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LUCKNOW, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3



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12 VIVACITYLate City Vol. 156 Issue 313
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

Pak court jails 26/11 butcher Saeed

JuD chief sentenced to 10-year imprisonment in two more terror financing cases

PTI ■ LAHORE

Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was on Thursday sentenced to ten years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in two more terror financing cases.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two terror financing cases.

The 70-year-old JuD chief is lodged at Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

"The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore on Thursday sentenced four JuD leaders, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, in two more cases," a court official told PTI.

Saeed and his two close aides — Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid — have been sen-

tenced to ten and a half years each, while JuD chief's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

"Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta of ATC Court No. 1 heard the case filed by the Counter Terrorism Department in which the verdict has been

announced after the statements of witnesses were cross-examined," the official said.

A total of 41 cases have been registered by the CTD

against the JuD leaders, out of which 24 have been decided while the rest are pending in the ATC courts. Four cases have been decided against

Saeed so far.

Thursday's sentencing comes weeks after Paris-based global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog - the Financial Action Task Force — retained Pakistan on its grey list till February 2021 as Islamabad failed to fulfil the agency's six key obligations, including failure to take action against two of India's most wanted terrorists — Saeed and Maulana Masood Azhar.

Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.

The FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019 but the deadline was extended later on due to COVID-19 pandemic.

With Pakistan's continuation in the 'grey list', the country may find it difficult to get financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union, thus further enhancing problems for the cash-strapped nation.

CM Yogi lauds LU for working towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Extending his good wishes to the completion of its hundred years, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said it's a matter of pride for the university as also the time to think about the journey ahead. He said LU has made a good start by working towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and promotion of local products at regional level.

The CM was speaking at the inaugural of the centenary celebrations at Malviya Hall on Thursday. He said the government would always endeavour to make the journey of LU even

dependence to the country," he added.

The CM said he has always noticed that educational institutes are not linked with the general public. "The educational institutes comprise not only students and teachers but also parents who have an equally important role to play along with the alumni. Knowledge is vast and if we carry any programme forward after a dialogue with all these people, the result will not only make education qualitative but also take research to another level," he said.

He said society can only become independent when it



more glorious. Yogi said the university must keep the legacy for the next century while taking on the challenges.

About the present scenario, he said: "We can learn from this situation. Any individual, organisation or society's potential is not measured in normal times but during stress and crisis."

"The university can say with pride that it has given a president, several judges, administrative officials, and strengthened democracy by giving a number of politicians along with big industrialists. However, it is important to incorporate the new education policy in its evaluation process," Yogi said.

"Rishis and sages have always said that merely passing the examination is not gaining knowledge. The new education policy's stress is that knowledge is not only intellectual but also has a behavioural aspect to it. When we establish a coordination between the two, no student would feel helpless after completion the education, because they will be capable to stand on their own feet but will also give a message of self-

moves in front of the government and not behind it. "PM Modi has started innovative programmes to put the society forward and this is the main mantra of self-reliant India," he said.

Referring to the state government's initiative of making India self-reliant, the CM said when they decided to celebrate UP Diwas after 69 years, they started with 'One District' One Product' and now it is being taken up by the Central government. 'Vocal for Local' begins from here and can become the foundation for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', he said, adding if universities associate with this, everyone would get work and immense opportunities for people would be created," he said.

The CM recalled that he had once called 20 students of a technical institute and asked them what they wanted to do in life. "Fifteen of them wanted to have their own start-ups, and I was surprised they did not know about the government schemes for getting the capital required. Students have to look for jobs because they

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4 JeM fidayeen shot, major attack foiled

Huge cache of arms & ammunition found at encounter site near toll plaza in Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ BAN TOLL PLAZA, NAGROTA, JAMMU

Four heavily-armed infiltrators believed to be the members of the fidayeen squad (suicide bombers) of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were neutralised by the joint team of security forces during a three-hour long fierce gunfight early on Thursday near Ban Toll Plaza on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

For the first time, the security forces used flamethrowers to neutralise the terrorists hiding behind the rice/sand bags inside the "mobile bunker" of a Kashmir-bound truck.

A huge consignment of arms and ammunition, including 11 AK-47 rifles, 29 grenades, 3 kg RDX, mobile phones & radio handsets, medicine and ration supplies were also recovered from the encounter site.



Security personnel inspect the site of encounter at Nagrota Ban toll plaza in Jammu on Thursday

PTI

Two jawans of the special operations group of Jammu & Kashmir Police namely Sgt Mohd Ishaq Malik and Ct Kuldeep Raj received injuries. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited Government Medical College Jammu to

enquire about their wellbeing.

The terrorists were obviously sent on a special mission to execute a bigger terror plot ahead of the District Development Council polls beginning November 28 in J&K.

J&K Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh said the forces have foiled an attempt made by the Pakistan-based terrorist outfit to sabotage peaceful conduct of District Development Council polls.

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Bihar Edu Minister resigns over graft charge, claims innocence

PTI ■ PATNA

JDU leader Mewa Lal Chaudhary, whose appointment as the Education Minister of Bihar despite a corruption taint had brought the Nitish Kumar Government under heavy Opposition fire, resigned on Thursday barely hours after taking charge.

Soon after assuming charge, Chaudhary expressed dismay over the controversy and told journalists that he was neither convicted by a court nor named in any chargesheet filed by the investigating agency in connection with irregularities that allegedly took place at an agriculture university a few



years ago while he was its vice chancellor.

His resignation was accepted by Governor Phagu Chauhan on the recommendation of Chief Minister Nitish

Kumar, and Ashok Choudhary, who holds building construction and other portfolios, has been asked to take the additional charge "till further orders".

"I was nowhere directly involved in the appointments. As the VC, I was only the Chairman of the experts' committee which was entrusted with the recruitments. Moreover, no court of law has held me guilty nor has any chargesheet been filed against me," said Chaudhary, who is understood to have been summoned by the chief minister twice before he agreed to step down.

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5 MBBS seats reserved for kids of Covid warriors to recognise sacrifice

Quota from Central pool for 2020-2021

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has decided to reserve five MBBS seats under the Central pool for wards of Covid-19 warriors for the academic year 2020-2021. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the move aims to honour the noble contribution made by Covid-19 warriors who have lost their lives due to the infection or died on account of Covid-19 related duty.

The Health Ministry has introduced a new category,

"Wards of Covid Warriors", in the guidelines for selection and nomination of candidates against central pool MBBS seats.

The selection will be made by the Medical Council Committee (MCC) through online application on the basis of rank obtained in the NEET-2020 conducted by National Testing Agency.

Vardhan said, "This will honour the solemn sacrifice of all Covid warriors who served with selfless dedication for the cause of duty and humanity."

Noting that the definition of "Covid warrior" has been laid down by the Government while announcing the insur-

ance package of Rs 50 lakh for them, the Minister said, "Covid warriors are all public health-care providers including community health workers, who may have to be in direct contact and care of Covid-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by this."

"Private hospital staff and retired/volunteer/ local urban bodies/contracted/ daily wage/ad-hoc/ outsourced staff requisitioned by States/Central hospitals/autonomous hospitals of Central/States/UTs, AIIMS and Institutes of National Importance (INIs)/ hospitals of Central Ministries drafted for Covid-19-related responsibilities are all included," he added.

CAPSULE

DOORSTEP REGISTRATION OF BUILDING WORKERS

New Delhi: Registration of construction workers for availing benefits under various Delhi Government schemes will now be done through doorstep delivery, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia announced on Thursday.

5 KILLED IN PLASTIC FACTORY BLAST IN WB

Malda: Five persons were killed and five others critically injured in a blast in a plastic factory in West Bengal's Malda district on Thursday, police said. The incident took place in Sujapur area around 11.30 am, a senior police officer said. "Four factory workers were killed on the spot and one was brought dead to hospital. Five others have been critically injured in the explosion that ripped the establishment apart," he said.

GOVT TO FINALISE DATA PROTECTION LAW SOON

Bengaluru: Union IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said the Government was very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy and would finalise a data protection law very soon. "I'm very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy. Data is going to drive the digital economy. It is also going to drive international commerce," said the Union IT and Communications Minister.

BRICS' NDB to loan \$500 mn for RRTS

Loan has tenor of 25 years with 8-yr grace period

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the continuing standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Government on Thursday signed a loan agreement worth \$500 million with the Shanghai-based New Development Bank (NDB) to fund part of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Project to boost connectivity between Delhi and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Finance (MoF), National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited, and Chief Operations Officer Xian Zhu from NDB side, signed the loan agreement.

The loan has a tenor of 25 years with an eight-year grace period. Approval from the NDB — a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS countries — for the loan came after a board meeting on September 29.

Earlier in September, the Centre had taken another loan

of \$500 million to fund the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor. The Government also plans to borrow from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Both NDB and AIIB are headquartered in China.

The funds will be used to finance rolling stock, signalling system, operational structures, residences for operational staff, train control and telecommunication system, among other works. Executed by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation, the 82 km-long corridor is estimated to cost \$3.7 billion. The total project cost is estimated at \$3,749 million, which will be financed by the NDB (\$500 million), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (\$500 million), Asian Development Bank (\$1,049 million), Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (\$3 million), and Government and Other sources (\$1,707 mn).

The RRTS project stretches over a distance of 82km between Delhi and Meerut and once ready, high-speed trains will run between the corridor reducing the travel time. The elevated corridor will have 24 stations, and of the 82 km distance, 11.5 km will be underground.

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CBI can't probe sans State Govt's consent, rules SC

'Centre can't extend agency jurisdiction'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid frequent controversy over alleged politicisation of Central probe agencies, the Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) cannot take up an investigation without a State Government's consent. The court also said the Centre cannot extend the agency's jurisdiction to a State without permission either.

"As per law, State consent is a must and the Centre cannot extend CBI jurisdiction without the State's consent. The law is in tune with the federal structure of the Constitution," the court said on a petition by officials accused in a corruption case in Uttar Pradesh.

Accusing the CBI of carrying political hunt on behalf of the Centre, eight Opposition-led States — Rajasthan, Bengal, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Mizoram — have withdrawn consent for CBI probes in their States.

Referring to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act that regulates the CBI, Justices AM Khanwilkar and BR Gavai said, "Though Section 5 enables the Central Government to extend the powers and jurisdiction of members of the DSPE (CBI) beyond the Union Territories to a State, the same is not permissible unless, a State grants its consent for such an extension within the area of State concerned under Section 6 of the DSPE Act. Obviously, the provisions are in tune with the federal character of the Constitution, which has been held to be one of the basic structures of the Constitution."

The apex court's verdict was on appeals challenging a judgment passed by the Allahabad High Court in August 2019 in a case involving Fertico Marketing and Investment Private Limited.

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Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 89,82,369

DEATHS: 1,31,843

RECOVERED: 84,07,254

ACTIVE: 4,41,249



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Cold winds blowing from snow-capped western Himalayas brought down the minimum temperature in the national Capital to 9.4 degrees Celsius on Thursday morning, three notches below normal and the lowest of the season. Delhi had recorded a low of 10.6 degrees Celsius on Wednesday.

The IMD had earlier predicted a drop in the minimum temperature in Delhi as cold winds have started blowing from hilly regions, which have

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	17,57,520	46,202	16,30,111
Karnataka	8,67,780	11,604	8,30,988
Andhra Pradesh	8,57,395	6,899	8,33,980
Tamil Nadu	7,64,989	11,550	7,39,532
Kerala	5,45,642	1,970	4,75,320
Uttar Pradesh	5,16,616	7,441	4,87,221
Delhi	5,03,084	7,943	4,52,683
West Bengal	4,45,505	7,873	4,11,759
Odisha	3,11,788	1,645	3,02,796
Telangana	2,60,834	1,419	2,46,733
Rajasthan	2,34,907	2,116	2,12,623
Bihar	2,29,474	1,209	2,22,492
Chhattisgarh	2,15,413	2,646	1,93,943
Assam	2,11,040	970	2,06,875
Haryana	2,09,251	2,113	1,87,559
Gujarat	1,92,982	3,830	1,76,575

Delhi's minimum temp plunges to 9.4° C, lowest of this season



witnessed a fresh bout of snowfall. The minimum temperature this month, barring on November 16, has remained 2-3 degree Celsius below normal in the absence of a cloud cover, according to IMD officials.

Normally, the Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, records a minimum of 12.3

degrees Celsius from November 19 to November 21.

The average minimum temperature from November 22 to November 26 is 11.3 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting center of IMD, had earlier said the month of November this year is expected to be the coldest in the last four to five years.

Clouds trap some of the outgoing infrared radiation and radiate it back downward, warming the ground.

Gupkar alliance unholy, Cong complicit: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Terming the Gupkar alliance stitched by opposition parties in Jammu and Kashmir as a nefarious ploy to compromise the integrity and sovereignty of the country, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flayed the Congress for being hand in glove with forces supporting separatism and terrorism.

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, Yogi Adityanath said that it had shown dubious and dual character on the Gupkar alliance and owed an explanation to the country.

Commenting on the leaders of the alliance comprising National Conference, People's

Democratic Party (PDP), Awami National Conference, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference, Yogi said, "Time and again, these leaders have been seen inviting China for restoration of Article 370. It is indeed surprising how the Congress brass is tolerating this."

"The Congress stand is not clear on the Gupkar alliance and also on Jammu and Kashmir. 'Congress ka haath, alagavwad ke saath (Congress is seen standing with separatist forces)," the CM said while speaking to media persons in Lucknow on Thursday.

Yogi charged that the Congress has engaged in double standards on the Kashmir



Valley and is seen joining hands with politicians like Farooq Abdullah, who seeks help from enemy country, and Mehbooba Mufti, who has always been against India.

"Congress is a party whose leaders P Chidambaram and Ghulam Nabi Azad spoke openly against abrogation of Article 370 and supported the cause of separatism and terrorist ideology," the CM said.

"It (Congress) ruled the country for 70 years and did nothing for developing Jammu and Kashmir. Now, it is trying to hinder BJP efforts started on August 9, 2019 by abrogating Articles 370 and 35A," he said.

Yogi further alleged that the Congress was playing with the sovereignty and security of

the country and India wanted to know as to why it was trying to impede the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are trying to connect the people of J&K with development through local bodies polls. On their part, the separatists are making all efforts to sabotage the process and they do not want the people to get linked with elections and participate in development of the region," the CM said.

"The BJP has always tried to unravel Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Now that the dream is coming true, such nefarious designs are creating hurdles. Such forces never want progress, growth, awareness and harmony in Jammu and Kashmir," Yogi charged.

Eyeing 2022 polls, Mayawati effects major rejig in BSP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Trked with the Bahujan Samaj Party's dismal performance in the recently held UP bypolls, party chief Mayawati carried out a major rejig in the organisation on Thursday.

A couple of days back, Mayawati had sacked state BSP chief Munkad Ali, replacing him with OBC leader Bheem Rajbhar. On Thursday, party units in Lucknow, Prayagraj, Mirzapur and Meerut division were also reshuffled. The recent rejig is being seen as BSP's preparations for the 2022 UP Assembly polls.

The BSP chief removed Lucknow division president Bhimrao Ambedkar and moved him to Prayagraj division. Chief sector in-charge of Lucknow, Ashok Siddharth, Dr Ramkumar Kuril, Naushad Ali, Dr Vinod Bharti and Vinay Kashyap have been asked to oversee things in Lucknow division.

In Rae Bareilly, Harish Sailani, BD Suman, Vijay Gautam have been asked to lead the party unit.

In Hardoi, Randhir Bahadur, Mewalal Verma, Rakesh Kumar Gautam have been vested with the responsibility and Umashankar Gautam and Amrishi Gautam have been made in-charges of Lakhimpur Kheri.

In Sitapur, Chandrika Prasad Gautam, Ramamurthy Madhukar, and Sowran Gautam have been made the in-charges while Dr Sushil Kumar alias Munna and Omprakash Gautam have been asked to lead the party unit in Unnao.

In Prayagraj division, Bhimrao Ambedkar, Ashok Kumar Gautam, Amarendra Bahadur Passi, Deepchandra Gautam and Dr Jagannath Pal would now manage the show. In Mirzapur division,



Maya bereaved

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati was bereaved with her father Prabhu Dayal passing away after a prolonged illness on Thursday.

He was 95. BSP general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra gave this information in a statement issued in Lucknow on Thursday and expressed his condolences on behalf of party leaders and workers.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief on the demise of Prabhu Dayal.

He called up the former chief minister of UP to express his heartfelt condolences.

Bhimrao Ambedkar, Ashok Kumar Gautam, Amarendra Bahadur Passi, Guddu Ram, Subodh Ram have got the responsibility.

Similarly, MLCs Atar Singh Rao and Pradeep Jatav, and Satpal Settla, Sohan Veer Javat will lead the party in Meerut division.

Rajbhar (51) has been a Mayawati loyalist and has been associated with the BSP for 35 years. He was asked to oversee the recent Bihar Assembly elections in which the party was part of the Grand Democratic Secular Front, along with Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP), Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and Om Prakash Rajbhar's Suheledev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP).

Hi-tech Township Policy amendment draft submitted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The draft of the proposed amendment to the Hi-tech Township Policy was submitted to Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Rajendra Kumar Tiwari here on Thursday.

Principal Secretary (Housing and Urban Development) Deepak Kumar presented in detail the proposed amendments to the Hi-Tech Township Policy.

Official sources said here on Thursday that discussions were held to reduce the area of various working hi-tech township projects, completion of the projects, provide additional time increment considering the period of reasonable delay, extend the project duration to complete the extended projects and know the value in completing the projects.

In addition, calculations were also discussed on the basis of various developmental works to identify the developed area of hi-tech township.

Earlier, the chief secretary heard from the representatives of Ansal Properties, Lucknow, Garv Build Tech Lucknow, Uppal Chadha Ghaziabad, Suncity Ghaziabad, Suncity Mathura, Uttam Steels Bulandshahr, to address their problems seriously on priority.

Giving necessary instructions to the authorities concerned, he asked them to provide the details about the above.

Principal secretary (housing), housing commissioner, district magistrate, Lucknow and other senior officials concerned were present in the meeting through video conferencing.

Buy2sell evinces interest in ODOP products

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Impressed by the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme of the Uttar Pradesh government, leading business to business platform Buy2sell has expressed its intent to sell ODOP products online. In an email sent to the Medium Small and Micro Enterprises (MSME) Department, the company said that ODOP products were attracting customers globally and it was also receiving queries about the products.

"Being a distribution service in South Asia, your brand (ODOP) has caught our attention. Being a B2B platform in Singapore and with sales and network with local, wholesale/retail in high-end markets, we hope to have an association with you," wrote a Buy2sell official.

The company has further sought details of the products, including

range and prices, so that it could further explore opportunities in the market and cater to the customers. The ODOP is one of the flagship schemes of the UP government and its products are gaining recognition globally ever since the scheme was launched. Besides, it is also benefiting workers, artisans and entrepreneurs associated with the products and generating employment at local level.

UP ADJUDGED BEST INLAND STATE IN FISHERIES

Efforts of Uttar Pradesh government in encouraging fishery conservation and promotion received national acclaim with the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad, adjudging it as the Best State in the inland state category. The UP government would be honoured at an event scheduled in

New Delhi on November 21 and be awarded Rs 10 lakh, a citation and an emblem by Union Minister for Fisheries, Dairy and Animal Husbandry, Giriraj Singh, Union Ministers Sanjeev Balyan, and Pratap Chandra Sarangi.

NFDB Senior Executive P Chelapati wrote to Principal Secretary Fisheries, Livestock and Milk Development Bhuvanesh Kumar conveying that he had been selected the Best State and ranked third in the country in fish production. While UP bagged the top honour in the inland state category, Odisha clinched the top spot in the marine state category and Assam in hilly states and north-eastern region category.

It is to be mentioned that the UP government was making several policy efforts to promote the commercial importance of fisheries.

Woman gang-raped in Mathura, girl in Fatehpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Members of the fairer sex continued to be on target of goons in Uttar Pradesh with fresh cases being reported from Fatehpur where a seven-year-old girl was raped by her neighbour and Mathura where a woman was gang-raped.

In Fatehpur, a girl was returning home after grazing cattle in a nearby forest when her 14-year-old neighbour stopped her and later raped her, in a village in Bindki police station area on Wednesday evening.

