the availability of cash in currency chests and also coordinating with the regulator to ensure that at no branch — there will be any shortage of currency even if a significant number of depositors turn up to withdraw the permissible amount.

"We have the full backing of the regulator to ensure that there is no cash shortfall. Nobody needs to get panicky about the

safety of their money," Manoharan told reporters in a concall that lasted over 90 minutes.

Reacting to the development the LVB counter tanked 20 per cent to Rs 12.40 on the BSE against the benchmark Sensex gaining 0.52 per cent to close above the 44,000-mount for the first time.

Manoharan said LVB has Rs 20,070 crore in deposits as of today, of which Rs 14,000 crore are term-deposits and Rs 6,070 crore savings and current account deposits from 20-odd-lakh depositors.

Its loan book stood at Rs 17,000 crore, Manoharan said, adding while deposits have come down to Rs 20,070 crore as of today from Rs 20,973 crore as of September-end, advances have increased to Rs 17,325 crore from Rs 16,622 crore as of September-end.

Manoharan also said that since last evening when the moratorium was clamped the bank saw only Rs 10 crore withdrawal through ATMs.

"There is no run on the bank and the bank has enough liquidity. No depositor need to get worried about the safety of the money," he reiterated.

When asked what makes him so confident of the merger getting through as many institutional investors have already threatened to challenge the RBI proposal to completely write off the value of all LVB shares to zero upon merger and an automatic delisting, Manoharan said the RBI will listen to every stakeholder before coming out with the final merger scheme on November 20 as the current one is only a draft.

"The regulator will hear everybody concerned before issuing the final merger scheme. Also, we will not bypass any regulations. Every regulation will be complied to," he added.

Retail investors own 45 per cent of the bank now but according to the present scheme, stand to lose every penny of their investment. With 4.99 per cent stake, the single largest institutional investor is Indiabulls Housing Finance with which it tried to merge in April 2019 but was scuttled by the RBI in October that year.

ARMY ENHANCING LAC INFRA AS PARLEYS LINGER

At present, more than one lakh soldiers from both the sides are positioned at the 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh. They are backed by tanks and heavy artillery guns stationed closer to the LAC.

The current stand-off is the first time that soldiers will be deployed in the forward areas of the LAC through Ladakh's harsh winter.

Besides providing state of the art facilities to the troops, the armed forces have also shored up energy supply by ensuring that the fuel dumps at strategic locations in the region are well stocked.

Kejriwal calls all-party meet on Covid

Delhi has seen a spurt in number of cases in last couple of weeks; over 660 ICU beds to be added in various Delhi Government hospitals soon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has called an all-party meeting on Thursday to discuss the Covid-19 situation in the national Capital, which has been seeing a spurt in the number of cases in the last couple of weeks with the city recording 104 deaths in a day on November 12, the highest in five months, officials said on Wednesday.

Also, the CM said, over 660 ICU beds will be added in various Delhi Government hospitals in the next few days for Covid management. Despite such a huge surge in Covid-19 cases, doctors have managed the situation well, Kejriwal said.

Leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), BJP Congress and other parties have been invited for the meeting.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during his visit to GTB Hospital to meet Covid-19 patients in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

"The Chief Minister will hold an all-party meeting to discuss the Covid-19 situation in Delhi. The meeting will be held at 11 am on Thursday," an official said.

On Thursday, Kejriwal will hold the all-party meeting to discuss the Covid-19 situation in the city, even as Opposition parties said that they would

raise issues like "inadequate" testing and press for proper enforcement of precautionary measures.

With medical facilities under strain, as many as 45 doctors and 160 paramedics of the paramilitary forces have also arrived in the national Capital to serve the people.

Delhi has been witnessing

a spurt in coronavirus cases since October 28 when daily cases breached the 5,000-mark for the first time. Single-day rise in cases crossed the 8,000-mark on November 11.

On Tuesday, Delhi recorded 6,396 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to over 4.95 lakh, while 99 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 7,812. The city had recorded 104 deaths in a day on November 12, the highest in five months.

Interacting with reporters after visiting GTB Hospital in East Delhi along with national Capital's Health Minister Satyendar Jain, the Kejriwal said, "We had a meeting with doctors at GTB Hospital and they have agreed to add 238 ICU beds in the next two days. In all, 663 ICU beds shall be added in various Delhi hospitals in the next few days."

No major change in Delhi's air this week but mercury to drop

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality is unlikely to see any significant change in the next three to four days, said weather experts and Government agencies on Wednesday.

Although Delhi's air quality deteriorated marginally and was recorded in the "poor" category on Wednesday as a change in the wind direction increased the share of stubble burning in the city's pollution slightly, the AQI is again going to improve to the "moderate" category by Friday owing to favourable wind speed, said VK Soni, the head of the India Meteorological Department's environment research centre.

The IMD said the minimum temperature in Delhi is predicted to drop to 9 degrees Celsius by Saturday, as cold winds have started blowing from hilly regions, which have witnessed a fresh bout of snowfall. On Wednesday morning, it was 10.6 degrees Celsius, two

notches below normal.

The city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded in the "moderate" category in the morning on Wednesday. However, pollution levels increased by a bit as the day progressed. The 24-hour average AQI stood at 211. It was 171 on Tuesday.

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

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, stubble burning accounted for eight per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Wednesday. It was three per cent on Tuesday.

Around 800 fire points were observed in Punjab, Haryana and western Pakistan. However, their impact on Delhi-NCR's air quality will not be significant, Soni said.

The Central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi also said

Delhi-NCR's air quality is likely to remain in the "moderate" and the lower-end of the "poor" category on Thursday and Friday.

On Wednesday, the prominent surface wind direction was northwesterly and the maximum wind speed 10 kmph, it said.

The minimum and maximum temperatures settled at 10.6 degrees Celsius and 25.4 degrees Celsius respectively.

Delhi's ventilation index — a product of mixing depth and average wind speed — was around 5,000 square metre per second on Wednesday and is likely to be 7,500 square metre per second on Thursday.

Mixing depth is the vertical height in which pollutants are suspended in the air. It reduces on cold days with calm wind speed.

A ventilation index lower than 6,000 square metre per second, with the average wind speed less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for dispersal of pollutants.

Pulwama:12 civilians hurt in grenade attack

Jammu: Ahead of the District Development Council polls, beginning from November 28, unidentified terrorists on Wednesday evening targeted security forces by lobbing a grenade in which at least 12 civilians received injuries in the Kakapora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Local reports said the grenade missed the target and exploded on the road. The entire area was cordoned off and searches were launched to track down the footprints of a grenade thrower. According to a police spokesman, "at about 5.45 p.m a CRPF bunker of 41 Bn was targeted by the terrorists near Kakapora area of Pulwama. Local police teams and other security personnel rushed to the spot". The police spokesman said, "the grenade missed the intended target and exploded on road. In this incident twelve civilians received injuries. All the injured were evacuated to a nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries". **PNS**

TrendSlazer

John chronicles his pain story

Actor **JOHN ABRAHAM** has used social media to share proof that when it comes to fitness, there is no gain without pain.

He shared a post-workout picture where he flaunts muscles. “I’m smiling inside :) #postworkout #goodpain,” he captioned the image.

Last week, John encouraged fitness enthusiasts by sharing photographs of his workout session on social media.

He shared pictures from the gym on his verified Instagram account where he can be seen lifting weights. The actor showed off biceps and triceps in black and white photographs.

‘Every film has a certain set of audience. For me its important for a film to entertain its core audience. If it fails to do so, then it doesn’t achieve its purpose. All my films have reached to its set of audience who have loved what we have tried to say about life, society and women empowerment. This is very gratifying for me.’

—Bhumi Pednekar



Actor **TAAPSEE PANNU** shared a picture on Instagram that captures her riding a motorcycle. She claims the photo was taken

right before she was fined for not wearing a helmet while riding the vehicle.

“Just before I was fined for no helmet,” she wrote as caption, with the tags #BikeLove, #RashmiRocket, and #ShootThrills.

Rashmi Rocket is Taapsee’s forthcoming film, which casts her as a runner from the Rann of Kutch who fights for her identity and becomes an athlete. Actor Priyanshu Painyuli will be seen playing Taapsee’s husband.

‘My mental health story was twisted’

Singer **SELENA GOMEZ** says her mental health story was twisted a lot, which made her angry.

In an interview with her mother Mandy Teehey for a newsletter Selena opened up about going public with her mental health struggles.

The singer-actor further said, “I got so angry that my story was twisted into so many different things. The first time I posted it on social media, I was like, ‘I claim my own story, so if you don’t hear it from me, then it’s not true.’ Did I go and get help? Yes I did. But I’m not ashamed. I feel better and I feel like I can understand a lot of things now.”



FLUSH THE TOXINS

The concept of ‘hygiene’ has been redefined due to the pandemic. On World Toilet Day, we examine how the term has assumed a different meaning this year

The novel Coronavirus has given a new twist to the word ‘hygiene’ globally. While earlier, it was considered to be synonymous with cleanliness, things have changed now. Words like contamination, disinfectants and sanitisation have become a part of our everyday vocabulary. The pandemic has shown us how serious gaps existed in the way ‘hygiene’ was maintained prior to its outbreak. In the post-pandemic world, things are going to be a lot more focussed and holistic as far as global hygiene practices and norms are concerned.

In the past, ‘sharing is caring’ was the common philosophy. People shared clothes, food, seats on public transport or armrests in a film theatre. Now, ‘distancing is caring’ is the norm that we all strictly adhere to. Forget seats, it is not even advisable to sit beside anyone in a public vehicle or premises. A visit to the local grocery store or railway station is a good enough indicator of how things have changed. Elevators no longer have push buttons, temperature guns are aimed at you from a distance to check body temperature and your hands are sprayed with sanitisers before touching anyone. These are some of the most visible and commonly followed protocols in the new world. However, there is another key area of focus which deserves greater attention than ever, and that is personal and toilet hygiene.

COVID-19 is a respiratory tract infection which first enters a healthy person’s body when they inadvertently inhale the contaminated respiratory droplets released by an infected person. Since the virus can survive outside the human body for different durations

depending on the material it attaches itself to, it can also enter a healthy person’s body when the person touches a contaminated surface. That’s where public toilets are garnering a lot of attention. In most places, whether they are shopping malls or office complexes or roadside public washrooms, there is usually a lot of mess and lack of hygiene. Floors can be dirty and there is usually the stink in the air. In the wake of the pandemic, everyone is beginning to take note of this problem and most people are now wary of using public washrooms as they are deemed to be unhygienic. To deal with the undesirable scenario of having to visit the common washrooms, people are increasingly carrying their own tissue papers, toilet seat disinfectant sprays, liquid soaps and hand sanitisers from trusted brands.