When she did not return home till late in the evening, her kin looked for her and found her in an unconscious state on the fringes of the forest. She was later admitted to a hospital for treatment.

A case of rape was registered on Wednesday night and the accused was arrested.

In Mathura, a case of gang-rape of a young woman has come to light in Thana Highway police area.

The police registered a case and started investigation.

As per reports, a 20-year-old woman went to get milk from a market place in highway police station when a miscreant dragged her to a nearby car and took turns with her along with his friends on Wednesday.

Ironically, as the victim accompanied by her kin approached police officials at highway police station, the latter tried to defend the accused. After the victim met senior officials, a case was finally registered.

Based on her complaint, the police were now probing the charges. The victim was sent for medical examination.

AKY accuses BJP of patronising criminals



Akhilesh Yadav giving away laptop to meritorious student in Lucknow on Friday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hitting out at the Yogi Adityanath government, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said that the Bharatiya Janata Party regime was patronising criminals and registering cases against those exposing the ugly face of the government.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Akhilesh said that such stance of the government was forcing women to commit suicide in despair.

"The feeling of insecurity among backwards, Dalits and women has heightened. They are frightened and refrain from venturing out. In a way, being a woman has become the biggest crime in BJP's jungle raj," he said.

The SP president said that atrocities on Dalits had peaked and the gang-rape of a Dalit teenager by those protected by power in Ayodhya's Nara village was an eye opener.

"The victim's family has been asking when their daughter will get justice but there seems to be no answer from the administration," he said.

The former chief minister of UP said that the Yogi government was vindictive against those exposing the jungle raj.

He said a case was registered against two news channels for running the statement of a mother of two minor sisters whose bodies were found in Fatehpur.

"Is it crime to air the views of a distraught mother? Why has a case been filed against TV jour-

nalists? Instead of improving law and order in the state, the Yogi government is out to persecute journalists. The government is spending crores on programmes like Pink Booth and Mission Shakti but its impact on the ground is zero. The Anti-Romeo Squad campaign has proved to be a big failure. The Samajwadi Party government had launched 1090 Women's Power Line and UP Dial 100 service but the BJP had destroyed them," he charged.

Akhilesh said that several BJP leaders were themselves involved in these crimes and the government was hence protecting them. "This regime is not worried about protecting the life and property of the public. It is more concerned about protecting BJP leaders," he said.

Two journalists booked for fake news in Fatehpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Fatehpur police registered an FIR against two journalists for spreading fake news on the alleged rape and murder of two Dalit girls in the district on Twitter.

In the FIR, SHO Ranjeet Bahadur Singh named a journalist of a television news channel and a freelance journalist, saying that he was on patrol at Chinchani village in Bala township when he learnt that the two journo were spreading fake news on Twitter about two Dalit girls being raped and murdered and their bodies being thrown in a pond with hands and legs tied.

The two journalists were charged under sections 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from the discharge of his duty) of the Indian Penal Code, Section 7 of Criminal Law Amendment Act and Section 67 of Information Technology Act.

Earlier, the Fatehpur police had clarified that the girls, aged 8 and 11, had died while trying to pluck water chestnuts from a pond.

Circle Officer Anil Kumar told the media that the autopsy report of the girls did not mention sexual assault or any violence and the cause of death was stated as drowning.

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CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have change my son name from Hemant Singh to Hemant Yadav Ram Sundar. Army No. 10406321, residing at Vill:- Nagla Fateh, Post-Matsaina, Dist:- Firozabad, (U.P.).

NOTICE

I, Faraz Kittur Ahmed S/o Riyaz Ahmed Kittur, R/o 5/270, Vikas Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010, inform that have lost my original 10th certificate id no. T/6926/015 & 12th Certificate id no. B/8785/176.

NOTICE

Army No.-14444962N Rank - NK(GD) Jitendar Tiwari S/o Surendra Nath Tiwari Braham Sthan New Colony, Post-Peer Nagar Ghazipur (UP) declare that in my service record my wife name shalini upadhyay. Wrongly mention According to other documents her correct name is Shalini Tiwari (date - 01.07.1984) for all future purpose.

Nursing staff accused of love jihad in Baghpat

Lucknow (PNS): In what appears to be a case of love jihad, a nursing home staff enamoured a divorced nurse and had physical relations after posing as a Hindu for seven months in Baghpat.

After the beau started pressing the nurse to convert to Islam, the nurse found out his real identity and complained to the superintendent of police after which a case was registered and the matter was being probed. The nurse, a resident of Baraut area, worked at a nursing home. Some months back, a youth in her staff, posing as a Hindu, narrated sob stories to her about his separation from his wife and child. As the nurse sympathised, they started meeting. The youth also promised to marry her and had sexual relations with the nurse for seven months. After the woman became pregnant and told the youth about it, the latter pressured her to change her religion and took her hostage in a house.

Youth Cong honours acid attack survivors on India anniv

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the UP Youth Congress leaders honoured acid attack victims in Lucknow on Thursday.

UP Youth Congress chief Kanishka Pandey said that the nation and the world recognised Indira Gandhi as an 'Iron Lady' for standing with courage and conviction even in the darkest of hours and most critical of crises.

"In a small attempt to pay respect to her personality, the UP Youth Congress chose to honour acid attack victims for standing with courage and setting an example that one should not be let down by an assault and stand with courage to build a respectable future," she said.

The leader said that a YC delegation visited Sheroes Café in Gontinagar and presented the acid attack survivors with shawl and citation on Thursday.

Earlier on Thursday morn-



ing, Youth Congress leaders paid floral tributes to Indira Gandhi on her birth anniversary at the YC office at Mall Avenue and pledged to follow her path.

Meanwhile, speaking at a austere function at UP Congress headquarters at Mall Avenue in Lucknow, UPCC

chief Ajay Kumar Lallu, while laying wreaths on her portrait, said that the entire nation was grateful to the architect of White Revolution, Green Revolution, nationalisation of banks, 20-point programmes and many revolutionary steps for which India would always remember her.

Lallu hailed Indira Gandhi for setting the highest example of sacrifice for the unity and integrity of India.

"By incorporating values like 'samajwad' and secularism in the Constitution, she had played an important role in integrating the pluralistic society of India," he averred.

Carelessness can prove costly in pandemic: CM

Fresh coronavirus cases cross 300-mark in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Directing officials to maintain caution towards COVID-19, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that a little carelessness could prove costly and stressed on effective measures and medical care to contain the infection.

Chairing an Unk review meeting at his official residence in Lucknow on Thursday, Yogi said that complete caution be maintained keeping in view the Chhath festival and instructed officials to ensure effective cleaning of ghats during the festival. He said that Covid testing had an important role in breaking the infection chain and it should also be carried out with full capacity.

Asking officials to ensure effective contact tracing, the CM said that 65,000 to 70,000 RT-PCR tests and 90,000 to 1.10 lakh rapid antigen tests should be carried out on a daily basis.

Yogi also said that the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) should work actively and district magistrates and chief medical officers should regularly hold review meetings at Covid hospitals in the morning and at the ICCC in the evening.

The chief minister directed officials to maintain treatment facilities at all Covid hospitals and medical colleges. He said adequate number of beds must be ensured in these hospitals. He asked the officials to ensure regular review of the availability of resources in the hospitals.

On Thursday, coronavirus cases crossed 300-mark again with 310 persons testing positive in Lucknow on Thursday. Besides, 248 patients recovered, taking city's recovery figures to 6,40,064. The death toll stands

Dues cleared, traffic signals functional again

Lucknow (PNS): The functioning of traffic signals at 19 crossings, which was discontinued over non-payment of electricity bill, was restored on Thursday after the dues were cleared. These signals were installed at different crossings under the Smart City's Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) project. The aim was to streamline traffic movement and keep an eye on offenders

The traffic signals get power supply through smart meters, which stop power supply if the feeding of bill payment is not done. JCP (Law and Order) Naveen Arora contacted traffic and ITMS officials and later discussed the issue with the municipal commissioner. A spokesman said Arora then asked the ACP (Traffic) later to contact the LMC officials and ensure functioning of the traffic signals. "The traffic signals at all the 19 crossings are now functional," he said.

The traffic signal stopped functioning at 13 crossings, including Hazratganj, Indira Gandhi Pratishthan.

Slight increase in positivity rate

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Covid positivity rate of Lucknow has reached 5 percent with a slight increase in the number of cases. According to a senior health official, the positivity rate has increased in the last three days. "The district had a positivity rate of 4.5 percent which increased to 5 percent. People may have contracted the infection during Diwali and there could be a spurt in the next two weeks. As far as recovery rate is concerned, it is 95 percent with patients still in hospitals," he said.

A meeting was held on Thursday to review testing and sampling and it was decided that there would be nine places to be visited by health teams in view of Chhath celebrations.

"Sampling will be done at these venues and people who are symptomatic will be tested. After Chhath too, the targeted sampling will continue at 12-13 points across the city," the official said.

Meanwhile, KGMU Vice-

at 950. The new patients included 29 from Indiranagar, 27 from Rae Bareilly road, 24 from Gomtinagar, 19 from Aliganj, 18 from Mahanagar, 17 from Alambagh, 15 each from Chowk & Ashiyana, and 10 from Hazratganj. There were six deaths in the city and three of the deceased belonged to Lucknow while the rest to Sultanpur, Agra and Azamgarh. A 30-year-old man from Uttarakhnd died at KGMU on Thursday.

Across the state, number of new novel coronavirus positive

Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri said their focus was on evolution of treatment strategies and methods and their refinement. "Various kinds of advisories keep coming to us such as those from ICMR regarding Covid-19 treatment. For example, the efficacy of plasma therapy is being questioned and there are lots of evolving paradigms and things that are happening. We are planning to have a webinar on Covid on November 28 for brainstorming and introspection," he said.

About the effectiveness of plasma therapy at KGMU, he said their view is the same as that of ICMR which says it is important to assess the level of antibodies in plasma and if the antibodies are low, the therapy has no benefit. However, there is no method for a quantitative measure of the antibody titre, and so we can only make approximate assessment. Unless the titre levels are high, the efficacy will be impacted and that is why the so-called failure of

plasma therapy is being pointed out," he reasoned. Dr Puri said as per guidelines, women who have recently been mothers are not allowed to donate plasma.

The KGMU VC said with a separate Covid hospital, they have been able to contain the spread of infection to a large extent. He pointed out that they are now aiming to save level-3 patients.

"These are patients with pneumonia and many of pneumonia attacks not only affect the lungs but also the heart and brain, causing strokes. Very often, these patients give us very little reaction time. We are now trying bronchoscopy to address these problems," he added.

Meanwhile, Industry Chamber FICCI handed over 5,000 face masks and packets of savouries to Divisional Commissioner Ranjan Kumar for corona warriors under corporate social responsibility. It was the second campaign of FICCI which had earlier handed over 9,000 PPE kits to Health Minister JP Singh.

The COVID-19 death toll reached 7,480 with 39 deaths during the past 24 hours.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said on Thursday that the positivity rate in people above 60 years of age had gone up to 10.02 percent and this was a cause of concern for the government. He said that among the casualties, over 45 percent were above 60 years.

"The UP government appeals to the people to take care of older people of the families," he said.

Two held for firing shots to celebrate birthday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two youths were arrested on Thursday for firing shots in the air to celebrate the birthday of their friends in Thakurganj police station area on October 31 night. The arrest came after a video went viral on social media on Wednesday. The police swung into action and nabbed one of the accused on Wednesday itself, while another was arrested on Thursday.

The accused were identified as Ashish Singh and Rishabh Singh, both of Thakurganj. They were celebrating the birthday of their friend Gyanendra Pratap Singh, who cut cakes with a sword, on October 31 night.

A spokesman said a case was registered against six persons on Wednesday night. "All of them have been named in the case for opening fire at a public place and creating a scare among people and violating Covid-19 protocols," he said. Other accused were identified as Akash Rathor, Ankit



Singh and Akash Singh (all of Thakurganj).

Meanwhile, Jankipuram police arrested a car-jacker, identified as Monu Singh of

Malihabad, and recovered a stolen car and bike. The accused landed in police net after their names surfaced during a probe into a bike theft case.

LU's 100-yr celebrations kick off

Varsity has produced many illustrious personalities: DyCM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the first day of the week-long centenary year celebrations of Lucknow University on Thursday, Literary Festival started with 'International Philosophy Day' programme organised virtually by the department of Philosophy to commemorate the birth anniversary of Socrates.

The programme started with Saraswati *vandana*, followed by a welcome address and a brief description of the department. Vice-Chancellor AK Rai delivered the inaugural speech which was followed by a 3-hour-long discussion. The event was attended online by a huge number of academicians from India and abroad.

A heritage walk was also organised which was led by the VC. It witnessed the participation of over a 100 persons. The walk covered all the vantage historical points while the participants were briefed by head of Ancient History department Piyush Bhargava and tourism official Prashant Chaudhary.

The centenary celebrations also witnessed a tonga ride and 'Awadh Ki Roshan Chowki' programme. The VC, along with others, took a a tonga ride during the heritage walk in which inputs about the Nawabi period were given by Nawab Mir Jafar Abdullah. In the evening, litterateur Yatindra Mishra and folk dancer Malini Awasthi participated in 'Awadh Ki Roshan Chowki'. Mishra gave a background of the cultural history of Awadh while Awasthi presented a variety of songs.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma, while speaking at Lucknow University's centenary celebrations, said the university has produced many illustrious personalities like former President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Ritu Karidahi Srivastava (scientist in Chandrayaan mission team) among others.

Sharma talked about the illustrious past of LU and recalled many distinguished faculty members. He said the government has sanctioned and established several centres such as Atal Sushasan Peeth, Bhaurao Devras Peeth, Deen Dayal Peeth in the university. He said the government also sanctioned around Rs 12 crore for renovation and maintenance of hostels.

AAP hits out at state govt

Lucknow (PNS): Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh said on Thursday that the Yogi Adityanath government had left women and girls with no other options but to end their lives over not getting justice. Addressing mediapersons, he cited some recent incidents in which women or girls ended their lives after having failed to get justice.

"The list of crimes against the fairer sex is endless. A class X girl student, who was a victim of eve-teasing, ended her life. There were reports that a woman police officer, who is the incharge of anti-romeo squad and Mission Shakti in Shamli, had complained about her exploitation. In Maharajganj, a Dalit girl was raped was beaten up after she reached the police station to lodge a complaint," he said.



Tonga ride at Lucknow University (top) and singer Malini Awasthi performing on Thursday

Pioneer

He also mentioned that during Vidyadaan month, LU contributed 11,500 e-contents in the digital library and the same has been viewed and downloaded more than 1.19 lakh times.

Sharma lauded the launch of SLATE app and hailed the work and dedication of teaching and non-teaching staff of the university. He added that LU would be amongst the top universities in India in time to come. He also said that during the conduct of BEd-JEE by LU in Covid-19 times, Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath had minutely observed each and every aspect.

Vice-Chancellor AK Rai said LU has achieved many landmarks such as implementation of choice-based credit system, value added courses, different research promotion schemes, new PhD & DLit ordinances which have been incorporated into the university system in accordance with the new education policy.

Rai said LU is not only focusing on textbook education but also looking into three key

aspects — spiritual, emotional and intellectual quotient.

"In view of this, we have established the department of Yoga, Nanoscience Centre and department of Molecular and Human Genetics to cater to the intellectual needs of the students. To cover the emotional quotient of students, OPD & TREE programmes have been implemented in all the departments. Besides, the 'Happy Thinking Lab' has been established for the spiritual quotient of students," Rai said.

Man duped of ₹75,000 in online fraud

Lucknow (PNS): An unidentified man duped a Jankipuram resident of Rs 75,000 in the name of purchasing latter's car on Thursday. According to complainant Brijendra Kumar Singh, he uploaded details of his car on a virtual marketplace on November 1. Singh said he got a call from a man who introduced himself as an army personnel (Vikas Patel of Chowk) posted in Leh presently. He also sent details of an ID card and Aadhaar card to win Singh's trust. After the deal was finalised, he asked Singh to share his Google Pay or Paytm account number so that he could transfer Rs 25,000 as an advance sum. Singh asked him to pay the advance amount through RTGS

and the remaining in person. He asked some details and sent two links to Singh. "As soon as I clicked on the links, Rs 75,000 were deducted from my bank account," Singh told the police.

ELDERLY MAN FALLS INTO WELL, DIES

A 65-year-old man, who was suffering from tuberculosis and cancer, died after he fell into a well in Mohanlalganj police station area in the wee hours of Thursday. The deceased was identified as Krishna Kumar Tiwari of Mau village in the area. As per reports, Tiwari left his house around 3 am on Thursday but did not return. He was later found dead in the well.



Women making purchases for Chhath Puja in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

Commissioner inspects Banthra police station

PNS ■ LUCKNOW


Commissioner of Police DK Thakur on Thursday inspected Banthra police station and quizzed the officials about details related to the incident in which six persons had died after consuming spurious liquor on November 13.

He asked the personnel to launch a drive against bootleggers and warned them of stern departmental action if they failed to comply with the orders. "Police teams should keep a close eye on liquor shops to prevent adulteration while those involved in distilling/sale of illicit liquor must be put behind the bars," he said.

Thakur also asked the officials to update the remand and bail registers and take stern action against criminals.

The CP stressed on the need to address the problems registered through Integrated Grievance Redressal System, CM Helpline and public hearings. He asked the officials to handle cases related to crime against women and children on priority and warned them of action if any complaint against them reached his office.

Thakur said crime, festival and 'malkhana' registers are of great importance and can be used tactically to check crimes. He also asked the officials to maintain cleanliness in and around the police station and barracks.



UCO BANK

UCO BANK, ZONAL OFFICE, DHANSHREE COMPLEX MAHMOORGANJ, VARANASI-221010

Possession Notice (for Immovable Property)
 (As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002)
 The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **UCO Bank** Varanasi under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said act. Dated for calling upon the borrower(detailed below) to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the properties described here in below in exercise of the power conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act read with Rule 9 of the said rule on date **17th November Month 2020**
 The Borrower/Guarantor attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. The property will be subject to the charge of **UCO Bank** for respectively for an amount plus interest and other charges there on as mentioned below.

Sl No.	Borrower / Branch	Description of immovable Property	Demand Notice Date Amount Rs
1.	M/s Kausal Khad Bhandar Prop- Jagdish Prasad Soni, Dankin Ganj, Mirzapur-231001 Guarantors:- (1) Late Malti Devi w/o Jagdish Prasad Soni, (2) Sarla Devi w/o Gopal Das, (3) Gopal Das s/o Late Ramautar, (4) Vivek Kumar Soni s/o Jagdish Prasad Soni (All Resident of Dankin Ganj Pariya Tola Mirzpur) Branch- Mirzapur	1- Equitable Mortgage of Title Deed No. 1597, Volume- 571, Pages 301 to 312, book- 1/ date- 12.05.1994, Area- 369 sq. ft., Registered with SRO Mirzapur , in the name of SMT. MALTI DEVI W/O JAGDISH PRASAD & SMT. SARLA DEVI W/O GOPAL DAS Boundaries:- East- House of Shiv Haluwal, West - House of Bachhan Lal, North- Road, South— Shivji Temple, 2- Equitable Mortgage of Title Deed No. 105, Volume- 1977, Pages 319 to 324, book- 1/ date- 12.05.1994, Area- 612 sq. ft., Registered with SRO Mirzapur , in the name of SMT. MALTI DEVI W/O JAGDISH PRASAD & GOPAL DAS s/o Late RAMAVATAR Boundaries:- East- Lane, West - House of Jagdish Prasad, North- House of Milap Chand, South— House of Mohan Lal	05.09.2020 Rs.43,83,216.66 + further Interest + Other Charges

Date : 20.11.2020
Place : Varanasi
Authorised Officer, UCO Bank

98 more test positive in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Seeing a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases, as many as 98 new positive patients have been detected on Thursday, increasing the total number of cases to 18,165. The day also saw one more death, increasing the toll to 292. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 50 and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 14,397. As no patient has been discharged

from any of the hospital, the number has remained at 2,850. The total number of patients who has been recovered so far is 17,247, leaving 626 active cases. The recovery rate is 94.94 per cent while mortality rate 1.60 per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 67 positive patients were found out of 3,488 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 3,80,642 and the

results of 5,833 are awaited. Out of them, 3,62,508 were negative, while 18,134 positive. The total number of samples collected was 4,00,885. Earlier, a male aged 44 from Shivpur succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of seven new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,426 including 204 red zones. There are 2,222 green zones with seven new ones. Under

ongoing mass/ group antigen tests, one out of 327 tests has been detected positive at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura, while all the 270 tests at Government Women's Hospital, 109 at Swami Vivekanand Government Hospital, Bhelupur and 237 at SSH BHU were found negative. However, two out of 95 at CHC Shivpur and three out of 220 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar have also been found positive.

GM flags off Qaumi Ekta rally at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal flagged off a cycle rally from the main gate of Golf Course in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on the occasion of Qaumi Ekta Diwas (National Integration Day) here on Thursday. The BLW officers along with RPF personnel, employees, members of Scouts / Guides and others participated in this cycle rally. The cycle rally ended at Scout / Guide Training Centre, Community Hall in BLW.

During the event, all the participants involved in the cycle rally followed the COVID-19 guidelines including wearing masks in the right manner and keeping distance of two yards while pedaling bicycles. They also created awareness by sending mes-



Cycle rally being taken out on Qaumi Ekta Diwas at BLW in Varanasi on Thursday

sages of integration through displaying placards.

The event also marked the beginning of Integration Week which will conclude on November 25. Under the Qaumi Ekta Week, an essay competition will be organised

on November 23, while a painting contest will be held the next day. On the last two days on November 24 and 25, stickers received from the National Foundation for Communal Harmony will be distributed in the offices of the

Administrative Building, medical centres and other offices in BLW. Besides, the contestants with excellent essays will also be awarded.

Meanwhile, under the ongoing 'Antimicrobial Awareness Week' which will continue till November 24, the Department of Microbiology, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has planned for some events in the form of training of junior doctors, survey of antibiotic use in the hospitals, surveillance on hand hygiene practices and questionnaire based assessment on 'antibiotic awareness' among healthcare workers. The programme started with a 'Signage Campaign' within the institute involving both Sir Sunderlal Hospital and Trauma Centre here on Wednesday.

Women start fasting after Kharna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

One of the toughest vrat (fast festivals) began when thousands of women went on more than 40 hours long fast after consuming Kheer (made of rice and gur), which is known as 'Bakheer' in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) here on Thursday. It was the second day of four-day Dalla Chhath (Suryashasthi) festival which is known as Kharna. Majority of women stayed at home and after cleaning the puja sites and bathing they ate Kheer and then start their fast which will end on Saturday morning after offering 'arag' to rising Sun (Lord Surya). However, many women groups reached different ghats even during the day and after taking holy bath in river Ganga and offering Sindur, they went for Kharna and vrat.

Heavy rush was seen in the markets to purchase sugarcane, various types of fruits and other articles. As the women need different types of



After taking holy bath in river Ganga, women start Kharna on second day of Chhath in Varanasi on Thursday

fruits, the sale of many such fruits was seen in the markets which are rarely seen during the normal days. Many articles were seen being sold on roadsides at various places including Sigra, Lanka, Luxa, Godowlia, Chetganj, Maidagin, Jagatganj and many places in trans-Varna areas. Heavy rush of retailers was also seen in the morning at

Pahadia Mandi, the biggest fruit markets of the Purvanchal.

Meanwhile, at various Ganga and Varuna ghats and ponds, cleanliness drive was launched as it is expected that a good number of people will turn out there on Friday (November 20) evening and Saturday (November 21) morning when the 'vrati'

women will offer 'arag' to Surya Bhagwan during sunset and sunrise respectively. The activists of Namami Gange and Nav Srijan Foundation launched a cleanliness drive at various ghats including Dashaswamedh, Prayag and Rajendra Prasad on the eve of Suryashasthi festival. They collected garbage and wastes from ghats and put the same into dustbins. They appealed to the vrati women not to make the ghats dirty. Carrying tricolour they also created awareness among the people towards coronavirus pandemic and appealed to the people to wear masks and maintain social distancing during the festival. Namami Gange convener Rajesh Shukla said that the festival gives us a message of cleanliness and environment protection.

Among others who were also present during the campaign were Priti Jaiswal, Rashmi Sahu, Sita Sahu, Swati Jaiswal, Rupa Jaiswal and Pari Jaiswal.

Birth anniv of Indira Gandhi celebrated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Congressmen on Thursday Celebrated the birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. They also celebrated the Jayanti of Rani Lakshmbai.

Recalling the contribution of Rani Lakshmbai to get the country free from British rule, the leaders of party said, it was Rani Lakshmbai who had given open challenge to British rule first and laid down her life while fighting with British rulers in the battlefield. Rani Lakshmbai had written the history of first independence struggle with her blood in 1857, they said adding, she was an ideal for all of us.

They also recalled the contribution of the ex-PM Indira



Congress workers celebrating Indira Gandhi Jayanti in Varanasi on Thursday

Gandhi and said that she was pioneer of development of the nation and sacrificed her life for the integrity and sovereignty of country. The ex-PM had taken

a number of reforms in economic policy to make the country prosperous and made the nationalisation of banks and insurance corporation in

this order, they said adding, she separated Bangladesh from Pakistan with the internal power and prosperity of the country. The personality of Indira Gandhi was full with courageous and bravery, they said further.

Indira Gandhi has left her influence not only on Indian politics but also on the world and this is reason why she is known as iron lady, they said adding, the personality of both Rani Lakshmbai and Indira Gandhi is inspiration for all of us. Prominent among those present on the occasion were the former state minister Ajay Rai, district president of Congress Party Rajeshwar Patel, city chief Raghvendra Chaubey, Jitendra Seth and Manish Moralia.

Complete projects on war-footing: DC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Deepak Agrawal has directed the concerned officers to complete all under-construction health sub-centres by February next year. He also instructed the officers of different departments to complete the ongoing projects on a war footing, ensuring the quality of works as per standard. Reviewing the progress made in various development and construction works here on Wednesday, he asked the engineers of Public Works Department (PWD) and

Bridge Corporation that such projects which require funds should be communicated at the government level soon so that the work does not stop in any condition. Agrawal further instructed the engineers to conduct on-site inspection and the works should not be left to the contractors.

Expressing displeasure over complaints for online data feeding in priority programmes, he directed the concerned officers to ensure data feeding with full vigilance because on this basis, ranking and review of districts and divisions are done. 'Incorrect data feeding should not be

done under any circumstances,' he said.

During the review of the Health department, he expressed displeasure over the information about delivery at home by staff nurses and ANMs and instructed to collect information on institutional deliveries. He also directed the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) that only such nursing homes should be given registration who met the standards of the Health department. He also asked the CMOs to find out how many nursing homes are running without registration in their respective districts.

The DC instructed the

Education department officers that children who are deprived of education from online and WhatsApp groups, should be linked with educational activities. Panchayat buildings of gram sabhas should be developed as 'Gram Sachivalya' (village secretariat) and the duties of secretaries and accountants should be fixed there and their names, mobile numbers and days of their stay there should be displayed on the walls. District Magistrates of Chandauli, Ghazipur and Jaunpur apart from Chief Development Officers (CDOs), divisional and departmental officers were also present.

149 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Prayagraj city again detected a total of 149 new cases of the COVID-19 within the last 24 hours on Wednesday night. The number of COVID-19 patients now shooting up above 100 every day post Diwali festival and the threat of this pandemic continue to increase with each passing day.

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

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

in corona testing but there was an increase in the number of patients. Samples of 2,019 people were taken, in which the report of 149 people came positive, that is, they were in the grip of corona. Now the number of corona patients has crossed more than 25,000.

According to the Department of Health, 66 corona patients also recovered. Among the recuperators, 18 patients were admitted to Covid hospitals, who were discharged from the hospital after recovering. In this way, 69 patients were allowed to remain in home isolation.

Corona continues to wreak havoc in the villages of Shankargarh region located on the border of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In these areas, three corona positive patients have been found,

including the one from Bara power plant Mishrapurva, in the recent testing of corona. These new patients have been isolated at home. So far, more than 50 corona infected patients have been found in Shankargarh and Bara region. Four of them have died.

Corona Nodal Officer Dr Anoop Singh said that in the past, the samples for the patients who came to the health centre for treatment and the family who came in contact with the patients found positive in the power plant in the past, were sent to Prayagraj for RTPCR examination. The 44-year-old employee of Bara Power Plant and his 33-year-old daughter-in-law, were found infected in the testing report, which came on Wednesday evening. Apart from this, the report of a 29-

year-old man from Jhanjhara Pandey village in the area was found positive.

He said that the patients found positive have been quarantined and the health workers have been instructed to check the people coming in contact with them. He said that on November 14, the report of the wife of the employee of the power plant Mishra Purva was also found to be corona positive. About a dozen workers have been found infected at the plant so far.

Four infected patients were also found in the villages of Shankargarh and Bara region last week. The Health department has also become alarmed about the increasing infection of corona in the area. Awareness programme has been intensified by the department.

Preparation for Magh Mela becomes a challenge for officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Not much time left to begin the Magh Mela 2021. After half of November, less than one and a half months are left. In such a situation, the preparation for Magh Mela has become a challenge for the officials concerned. However, they believe that the work will be expedited after Chhath Puja. There will be work on a war footing. Checkered plates, pontoon bridges, electricity, water as well as all other arrangements will be made. For this, the officers have also pulled its socks up.

The preparation for Magh Mela was also affected due to frequent festivals amid corona infection. Earlier it was being hoped that the Magh Mela would not be organised this time due to corona infection, but when the government gave the green signal to this direction, the process of preparation

was started. It also took some time.

Preparations begin three months before the arrival of the Magh Mela every year. The process of tender etc. was dealt with together. Due to which almost half the work was done by the end of November, but this time it was delayed, due to which the work of Magh Mela has not been fully started yet.

Soon the state ministers and senior officers will inspect here regarding preparations for Magh Mela. For this, the concerned department officials have started preparing in their own way. No one has to listen to the reprimand of the minister or the officer, for this, a plan is being prepared to complete the work on time.

GMC GETS 27 NEW ASST PROFS: Government Medical Colleges have received a total of 27 new Assistant Professors in Orthopedics and ENT departments. Uttar

Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) on Tuesday released the final selection result of direct recruitment to these posts. 19 posts of Assistant Professor Orthopedics and eight posts of Assistant Professor ENT have been selected.

Out of 19 posts of Assistant Professor Orthopedics, 12 posts are reserved for unreserved and four posts are reserved for Other Backward Classes. Interviews for recruitment to these posts were conducted on November 3, 4, 5 and 6.

At the same time, in the eight posts of Assistant Professor ENT, five posts are reserved for unreserved, two for Other Backward Classes and one post is reserved for Scheduled Caste category. The interviews for recruitment to these posts were held on November 4, 5 and 6.

The merit of the selected candidates for the post of

Assistant Professor ENT included the names of Prabhat Srivastava, Sankalp Keshari, Shivendra Pratap Singh, Nikunj Jain, Visakha Gupta, Chandrabhan, Deepti Singh and Sushil Kumar Sharma.

At the same time, in the main list released in the superiority of selected candidates for 19 posts of Assistant Professor Orthopedics, Alok Rai, Rajat Kapoor, Vasu Sharma, Naveen Kumar Singh, Harsh Pratap Singh, Kritesh, Vivek Kumar Srivastava, Saurabh Kumar, Prem Prakash Bajpayee, Santosh Kumar Singh, Chetan Singh, Hitendra Kumar Bhartiya, Ravikant, Ravindra Mohan, Chandra Shekhar Verma, Raj Kapoor, Anand Kumar, Brijmohan Patel and Narendra Kumar Choudhary. The selection of 10 candidates from these is formal. Such candidates will have to submit desired records to the Commission.

NCR GM inspects electric loco trip shed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

General Manager North Central Railway Rajiv Chaudhry inspected Electric Loco Trip Shed New Delhi on Thursday and checked safety and fog related critical maintenance activities. This NCR electric locomotive trip shed at New Delhi was commissioned in June 1984 and caters to trip and minor maintenance of electric locomotives working in 23 important trains including Rajdhani, Shramshakti, Shivganga, Mahabodhi, GT Express, Kerala Express and other prestigious trains operating over North Central Railway and other zones. Proper func-

tioning of trip shed is critical to safe, efficient and punctual operation of these important trains and on average 19 coaching locomotives are attended in this trip shed on a daily basis.

General Manager Chaudhry inspected safety critical maintenance practices in the shed and checked various equipment, tools and gauges used in trip maintenance of locomotives. He inspected different maintenance sections of the trip shed and checked the cleaning arrangement of locomotives. To avoid wheel slip during moist weather conditions, locomotives are equipped with sanding gear to apply sand between wheel and rail to

get required adhesion without wheel slip. The GM inspected functioning of sanding gear in under maintenance locomotive number 37167 and also checked sand supply and filling arrangement for locomotives and gave instruction for proper maintenance of this important locomotive system especially during winters and moist weather.

For safety of the workman, proper OHE isolation is must for any work on a locomotive roof or on a high voltage system.

Chaudhry checked the isolation record and instructed that key for OHE isolation must be exchanged

under proper written acknowledgement without any exception.

The General Manager also reviewed progress of renovation work being done in the trip shed. He also inspected staff amenities in the New Delhi trip shed and advised officials to provide tea/ coffee machines for staff of the trip shed.

During inspection of General Manager, Sr DEE(Operation) of Agra division Aftab Ahmad and Sr DEE(Operation) of Delhi division Rachit Khanna were present along with the technical supervisors and staff of NCR's trip shed New Delhi.

PDA to launch drive against illegal constructions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The government has given instructions for effective action against illegal constructions and encroachers. In the same phase, action is being taken by the Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) in the first phase against illegal constructions of land mafia, criminals and anarchists. So far, the houses, hotels, lodges and guest houses of 26 history-sheeters and criminals, including mafia Atique Ahmed and his close aides, have been demolished. At the same time, the authority will launch a campaign against other illegal constructions in the second phase. However, the first stage list is still longer. On November 18, the Principal Secretary Housing and Urban Planning department reviewed several points. In the first phase, he expressed satisfaction over the action being taken by the PDA against the land mafia, anarchists and criminals. In the second phase, instructions have been given to prepare an action plan for the demolition campaign to be run against other illegal constructions. Work has been started in this direction

from the authority. However, in the order of the campaign being run under the first phase, the list of mafia criminals is being said to be long. Obviously, dozens of illegal constructions will be demolished at this stage itself. After that, the second phase of action will be started. The number of other illegal constructions is about 28,000. The most illegal constructions in this area have occurred in Salori, Chandpur, Chhota Baghara, Bada Baghara, Daraganj, Dharharia, Shivkuti, Govindpur, Pitambaranagar, Rasulabad, Mehndori, Beli village, Beli Kachar18, Rajapur, Ashok Nagar, Nevada, Dhumanganj.

CAR DAMAGES RAILING OF RLY OVER BRIDGE: A speeding four-wheeler damaged the railing of the railway over bridge connecting High Court and the city side of Prayagraj Junction railway station on Thursday morning in wee hours. Youth in the car, however, came out safely, but escaped from the scene leaving the vehicle there on the over-bridge.

This was the result of rash driving, said the eye witnesses when the police reached there.

They, however, could not confirm whether or not the youth were drunk. By the grace of God no-one was there on the road, below the over bridge otherwise this accident could have been fatal as the debris of the railing and parts of the car including its bumper fell down.

Earlier this over bridge had witnessed a good number of accidents owing to steep curve and both ways traffic, but by the side of this over bridge, yet another has been constructed to make the traffic flow one-way, and since then no such accident was reported.

On Thursday morning a car in high speed approached the over bridge from High Court side to go towards the city side of railway station, but owing to speed the driver could not keep control on the steering on the curve, and dashed against the railing. The impact was so severe that a portion of the railing and the bumper of the car fell on the road below the over bridge.

The police barricaded the broken portion of the railing to avoid any further such accident. Car number has been noted down, and efforts are on to trace out the owner to reach

the real culprits.

MADHYAM GROUP STAGES PANCH LIGHT: North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Prayagraj on Thursday invited Madhyam theatre group to stage Panishwar Nath Renu's story 'Panch Light' on its stage under Masik Natya Yojana. The play was directed by Vinay Srivastava who successfully created the atmosphere of rural India on the state. The story revolves around a young man who loved a girl of the same village and got married. This love marriage concept could not be digested by the village Panchayat and he was ousted from the village. Later a gas light comes in the village, called Panch Light, but no one in the village could light it. The villagers and the Panchayat became a laughing stock. Later someone told the Panchayat that the man who had been ousted, knows as to how this gas light lamp it lit. The Panchayat calls him back and he lights the gas light.

Those who acted in the play included Anuj Kumar, Akhilesh Prajapati, Anshu Srivastava, Lackush Bharatiya, Rohit, Om Srivastava, Chanki Bachchan and Krishna Yadav.

People coming to Kanpur to be screened, tested for Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Development Officer Mahendra Kumar Singh, on Thursday, said people entering Kanpur especially from New Delhi should be screened and if need be, tested for COVID-19 without fail. He also stressed on maintaining social distancing.

The chief development officer said all people entering Kanpur must wear masks or else legal action would be taken against them.

He said the district administration had set up special camps to not only screen people entering into Kanpur but also providing them free Covid test facility.

He said directives had already been issued to ASRM Roadways to ensure its passengers avail themselves of the free Covid test facility at the camps.

He said this step was being taken to ensure that COVID-19 cases do not enter Kanpur from Delhi and cause a health problem for the people living here.

He said strict action would be taken against those who openly violate the Covid safety protocol.

Singh inspected the camp set up at Jhakarkati bus sta-



Special COVID-19 testing camp organised at the Jhakarkati Bus Station on Thursday.

Pioneer

tion. He said the health authorities had informed the administration that there was a sudden rise in novel coronavirus infections in three prominent areas of the city — Rambagh, Kidwai Nagar and Kalyanpur.

He said as per surveillance in these three areas, people had returned from Delhi and thus it had been decided to increase surveillance at the bus and railway stations.

Singh said at the railway station, thermal screening was being done of all the passen-

gers deboarding the trains at Kanpur Nagar, especially those coming from Delhi.

He said in view of the sudden rise in COVID-19 cases, it had become essential to take special care so that the infection may not spread.

Meanwhile, District Magistrate Alok Tiwari said the COVID-19 patients would not be sent directly to the private nursing homes and instead they would first be referred to the chief medical officer and if he felt so, he could refer a patient to a

nursing home.

He warned the nursing homes to ensure that they did not admit COVID-19 patients directly. He said of late, COVID-19 patients were arriving from the surrounding districts and taking admissions in LLR Hospital and private nursing homes.

He said as per the CMO office, there was a constant rise in COVID-19 cases and around 65 plus patients suffering from the disease were admitted to the hospital during the past 24 hours.

Congmen remember Indira Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of Congressmen assembled at Indira statue at Noronha crossing on Thursday to pay tributes to Indira Gandhi, the Iron Lady of India, on her 97th birth anniversary.

The Congress leaders and workers first offered floral tributes to her statue.

Addressing the gathering, Congress City unit president Har Prakash Agnihotri said Indira Gandhi's contribution and sacrifice for the unity of the country would be remembered for generations to come.

He said her role in the formation of Bangladesh had proved her leadership qualities and won lots of appreciation on the global front.

He said Indira Gandhi carried forward former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's core initiative of making India self-sufficient in food. He said her Green Revolution and White Revolution had made



Congressmen paying rich tributes to Indira Gandhi on her birth anniversary on Thursday

Pioneer

India self-reliant in food and milk and the country also started exporting them to other countries which in turn generated revenue.

Agnihotri said whatever she did as prime minister in 15 years of her tenure was good for the country. He said even today, Indira Gandhi was

remembered for her contributions to India's growth, both in her domestic and foreign policies.

He said it was Indira Gandhi who shifted agriculture to the industrial sector with the adoption of modern techniques such as use of high yielding variety seeds, use of pesticides and fertilisers, and the adoption of modern technology such as tractors and irrigation facilities.

He said Indira Gandhi nationalised 14 private sector banks and one major reason for nationalisation was the fact that these banks only catered to large industries and businesses, and the agriculture sector was largely ignored.

He added that it was she who ended Privy Purse given to royalty.