From the sanitation point of view also, things have changed tremendously. There is a lot of awareness about do’s and don’ts in public toilets. For instance, sanitation workers managing these washrooms are now mandated to wear PPE suits during their presence in the washrooms. Additionally, they must wear face shields and gloves at all times to avoid directly touching any contaminated surfaces. In places like malls, multiplexes, airports and railway stations, multiple cleaning rounds are now being undertaken on an hourly or even greater frequency unlike the past when two-three rounds a day were considered to be sufficient.

The key to effective toilet hygiene lies in understanding how the virus can spread through contamination in public washrooms and adhering to practices that help us prevent such situations.

‘THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE TOILET HYGIENE LIES IN UNDERSTANDING HOW THE VIRUS CAN SPREAD THROUGH CONTAMINATION IN PUBLIC WASHROOMS AND ADHERING TO PRACTICES THAT HELP US PREVENT SUCH SITUATIONS’

Whenever someone flushes in a public toilet, there is an aerosol cloud created which might contain some of the contaminated respiratory droplets from an infected person. It can hover around the toilet seat and infect a healthy user who subsequently uses the same toilet. To prevent this from happening, the ideal practice is to put down the lid on the toilet seat and then flush it. Also, it is absolutely mandatory to wear face masks even when one is inside the toilet and alone. This can keep the user safe from infection caused by the contaminated droplets present in the air inside the washrooms. Not only that, spitting inside the washrooms is also strictly prohibited now and violators of the protocols often end up paying steep fines.

Majority of people now stay away from public washrooms in markets and shopping malls or theatres, but if you are on a long trip or in the office, usage of the washroom becomes almost unavoidable. In such scenarios, it is important to pay attention to small but highly beneficial user tips. To begin with, you must not touch the door handle with bare hands to enter the washroom or the toilet stall. In case, you need to sit on the toilet seat, inspect it carefully before doing so. If you spot any dampness, wet seat, urine or blood drops etc, use toilet paper to wipe off the surface in a way that your hands don’t touch the surface in any manner and dispose that wad of toilet paper in the waste basket. The best option would be to thoroughly spray the toilet seat with a high-quality toilet seat disinfectant spray capable of killing harmful microbes such as virus or bacteria present on the surface. You need to

wait only for a few seconds after spraying the seat while the spray kills the germs and then you can confidently use it.

Similarly, there are also easy disinfectant sprays, wipes and hand sanitisers available in the market that can be used to make other surfaces germ free. There might be times when despite all the precautions, it becomes unavoidable or you accidentally touch any surfaces such as taps, door handles, counters or walls in a public washroom. In such situations, you should thoroughly wash your hands using a soap and running water for 20 seconds in the manner prescribed by the World Health Organisation. Alternatively, good hand sanitisers with 60 per cent or higher alcohol content can also be used to disinfect your hands. This has to be done before touching your eyes, nose, mouth or any part of the face as the virus can get transferred through touch.

While these are practices which have been helping us keep ourselves protected from the pandemic, there are also various innovations and design changes being integrated to address this issue nowadays. For instance, sensor-driven taps, lights, soap dispensers, automatic flushes, doors and toilet lids are going to constitute the smart toilets of the future. The focus of hygiene practices in the post-pandemic world is to use equipment that helps us avoid contact with contaminated surfaces or infected people. Smart, contactless processes and an unwavering focus on personal as well as community hygiene will eventually help us prevail over the disease.

(The writer Vikas Bagaria is the founder of Pee Safe.)

An ode to women

The sports docu-series, *Being Serena*, is an intimate, first-person account of the life and success of Grand Slam champion **SERENA WILLIAMS**



Discovery Plus has come up with its latest Emmy nominated sports docu-series that follows pivotal moments in the life of former world tennis champion, **SERENA WILLIAMS**. Titled *Being Serena*, the five-episode documentary series produced by HBO Sports and IMG’s Original Content, showcases game

changing moments in her professional and personal life, tracking her pregnancy, motherhood, comeback and more.

Serena’s success story goes well beyond her 23 singles women’s grand slam titles, 39 grand slams overall and four Olympic Gold Medals. Since her return to the court

after embracing motherhood, Serena rose to dominance once again, qualifying for four grand slam finals between 2018 and 2019. While not serving in the court, Serena she supports minorities and women by funding their businesses through her VC Serena Ventures.

Speaking on the occasion, Serena said, “The documentary is very close to my heart – it captured my life during some of the most unforgettable and challenging moments in a really honest way. It is a tribute to all the women who have gotten back to work – or in my case back on the court – after becoming a mother. I am excited that my fans in India will have a chance to see my story.”

Speaking on the India launch of the series, Issac John, Digital Head, APAC – Discovery, said, “Serena is not only a talented sporting hero but she has also lived an exemplary life off the court, making her a true role model. One doesn’t have to be a tennis fan to be awed by her incredible resilience and grit. We are delighted to provide Indian audiences with this never-seen-before access into the life and the journey of a living legend.”

Apart from her grand slam success, she has also been bestowed with various other awards which include Sports Illustrated’s Sportsperson of the Year honours in 2015 and a four-time awardee of the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year, first in 2002 and most recently in 2015.



A musical odyssey

The animated musical comedy, *Trolls World Tour*, is set for a big screen release as singer **NEETI MOHAN** lends her voice to its Hindi-dubbed version

While the year has trolled each one of us in style, saving the best for the last, *Trolls World Tour* is all set to take over the theatres with its English and Hindi edition.