Prominent among those who spoke on the occasion were Ashok Dhanvik, Sudhir Sahu, BN Mishra, SD Mishra, MM Shukla, Athar Naem, Dr Rama Shukla, Samuel Lucky Singh, Munna Khan and Deepak Dhawan.

KDA to open administrative office in South City area

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The 131st meeting of the Kanpur Development Authority Board was held on Thursday. It was chaired by Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar as chairman of the KDA Board.

The KDA Board resolved to open an administrative office in South City area where officers of additional secretary rank of different departments would be present to hear the grievances of the people.

The KDA Board also decided to organise camps and melas in different zones of the city to resolve various problems of the allottees and general masses relating to mutation, registry, possession, etc. The KDA Board members also discussed various proposals in the agenda. These included the proposed acquisition of 200 hectare land and the already acquired land in New Kanpur City and revoking ban on sanction of layouts for construction on other lands.

Thereafter, people can carry out construction of house on their land with the sanctioned layout. There were plans to set up New Kanpur City after acquiring 200 hectare land. Still 82.205 hectare land is yet to be acquired there. With this, the sanction of layout for construction under the New Kanpur City scheme will be allowed. Besides, the proposal for execution of water and electricity supply, sewerage and drainage system works by KDA for 10,032 houses constructed



Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar chairs the KDA Board Meeting on Thursday.

Pioneer.

under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was also discussed in the meeting.

Other proposals included setting up of Indian Oil retail outlet in Jeora, Nawabganj; granting special permission to Kudrat Hotel, Fazalganj, covered under the Investors' Summit 2018; disposal of vacant plots under the Transport Nagar Scheme; recosting of Phoolbagh's underground parking to attract contractors and appointment of brokers for sale of KDA flats in hi-rise buildings.

MINI-DAIRY MENACE

Residents of Girja Nagar,

situated adjacent to 37th PAC Battalion, are upset by the mushrooming mini-dairies in the nearby Gadiyana village. Due to these mini-dairies, garbage and dung is littered all over the place, sewer line has choked, and the drains are overflowing.

The residents are literally struggling for life in such unhygienic conditions and do not find anybody to take care of their woes.

The drive launched by the Kanpur Nagar Nigam to remove mini-dairies from the city appears to be a futile attempt.

The municipal commis-

sioner, mayor and nagar nigam officers appear to have turned a blind eye towards the mini-dairy menace in the city. The notices served to some mini-dairy operators by Kanpur Nagar Nigam a few days back also appears to have been thrown into the dustbin by them. Mini-dairy operators say that the drive launched by the nagar nigam to remove mini-dairies was foiled by greasing the palms of the officials concerned. It is alleged that the cattle often enter the houses of Girja Nagar residents and the locals face the wrath of the mini-dairy operators if they protest.

139 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 139 more coronavirus positive cases on Thursday evening. Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 139 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Wednesday evening and Thursday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 29,433 cases. He said that 19 cases were discharged from hospital. He said no COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Thursday evening keeping the death toll to 761. The CMO said at present 1004 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 5151 samples were sent for testing in the city.

Farmer hacked to death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A farmer was killed in his field on Gahdeva Road under Kakwan police station in Bilhaur on Wednesday night. The assailants hacked his face and head with a sharp-edged weapon.

When the farmer's daughter reached the field on Thursday morning, she found the profusely bleeding body of her father.

The victim, Kushilal Kushwaha (58), apart from being a farmer was also a mason. He lived with his married son Laljit, unmarried son Shivalp and daughter Mohini. His wife, Nanhi, had died about four years ago and the elder daughter was married and living with her husband.

Khushilal owned 12 bigha field. According to his brother, Raju, Khushilal had gone to the field on Wednesday night to take care of the paddy crop.

When he did not return home on Thursday morning, Mohini went to the field, which is about one kilometre away from the house, and found him dead. She immediately returned to the village and informed the villagers and family members about her murder.

Police and forensic experts collected evidence and carried out investigations.

Station House Officer Amit Kumar Mishra said the cause of death could not be ascertained in the preliminary investigation and they would wait for the autopsy report.

The kin of the victim denied enmity with anyone.

Villagers said that Khushilal's younger son had lost huge money in gambling.

Police register rape case on court's order

KANPUR (PNS): A woman was raped by a local youth in Mangalpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat. The youth had earlier shot a video clip of the woman bathing in her house to blackmail her. Police registered the FIR on the orders of the court and started investigation. The woman lives alone in the village as her husband is employed in Delhi. Taking advantage of the absence of a roof on her bathroom, Rohit alias Babu, who lives in a neighbouring house, quietly shot a video clip of the woman when she was bathing in the buff on May 6. Later the same night, Rohit entered the woman's house and after threatening to make the video viral on the social media, he raped her. He also threatened her with dire consequences if she reported the incident. When her husband returned home on October 16, the woman told him about the incident. On his visiting the neighbour's house, the husband was beaten up by Rohit, his wife Manju and father Shyam Babu. When the local police took the issue lightly, the victim moved the court which directed the Mangalpur police to register a case. Station House Officer Amod Kumar Singh said after registering an FIR against three persons, the police were investigating the case.

THEFT : The house of a retired police sub-inspector, Ram Shanker Pal, was burgled in Shakra Janwara village on Moosnagar Road under Ghatampur Kotwali police station on Wednesday night.

Girder launching work starts

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Safe, secure and uninterrupted rail movement is the top priority of the North Eastern Railway (NER). In the past years all unmanned level crossings (LCs) on broad gauge have been eliminated. Now the railway administration by making a provision of road over bridge (ROB), RUB/ limited height subways (LHS) at manned level crossings was closing them too and is fast implementing the plan to make the rail movement fast and accident-free. In the same sequence in North Eastern Railway (NER)'s Varanasi division's Gorakhpur-Deoria Sadar section between Sardaranagar and Chauri Chaura stations on level crossing number-149 special and between Chauri Chaura and Gauri Bazar stations on crossing number-145-E on under construction road over bridges the girder launching work is being done by the rail administration. On level crossing number -149 special between Sardaranagar-Chauri Chaura stations the work of girder launching has started. The gird-



er launching work on level number-145-E between Chauri Chaura-Gauri Bazar stations will be completed on November 22 and 23. On level crossing number-149 special between Sardaranagar and Chauri Chaura stations the girder launching work started on Wednesday morning under the supervision of Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction (Bridge) NK Singh and Executive Engineer/Construction (Bridge) Ram Awadh and two out of five girders were launched successfully within a short span of just three hours and 15 minutes, CPRO PK Singh said. It is noteworthy that the length of each girder is 30.9 metres. Besides, each girder weighs about 22 tonnes. These girders made of high quality iron have a lifespan of about 100 years.

The provision of road over-bridge is very beneficial for both the railway administration and road users. Besides the rail movement takes place in a safe manner and at an uninterrupted speed. With the construction of road over bridge road transport will also become convenient and road users will get relief from the problem of jam.

Many trains to remain cancelled

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Due to the ongoing farmers' agitation in Punjab, the cancellation and short-termination of trains will be done as follows. The 05212 Amritsar-Darbhanga special train to run from Amritsar on November 21 will remain cancelled, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh

said. The 04923 Gorakhpur-Chandigarh special train to run from Gorakhpur on November 20 will remain cancelled. The 02588 Jammu Tawi-Gorakhpur special train to run from Jammu Tawi on November 21 will remain cancelled. The 04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar special train to run from Amritsar on November 20 will remain cancelled. The

04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar special train to run from Jaynagar on November 22 will remain cancelled. The 04674/50 Amritsar-Jaynagar special train to run from Amritsar will be run from Ambala on November 20. Likewise the 02408 Amritsar-New Jalpaiguri special train to run from Amritsar on November 20 will be run from Ambala.

Valuables reduced to ashes

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

A devastating fire broke out in a general store shop situated in Gowdihar village under the Baburi police station at night as a result of which valuables worth around ₹3

lakh kept in there and Rs 20,000 in cash were reduced to ashes. The general store of Ramesh Maurya, a resident of Goan is situated outside the village. Ramesh closed his shop and went home on Tuesday night when it caught fire after

midnight. On receiving information, the team of fire brigade extinguished the flames with the help of villagers. How the fire broke out could not be ascertained yet. It is estimated that a short circuit probably caused the fire.

SP inspects Bariaghat

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

In view of festival of Dala Chhath Superintendent of Police (SP) Ajay Kumar Singh inspected Bariaghat under City Kotwali police station and gave the necessary directions to cops. The SP directed them to keep ready the divers, boats, light, changing rooms, barricading etc for the security of devotees. He directed the Station House Officer (SHO) City Kotwali to deploy adequate



force, including women police personnel at each ghat of the river where the 'puja' was to be performed.

ARRESTED: The Dehat Kotwali police have arrested an accused in connection with the molestation of a minor girl on Wednesday. As per the report, mother of a minor girl had lodged an FIR on Tuesday that a resident of Nuaan village had molested her daughter. Taking instant action on the case inspector posted at Dehat Kotwali Aurangzeb Khan arrested the accused on Wednesday from Ghode Shaheed locality under City Kotwali. After completing the legal formalities the accused was sent to jail.

SUICIDE: Jyoti Sonkar, wife of Rajan Sonkar, a resident of Mahmaddpur village, committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of the house. It is learnt that she was married eight months ago. After getting information the police reached the spot and took the body of the deceased into custody. Along with completing the legal formalities the police also informed her family members in Jaunpur district.

DRM flags off tower wagon

PNS ■ VARANASI

The eight-wheeler tower wagon for maintenance work was flagged off by the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vijay Kumar Panjiyar from platform No. 8 of Manduadih railway station on Wednesday. This tower wagon number-190115 will be used for maintenance work of Prayagraj Rambagh-Gyanpur section under Handia Khas OHE. Prior to flagging off, the DRM inspected various equipment fitted in the tower wagon and understood their working. The tower wagon consists of two engines of 700 horsepower/ 515 kW, control panel and rectifiers of 47 to 120 Hz capacity of Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL), four traction motors, two alternators equipped with 600V / 720A / 1,800 RPM, twin pipe air hall vacuum system of Escorts, 0.5 tonne capacity hydraulic lifting platform and



10/02 kW diesel generator set. With the commissioning of this tower wagon, the number of tower wagons working in Varanasi-Prayagraj Rambagh section has increased to two which would help in accelerating the pace of maintenance work in case of failure of electrical overhead traction and make it easy to attend the breakdown (accident) sites apart from smoothening the running of electrically-operated vehicles as on this 120-km-long route the work of doubling the tracks and electrification is going on speedily. Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) Pankaj Kesharwani, Senior Divisional Operations Manager Rohit Gupta, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer Trimbak Tiwari, Divisional Security Commissioner Rishi Pandey, Assistant Divisional Town Engineer NK Pathak, Station Superintendent Arun Kumar and other staff of the station were also present.

Bid to create awareness about Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

During the Jan Andolan organised on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and in accordance with the instructions of Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, the Welfare Department of the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) through PA System in colony premises and under the leadership of the administrative officials of its



care of hand hygiene. The slogan of this campaign is 'Jab tak dawai nahi tab tak dhilai nahi.' (No carelessness till a medicine is found).

Prasad: Will finalise data protection law very soon

Bengaluru: Union IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said the Government was very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy and would finalise a data protection law very soon. “I’m very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy. Data is going to drive the digital economy. It is also going to drive international commerce,” he said.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020 (BTS2020) virtually, he said India produces huge data and the digital ecosystem, like mobile phones

and Aadhaar, is producing data. “We are going to finalise a data protection law very soon. India is waiting for its movement for data economy, data innovation, data refinery. I would urge the Chief Minister (of Karnataka) to ensure that the state becomes a great centre of India’s data economy,” he added.

Organised by the Karnataka government, along with Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society, the state government’s Vision Group on Information Technology, Biotechnology & StartUp and Software Technology Parks of India, the summit, that saw the

inaugural address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is scheduled to take place from November 19 to 21.

Prasad said even during the pandemic the communications sector witnessed a growth of over seven per cent and also received significant investments from major global companies. “It is a challenging time and we decided to convert it into an opportunity. The global manufacturing world was looking towards alternative destinations. In view of India’s enormous success in mobile manufacturing, we came up with a big idea of production linked incentive,” he said. **PTI**

PM unveils Bengaluru Tech Summit in virtual mode

IAN S ■ BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday unveiled the 23rd edition of the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020 in virtual mode through video-conferencing from New Delhi amid the Covid pandemic.

Leveraging the digital technology, Modi also addressed the gathering in this tech city and in virtual world, which included Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Swiss Confederation vice-president Guy Parmelin.

“Thanks to digital technology, India has been able to scale up faster in the service delivery to people across the country. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has been able to help

citizens through Ayushman Bharat for medical assistance efficiently thanks,” said Modi in English.

Recalling that the Union government had started the Digital India initiative 5 years ago to transform a citizen’s life in terms of ease of work and service delivery, the prime minister said the flagship programme had become a way of life in the country.

“Our resilient technology industry was able to overcome difficulties caused by the pandemic and enabled employees to work from home and from anywhere. This has become a new norm and is going to stay. We will see a high amount of tech adoption in education, agriculture and other sectors,” asserted Modi.

5 killed, 5 critically injured in Bengal plastics factory blast

Malda: Five persons were killed and five others critically injured in a blast in a plastics factory in West Bengal’s Malda district on Thursday, police said.

The incident took place in Sujapur area around 11.30 am, a senior police officer said.

“Four factory workers were killed on the spot and one was brought dead to the hospital. Five others have been critically injured in the explosion that ripped the establishment apart,” he said.

Preliminary investigation had found that a technical fault in a heavy machine inside the factory caused the high-intensity blast, Superintendent of Police Alok Rajoria said.

“The explosion happened during plastic manufacturing. We are probing all the angles and a forensic team will visit the spot,” he said.

A huge police contingent has been deployed at the spot to keep the situation under control, the officer said.

The state government announced ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each for the injured persons.

Senior TMC leader and state minister Firhad Hakim has been sent to the spot to take stock of the situation.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed anguish over the incident and asked

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to “contain illegal bomb-making” and ensure “professional non-partisan investigation”.

“Anguished at deaths in reported blast that ripped establishment apart at Sujapur area of Malda district. According to SP five killed & five injured. Time @MamataOfficial to proactively contain illegal bomb making and ensure professional non-partisan investigations @WBPOLICE,” he tweeted.

Dhankhar also asked the administration to ensure medical assistance to the injured. **PTI**

Senior Bengal Minister Subhendu Adkary quitting TMC?

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There was more haze around senior Bengal Minister and power Trinamool Congress leader Subhendu Adkary’s future political move.

Leaving more suspense around his political plans, Adhikary, once the Nandigram spearhead of the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday told a mass rally unattended by any of the senior TMC leaders that there were so many political things which could not be dwelt from within the Cabinet.

“There are so many things which cannot be said when you are still in the Cabinet... and I am still a Minister and a pri-

mary member of the party ... as neither I have been expelled by the Chief Minister nor I have left the party on my own,” Adhikary the most powerful satrap in the TMC after the Chief Minister with a strong organizational base in more than one districts apart from his own East Midnapore said.

“There can be differences of opinion which may lead to dispute and that may cause splits but till you are in the party you cannot say something political things which should not be said,” he said reminding how he was “not the cuckoo that sings only during the Spring ... I am not the one who enjoys the comfort of my

house. Rather I spend my days in the political field and I am the person who never compromises on questions of policy and ideology.”

A team of senior TMC leaders led by MP Saugato Roy had been holding talks with Adhikary to address his grievances that allegedly include the rising importance of Chief Minister’s nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee in the Trinamool’s scheme of things.

Notwithstanding the internal issues, a parallel opinion in the party says that Adhikary -- who is under scanner in Narada and other chit fund scams --- has been under tremendous pressure from the

BJP to come out of his party and join the saffron group a la another very senior former Trinamool leader Mukul Roy.

Independent posters of Adhikary who has not attended at least two Cabinet meetings in the recent past have been appearing in a number of districts including East and West Midnapore, Bankura, Malda,

Murshidabad and elsewhere with catch lines saying “We are with our leader Subhendu Adhikary.”

Meanwhile, reacting to the intra-party imbroglio Saugato Roy on Thursday said that he had talks with the rebel minister and “have communicated

his grievances to our party chief Mamata Banerjee. Next week we will again sit and talk and then wait for the decisions taken by the Chief Minister. By the next week things will be get clearer... Till then he is still a member of Trinamool Congress.”

When asked to comment about his future political moves regarding the BJP a close associate of Adhikary said “till you are in a party you the member of that party ... when you will join another party you will become a member of that party... but we can say that wherever he goes a large number of supporters will move out of the TMC.”

Ayodhya again sealed, devotees not allowed to do kosi parikrama

Ayodhya: The temple town of Ayodhya that has seen harsh restrictions during the Deepotsav celebration on the occasion of Diwali festival will once again be under strict guard. This time, a centuries-old tradition will be broken in Kartik Mela.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the ‘panch kosi parikrama’ and ‘chaudah kosi parikrama’ in which lakhs of devotees used to participate, will now be banned this time. Outside devotees will not be allowed to attend the main festival of Kartik Mela, Chaudhosi and Panchkosi Parikrama, as only locals will be allowed to participate. **IAN S**

Didi urges Chhath devotees to follow court directives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

With both Supreme Court and Calcutta High Court refusing to relax curbs on offering Chhath prayers at Rabindra Sarobar and Subhas Sarobar — two water bodies considered the ling of Kolkata — Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday appealed to the devotees to offer their prayers at alternative sites and not the protected lakes kept out of bounds by the law courts.

Making a televised appeal

to the devotees Banerjee asked them to “Please follow the court directives and offer your prayers at alternative sites.” Like the people followed the court orders during Durga Puja and Kali Puja by not visiting the pandals “the devotees of Chhath Puja are also requested to go to other ponds and lakes,” Banerjee said.

State Chief Secretary Alapan Banerjee too appealed to the people saying that 1,300 artificial water tanks had been constructed by the State Government for offering the Puja.

Central agencies being used to target Kerala Govt: CPM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Following the leak of a voice message by Swapna Suresh, one of the kingpins in the gold smuggling scam and LIFE Mission kickbacks that she was under pressure from investigation agencies to name Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan as a beneficiary of the scams, the CPI(M) in Kerala has launched a multi-pronged attack against the Centre on Thursday.

“The Centre, shocked over the progress made by the LDF Government in implementing people’s welfare measures, is making use of various Central investigation

agencies to target the popular Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and to subvert the development works carried out by the State Government. The investigating agencies are acting as the hand maidens of the Congress and the BJP,” said a Statement released by the CPI(M) to the media on Thursday.

The immediate provocation behind the volte-face by the Marxists is the reported voice message allegedly belonging to Swapna Suresh in which the woman charged that she was being pressurized by the investigating agencies to name the chief

minister as the beneficiary in all the scams so that she could escape from all charges as an approver.

Rishiraj Singh, the director general of police (prisons) asked the State Police Chief Lok Nath Behra, to order a thorough probe into the voice message and how it reached a news portal. The Inspector General of Prisons held a preliminary enquiry by inspecting the jail where Swapna is undergoing judicial custody.

She also charged that the investigating agencies viz NIA, ED and Customs which had interrogated her in various cases never showed her or read out to her the copies

of the statements they submitted to the court.

It was Chief Minister Vijayan’s letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in early July that resulted in the investigation into the gold smuggling scam and other cases were handed over to central agencies.

Vijayan had said that since gold smuggling was a pan India affair with global ramifications, it would be better if the central agencies investigate the cases.

But it led to the opening of a Pandora’s box as many bigwigs with close links to the CPI(M) and the chief minister got arrested in the process.

Meanwhile, Thomas Issac, finance minister, said that the Comptroller and Auditor General’s Report on Kerala Infrastructure Investment Board Fund (KIIBF) was politically motivated and it’s mission was to derail the development activities in the State.

“The KIIBF was set up as part of the legislation enacted by the State Government and there is nothing unconstitutional in it.

The CAG report has created a strange situation requiring strange solution,” said Issac while speaking to reporters at Thiruvananthapuram.

5 teachers fired for their off-duty behaviour

Aligarh: BSA Lakshmikanth Pandey terminated the service of 5 teachers on the charges of continuously going off-duty in the school and the violation of the posting rules. Amit Kumar, Assistant Teacher of former Secondary school, Panihwar, has been absent since July 29, 2018 without giving any notice.

Preeti Goyal, an assistant teacher of the primary school of Visra development block, has been also going absent since 1st January 2019 without any notice or prior approval.

Similarly, Tarannum, assistant teacher of Primary School of Savkara development block jawan is going absent from 26th July 2019 without giving any notice. **PNS**

Hathras case: CBI re-visits accused home

PNS ■ HATHRAS

Thirtyeight days have passed since the CBI team started the investigation. On November 25, they must submit a status report in the High Court. After the festival holidays, CBI has started the investigation again. The CBI team re-visited the house of the accused and questioned the relatives. After an hour of questioning, the team called Chhotu to their camp for questioning and sent him back after an hour.

The SIT investigation of the Boolgadhni case revealed the negligence of a home guard of Chandpa police station. On 14th September, the home guard left the victim in the district hospital and returned to the police station. The letter has been written to the government for action against him. **PNS**

The SIT formed after the death of the girl, submitted the investigation report to the government, while the CBI investigation is still going on. On September 14, the girl was attacked in village Boolgadhni. Mother, brother and other relatives brought her to Chandpa police station. From there she was sent to the district hospital.

The SIT investigation revealed that the home guard Shivkumar had taken her to the district hospital from where she was referred to JN Medical College Aligarh. The home guard did not go to Aligarh with her and returned to Chandpa police station without informing her family members. He did not even wait for the ambulance to leave. The SIT has recommended action on the home guard, considering it to be insensitive.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, अनुसंधान खण्ड नं.-1(सिविल), लो.नि.वि., लखनऊ							
पत्रांक-2444/Tender/2020							
निविदा सूचना (प्रैस विज्ञापित)							
दिनांक-17.11.2020							
Sl. No.	DIST.	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs.in Lac)	Bid Security (Rs.in Lacs)	Cost of Docu-ment (in Rs.)	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer executing
1	Lucknow	Under 78 / 2052 Work of the Mechanised House Keeping/ Cleaning Services of Babu bhawan located in the U.P. Secretariat under the Secretariat speciality/commercial services items is	31.19	3.12	Rs.800/-	04 Month	E.E. Maintenance Div-1 (Civil)
2	Lucknow	Under head 78 / 2052 Sachivalaya Vishes/Vyawaasaayik Sewayen Providing mechanized housekeeping services in Naveen bhawan and Adhikari Bhawan Sachivalaya at	18.56	1.86	Rs.800/-	04 Month	E.E. Maintenance Div-1 (Civil)
3	Lucknow	Under head 78 / 2052 Sachivalaya Vishes/Vyawaasaayik Sewayen providing mechanized housekeeping services in Mukhya Bhawan Basement and Ground floor (Except Vihansasha and Vihansha-rishad Sachivalaya at	14.35	1.44	Rs.725/-	04 Month	E.E. Maintenance Div-1 (Civil)
4	Lucknow	Under head 78 / 2052 Sachivalaya Vishes/Vyawaasaayik Sewayen Providing mechanized housekeeping services in Bahukhandi Bhawan and Sachiv Bhawan Sachivalaya at	10.75	1.08	Rs.725/-	04 Month	E.E. Maintenance Div-1 (Civil)
Tender will be publish on dated-27.11.2020 the Bid documents with the details terms and condition will be available online on website http://tenderup.nic.in from dated-27.11.2020 to 03.12.2020 upto 12 hours and the tender will be opened on dated-03.12.2020 at 12.30 PM.							
(ए.के.मिश्रा) अधिशासी अभियन्ता							
अनुसंधान खण्ड नं.-1 (सिविल) लो.नि.वि., लखनऊ							
विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।							

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन मध्यप्रदेश		
8, अरेरा हिल्स, जेल रोड, भोपाल		
क्रमांक/एन.एच.एम./एच.आर./R-22/2020/14908		
भोपाल दिनांक 16.11.2020		
// संशोधित विज्ञापित //		
राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन मध्यप्रदेश के अंतर्गत विज्ञापित राज्य स्तरीय संविदा सलाहकारों के रिक्त पदों की पदपूर्ति हेतु प्रमुख समाचार पत्रों में विज्ञापन क्रमांक एनएचएम/एचआर/2020/1341 दिनांक 24.01.2020 (जी-22188/2020) प्रकाशित कर सेम्स (SAMS) के वेबपोर्टल www.sams.co.in पर विस्तृत नियम-पुस्तिका अपलोड की गयी थी।		
उक्त प्रकाशित विज्ञापन एवं नियम-पुस्तिका में से निम्नलिखित पदों में आवश्यक संशोधन किया जाता है और पूर्व में प्राप्त ऑनलाईन आवेदनों को निरस्त किया जाकर पुनरीक्षित अर्हता अनुसार पुनः नवीन ऑनलाईन आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं जो निम्नानुसार हैं:-		
S. No.	Position Name	No. of Post
1.	Consultant HR (Technical)	1
2.	Consultant CPHC	1
3.	State Coordination Officer (Blood Bank)	1
4.	Consultant- Mental Health	1
5.	Consultant- Mobile Health Services	1
6.	State consultant- Finance cum Logistics (NPCDCS)	1
7.	Consultant Maternal Health- Technical	1
Total		07
उक्त तालिका में दर्शाये गये पदों हेतु https://www.sams.co.in और https://www.nhmmp.gov.in पर दिनांक 20.11.2020 से पुनरीक्षित नियम-पुस्तिका अनुसार दिनांक 20 नवम्बर 2020 से 04 दिसम्बर 2020 मध्य रात्रि 11.59 तक सेम्स के माध्यम से ऑनलाईन आवेदन स्वीकार किये जावेंगे। शेष शॉर्ट पूर्ववत् रहेंगे।		
मिशन संचालक एन.एच.एम., मध्यप्रदेश		
G-15604/20 दो गज की दूरी, मास्क है जरूरी।		

IIM Indore ranks 5th in Eduniversal Rankings 2020

New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Management, Indore (IIM, Indore) has received the fifth rank in the Eduniversal Rankings 2020 and third rank in the 4 Palmes of Excellence Category in the Central Asia Region—under the top business school with significant international influence.

The awards were announced at the annual Eduniversal 3-D World Convention (EWC) 2020

Every year, during the EWC, the Eduniversal Awards Ceremony recognises the Top 3 Business Schools from each of the nine geographical zones. These zones include Africa, Central Asia, Eurasia and Middle East, Far East Asia, Latin America, North America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and Oceania. The rankings are based on the results from the academic peers who participated in the annual Deans’ Vote survey.

“We’re delighted to be on Rank 5 in the Eduniversal Rankings 2020, with

third position in the 4 Palmes of Excellence category. Now we will aim to get into the 5 Palmes category,” said Professor Himanshu Rai, Director, IIM Indore.

IIM Indore is the second institute in the country with a Triple Crown to receive the three prestigious international accreditations—AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS.

“We already have more than 35 foreign collaborations and we look forward to providing contextually relevant and world class academics to our participants,” he added.

The ranking is conducted in three steps which includes the official selection of 1000 best business schools from 154 countries; The Palmes of Excellence Awards to each of the 1,000 ranked schools and finally, the most important is the Deans’ Vote—which allows to take into account the expertise of the deans of the best business schools worldwide.

Terrorists crossing LoC won’t be able to survive: Army Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Sending out a stern warning to Pakistan Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane Thursday said whosoever crosses the Line of Control to infiltrate into India would be dealt with in the same manner and would not be able to go back.

The Army Chief heaped praise for the troops who carried out the operation against terrorists hiding in a truck. He said that there was a great deal of synergy between the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and paramilitary troops deployed there.

“This was a very successful operation by the security forces. It shows the high degree of synergy between all the security forces operating on the ground,” General Naravane said.

“The message is very clear for the adversary and terrorists that whosoever tries to infiltrate towards our side would be dealt in the same manner and they would not be able to go back,” he added.

The Army Chief was asked to comment on the operation in Nagrota in which four terrorists were killed. The four terrorists are suspected to be members of the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Demand for changing name of Karachi Sweets not Sena’s stand: Raut

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ruling Shiv Sena found itself in an embarrassing situation on Thursday, as one of its activists Nitin Nandgaonkar ordered the owner of the famous sweets shop “Karachi Sweets” at Bandra (west) in north-west Mumbai to change the establishment’s name from “Karachi” to some Marathi name.

However, Shiv Sena MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut nipped the brewing controversy by disassociating the party from Nandgaonkar’s act through a tweet.

“Karachi bakery and Karachi sweets have been in Mumbai since the last 60 years. They have nothing to do with Pakistan. It makes no sense to ask for changing their names now. Demand for changing their name is not Shiv Sena’s official stance,” Raut tweeted.

Raut’s tweet came after a video put out by Nandgaonkar showing him ordering the owner of “Karachi Sweets” shop at Bandra (west) to either change the name or remove the word “Karachi” from the shop’s name and replace it with some Marathi name, went viral in the social media.

In the video, Nandgaonkar is heard telling the “Karachi Sweets” shop owner: “In Mumbai and Maharashtra, there cannot be any shop with Karchi. Having the word ‘Karachi’ in the name of the shop gives an impression that you are supporting Karachi and Pakistan from where the terrorist activities are planned against India. Our soldiers are

killed because of Pakistan’s activities. ... If you want to be in Maharashtra, the word Karachi has no place.”

“We are not bothered if you are a Hindu or Muslim... The name Karachi is a problem, and you cannot use it here... It is a place of terrorism and no business should be carried in the name of Karachi,” Nandgaonkar told the shop owner.

“You may have migrated from Pakistan after partition, but do not make Karachi part of the shop’s name. I am ready to give you some time. I will come back after a fortnight and check... You either change the name of your stores or remove the word ‘Karachi’ from the name,” Nandgaonkar told the shop owner.

Nandgaonkar – who incidentally is a former activist of the Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) --also offered to help the shop owner in taking up with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and completing the name changing formalities. “But, you should realise that we have a problem with word ‘Karachi’

is essential to change the name.

Meanwhile, the MNS’ vice president Haji Saif Shaikh shot off a letter to the owner of the “Karachi Sweets” and demanded that the word “Karachi” be removed from the shop’s name. He also threatened to move the court if the shop owner refused to heed his advice.

“You are running a shop named after Karachi, a city in Pakistan which is our traditional enemy. By promoting and propagating Karachi’s name, you are hurting the sentiments of the people. We also have serious objections to your dislike for Marathi language,” Shaikh wrote in his letter.

In a related development, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) hit out at the Shiv Sena’s ‘goondagiri’ of threatening the sweet-shop owner and urged Mumbai Police to take cognizance of Sena activist’s act.

“This is ridiculous goondagardi by @ShivSena! Despite being the Chief Minister @OfficeofUT is not able to instill a respect for democracy in his cadre. I stand with #KarachiSweets,” AAP Spokesperson Preeti Sharma-Menon tweeted.

Speaking separately, Preeti Menon said: “The Shiv Sena and Nandgaonkar must be well aware that ‘Sindh’ is part of our National Anthem as well. Is our beloved National Anthem the next target?”

She said that Sindhis were indigenous people who took refuge in India after the Partition, many made Mumbai their home, so “anything that offends the Sindhis, offenders every Indian”.

IIT-D most employable varsity in India: Survey



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IIT Delhi has been rated as the most employable university in the country as per the Global Employability Ranking and Survey of GEURS 2020. In a comprehensive report on the performance of the universities of various countries, India has shown a commendable increase in overall employability, rising to number 15 position, vis a vis its 23rd rank in 2010.

“Employability Rankings 2020: Glad to share that India has been featured among the top 15 countries with universities producing the most employable graduates. India has improved its ranking from 23 in 2010 to 15 in 2020,” Education Minister Ramesh

Pokhriyal tweeted.

In a study published by French HR Consultancy group Emerging and Times Higher Education, while US Universities continued to remain in the top spot, many universities of other countries have shown a tremendous improvement in employability over the last decade. Among the best-performing countries are Germany, China, and South Korea. India too has increased the number of universities in the Top 250 rank to find it on 15th rank, which is an improvement of 8 places over the last decade.

As for individual universities, IIT Delhi climbed 27 ranks from 54th in 2019 to 27th in 2020. The only other Indian university – Indian

Institute of Science, Bangalore has slid from Rank 43 in 2019 to Rank 71 in 2020. IIT Bombay has also made an entry in the Top 150 at number 128, an improvement of 25 places from 2019's rank of 153.

IIT Kharagpur and Amity University have made a fresh entry into Top 250 Rankings this year with IIT Kharagpur at 195 and Amity at 236th rank.

As for the global list, California Institute of Technology or CalTech unseats Harvard University to clinch the Top spot as the latter slipped to number 3 this year. Massachusetts Institute of Technology also gained a rank from 12th to second rank this year. US Universities claimed 7 spots in the top 15 most employable universities ranking. Australian National University has gained 14 places to enter the fold at number 15 from its 29th rank in 2019.

While the rankings continue to show a steady number of US Universities, overall the universities in both US and UK have shown a decline in the last 10 years.

The country score of the US has fallen by 51 per cent in the last 10 years. The UK slipped from the second rank to the fourth position in terms of best-performing countries for employability with a 46 per cent drop in its country score.

COVID-19 ASSESSMENT

Centre rushes teams to 4 States



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday deputed four separate high-level Central teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur to take stock of the Covid-19 situation there as it feared infection spillover effects particularly in the National Capital Region in view of sharp surge in Coronavirus cases in Delhi.

Overall cases in Delhi has crossed 5 lakh figure, the last one lakh cases reported in just last 15 days. Number of fatalities in the national capital is also on rise with experts warning that cases and deaths might increase further in the coming days because of the negligence of Covid-norms by the public during the ongoing festivals and holidays.

Randeep Guleria, Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), is leading the three-member team bound for Haryana; Niti Aayog member (health), V.K. Paul, is heading the Rajasthan team; NCDC Director, S.K.

Singh, will be leading the Gujarat team; while Additional D D G, Directorate of Health Services, L. Swasticharan, is heading the Manipur team, said the Ministry in a statement.

The teams will visit the districts reporting high number of Covid-19 cases and support the state efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention, control measures and efficient clinical management of the positive cases.

The Central teams shall also guide in effectively managing the challenges related to timely diagnosis and follow-up. “As an ongoing effort to strengthen the efforts of various state and UT Governments for Covid management, the Centre has been deputing Central teams from time to time to visit various states and UTs.

“These teams interact with the state and UT authorities and get a firsthand understanding of the challenges and issues being faced by them so as to strengthen their ongoing activities and remove the bottlenecks, if any,” the Ministry said.

Covid warriors, elderly people to be first to get vaccine shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Thursday expressed confidence that the Covid-19 vaccine would be ready in the next three-four months and that the priority to provide the same will be given to health-care workers and corona warriors followed by elderly and disease-prone people.

The Minister was addressing the FICCI FLO webinar on “The Shifting Healthcare Paradigm During and Post-Covid” on Thursday.

“I am confident that the COVID-19 vaccine will be ready in the next three-four months. Priority for the vaccine will be designed on the basis of scientific data. Of course, health care workers and corona warriors will naturally be prioritised followed by elderly and disease-prone people. Very detailed planning is underway for vaccine dissemination. An e-vaccine intelligence platform has been created to discuss the blueprint for the same. Tracking and tracing of the vaccine would

put under surveillance for COVID-19 well in time,” he added.

Giving an account of the journey of the last 11 months, the Minister said India was amongst the top countries to control the impact of the pathogen in a short duration.

“Initially we faced a shortage of PPE kits, ventilators and N-95 masks. But in a few months time, we were able to export these things to different parts of the world. Our scientists are now well ahead of many others globally in their research on the vaccine. In a couple of months, we should be able to produce a vaccine for the Covid-19 infection.

“Our performance has been excellent on every parameter set by the World Health Organisation, we have the highest recovery rate and the least fatality rate. We have 2,115 laboratories in every look and corner of the country for Covid tests. Over 20 lakh dedicated Covid beds are in place. It proves that whenever India decides to excel at something, it does,” he said.

CBI arrests Food & Supply dept official for taking bribe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested an Assistant Commissioner, Food & Supply Department, Delhi and a contractual employee for accepting a bribe of ₹1Lakh from the complainant.

A case was registered against the accused Assistant Commissioner, Food & Supply Department, Delhi, Jitender Singh Rath.

“It was alleged that the said public servant demanded an amount of Rs 1.5 lakh as illegal gratification for revoking suspension of license of fair price shop of the complainant. The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused along with a contractual employee of the Food and Supply Department, Delhi while accepting a bribe of Rs One lakh from the complainant,” the agency said in a statement.

Searches are being conducted today at the premises

of the accused including at Delhi and both the arrested accused will be produced before the designated court on Friday.

Meanwhile, the CBI on Thursday conducted searches at 25 places including Guntur District and Hyderabad at the premises of former MLA of Gurazala Constituency (Andhra Pradesh) and others including private persons in an ongoing investigation of a case.

During searches, several incriminating documents, mobile phones, material objects and cash have been recovered, it said.

In pursuance of the Notification issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh and further Notification issued by DoPT, the CBI had taken over 17 cases of illegal limestone mining from CBCID, Andhra Pradesh and registered a case on August 26 against 17 accused.

It was alleged that the accused had fraudulently conducted illegal and unauthorized mining, quarrying and transportation of limestone in Konanki village of Piduguralla Mandal, Kesanupalli and Nadikudi villages of Dacheppalli Mandal, Guntur district for several years and thereby caused revenue loss to the Government and other licensed lease holders, and also exploited the natural resources, it said.

“It was further alleged that illegal mining of several lakh tonnes of limestone was conducted by the accused during the period from 2014 to 2018, as a result of which, natural resources worth several crore of rupees have been plundered,” the CBI said in a statement.

In order to ascertain the quantum of unauthorized and illegal mining, CBI is also conducting volumetric analysis by using satellite imagery.

SC orders Uttarakhand Govt to demolish four illegal religious structures in Haridwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave time till May 31, next year to Uttarakhand Government to demolish the four illegal religious structures built on public land in Haridwar in view of upcoming ‘Kumbh Mela’ which is scheduled to be held in the city from January, 2021.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah said, “For the reasons given in the application and especially that ‘Kumbh Mela’ is to commence in 2021 and will end on April 15, 2021, we are of the view that the State should be permitted to demolish the illegal structures by May 31, 2021.”

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttarakhand government, submitted that the State has undertaken to commence proceedings for demolition of the four illegal

structures in Haridwar and will remove them by May 31, 2021.

Counsel appearing for intervenor ‘Akhi Bhartiya Akhara Parishad’ submitted that the structures, which have been made, should not be demolished.

He, however, conceded that the religious structures have been made on the land belonging to the State’s Irrigation Department but added that the said lands were allocated during ‘Kumbh’ period to the ‘Parishad’.

The bench said, “Be that as it may, allotment, if any, is temporary and any permanent structure could not have been constructed and the same is to be demolished.”

The four religious structures which are to be demolished are of ‘Nirmohi Akhada’, ‘Nirmanji Adi Akhada’, ‘Bhaiyadas Digamber Akhada’ and ‘Niranjani Akhada’ at Bairagi camp of Haridwar.

Country’s Covid recovery number rises to 83.83L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India’s Covid-19 caseload rose to 89.58 lakh with fresh 45,576 infections, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to over 83.83 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 93.58 per cent, according to the data available from the Union Health Ministry on Thursday.

India’s COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11 and crossed 80 lakh on October 29.

In almost twenty days since then, total coronavirus cases mounted to 89,58,483, with 45,576 infections being reported in a day while the death toll climbed to 1,31,578 with 585 new fatalities.

The number of active cases

remained below 50,000 for the ninth consecutive day.

There are 4,43,303 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country as on date which accounts for 4.95 per cent of the total caseload while the total recoveries have surged to 83,83,602, pushing the national recovery rate to 93.58 per cent. The Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.47 per cent.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative total of 12,85,08,389 samples have been tested up to November 18, of which 10,28,203 samples were tested on Wednesday.

The 585 new fatalities include 131 from Delhi, 100 from Maharashtra, 54 from West Bengal, 31 from Punjab, 30 from Haryana, 29 from Uttar Pradesh, 28 from Kerala, 23 from Chhattisgarh and 21 from Karnataka.