Ending the year on a great note for Indian audiences, cinephiles are set to see the animated musical comedy on the big screen. The film will feature singer Neeti Mohan who will lend her voice to the lead character Poppy in the second installment of the film. With Anna Kendrick regaling audiences in the English version of the film, Neeti will sing three songs for the film — *Koi Geet Gao*, *Iss Pal Ko Jio*, *Trolls Toh Karengae Fun*.

Commenting on lending her voice to the film, the singer said, “Poppy sends across the message that every girl is a queen. She is a free-spirited soul who is a ‘go getter’ and the character inspires the audiences to a great extent. Which is why getting the chance to be ‘Poppy Mohan’ was a great thing. The dubbing experience was challenging as it’s not easy to translate songs or dialogues to another language. Despite that, I had a blast recording those three songs and I feel that this is an experience that’s going to last forever.”

Commenting on the film, Nitin Bikhchandani, General Manager, NBCUniversal Media

LLC, said, “Owing to its prominent elements of comedy and music, this is a special film, especially for the Indian market. The first part of the film was received with great response from the audiences and the second part promises to be even grander. All I can say is, the film has been worth the wait.”

It is directed by Walt Dohrn, who served as co-director on *Trolls* and is produced by returning producer Gina Shay. It is co-directed by David P. Smith and co-produced by Kelly Cooney Cilella, both of whom worked on the first *Trolls*.

(The film releases on November 19.)

Kerala through the lens

CM PINARAYI VIJAYAN released a coffee table book with Raghu Rai's photographs on Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan released a coffee table book on Thiruvananthapuram with a collection of images by eminent photographer Raghu Rai for Kerala Tourism as part of the capital city heritage project, yesterday.

A stunning visual treat — Thiruvananthapuram — the artist's impression explores the city's culture, heritage and life through a fascinating collection of shots viewed through the lens of Raghu Rai, coupled with graphic descriptions by writer Lekshmi Rajeev.

"This is a fantastic work that has tapped fully the mesmerising power of photography to capture the images of the city," said Vijayan, while releasing the compendium through a video conference.

State Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran, who presided over the function held at Mascot Hotel, said, "This outstanding work would add considerable strength to the capital city heritage project."

Dr Shashi Tharoor, MP, and Raghu Rai also joined the ceremony online. Rai said, "City of festivals, it was an unforgettable experience to capture the images of Thiruvananthapuram with its vibrant life and culture." He added that he has plans to write a book on Kerala, too.

A visual statement on the city, the 190-page work encapsulates its



history, culture and heritage. While most similar collections have their emphasis on nature, this work has its accent on human life in the city.

Apart from the capital city, the Tourism Department has been implementing heritage projects to protect and preserve historical and

cultural assets of Alappuzha, Muziris and Thalassery, said Tourism Secretary Rani George IAS.

M Vijayakumar, Chairman

KTDC, P Bala Kiran IAS, Tourism Director, and V K Karthika, Editor & Publisher, Amazon Westland, attended the online event.

MoS PMO addresses programme for pensioners

The Union Minister of State (I/C) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) is trying to make the pensioners' 'atam-nirbhar'. They are doing it by promoting the Digital Life Certificate for pensioners, which can be given from the comfort of one's home. Earlier, due to the difficulties faced by the pensioners in submitting the Life Certificate because of COVID-19 pandemic, the government has relaxed the existing timeline for submission from November 1 to December 31.

Addressing an interactive session of Bhrahma Kumari Sister Shivani on "Power of thoughts and meditation in COVID-19 pandemic" organised by DoPPW, Dr Jitendra said that the pensioners as senior citizens being the most vulnerable group in the wake of the pandemic need a helping hand and compassionate ears in addition to medical care. "Such programmes will help them to tackle their mental stress level, thus, protecting them from physical illness as well," added he.

While appreciating the session, he said that senior citizens always have a lot to offer to the

'Lifestyle modifications are must in this period of global health crisis as one should liberate oneself from nagging thoughts'

society and their valuable experiences can bring positive changes to the society. The key to happiness is being grateful for all that we have.

Endorsing the thoughts on building positivity in life, Dr Jitendra also said, "Lifestyle modifications are must in this period of global health crisis as one should liberate oneself from nagging thoughts. One should add life to the years and not years to the life."

Dr Kshatrapati Shivaji, Secretary (Pension and Pensioners' Welfare) and Sanjiv Narain Mathur, Joint Secretary (Pension and Pensioners' Welfare) along with other senior officials and office bearers of the Pensioners' Associations were present in this digital event.

The programme was aimed to sensitise senior pensioner on mental well-being during the pandemic. The DoPPW has been taking extra efforts for organising programmes for addressing pensioners' health issues.

KIIT wins Asian award



The Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Deemed to be University has won the THE Awards Asia 2020 declared by the Times Higher Education (THE) on Tuesday. KIIT, which has been declared winner in the category 'Workplace of the Year', is the only institute in India to get such a prestigious recognition. It got this recognition "for its unstint-

KIIT RECEIVED THE RECOGNITION FOR ITS UNSTINTING COMMITMENT TO ITS STAFF AND STUDENTS, IN PARTICULAR TO ITS EARLY CAREER FACULTY

ing commitment to its staff and students, in particular to its early career faculty."

KIIT is known for its decentralised governance, where prominent staff are provided with ample autonomy and power to deliver their assignments. It is the only self-financing university which is above family domination. All senior functionaries are renowned academicians and they are chosen through a transparent process with merit as the only criteria.