Total 1,31,578 deaths reported so far in the country

include 46,202 from Maharashtra, 11,578 from Karnataka, 11,531 from Tamil Nadu, 7,943 from West Bengal, 7,441 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,899 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,541 from Punjab and 3,823 from Gujarat.

The Ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

Of the new recoveries, 77.27 per cent was contributed by 10 states and Union territories, with Kerala recording the most 7,066 people recuperating from Covid-19 in a day. Delhi registered 6,901 recoveries while Maharashtra reported 6,608 new recoveries, according to the Ministry.

Ten states and Union Territories have contributed 77.28 per cent of the new cases. Delhi reported 7,486 cases in 24 hours, Kerala 6,419 and Maharashtra 5,011 fresh instances of the infection.

DUAC objects to design of RRTS stabling yard



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC) has objected to the design submitted for the stabling yard and supporting residential facilities at Jangpura for the rapid rail transit system (RRTS) connecting Delhi to Meerut. According to the DUAC, the current layout planning seems to portray wastage of spaces and does not consolidate use zones for efficient circulation.

DUAC, the statutory body responsible for maintaining aesthetics and environmental design in Delhi, has not

approved the design of stabling yard and supporting residential facilities at Jangpura for the rapid rail transit system.

“The architectural vocabulary of all the residential towers to be the same to maintain harmony and the aesthetics of the complex. Currently, the towers have different vocabulary. The balconies need to be screened appropriately along with the provision of screening of drying clothes. Innovative architectural features and materials shall screen dish antennas in the balconies. The parking for Tower A, B, C and D to be consolidated together (by

exploring MLCP etc.) to ensure space optimisation. Surface and road network to be minimised to reduce heat island effect. Also site to be appropriately landscaped and seamless pedestrian connections to be ensured,” the DUAC said in its observation.

It further added that the provision of air-conditioning units on the façade is not given in the proposal (drawings/3d views). The air-conditioners would be an eye-sore to the building façade. To avoid the same, provision shall be made in the design to accommodate the outdoor units, at this stage,

so as not to mar the aesthetics.

“All the residential towers shall be such designed that they are not scattered and located close to each other. This would ensure cohesiveness in the design. Also, the cost of services/utilities in the site would decrease due to the close placement of the building footprints. A clear zoning plan is to be shown. Amenities like Clubhouse, which would be shared facilities, can be located centrally in the design to ensure its equitable use by all users. The same to be linked by appropriate pedestrian pathways,” the DUAC said.

For the residential tower A, the DUAC has observed that parking in stilts to be removed and relocated elsewhere (basement or consolidated MLCP for all use zones). The stilts can then be used as community spaces for residents, and for facilities including toilets for guards and servants. For tower B, the uses on 22nd floor are not understood as there is no clear layout plan for furniture.

The kitchen on the 23rd to 28th floor is designed away from the servant’s quarters. They both are suggested to be located closely to ensure servicing and functionality.

Thursday,

“It is shameful that Twitter is allowing its platform for obscene remarks like the one by stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra against the Supreme Court and the CJI,” Lekhi told reporters here.

Puri launches ‘Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge’ across 243 cities



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday launched the ‘Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge’ across 243 cities in the country, a move that aims to mechanise all sewer and septic tank cleaning operations by April 30 next year.

Addressing a webinar on ‘World Toilet Day’, Puri said the challenge is to ensure that no life of any sewer or septic tank cleaner is ever lost again owing to the issue of “hazardous cleaning”.

The Minister, according to a statement, said this is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision, who has always placed the safety and dignity of sanitation workers at the core of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U).

The virtual event saw the chief secretaries, state mission directors and other senior state and union territories coming together to take a pledge on behalf of 243 cities to mechanise all sewer and septic tank

cleaning operations by April 30, 2021, and gave their commitment to work towards preventing any deaths from hazardous entry, it said.

“The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act (2013) and various judgements of Hon’ble Supreme Court expressly prohibit hazardous cleaning, i.e. manual entry into a septic tank or sewer without protective gear and observing operating procedures,” the statement quoted Puri as saying at the event.

He said despite this, recurring episodes of human fatalities among those engaged in cleaning of septic tanks and sewers, typically belonging to the economically disadvantaged and marginalised communities of society, continue to be an issue of concern. As many as 4,337 Urban local bodies (ULBs) have been declared open defecation free (ODF) (except 35 ULBs of West Bengal), it said. “Besides, over 62 lakhs individual household toilets and over 5.9 lakhs community/public toilets have been constructed. Additionally, over 59,900 toilets across 2900 plus cities have been made live on Google Maps,” it added.

In the area of solid waste management, 97 per cent of wards have 100 per cent door-to-door collection while 67 per cent of the total waste generated is being processed, the ministry said.

Cong leaders pay rich tributes to Indira Gandhi on birth anniv



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday paid rich tributes to former prime minister Indira Gandhi on her birth anniversary with Rahul Gandhi saying the whole country still gives the example of her impressive leadership.

Born on 19 November, 1917, Indira Gandhi served as Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984. “A trailblazer, a visionary, a true leader and a great daughter of our motherland, Indira Gandhi was much more than a Prime Minister to our citizens; she was the revitalising strength in their quest for greatness and prosperity. Today, we pay a proud tribute to India’s Indira,” the Congress tweeted from its official Twitter handle.

In a tweet in Hindi, Rahul Gandhi also paid tributes to Indira Gandhi, calling her an efficient prime minister.

“The whole country still gives the example of her impressive leadership, but I always remember her as my beloved grandmother. Her teachings inspire me constantly,” the former Congress chief said.

Rahul Gandhi also paid floral tributes to Indira Gandhi at her memorial ‘Shakti Sthal’ here.

Congress’ chief spokesperson and party general secretary Randeep Surjewala also paid rich tributes to Indira Gandhi on her 103rd birth anniversary.

“Known as the Iron lady across the world, the one with determination, courage and amazing ability, the first and only woman Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. My tributes to her on her birth anniversary,” he said.

The Indian Youth Congress marked her birth anniversary by distributing blankets to the poor and needy in Delhi.

Parl panel quizzes Twitter over Kamra’s obscene tweets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A parliamentary committee questioned representatives of social media giant Twitter on stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra’s recent “obscene” tweets

targeting the Supreme Court and the chief justice of India and sought a reply within seven days, the panel’s chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Thursday.

This came close on the heels of Twitter apologising in writing

to the same parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and promising to correct the error by the month-end.

Twitter India representatives deposed before the Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill on

SC upholds federalism

Top court says Centre can't extend the jurisdiction of CBI to States without their consent, curbs political vendetta



In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court has upheld federalism and drawn a clear line between the Centre's swamping tendency and the States' right to autonomy. It has laid boundaries between the misuse of Central power for coercion and the use of guaranteed power to withstand it by the States. In doing so, it has upheld the spirit of the Constitution, something which has increasingly come under attack in recent times. The court has said that the Centre cannot, on its own, extend the jurisdiction of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) without permission from the States, and that a CBI probe cannot begin without consent from the Centre and the

State in question. As of now, the CBI can override the States only when the Supreme Court orders a national inquiry and empowers it to do so on a case-specific basis. The ruling, therefore, justifies the move by eight Opposition-ruled states – Rajasthan, Bengal, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Mizoram – to revoke the blanket consent given to the CBI for probing cases in their States. They argued that the Centre was using the CBI to carry out vendetta against Opposition and dissenting leaders, and by extension was stifling the emergence of an alternative discourse. Justices AM Khanwilkar and BR Gavai, in fact, underlined that “the law is in tune with the federal structure of the Constitution” and was a foundational tenet. And lest there be any confusion, the judges also referred to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act of 1946, clarifying that “though Section 5 enables the Central Government to extend the powers and jurisdiction of Members of the DSPE (CBI) beyond the Union Territories to a State, the same is not permissible unless a State grants its consent for such an extension.” The top court obviously still believes that the CBI is, what it once described, a “caged parrot” and, therefore, needs to be depoliticised. The States have sought a protective sheath not without reason. The DSPE Act was used prominently in 2018, when the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) left the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and fearing political retaliation, blocked the CBI from entering its State. It was only in mid-2019 that the position changed after the BJP-friendly YSR Congress regime came to power in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, the West Bengal Government ruled by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) refused the agency permission during the probe into the Sarada scam, when the latter summoned the Kolkata Police Commissioner. In the end, it was the Supreme Court, after judging the merits of the case and verifying claims of obstructive justice, that handed over probe rights to the CBI.

This bureaucratic one-upmanship or playing favourites is not new to the CBI, which has since inception been a political tool for the government of the day, each using its investigative depth to uphold the power of coercion rather than dispensation of justice, deepening a fear of the establishment rather than truth. And though the Modi government is under the scanner at the moment, the fact is the dilution of the CBI's independence had begun much earlier in the Congress years. A CBI inquiry had become the ruling dispensation's bargaining chip to keep the Opposition and regional leaders in check, either by over or under-cooking of corruption cases that every politician has indulged in this country. A CBI probe had even been dangled to buy allegiance, particularly of regional parties, to stitch up grand coalitions of survival. And whenever an honest, upright officer had gotten too close for comfort to nail the political biggies, he had routinely been told to “go slow” or been simply shunted out. However, this does not mean that the present government or any regime hereafter should not try to change the status quo. The only problem the CBI might face vis-à-vis the consent clause is in pursuing investigations in State-level branches of Central Government departments, PSUs, banks and so on. As per the new rules, the CBI has to get a local sanction for starting an investigation against officers under suspicion. This means getting a permit from the senior officers of the organisation which is being probed. In such cases, there is always the risk that the time lag will allow the trail to go cold and let the officers tamper with evidence. The Government insists that this was done to protect officers from being targeted but what if they are complicit in the crime? The Supreme Court had slammed the CBI for dragging its feet in the Jain hawala case and had laid down guidelines to ensure the agency's independence and autonomy, suggesting that it be placed under the supervision of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and be freed from executive control or interference. But we have seen the spirit of this landmark judgment mauled during the tussle between the CBI Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana. Unfortunately, the CBI now runs on political allegiances and that can be curbed only when it is made accountable to a neutral, collective authority, like a parliamentary committee, may be a rights watchdog or made supreme like the Comptroller and Auditor-General. Aware that it would be under a public scrutiny of sorts, the CBI could actually then exercise more autonomy and not be compelled to remain a stooge. Besides, as the country's premier investigative agency, it has superior officers, who, freed from controls, could professionalise the institution as a modicum of propriety and fairness.

Holidays a far cry

While ‘revenge travel’ has perked up hope, the overall tourism sector is still far from recovery with curbs in place



Deep Kalra, Chief Executive Officer of MakeMyTrip, India's largest online travel agency (OTA), recently spoke about the concept of “revenge travel,” where people, bored out of their minds being stuck at home, are travelling to resorts and destinations across the country to make up for lost vacation time. They have often been using their personal modes of transport for that “disinfected” comfort. That said, with international travel, particularly leisure travel, still in the doldrums with limited flights and all sorts of rules, the revival of the travel and tourism sector is still a season away. For example, while there are “air bubbles” between India

and some countries, transit through a third country is prohibited. So while an Indian can travel to the United Arab Emirates or the US, transiting via Dubai to go to the US is not allowed without some sort of quarantine. And even as domestic air travel is picking up, traffic is still around two-thirds of what it was before the pandemic hit. Even as news of a vaccine has lifted spirits, particularly on the stock markets, it is still a long time before any of it can be deployed. Now Expedia, one of the world's largest OTAs, has said that it might be summer of 2021 before the travel and tourism industry actually recovers to any semblance of what it was before the pandemic. Many frequent fliers still do not have the confidence to fly even as airlines and airports talk about enhanced sanitisation.

The collapse in the travel industry has hit several parts of India, which depended on international tourists, really hard. There are no European tourists to be seen in Rajasthan right now, hitting not just hotels but also the livelihoods of artisans and folk performers. As a third wave of COVID-19 cases hits cities like Delhi, it is inevitable that the cases will spread and the restrictions on weddings will become more widespread. That will devastate another money-spinner, the destination wedding sector. The Government has tried to shore up the industry. Nevertheless millions of livelihoods have been impacted by the drop in travel and tourism and the Government must find a practical way to assist the affected. They might have been airline pilots or an artisan selling trinkets to tourists, they could have been guides at the Taj Mahal or a self-employed taxi driver. We should not fool ourselves by pretending that things will become alright now that an effective vaccine has been developed. The smaller players in the hospitality business may not last that long.



AJOY KUMAR

In Nazi Germany, certain laws were announced in Nuremberg, which prohibited Jews from marrying or having intimate relations with persons of “German or related blood.” A Jew would have to prove his/her credentials by showing that he/she had three or four Jewish grandparents. The aim of the law was, of course, to alienate the Jews from German society and to further entrench prejudices against that community as a whole.

In India, over the past few weeks, States like Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have been mulling and working towards drafting a law that targets the problem of “love jihad.” All of these have a BJP government handling the ropes. The Madhya Pradesh Government, as an example, has decided to bring in the Dharma Swatantrya Bill 2020, which makes coercing or pressuring an individual into marriage a punishable offence, non-bailable in nature and proposes a five-year rigorous punishment. Furthermore, the Bill codifies that in case someone wishes to undergo voluntary conversion for marriage, they will have to mandatorily apply to the collector a month in advance. In a society that is yet to come out of the revenge code of honour killings, would not a public declaration of love and conversion invite a hit-back? Consider the consequences if the person seeking an inter-faith union is a young girl. We just saw the backlash following an advertisement campaign by a jewellery brand of an inter-faith marriage, where none of the partners were shown as changing their religion. If that had to be taken down, imagine what could happen to two people making independent choices.

One of the most important questions to ask in this regard is if at all there is a need for such a law. And more importantly is it even constitutionally valid? What is relevant is how many instances of “love jihad” are actually recorded. According to the Central government, not too many. In February this year, for example, while responding to a question on the subject, the Government informed Parliament that the term “love jihad” had not been defined under any law and no case had been reported or registered by any Central agency. Therefore, it is evident that the Central Government

opinion

Love and war

If there are hardly any instances of love *jihad*, according to Govt data, and with laws to prevent forced marriages and conversions, why do we need a new law?



“THE SPECTRE OF THESE STATE LAWS BEING MOOTED BY BJP GOVERNMENTS WOULD IN EFFECT CREATE HURDLES FOR INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES. THIS IS WHOLLY INCONGRUOUS WITH THE IDEA OF A UNIFORM CIVIL CODE”

to safeguard against forced conversions, he displayed characteristic prescience in noting that such laws “will not help very much in suppressing the evil methods [of gaining converts], but might very well be the cause of great harassment to a large number of people.” Pandit Nehru went on to state that “the major evils of coercion and deception can be dealt with under the general law. It may be difficult to obtain proof but so is it difficult to obtain proof in many other offences, but to suggest that there should be a licensing system for propagating a faith is not proper. It would lead in its wake to the police having too large a power of interference.”

Few can explain the potential risks better. Such a move, therefore, is not grounded in reality but is merely a stunt to fan emotions against particular communities and arouse fear when there is little reason to be worried. Such a move would also be antithetical to what the BJP has spoken till now with respect to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). As noted by Faizan Mustafa, Vice-Chancellor of the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSA), the UCC encourages or at the very least makes it easier to enter into inter-faith marriages. However, the spectre of these State laws

being mooted by BJP governments would in effect create hurdles for such marriages, which is wholly incongruous with the idea of a uniform civil code. It is no wonder then that the BJP only speaks about UCC when talking about triple *talaq* but finds no mention of it when talking about inter-faith marriages. Stoking hate and fear does, unfortunately for the BJP, come with its own set of unique contradictions.

The real danger is the slippery slope that such a move would lead to. For example, the first supplemental decree of the Nuremberg Laws extended the prohibition of marriage and intimate relations from Jews to between people who could produce “racially suspect” offspring. This was later interpreted by the Nazi government of the time to mean relations of “Germans of related blood” with gypsies, Blacks or their offspring. So who is to say that after such seeds of hate have been planted, the bitter fruits that will follow may be the restraint of marriage between different castes or between different classes. At a time when the rest of the world's respected democracies are working towards celebrating love, we must make sure that we are not the ones who seek to destroy it.

(The author is former IPS and member of the Congress Party)

SOUND BITE

Marathas are also Hindu followers. There is a difference between development of Marathi and Maratha. Maratha is a community and they are Hindus.



Karnataka Chief Minister —BS Yediyurappa

As long as this fake Government remains in power, the poor cannot run a household and they will not be able to obtain cheap medicine.



PML-N vice-president —Maryam Nawaz

The Indian film industry has lost a legend. I am eternally grateful that I got to work alongside Soumitra sir in *Ahalya*. He was a true gentleman and a kind soul.



Actor —Radhika Apte

I think bubble life is a lot easier than quarantine. There are a few things you can get out to do and playing cricket as well. That is a huge bonus.



Australian cricketer —Josh Hazlewood

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Modi and Biden talk

Sir — It is a good thing that Prime Minister Narendra Modi called up US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris and congratulated them on their victory. He also discussed the Indo-US relationship, priorities and concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Thankfully, climate change is back on the talks agenda under Biden. But equally important from India's perspective is the continuing focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

The leaders agreed to work closely to further advance the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, built on shared values and common interests. Now, it remains to be seen what will be the US' response to India's escalating conflict with China and Pakistan. It is turning out to be dangerous in the region and could lead to a two-front war for India. That is why it is vital for India to have the US on its side as it cannot afford to be isolated at this point of time.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Quad: A good strategic exercise by India

Vacating Chushul Heights without full restoration of status quo ante will be squandering a strategic asset, particularly as the ninth round of the commander-level talks is expected later this month. Strategic edge is one reason why we still do not give up Siachen. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has managed to creep forward towards its 1959 claim line and annexed Indian territory. The Chinese have intruded 18 km into Depsang and blocked Indian patrols. The Quadrilateral (Quad) coalition (India, US, Japan and Australia) is focussing on containing China's military expansionism in the Indo-Pacific region.

The navies of the four nations began the second phase of the Malabar series of exercises in the northern Arabian sea on November 17, after the successful completion of the first phase earlier this month, which took place in the Bay of Bengal from November 3 to 6. The participation of the *USS Nimitz*, the world's largest warship and the Indian Navy's *Vikramaditya* carrier battle group were the highlights of the exercise. The Australian Navy has deployed *HMAS Ballarat*, an Anzac-class frigate, while the Japanese Navy has sent its lead-



ing destroyer *JS Murasame*. The two carriers, along with other ships, submarines and aircraft of the participating navies engaged in high-intensity naval operations over four days. This is a good strategic move and should make China re-think before it challenges India further.

TV Jayaprakash
Palakkad

Clear encroachments

Sir — Increasing the number of hospital beds, including Intensive Care Units (ICUs), ramping up the availability of ventilators and all other medical facilities now planned by the Central and Delhi Governments are simply an eyewash. Curative

steps for treating Coronavirus patients in Delhi will remain grossly insufficient till real preventive steps are taken to stop the spread. That means ensuring behavioural discipline, early testing and treatment.

Even daily statistical data given by Government agencies regarding new Corona cases

and deaths may be far below the actual figures because these do not include those undergoing self-isolation in homes without informing the agencies concerned. One of the reasons for the spread of COVID during the festive season is the encroachment of footpaths and market places in the city. This lack of

space led to overcrowding and people being forced to shop in congested and spilling at the seams markets.

The Government must do whatever it can to get rid of the squatters. However, sadly, all political parties avoid touching encroachers because they are the real vote bank and law-abiding citizens are in a minority. Hence, a tough drive is urgently required to remove all encroachments from all over Delhi. But sadly, there is no political will to do the same. As a result Delhiites will continue to suffer.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal
New Delhi

A wise move

Sir — At last, good sense has prevailed and the Government has decided to bring the number of people being allowed to attend weddings down from 200 to 50. This may inconvenience the families of those getting married but it will certainly help in keeping the number of new infections low. It is a small price to pay for the greater good.