Staff and faculty members gave all the credits to Founder, Dr Achyuta Samanta for the achievement. Dr Samanta has given a lot of importance on working comfortably with freedom both in financial and administrative aspects. He has created an ambience and work culture where faculty and staff could work with free hand to deliver their assignments. As a result, KIIT has been a student, parent, people and environment-friendly campus since its inception.

THE judging panel, joined by guest experts, evaluated hundreds of institutions that have launched initiatives to support students, teachers, researchers and local communities before declaring KIIT the winner.

Dr Annadurai inaugurates ICePhaST-2020 virtually

The International Conference on Electronics, Photonics and Smart Technologies (ICePhaST-2020) was organised by the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering through virtual platform. The event was inaugurated by honourable chief guest Padmashri Dr Myslwamy Annadurai, former director of Indian Space Research Organisation Satellite Centre, (ISAC), Vice President-Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology, Chairman-National Design and Research Forum, India, who delivered a technical talk on "Smart technologies in emerging space programme."

The talk completely motivated young and budding researchers in the field of photonics and optical based satellites. Faculty members, researchers and students of SRM IST were very proud, content and excited to have the chief guest on the virtual conference.

The three foreign delegates, professor Hiroshi Inokawa, Shizuoka University, Japan, professor Chennupati Jagadish, Australian National University, Australia and professor Stephen CR and University of Michigan, USA, provided the guest of honour address during the inauguration. Professor Hiroshi Inokawa expressed the contentment



the long term technical relationship with SRM IST and elaborated the importance of organising conferences under the photonics banner.

Professor Chennupati Jagadish and professor Stephen CR and showed the interest of long term research collaborations with the department of

Electronics and Communication Engineering, SRMIST.

The presidential address was delivered by Dr Sandeep Sancheti, vice chancellor, SRMIST, conveyed that several programmes of this dimensions are conducted by the department of ECE, SRMIST, Kattankulathur. The ICePhaST-2020 conference proceedings were released by Dr C Muthamizhchelvan, ProVC, Engineering and Technology, SRMIST and congratulated the team for meticulous planning and execution. The gathering was felicitated by Dr TV Gopal, Dean, College of Engineering and Technology, SRMIST.

CISF organises investiture ceremony



A small-scale investiture ceremony was organised at CISF Headquarters in New Delhi, observing all the necessary COVID-19 preventive measures. The officers and personnel of CISF were honoured with police medals. During the ceremony, Rajesh Ranjan, DG, CISF decorated the following officers and personnel:

President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service: awarded on Republic Day 2020
H S Karmyal, Assistant Commandant

Police Medal for Meritorious Service: awarded on Independence Day- 2018, 2019, 2020 and Republic Day 2020
1) Pradip Kumar Bharti, DIG Independence Day 2019
2) Ganga Shankar, Sr Commandant

Independence Day 2018
3) Apoorv Pandey, Sr Commandant Independence Day 2018
4) Anil Damor, Sr Commandant Independence Day 2019
5) Md Abdus Salam, Assistant Commandant Republic Day 2020
6) Yadukul Bhusan, Assistant Commandant Independence Day 2020
7) Mahendra Pratap Singh, Inspector Independence Day 2020

President's Fire Service Medal For Distinguished Service
P Vinod, Dy. Commandant/ Fire, Independence Day 2019
The DG, CISF congratulated all the medal winners for winning the laurels for the Force.



Dr Reddy assumes charge as VIT VC

Dr SV Kota Reddy assumed charge as VC of the VIT-AP University. Dr D Subhakar handed over the charge to the new incumbent at a simple function. While speaking at the gathering, he urged the faculty members to focus on innovative research and asked the staff to extend full support.

Dr Reddy has a Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering from IIT Bombay. On this occasion, he held a meeting with heads of the departments and gave directions for smooth

delivery of services to the students. He advised the university to strictly follow the directions of the government from time to time.

Professor Jagadish Chandra Muduganti, Dean Academics and Dr CLV Sivakumar, Registrar, informed the VC about initiatives taken by the student community better, particularly strategies followed to deliver the online classes, combating difficulties created by pandemic for physical delivery.

GM Northern Railway meets dept heads

Shutosh Gangal, General Manager, Northern Railway, held a performance review meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway through video conferencing. Detailed discussions were conducted on the issues relating to — safety, rail fractures and rail joint problems during winter, train operations in foggy weather, digitisation of railway, material management and scrap disposal.

The GM advised on focusing efforts on the maintenance of track, welds of joints, signaling systems and rolling stock assets for unhindered running of trains during the cold foggy winter months. He added that the frontline staff are the eyes and ears of the railways, attention should be given to their periodic training and sensitisation to use of gadgets.

He took stock of the works being undertaken to remove bottlenecks to enhance speed of trains. Improvement of level crossings, turnouts, doubling, electrification, replacement of rails construction of ROB and RUBs were some of the points



touched upon. He called upon the concerned departments to expedite the processes. He also advised to maintain the adequate stock pile of materials needed for repair and maintenance of assets along with the timely disposal of scrap. He insisted on completion of digitisation of all railway records to bring in more transparency and clarity on land ownership issues.

He expressed his concern over the rising cases of signal cable cutting by outsiders. He

was informed that such cases are being dealt with heavy hand and prosecuted under Railways Act, signaling systems have been made fog conductive and detonators have been provided.

Expressing satisfaction on the performance of the various departments, Gangal shared that there has been no consequential train accident reported in the zone, the punctuality has been high and efforts are on to complete the engineering works.

IN SHORT



The Municipal Corporation has started manufacturing various types of products from waste plastics. The waste plastic manufacturing unit has been set up near Airport Road, Karhaida, Mohan Nagar. The unit has prepared a benchmark made of plastic as a model. These benches will be set up in various municipal parks. In the first phase, 75 benches will be prepared daily. Apart from this, the work of making planters, pots, gates, dustbins, buckets and tiles and much more will also start very soon. The Municipal Commissioner Mahendra Singh Tanwar claimed that Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation has become the first corporation of the year not only in Uttar Pradesh but all over India to manufacture various products from plastic waste. He said, "We have employed local artists in this project. This will give these artists an opportunity to show their skills as well as a chance to get employment."



An on-duty RPF staff recovered a mobile phone from a sitting chair at Rabindra Sadan metro station. After a while, he received a call on that recovered mobile phone, where the caller claimed that he was the owner of the phone. The caller was advised to contact station master's office of Rabindra Sadan station. The on-duty RPF staff deposited the phone to the station master's office. After sometime, a person arrived and after proper verification and completing all the formalities, the recovered mobile phone was handed over to him.



IAS Vijayendra, CMD, NSIC, launched a mobile application "MSME Global Mart" on November 12 for facilitating MSMEs and to popularise the M-Commerce. Also present on this occasion were P Udayakumar, Director (P&M), NSIC, Gaurang Dixit, Director (Finance), NSIC. The key features offered in the first version of the app, which include Public Procurement Information, International Trade, Key Catalogues, Success Stories, Prospective buyers etc. Corporates, PSUs and others can reach relevant suppliers for sourcing and sub-contracting needs through this app by searching from 86 categories and 1462 sub-categories offered in the app. The initiative aims at benefiting more MSMEs become Alma Nirbhar. One can log on to www.msmeart.com too.

Germany reach all-time Löw

Die Mannschaft suffer heaviest loss in 89 years after Spain beat them 6-0 to qualify for Nations League finals

AFP ■ SEVILLE

Ferran Torres grabbed a hat-trick as Spain condemned Germany to their worst defeat in 89 years on Tuesday, winning 6-0 in Seville to qualify for the UEFA Nations League finals and join France, who came from behind to beat Sweden 4-2.

Manchester City forward Torres was the star for Spain, who were as brilliant as Germany were bad. The result raises further questions about Germany coach Joachim Löw, who was already under pressure coming into this game.

"This has been a black day for us," admitted Löw after Germany's heaviest defeat since losing 6-0 to Austria in 1931.

They came into their final game in League A, Group 4 on top, a point clear of Spain, and so only needed a draw at an empty La Cartuja to qualify for the finals in October next year.

But Alvaro Morata headed Spain in front in the 17th minute before Torres crashed in the second on 33 minutes after Dani Olmo's header hit the bar.

His City team-mate Rodri headed in another to make it 3-0 for Spain before the end of a first half in which they lost Sergio Canales and skipper Sergio Ramos to injury, with the latter coming off feeling his hamstring.

Germany's defence was posted missing as Jose Gaya



Mikel Oyarzabal celebrates with Spanish teammate Gaya after scoring his side's sixth goal against Germany

AP/EURO2020

burst through and squared for Torres to get the fourth on 55 minutes, and Fabian Ruiz teed up the 20-year-old Torres to complete his hat-trick.

Serge Gnabry hit the bar for Germany before substitute Mikel Oyarzabal completed the rout.

"It was one of the best and

most complete matches of the Spanish national team," said Spain coach Luis Enrique.

Germany now have several months to reflect on this

loss before the start of 2022 World Cup qualifying in March and then the delayed Euro 2020 in June and July.

Spain, meanwhile, become the second side to qualify for the Nations League finals after France clinched their place by beating Portugal at the weekend.



WIN WITH LATE GOAL

The World Cup holders finished off their League A, Group 3 campaign by beating Sweden behind closed doors at the Stade de France as Olivier Giroud continued his remarkable scoring record for Les Bleus with a brace.

Viktor Claesson's deflected early strike gave Sweden the lead, but Giroud soon equalised and Benjamin Pavard put France ahead before half-time.

Giroud then headed in Kylian Mbappe's cross to make it 3-1 before the hour mark, and Kingsley Coman scored France's final goal at the death after Robin Quaison had netted Sweden's second.

Having recently overtaken Messi's tally of 41 goals for Les Bleus, Giroud is

now on 44 and is closing in on Thierry Henry's overall record mark of 51.

The 34-year-old remains a key player for France despite being on the periphery with his club Chelsea, for whom he has started just once this season, in the League Cup.

Sweden finish bottom of the group behind Croatia and are relegated to the second-tier League B for the next edition of the competition.

That is despite 10-man Croatia losing 3-2 at home to Portugal in Split, with Manchester City defender Ruben Dias getting a 90th-minute winner for the 2019 Nations League champions.

Chelsea's Mateo Kovacic had scored twice for Croatia, either side of Dias's first of the night and a Joao Felix effort for Portugal, who featured Cristiano Ronaldo wearing the captain's armband.

The remaining two spots in the Nations League semi-finals will be decided on Wednesday, with Italy and Belgium currently in pole position.



Richarlison celebrates with teammate Roberto Firmino after scoring Brazil's 2nd goal against Uruguay at Centenario stadium in Montevideo

AP

Brazil continue perfect start

AFP ■ MONTEVIDEO

Brazil continued their perfect start to the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup with a 2-0 win over Uruguay while rivals Argentina stayed in touch with an easy win in Peru.

First-half goals from Arthur and Richarlison helped Brazil to a 2-0 win over Uruguay, who had Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani sent off.