Naushad Ali
New Delhi

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Good cause, bad tactics

Hong Kong's freedom was always conditional and ultimately doomed but last week's blundering collapse was premature and far from inevitable



GWYNNE DYER

One Hong Kong lawmaker, Claudia Mo, said it was “the death-knell of Hong Kong’s democracy fight.” But she was part of it. One of the 15 remaining pro-democracy members of the Legislative Council (Legco) who resigned recently in protest at the expulsion of four other democratically-elected members of the pseudo-Parliament. Wu Chi-wai, speaking for the 15 who resigned, tweeted that, “‘One country, two systems’ in Hong Kong has come to an end.” That is true, and it is regrettable, but it’s hard to see how a mass resignation that eliminates all pro-democracy legislators from Legco helps the cause. Bad tactics in a good cause has been the hallmark of the democratic movement’s behaviour throughout the last 18 months. It mobilised a very effective non-violent protest campaign when the Communist Government in Beijing introduced a law in June 2019 that directly challenged the deal signed by China and the former colonial power, the UK, in 1997.

The UK ignored the democratic rights of the city’s Chinese majority for most of its 155-year tenure, but when it handed the colony back to China in 1997, it did give a guarantee that Hong Kong could keep its free institutions, including freedom of speech and of the Press, impartial courts, and a separate, partly democratic Government for 50 years. “One country, two systems” was the slogan. Beijing’s new law would have allowed Hong Kong residents to be transferred to mainland courts for certain “security” offences. So the protesters spilled out into the streets to protect the status quo, which kept all Hong Kongers free from Communist interference and made some very rich. Within three months, Chief Executive Carrie Lam withdrew the legislation. The Hong Kong Government is not an entirely free agent and Lam initially went along with Beijing’s demand. By withdrawing it, she was signalling that Beijing was willing to drop the matter for now. But the protesters snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

The sensible thing to do was accept the concession and go home. Beijing’s demand might come back again in five years, but enjoy the time you have won. The Communist regime will never let you have any more than this, and the mainland population outnumbers you 200-to-one. Instead of going home happy, the protesters stayed out in the streets and raised the stakes, demanding fully free elections and more autonomy for Hong Kong. They also broke the prime rule and allowed their protests to become violent. (Don’t explain that the police are being violent; your only safety lies in remaining non-violent regardless of the provocation.)

So Xi Jinping’s Communist regime in Beijing struck back hard against what it saw as a serious challenge to its authority. A new law was imposed on Hong Kong, contrary to the 1997 agreement, that effectively subordinates the city’s legal system to Beijing’s whims. It was the end of Hong Kong’s legal autonomy, and to rub it in, four pro-democracy legislators were expelled from the Legco. In a final Quixotic gesture last week, all the remaining democrats in the Legco quit too. It’s a prelude to a far larger abandonment. Hong Kong’s relative freedom was always conditional and ultimately doomed (2047 at the latest) but last week’s blundering collapse was premature and far from inevitable. Only two substantive questions now remain. What happens to Taiwan, and where will all the Hong Kongers, who want to leave, go? One-third of Hong Kong’s seven million people were born on the mainland: Some of them moved to the city for the money, but most were undoubtedly getting away from the Communists. Another third will be the children or grand-children of those refugees (the city’s population was only 6,00,000 in 1945) and will probably share their opinions. A lot will leave.

An estimated 6,00,000 Hong Kong residents already hold full foreign passports, half Canadians and most of the rest Australian, British or American ones. They acquired them as an insurance policy, and this is the contingency they were insuring against. Another three million people hold British National (Overseas) passports or can easily acquire them, and London promises that they can all move to the UK if they wish. The “central range” estimate of the British Home Office is that between 2,58,000 and 3,22,000 Hong Kongers will come within five years, but it could be many more. That’s unless Beijing stops them from leaving. But if it closes the gates like that, it would be the definitive end of Hong Kong as a great international trading city. And what about Taiwan? Well, “one country, two systems” was also the promise Beijing was holding out to Taiwan to seduce it into peaceful reunification. It has now been comprehensively trashed, and the long-term likelihood of an attempted military “solution” to the Taiwan “problem” has just risen significantly.

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

THE CONGRESS’ POSITION DEMANDING THAT MODI NOT DRAG INDIA INTO AN UNFAIR RCEP, AS WAS BEING PLANNED, STANDS VINDICATED.
—CONGRESS LEADER
JAIRAM RAMESH

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



INDIA’S DECISION OF NOT JOINING THE RCEP IS UNFORTUNATE. IT IS IN INDIA’S STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS TO BE A PART OF IT.
—CONGRESS LEADER
ANAND SHARMA

Empowered PRIs fight virus

In times of COVID-19, the trust developed by the Panchayati Raj Institutions has aided the Govt’s efforts to test, trace and treat people and contain the crisis in rural areas



SIMI MEHTA

The spirit of decentralisation runs deep within the consciousness of India. Local governance had been at the core of functioning of the country’s rural and urban administration even before it was mandated by the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in 1992. At present, there are 2.5 lakh *gram* panchayats, over six lakh villages, around 4,500 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and 4,000 census towns in the country. Being at the forefront of rural governance, panchayats have borne the brunt yet stood resilient amid the COVID-19 outbreak. It is important to note that they have played a pivotal role in saving lives even before the pandemic, because women members of panchayats help in building trust among the village folk and the health-care providers, the locals wary of visiting doctors.

These women even helped the doctors and nurses to explain to the villagers the diseases they were suffering from and the treatment protocols in a language they understood. Consequently, the number of villagers availing medical services without fear or anxiety increased exponentially over the years. In times of COVID-19, the trust developed by the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has aided the Union and State Governments’ efforts to test, trace and treat people and contain the crisis in rural areas to a very large extent.

This, in the words of Professor James Manor, an expert on the study of decentralisation in India, would further deepen accountability and transparency at the grassroots, drawing ordinary people in villages into democratic processes to pursue their rights and contribute towards poverty alleviation. According to Manor, the world has a lot to learn from the Indian panchayat system. He exemplifies how Britain is centralising the system to tackle the contagion, which in turn is costing the lives of people even as the neutrality of local councils is being ignored. In a similar manner, the decentralisation system has been weakened in South Africa where local councils are being dominated by people at higher levels. Thus, all efforts to implement the rural employment guarantee Act, that has been styled on the lines of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India, failed in South Africa because of restricted access to financial resources. Now, even the COVID testing, tracing and treatment in South Africa have lagged because of this weakening of local councils.

The constitutional duties of the panchayats are listed under Schedule 9, Schedule 11 and Schedule 12 of the Indian Constitution. Its makers foresaw that a major health emergency in the country, like the present contagion, would require a resolution at both rural and urban levels. So they devised a mechanism called the District Planning Committee, on which members elected to the panchayats would have a major representation as compared to those elected to municipal bodies. According to legislation under Article 243G, panchayats have the power and authority to enable them to function as institutions of self-government in respect of preparation of plans and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice. The 73rd Amendment left the decision to delegate powers, functions and finances to PRIs to the State legislatures. Item 23 of Schedule 11 of the Constitution relates to the empowerment of PRIs where health and sanitation are concerned, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries, which is significant in view of the current pandemic. States have fulfilled the constitutional mandate to empow-

“THE CHALLENGES PERTAINING TO PROVISION OF SUFFICIENT PROTECTION KITS FOR FRONTLINE PANCHAYAT WORKERS, INADEQUATE FUNDING, DILUTION OF POWERS OF PANCHAYATS IN NORMAL TIMES, STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR ACCURATE PANCHAYAT-LEVEL DATA, AND SO ON, REMAIN TO BE ADDRESSED AS POLICY PRIORITIES



er the PRIs to look into health and sanitation, which are intimately connected with COVID-19 and where such responsibilities are institutionally exercised through hospitals, primary healthcare centres and dispensaries under their overall supervision. A staunch advocate of democratic decentralisation and a former Union Panchayati Raj Minister, Mani Shankar Aiyar, says that the pandemic has affected many vital areas and vulnerable sections of rural society. First it has hit women and child development where Anganwadi workers along with auxiliary nurses, midwives and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) are responsible for development of children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Second, mentally and physically challenged people, who are not able to access medical care, have become even more vulnerable. While people with money and those belonging to higher castes in rural India would be able to access medical care due to their influence in society, it would be difficult for people with less money or those belonging to the backward castes to access the same. Lastly, the Public Distribution System (PDS), which can provide food access to the underprivileged, as mandated by Schedule 11, has been hit too.

The optimism that PRIs would be greatly successful in attending to problems brought on by COVID-19 is strengthened by Kerala’s demonstrated capacity to decentralise the planning system in the State and strengthen local governance in matters of health, sanitation, women and child development, welfare of the weaker sections of society, the PDS, feeding of the destitute, free day care centres for the differently-abled and so on.

Financially-empowered panchayats along with the Kudumbashree movement for economic empowerment of women and inclusion of schools and district colleges in the panchayat systems have all led to consolidating holistic efforts to effec-

tively combat the pandemic with minimal loss of lives. Thus, Kerala’s panchayats have smoothly transitioned to take care of those affected by COVID-19.

Similarly, in Karnataka, panchayat level COVID-19 task forces were formed and are working successfully. They comprise primary health centre doctors, auxiliary nurses, midwives, ASHA workers and elected representatives and panchayat-level staff. Present across the State, these task forces have been at the forefront of pandemic management. This has resulted in strict enforcement of lockdowns, disinfection, providing food to the needy, ensuring the supply of essential services, and so on.

Over the years, Odisha has witnessed strengthening of panchayats, which have played an important part in combating natural disasters. As a result, during the pandemic-induced reverse migration of labourers, the role of panchayats became crucial. The State Government worked in close coordination with PRIs and delegated the powers of the District Collectors to the latter to work towards containing the spread of the Coronavirus in each panchayat. Women-led PRIs have proactively engaged with Self Help Groups (SHGs) in running free kitchens and in making face masks to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Such responses from the PRIs are very encouraging as they are going the extra mile to ensure continuity of essential services, especially for the vulnerable. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, has applauded the efforts of the PRIs to fight the pandemic and remarked that the stronger the PRIs, the stronger the democracy of a country. In fact, in order to strengthen PRIs, the Government has announced two projects: The e-Gram Swaraj App, where details of the development work of panchayats and the funds will be available and the Swamitwa Yojana (ownership plan), where each property in the village will be mapped through drones

after which a certificate of ownership will be issued. This will help in removing confusion about the property and help in proper policy planning, too. Further, the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has exhorted all States to use a tool for assessing the community response to COVID-19 at the village and panchayat level for timely action in containing the spread of the virus and vector-borne diseases. This includes eight areas for action at the village level: Creating awareness regarding preventive measures, solidarity to address the associated stigma, support for home as well as community quarantine, help in surveillance activities’ identification, support to needy families, ensuring availability of routine healthcare services, prompt response in case of positive cases and maintaining hygiene and sanitation at the village level. The information in this check list will help the panchayats to self-assess their preparedness and identify what more they may do. This will also help the health department to take timely and corrective measures.

To effectively handle the crisis, it is important to look at the number of recoveries and the number of fatalities along with co-morbidities. There exists a positive correlation between operating the PRIs and effectively handling the pandemic. COVID-19 should be a lesson for the current and future governments to make PRIs an inclusive part of governance. The challenges pertaining to provision of sufficient protection kits for frontline panchayat workers, inadequate funding, dilution of powers of panchayats in normal times, strengthening management information systems for accurate panchayat-level data, and so on, remain to be addressed as policy priorities. Only then Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of “an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice”, would be fulfilled.

(The writer is CEO and Editorial Director, IMPRI)

Progress and challenges go hand in hand

The UNDP report recommends that Governments should consider the benefits and costs of migration on their strategies and plans



EDUARDO FALEIRO

The last few decades have witnessed vast changes in political ideology and economic policies across the world. People of different countries have been affected differently, but always in a significant manner everywhere. Goa has achieved remarkable progress since liberation from Portuguese rule on December 19, 1961. The greatest gain of this freedom has been the feeling of self-respect regained, the opening of the portals of opportunity, particularly to the vast mass of people who were denied upward mobility over the centuries and perhaps millennia.

Great strides have been made in core sectors such as education. In 1961, the literacy rate here was 30 per cent.

Goa is now a fully literate State if we exclude some people above the age of 50 and a section of migrant labourers.

This has been achieved mainly through private institutions. Regrettably, Government schools themselves are in an appalling condition. As a result, only those who cannot afford to enroll their children in private schools send them to the Government schools in the State. The Fundamental Right to Education for all children up to the age of 14 years is enshrined in our Constitution. What is required is a law to determine the facilities which the State Government should provide to the children so that they can exercise this fundamental right.

“Free education” means not merely freedom from tuition fees but also adequate classrooms and teachers, free uniforms, textbooks and other educational material. Inequalities in education will be accentuated in the computer age. The dangerous “digital divide” can only be prevented if necessary steps are taken right now. The ideal is the “Common School System” with quality Government schools, known as “neighbourhood schools”, in

every locality where all children, irrespective of social class or religious affiliation can attend. This is the system prevailing in Scandinavia and other educationally-advanced countries.

The Goa University ought to be a centre of academic excellence at the national as well as at the international level. It should be a powerful instrument to enable the youth of Goa and of the country at large to deal with and thrive in today’s increasingly competitive world, the global “knowledge society” where education is the key to success. Turning Goa University into a Central University would have advanced this objective and would have improved significantly our university education.

The Official Language Act was enacted in 1987. It was intended to strengthen our common cultural heritage and achieve greater unity and harmony among our people. Yet, in the process of implementing the Act, those who write Konkani in the Roman script are entitled to the same protection available to those who write in Devanagari. This is their right and it flows from Article 29 (1) of the Constitution of India. Konkani writers

in Roman script should have access to literary awards, representation in literary bodies, financial assistance and so on, to the same extent available to those who write in Devanagari. However, Konkani should be taught in schools through the Devanagari script only. The reason is that children learn the Roman script through the study of English, which is important for international communication and for availing the increasing employment opportunities in the country itself. Devanagari is equally important for access to Indian culture and other Indian languages. The importance of national languages and assertion of national cultural identity are growing everywhere in the world. India is not and should not be an exception.

In the 1960s, tourism was adopted as a key sector for Goa’s development primarily because of its potential to generate employment in a State with an increasingly educated workforce and limited industrial growth. The objective of employment has been achieved to a great extent in as much as almost one-third of Goa’s population is engaged in tourism-related activities, directly or indirectly. However, Goa

being a small State, its carrying capacity in terms of its size, facilities available and ecological fragility should be considered.

Very little awareness existed until a decade ago among policymakers in Goa or elsewhere in the world about the need for sustainable tourism development. It is now accepted that tourism should be developed in a manner that meets the requirements of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable tourism development considers three fundamental elements, economic, social and environmental. Economic sustainability consists in maintaining the growth rate at a manageable level to avoid consumer dissatisfaction. In Goa, it is necessary to upgrade the basic physical infrastructure. Social sustainability refers to society’s ability to absorb tourist arrivals without adversely affecting local well-being and value systems.

Environmental sustainability relates to the capacity of the environment to handle population impact without damage. Mega construction projects have transformed the land-

scape of Goa. Huge buildings have now progressed from the coastline into the hinterland and they have a negative impact on the lifestyle of the local population. Big buildings, especially in the villages, destroy the environment and should not be permitted. Non-disposal of garbage, particularly inorganic, in a scientific manner is also assuming menacing proportions. This matter should be tackled with a sense of urgency. There is apprehension in our State regarding the influx of people from other States who come here mostly for employment.

The Department of NRI Affairs published in 2008 the first-ever Goa Migration Survey. It identified the Goan diaspora in 43 countries and stated that “the actual number of countries would be much larger. Goans are found the world over and it would be difficult to name a country without a Goan community.”

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its annual Human Development Report under the caption “Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development.” The report deals entirely with migration within and among countries. It

finds that migrants boost economic output and, contrary to commonly-held beliefs, immigration generally increases employment in host communities, does not crowd out locals from the job market and improves the rate of investment in new businesses and initiatives.

The UNDP report recommends that Governments should reflect on the benefits and costs of migration on their strategy and plans. Migration from one region to another puts pressure on the existing infrastructure and social services such as housing, electricity, water and sanitation.

While Goans can be justifiably proud of the vast social and economic progress achieved over the last five decades, they do also face several challenges at this point of time. Goans ought to confront these hurdles with confidence and commitment to values that shape a forward-moving and progressive society. These values should be taught at school and at home so that our land is prosperous and free from oppression of any sort, where justice and fairplay do indeed prevail.

(The writer is a former Union Minister)

Markets snap record run as virus caseload weighs

BANK STOCKS LEAD DECLINE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty retreated from record highs on Thursday following heavy profit-taking in financial stocks amid a weak trend in global markets due to rising Covid-19 cases in multiple countries.

A depreciating rupee and concerns over frothy valuations further dented risk appetite, traders said.

After briefly touching its record intra-day high of 44,230 in a volatile session, the 30-

share BSE Sensex ended 580.09 points or 1.31 per cent lower at 43,599.96.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty hit a fresh intra-day peak of 12,963, before ending 166.55 points or 1.29 per cent down at 12,771.70.

Both the key indices had ended at fresh lifetime highs in each of the previous three sessions. The Sensex and Nifty have closed in the red only twice this month so far. SBI was the top laggard in the Sensex pack on Thursday, tumbling 4.88 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel.

On the other hand, PowerGrid, ITC, NTPC, Tata Steel and Titan were among the prominent gainers, spurring up to 2.43 per cent.

Global stocks slipped for the third straight day as the unabated rise in COVID-19 caseload in various regions offset euphoria around vaccine progress.

“The increasing virus infections raised fears of additional restrictions and considering its impact on global economic activity, global market sentiments turned negative. This was in spite of the optimism surrounding the advanced stages of vaccine development.

Indian markets also witnessed profit booking from recent highs, as investors turned cautious. Financials led the losses while defensive sectors such as FMCG and Pharma fared better.

“The positivity in Auto sales numbers continued and could be an indicator of economic recovery.

However, increasing virus infections, which is again being reported in some parts of India, can offset this nascent recovery. We can expect short term volatility in the markets and investors are advised to remain cautious,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

₹ logs 1st loss in four sessions, slips 8 paise against \$

Mumbai: The Indian rupee saw its first decline in four sessions on Thursday, depreciating by 8 paise to settle at 74.27 against the US dollar tracking weakness in Asian currencies and a lacklustre trend in domestic equities.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 74.28 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day high of 74.22 and a low of 74.33.

Gold slips ₹248, silver declines ₹853

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Thursday dropped ₹248 to ₹49,714 per 10 grams in the national capital, as investors and traders switched to riskier assets on new vaccine development, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at ₹49,962 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver also declined by ₹853 to ₹61,184 per kg, compared to the previous close of ₹62,037 per kg.

OE revises downwards India growth forecast

Pegs at average 4.5% for 2020-25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global forecasting firm Oxford Economics on Thursday revised downwards its India growth forecast over the medium term to an average 4.5 per cent over 2020-25, from its pre-pandemic projection of 6.5 per cent.

In a research note, it said India's post-COVID-19 scars could be among the

worst in the world.

“We forecast India's growth equilibrium to worsen substantially over the medium term, with potential growth averaging just 4.5 per cent over 2020-2025 in our latest baseline, as opposed to our pre-virus forecast of 6.5 per cent,” Oxford Economics said.

It said an adequate and well-designed fiscal stimulus would halve this impact by limiting deterioration in pre-COVID-19 headwinds. “But, given the low likelihood of such a comprehensive response,

we project India's GDP per capita to be 12 per cent below our pre-virus baseline even in 2025, implying the largest amount of scarring among major economies globally,” Oxford Economics said.

It added that the Indian government has announced various schemes and reforms this year, with an eye on the medium-to-long-term growth. “However, its policy implementation track record is mixed and is likely to have been weakened further by recent social and

institutional developments that detract from its capacity to focus on economic policymaking,” the global forecasting firm said. Beyond 2020, Oxford Economics said India remains one of the most rapidly growing economies in our baseline.

“But, that is not enough to preclude a large medium-term output loss in the wake of COVID-19,” it said. Oxford Economics said that even after the pandemic is contained, India's economy will have to deal with its aftermath.

Hiring in IT sector least impacted by Covid-19 disruptions: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the pandemic forcing businesses to adopt digitalisation, the hiring in the IT sector has been the least impacted compared to other sectors, in both software and hardware segments, according to a report. The information technology (IT) sector remained one of the least impacted sectors in terms of hiring from the global pandemic, job site Naukri.Com said in the report. It

showed that with all businesses going virtual, the demand for professionals in software and hardware segments has been steady.