Argentina, with Lionel Messi pulling the strings, brushed aside a limited Peru 2-0 in Lima, with goals from Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez and Nicholas Gonzalez in a game in which they were never troubled.

Ecuador, playing on their home turf in high-altitude Quito, hammered Colombia 6-1. Paraguay and Bolivia fought out a 2-2 draw.

While Venezuela — the only South American team never to qualify for a World Cup finals — picked up their first points in a 2-1 victory

over Chile in Caracas.

Victory in Montevideo left Brazil on top of South America's qualifying standings on 12 points with four wins from four games. Argentina are second on 10 points after beating Peru, with surprise team Ecuador third on nine points.

Uruguay are fifth on six points, behind Paraguay on goal difference after four matches.



The first four teams in South America's round-robin competition qualify directly for the World Cup finals in Qatar, while the 5th placed nation faces a playoff against the country qualifying from Oceania.

Five-time world champions Brazil were fortunate to be two goals up at half time in Montevideo after Uruguay had hit the woodwork twice at either end of the half.

The win also extended Brazil's long reign of dominance over the Celeste, who have not beaten their fierce rivals since 2001.



Indian captain Virat Kohli and England's Joe Root pose with trophy

AP/File Photo

England aim for fans' return in 2021 India Test series

PTI ■ LONDON

A five-match Test series against India will headline England's bumper home summer in 2021 as the country's cricket board on Wednesday unveiled a provisional fixture with plans to get crowds back into the stadiums.

The matches against India are scheduled for August-September.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) seems eager to stage the return of fans into the playing arena from the next season onwards depending on the Covid-19 situation.

"We had an amazing summer of international cricket this year with some memorable performances, and we know how much enjoyment it brought to people whilst staying at home," ECB chief executive officer, Tom Harrison, said in a release. "Next year we've got another big international programme to look forward to, with the thrill of a five-Test series against India as the centrepiece, compelling white ball series for our men and women, and an Ashes Series for our Visually Impaired team."

Much to the delight of English cricket fans craving for Live action, the CEO added, "It's an exciting prospect for England fans, and while Covid-19 means there's still a great deal of uncer-

tainty, we really hope to be able to welcome fans back into the grounds safely next year to bring that unique atmosphere to stadia across the country."

The Test series against India is due to conclude the men's international summer, with matches at Trent Bridge, Lord's, Headingley, the Kia Oval and Old Trafford.

The series is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14.

Before the assignments against India, Sri Lanka are due to play three ODIs from June 29 to July 4, with Pakistan arriving for three T20Is and three ODIs between July 8 and 20.

The ODIs will be played in Cardiff, London (Lord's) and Birmingham on July 8, 10 and 13 respectively, while the T20Is will be held in Nottingham, Leeds and Manchester on July 16, 18 and 20 respectively.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

August 4-8: 1st Test, Trent Bridge
August 12-16: 2nd Test, Lord's
August 25-29: 3rd Test, Headingley
Sept 2-6: 4th Test, Oval
Sept 10-14: 5th Test, Old Trafford.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's premier strike bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami are unlikely to play all the upcoming six white-ball games against Australia as the team management would like to keep them battle-ready for the four-Test series starting December 17.

India are starting their two month tour of Australia with three ODIs followed by as many T20Is — to be played between November 27 to December 8 in Sydney and Canberra.

If sources in BCCI are to be believed, Bumrah and Shami's workload management is paramount for head coach Ravi Shastri and bowling coach Bharath Arun in case Ishant Sharma is not available for the first Test.

The first red ball warm-up

game at Drummoyne Oval will be played between December 6-8.

However, India's second and third T20Is will be coinciding with the first warm-up game for the Tests.

There is a school of thought that with Bumrah and Shami both being integral to India's Test match plans, the management (head coach Ravi Shastri, captain Virat Kohli and bowling coach Bharath Arun) will not risk playing them in six back to back games in only 12 days.

"If both (Bumrah and Shami) play the T20Is (on Dec 4, 6 and 8), then they will have one warm-up match less which I

don't think the team management will fancy at this moment," a source said.

So, there is a chance that Shami and Bumrah will be rotated during the white-ball series.

Shami has been seen primarily bowling with pink and red balls during net sessions, which is an indicator of where his and team's priorities lie.

It may be possible that both Bumrah and Shami will play the ODIs where they can bowl their 10 over quota and then switch to Test match mode by playing the warm-up games which will help them get the overs



Poms confirm first Pak tour in 16 years

England will play two T20Is next October

PTI ■ KARACHI

England will make their first trip to Pakistan in 16 years for a two-match T20 International series next October as part of a reciprocal agreement reached between the two cricket boards.

The two games, to be held in Karachi on October 14 and 15, will form part of the 2021 T20 World Cup build-up.

Both the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and its counterparts from Pakistan on Wednesday confirmed that the tour will take place just before the mega-event in India.

"I am delighted to confirm that England will be touring Pakistan to play two T20Is in October 2021," PCB chief executive Wasim Khan said.

"This will be their first visit to Pakistan by England for 16 years and will open the door for both Test and white-ball tours in the 2022-23 season.

England will arrive in Karachi on October 12, and both the sides will depart for India on October 16 for the ICC T20 World Cup.

Wriddhiman back at nets

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Veteran wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha was back at the Indian team nets here on Wednesday, showing signs of recovery from an injury with four weeks still left for the much-anticipated December 17-21 Test series opener against Australia in Adelaide.

Saha, one of the finest of glovemen ever to have donned the national colours, had damaged both his hamstrings during a short but successful IPL campaign for Sunrisers Hyderabad, in which he scored two match-winning half-centuries.

Thanks to the injury, the 36-year-old keeper missed the eliminator as well as the second qualifier of the Indian Premier League.



On Wednesday, Saha was seen facing throwdowns at the nets from the Sri Lankan left-arm specialist Nuwan Seneviratne and Indian right-arm bowler Dayananda

Garani for a considerable period of time.

He didn't keep wickets though and the extent of recovery couldn't be ascertained from the video uploaded by the BCCI media.

There wasn't any pronounced forward press or footwork involved while driving the half-volleys, which could be an indicator of how quickly his hamstring is healing.

However, the man who has so far played 37 Tests and scored 1238 runs for the country, didn't look uncomfortable during his time at the nets.

From the video it seemed that both the throwdown specialists didn't go full tilt at the batsman, who is trying to gradually get into the groove after the injury.

Bugatha to lead Indian challenge at ADHM 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defending champion Srinu Bugatha will lead a strong Indian field in the annual Airtel Delhi Half Marathon (ADHM) to be held here on November 29.

Bugatha, the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2020 champion, will spearhead the men's field alongside Abhishek Pal, Avinash Sable and Pradeep Singh.

Pal and Sable were involved in a thrilling race at ADHM 2018, running neck-and-neck until the final five kilometers when the former broke away and finished as the fastest Indian in that edition.

The national record holder in 3000m steeplechase, Sable became the first Indian to qual-



ify for the Olympics since 1952 in his discipline last year.

In women's category, the winner of the Half Marathon race at the Tata Mumbai Marathon earlier this year, Parul Chaudhary will lead the Indian elite team along with Sanjivani Jadhav, Monika Athare and Chinta Yadav.

Chaudhary broke the course record of Tata Mumbai Marathon earlier this year with a timing of 1:15:37s. She had finished second in the last two editions of ADHM.

AIFF hints at extension for Dennerby

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Head coach Thomas Dennerby could continue, but the journey of several of his Indian players has ended even before they could hit the road to fame, courtesy the cancellation of next year's FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup.

Having worked so hard and for so long, they are now going to miss the mega-event for no fault of theirs.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday assured them that they would be considered for selection to the senior team in the near future.

"I believe that some players, who are 2005 born in this team, may qualify to play in the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2022. FIFA (has) not yet (given age cut-offs) but we believe it will be 2005-2007 born," AIFF general secretary Kushal Das said.

"All these players are part of overall plan to develop women's football. They will continue to be part of national camp."

"This team will be the core team to play in round one of AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers in March 2021 in view of their training and exposure so far."

He said many of these players (who will miss out on the 2022 Women's U-17 World Cup) "will make it" to the senior national team for the AFC Asian Women's Cup in 2022, which the country is hosting.

The tournament in India, which was postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, was on Tuesday cancelled by the world governing body FIFA and the country was handed the hosting rights of the 2022 edition.

Das indicated that head coach Dennerby will be in charge of the Indian team in the 2022 edition following a contract extension.

"We believe Thomas is the right coach for the U-17 World Cup team. He has now gained experience of India and has a good track record and a very good rapport with the support staff."

"We will certainly be discussing with the AIFF Technical Committee to extend his contract," he said.

'Will be tough to ignore split captaincy calls if Rohit does well in Oz'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan pacer Feroz Khan Akhtar feels Rohit Sharma leading the Indian Test team against Australia in Virat Kohli's absence is a no brainer and the much awaited series will be his "best chance" to stake claim for captaincy in one of the limited-overs formats.

Calls have been growing for split captaincy in the Indian team since Rohit led Mumbai Indians to a fifth title in the IPL. Rohit has also led India to an Asia Cup title in Kohli's absence.

Though Ajinkya Rahane is the vice-captain

on paper, Akhtar sees Rohit taking over leadership duties from Kohli following the first Test at the Adelaide Oval. The India skipper will be returning home after the series-opener to attend the birth of his first child.

Speaking to PTI, Akhtar offered his view on the debate.

"My take on it is pretty simple. From what I know Virat is very keen to take the team forward. It all depends on how fatigued he is feeling. He has been playing non-stop since 2010, has got 70 centuries and a mountain of runs under his belt," he said.

"If he is feeling

fatigued, then he should think about giving the leadership role to Rohit in one of the formats (preferably T20s).

"I could see the boredom on his face during the IPL, may be it was because of the bio-bubble situation, he seemed a bit stressed out. It all depends on how he feels. Rohit has been ready for captaincy for a while."

The series will also be Rohit's first in overseas conditions as an opener and he faces a tough task in facing the likes of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood.

"Rohit is one of the greatest batsmen India has

produced. Now he also understands the real value of his talent.

"Australia will be his best chance to prove himself as captain. He should grab it with both hands. He has the talent and ability to lead the team. It will be a tough test for India and I would look for these kind of situations as a player."

"The whole world would be looking at Rohit as captain and batsman. If he does well for himself and the team, then there should be a debate about split captaincy."

India won their first ever series in Australia two years ago but the task

seems much tougher this time with Kohli not being available after the first Test and Australia being a stronger team following the return of David Warner and Steve Smith.

"In my opinion, India have the ability to win again. But if their middle order doesn't perform, I see them struggling. People will be watching this series with great interest including myself."

"The day-night Test will be their toughest test. If India play well in those conditions, then you never know. The first two innings of the first Test will tell us where the series is headed."