The report is based on job postings on Naukri.Com during February and the months after the lockdown, which was imposed in late-March.

Further, the report stated that the overall sector saw upward month-on-month recovery, peaking in September for hard-

ware (63 per cent) and software roles (20 per cent), it added. Top roles that recruiters are hiring for include software developer, tech lead, tech architect, testing engineer, technical content developer, database architect and solution architect.

Roles such as technical content developer, solution architect and database architect have seen 350 per cent, 150 per cent and 100 per cent growth in demand year-on-year.

GDP contraction likely to have narrowed to 9.5 pc in September quarter: Icra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The contraction in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) may have narrowed to 9.5 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal from 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter, says a report. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) will release the GDP data for the second quarter of FY21 on November 27.

In a report on Thursday, rating agency Icra said the Year-on-Year (YoY) contraction in Indian GDP (at constant 2011-12 prices) is estimated to have narrowed appreciably to 9.5 per cent in Q2 FY2021 from 23.9 per cent in Q1 FY2021, as the economy recovered from the lows of the pandemic-induced lockdown.

It said the contraction in the Gross Value Added

(GVA) at basic prices is expected to have moderated considerably to 8.5 per cent in the July-September quarter from 22.8 per cent in the previous three months.

The ease in GVA would be led by industry to (-) 9.3 per cent from (-) 38.1 per cent, driven primarily by manufacturing and construction and services to (-) 10.2 per cent from (-) 20.6 per cent, it said. Icra's principal economist Aditi Nayar said a substantial recovery in manufacturing and construction is likely to underpin the expected improvement in the performance of the industrial GVA in the second quarter of the current fiscal. Various sectors of manufacturing recorded an improvement in demand and volumes in the September quarter although the performance was admittedly uneven.

China all set to change its development model from 2021: Xi

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that China is set to change its development model from next year, relying more on domestic consumption than export-reliant growth which propelled it to become the world's second largest economy next only to the United States.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	12839.50	12963.00	12745.75	12771.70	-166.55	
POWERGRID	178.50	197.20	178.40	190.20	4.80	
ITC	182.80	191.80	182.70	188.05	4.00	
NTPC	88.40	91.90	88.00	89.80	1.50	
COALINDIA	121.75	124.30	120.85	122.15	1.40	
TATASEEL	511.85	535.70	510.00	523.10	5.90	
TITAN	127.55	134.50	127.00	129.20	11.90	
BRITANNIA	348.00	354.90	348.00	352.00	19.65	
TCS	2637.00	2676.15	2630.85	2640.25	13.60	
DREDDY	4675.00	4811.80	4657.00	4725.00	21.20	
ONGC	71.50	74.20	71.45	72.20	0.25	
NESTLEIND	16840.00	17200.00	16786.05	16924.80	52.20	
HEROMOTOCO	3029.00	3136.75	2975.15	2989.60	6.60	
BAJAJFINSV	7789.95	8199.90	7750.00	7803.00	13.05	
BPCL	383.05	395.50	382.05	383.30	0.25	
CIPLA	742.55	751.90	737.95	742.00	-0.95	
HINDUNILVR	2125.80	2147.40	2114.50	2129.00	-3.10	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3033.00	3065.50	3010.00	3027.80	-10.10	
KOTAKBANK	1819.00	1860.70	1816.05	1824.20	-6.40	
GAIL	93.00	96.85	93.00	93.45	-0.50	
IOC	85.25	86.60	84.50	84.80	-0.45	
M&M	699.00	728.40	692.30	701.00	-4.75	
WIPRO	347.70	349.50	341.60	342.85	-2.45	
RELIANCE	1987.20	2001.45	1968.20	1972.00	-15.20	
DIVISLAB	3436.00	3490.00	3406.30	3421.10	-30.70	
HCLTECH	815.00	820.45	803.00	804.60	-9.70	
INFY	1100.00	1114.70	1093.80	1097.00	-13.55	
SUNPHARMA	512.00	516.15	505.00	506.00	-7.00	
MARUTI	7031.00	7130.00	6915.20	6949.00	-105.30	
SBIIFE	854.80	862.80	838.00	844.95	-13.00	
GRASIM	844.80	861.90	832.00	835.95	-13.00	
HDFC	2336.00	2415.00	2311.00	2327.50	-37.40	
ASIANPAINT	1127.00	2195.00	2156.70	2159.20	-36.55	
IT	2125.05	1177.00	1107.70	1128.75	-19.40	
TECHM	833.00	849.00	820.00	821.80	-14.30	
INDUSINDBK	816.00	845.90	804.20	812.35	-15.95	
SHREECEM	2400.00	2428.00	2350.60	2370.05	-69.20	
BHARTIARTL	476.00	481.45	467.00	468.40	-10.00	
UPL	425.90	425.90	415.05	416.00	-10.30	
ADANI-PORTS	390.00	392.70	379.60	381.40	-9.70	
HINDALCO	217.45	227.25	212.70	213.80	-5.55	
HDFCLIFE	661.00	670.75	643.00	647.40	-17.40	
EICHERMOT	2561.00	2658.00	2538.50	2544.95	-69.20	
HDFCBANK	1389.70	1399.45	1378.00	1370.90	-37.90	
BAJFINANCE	4628.90	4785.00	4512.55	4528.20	-125.55	
ULTRACEMCO	489.00	4914.00	4761.00	4772.95	-154.55	
JSWSTEEL	339.00	346.35	329.15	330.15	-12.45	
TATAMOTORS	171.40	176.35	166.55	166.95	-6.55	
AXISBANK	619.00	633.00	609.05	610.05	-26.25	
ICICIBANK	490.00	493.35	475.80	476.80	-20.85	
SBIN	248.00	251.80	239.00	239.50	-12.50	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	29710.50	30088.20	29523.00	29579.80	-241.15	
BAJAJHLDNG	2770.00	2999.00	2751.00	2891.00	-110.05	
BOSCHLTD	11547.00	11979.95	11420.10	11917.70	415.95	
UBL	1029.95	1076.75	1026.20	1049.90	20.35	
MCDOWELL-N	562.00	577.75	559.75	571.95	8.20	
ABBOTINDIA	15100.00	15299.00	15100.00	15284.00	187.80	
DABUR	505.00	510.00	500.05	508.20	2.80	
DMART	2375.00	2415.00	2330.00	2387.00	11.95	
GODREJCP	681.00	703.00	680.15	685.70	2.35	
PEFC	103.50	106.90	103.10	104.90	0.35	
SIEMENS	1425.80	1444.00	1410.40	1430.00	3.80	
CADILAH	430.55	438.85	427.10	430.00	1.10	
ADANIGREEN	1080.95	1089.90	1050.00	1083.00	2.05	
GICRE	125.75	127.75	124.55	125.45	0.10	
MOTHERSUMI	135.95	140.55	134.20	137.00	0.05	
COLPAL	1514.90	1526.35	1488.15	1522.00	-0.20	
BIOCON	422.15	426.40	420.35	422.65	-0.35	
LUPIN	876.10	891.45	876.10	883.00	-1.30	
PIDILITIND	1555.00	1586.00	1553.95	1558.35	-4.95	
TATACONSUM	515.90	528.00	512.25	514.80	-2.10	
CONCOR	405.80	415.00	403.65	406.05	-2.20	
ACC	1673.65	1719.00	1667.40	1677.00	-9.30	
HINDPETRO	213.00	218.25	212.00	212.50	-1.25	
ALKEM	2697.00	2699.00	2661.55	2678.00	-17.30	
MUTHOOTFIN	1175.95	1217.00	1162.15	1166.05	-10.65	
OFSS	3060.50	3089.55	3045.00	3053.85	-29.15	
SBCARD	812.00	832.00	801.50	806.50	-7.85	
AUROPHARMA	837.00	862.00	821.95	826.90	-8.10	
PGH	1070.20	1070.20	10453.00	10475.10	-105.45	
INDIGO	1697.40	1734.90	1676.15	1685.00	-17.00	
INFRATEL	189.50	194.20	184.05	188.00	-2.05	
ICIGI	1308.10	1348.80	1285.10	1295.00	-16.25	
HAYVELS	833.50	855.00	821.65	826.10	-12.00	
HINDZINC	227.25	229.90	222.50	224.00	-3.25	
AMBUJACEM	259.85	265.80	256.45	258.15	-3.85	
LTI	3028.00	3049.80	2954.65	2970.00	-47.55	
NMDC	97.40	99.00	95.80	96.00	-1.60	
PETRONET	259.85	263.30	252.30	253.70	-4.50	
IGL	451.70	458.30	441.20	441.50	-8.15	
HDFCAMC	2459.00	2464.35	2410.00	2419.95	-49.25	
TORNTPHARM	2680.00	2708.60	2621.60	2622.00	-54.55	
BERGEPAINT	654.30	654.50	635.00	636.90	-14.95	
MARICO	373.00	379.50	365.75	367.95	-9.30	
ANANDTRANS	380.00	385.00	370.20	377.00	-10.05	
BANDHANBNK	356.90	366.30	351.20	351.90	-9.55	
PAL	1425.10	1452.00	1385.05	1394.00	-42.30	
ICICIPRULI	452.00	460.45	438.90	440.40	-14.65	
PNB	30.85	30.85	29.75	29.80	-1.05	
DLF	189.90	200.85	182.70	184.20	-6.55	
BANKBARODA	49.35	49.35	47.65	47.75	-1.85	
NAUKRI	3950.00	3959.00	3784.00	3811.85	-152.45	

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
HDFC	2340.00	2351.25	2310.75	2324.70
BAJFINANCE	4625.00	4782.20	4513.35	4534.10
RELIANCE	1986.40	2010.00	1968.00	1972.65
SBIN	247.50	251.75	239.00	239.75
TATAMOTORS	171.80	176.35	166.60	167.75
INDUSINDBK	801.00	845.75	801.00	817.70
BAJAJFINSV	7800.00	8197.90	7752.15	7822.40
ITC	183.00	191.70	182.80	187.85
INFY	1104.65	1114.80	1094.00	1096.45
IDEA	9.12	9.59	9.04	9.27
HEROMOTOCO	3040.00	3135.55	2975.85	2988.45
TATASEEL	512.60	535.65	510.00	523.40
SPICETEL	68.25	76.80	68.00	74.35
M&M	700.00	728.00	692.75	703.80
BANDHANBNK	357.00	366.20	351.20	352.45
SKRTRANSFIN	919.85	998.05	902.15	911.40
ICICIBANK	490.00	495.25	476.00	478.35
HDFCBANK	1400.00	1400.00	1368.00	1374.35
MARUTI	7042.00	7126.90	6920.00	6961.35
LAJ	1128.85	1167.75	1108.10	1134.95
BAJAJ-AUTO	3039.00	3057.45	3010.10	3034.80
BEL	96.65	107.55	95.80	103.10
DLF	194.50	200.75	182.75	184.80
HEG	717.00	806.55	712.00	791.90
KOTAKBANK	1824.70	1859.95	1814.50	1824.90
BPCIL	384.95	395.20	382.25	383.45
AXISBANK	620.00	632.80	609.30	611.20
TCS	2630.00	2678.60	2630.00	2637.05
VEDL	110.90	116.85	110.50	112.05
BATAINDIA	1443.00	1504.80	1433.95	1499.50
HINDALCO	214.50	227.20	212.70	213.90
MUTHOOTFIN	1168.00	1216.40	1162.20	1169.65
BHARTIARTL	476.00	481.30	467.10	468.60
TITAN	1279.00	1345.00	1271.15	1292.40
VOLTAS	765.00	785.75	765.00	773.50
SBILIFE	860.00	862.25	839.00	847.00
TATACHEM	327.40	359.40	325.15	353.10
LICHSGFIN	73.10	345.60	321.10	327.50
LT&TF	38.00	74.00	71.20	71.75
CIPLA	743.35	751.50	738.00	741.90
RBLBANK	217.50	219.20	210.35	211.85
FEDERALBANK	61.85	61.90	58.10	58.60
DRREDDY	4690.00	4812.20	4660.05	4707.35
INDIACEM	133.00	153.10	132.00	150.25
NTPC	88.15	91.90	88.00	89.73
POWERGRID	183.80	197.20	178.70	189.85
FRETAIL	6.70	73.20	6.60	71.75
ADANIENIT	292.05	398.20	378.05	385.55
BHEL	28.35	30.15	28.20	29.15
M&FMIN	95.20	168.85	153.20	155.40
ASHOKLEY	94.75	97.80	93.70	94.70
APOLLOHOSP	2290.00	2414.85	2281.00	2298.40
ADANIGREEN	1082.00	1090.00	1053.00	1083.85
ADANIGAS	343.70	346.80	312.50	331.80
PFIZER	5240.00	5240.00	5043.00	5058.10
COALINDIA	121.80	142.25	120.80	122.05
JSWSTEEL	321.40	326.20	329.05	331.15
IBULHSGFIN	181.00	184.70	175.65	176.80
GRAPHITE	95.80	221.90	183.60	211.35
INFRATEL	192.70	194.10	184.00	185.60
EICHERMOT	2560.00	2655.05	2538.40	2548.65
MOTHERSUMI	136.30	140.50	134.05	136.75
ADANIPARMA	837.00	861.80	821.85	829.45
JINDALSTEL	662.80	235.75	224.70	224.75
BDFCLIFE	662.80	820.00	644.05	644.05
HCLTECH	814.95	814.95	800.25	804.25
HINDUNILVR	2129.50	2147.00	2113.25	2129.80
MRF	7444.30	7730.00	7401.55	7693.10
GAIL	92.35	425.00	410.25	416.45
UPL	93.30	96.90	93.10	93.75
WIPRO	348.40	349.45	341.80	342.65
INDIGO	1702.00	1734.35	1677.65	1687.90
TATAPOWER	60.55	61.45	58.80	59.20
TECHM	834.90	848.95	819.95	821.85
ESCORTS	1424.75	1446.40	1385.60	1406.55
DIVISLAB	3410.50	3499.00	3409.00	3434.65
ORIENTORIT	447.10	463.00	442.90	455.45
MANAPPURAM	165.75	172.60	161.40	162.50
ZEE	190.45	191.85	185.25	186.25
BANKBARODA	49.30	49.35	47.60	47.95
ULTRACEMCO	4940.00	4940.00	4762.05	4778.30
BALKRISND	1625.20	1684.85	1586.10	1596.80
SUNPHARMA	511.40	516.30	505.20	507.40
ASIANPAINT	2183.00	2194.60	2156.45	2161.25
BOSCHLTD	11360.00	11978.65	11360.00	11425.10
IOC	85.00	86.60	84.90	84.65
KAJARIACER	61.90	61.90	59.25	61.65
NATIONALUM	35.20	38.25	35.10	36.60
SCNBRANDS	405.30	405.30	400.00	400.75
TBICARD	813.80	831.80	801.55	806.70
TATAMTRDVR	76.50	78.10	71.45	72.10
ACC	1685.00	1718.55	1667.75	1679.25
ONGC	71.50	74.15	71.50	72.10
BAJAJHLSDNG	2755.00	2998.00	2754.00	2878.55
GODFREYPROP	1084.00	1120.95	1028.05	1038.70
LAURUSLABS	271.50	276.35	266.35	268.65
LUBIN	879.00	891.35	876.00	884.40
JUPINFOD	2580.00	2634.10	2495.00	2510.25
NESTLEIND	16865.00	17199.00	16801.00	16933.50
BHARATFORG	502.80	516.20	499.00	510.45
ALOKTEXT	22.30	23.35	22.10	22.25
GMM	3805.00	3886.65	3718.05	3774.45
IDFCFIRSTB	64.00	34.40	33.05	33.35
MPSFL	320.00	625.00	609.00	612.75
LEMONTREE	32.40	35.40	32.40	35.10
NCC	40.20	42.65	40.00	41.30

To block Biden, Trump targets vote certification in late bid

Washington: Getting nowhere in the courts, President Donald Trump's scattershot effort to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory is shifting toward obscure election boards that certify the vote as Trump and his allies seek to upend the electoral process, sow chaos and perpetuate unsubstantiated doubts about the count.

The battle is centered in the battleground states that sealed Biden's win.

In Michigan, two Republican election officials in the state's largest county initially refused to certify results despite no evidence of fraud, then backtracked and voted to certify and then on Wednesday flipped again and said they "remain opposed to certification."

Some Republicans have called on the GOP statewide canvassers to do the same.

In Arizona, officials are balking at signing off on vote tallies in a rural county.

The moves don't reflect a coordinated effort across the battleground states that broke for Biden, local election officials said. Instead, they seem to be inspired by Trump's incendiary rhetoric about baseless fraud and driven by Republican acquiescence to broadsides against the nation's electoral system as state and federal courts push aside legal challenges filed by Trump and his allies.

Still, what happened in Wayne County, Michigan, on Tuesday and Wednesday was a jarring reminder of the disruptions that can still be caused as the nation works through the process of affirming the outcome of the Nov. 3 election.

There is no precedent for the Trump team's widespread effort to delay or undermine certification, according to University of Kentucky law professor Joshua Douglas.

"It would be the end of democracy as we know it,"

Douglas said. "This is just not a thing that can happen."

Certifying results is a routine yet important step after local election officials have tallied votes, reviewed procedures, checked to ensure votes were counted correctly and investigated discrepancies. Typically, this certification is done by a local board of elections and then, later, the results are certified at the state level.

But as Trump has refused to concede to Biden and continues to spread false claims of victory, this mundane process is taking on new significance.

Among key battleground states, counties in Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin have all made it through the initial step of certifying results. Except for Wayne County, this process has largely been smooth. Arizona, Pennsylvania and Georgia still haven't concluded their local certifications. Then all eyes turn to statewide certification. **AP**

China says 'Five Eyes' should face reality on Hong Kong

Beijing: China on Thursday rejected the latest attack on its Hong Kong policy by the US and several of its allies, saying they "should face up to the reality" that the former British colony has been returned to China.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian was responding to a statement on Hong Kong issued by the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which together make up an intelligence partnership known as the Five Eyes.

"No matter if they have five eyes or 10 eyes, if they dare to harm China's sovereignty, security and development interests, they should beware of their eyes being poked and blinded," he said at a daily briefing.

The foreign ministers of the five nations said that a new Chinese government resolution that led to the disqualification of four pro-democracy lawmakers in Hong Kong appears

to be "part of a concerted campaign to silence all critical voices."

The joint statement called the resolution a breach of China's international obligations and its commitment to grant Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy and freedom of speech.

Hong Kong, a city of 7.5 million people, was promised autonomy over local affairs for 50 years after its return to China in 1997.

Zhao said Hong Kong is an inalienable part of China and that public officials must "be loyal to the motherland. This is a basic political ethic in every country in the world, right?"

The four disqualified lawmakers were earlier barred from running for reelection because of their calls for foreign governments to impose sanctions on China and Hong Kong. They had remained in office because elections were postponed for one year. **AP**

US House passes bipartisan resolution on Tibet

Washington: A bipartisan resolution recognising the cultural and religious significance of an autonomous Tibet and seeking peaceful solutions to the conflict has been passed by the US House of Representatives.

The resolution recognised the significance of the genuine autonomy of Tibet and the Tibetan people, and the work done by 14th Dalai Lama to promote global peace, harmony and understanding.

Passed by a voice vote, the resolution determined that it would be beneficial to convene a bipartisan, bicameral forum, either through a Joint Meeting

of Congress, a teleconference broadcast at the Capitol Visitor Center, or roundtable, between Members of Congress and His Holiness the Dalai Lama to discuss peaceful solutions to international conflicts.

It also noted that there is overwhelming bipartisan Congressional support for the Tibetan people's aspirations for internationally recognised human rights and freedoms and the protection of their distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and national identity.

The resolution said there are over 6,000,000 Tibetans in the world, spanning over 40

countries.

"Honoured to see the House unanimously passed my resolution recognising the genuine autonomy of Tibet and celebrating the work the Dalai Lama has accomplished. The US must continue to work with allies to secure freedom from oppression for the Tibetan people," Congressman Ted Yoho said.

Speaking on the floor of the House, Congressman Eliot Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, accused China of violation of international religious freedom in Tibet. **PTI**

Report finds Aus troops unlawfully killed 39 Afghans

Wellington: A shocking Australian military report into war crimes has found evidence that elite Australian troops unlawfully killed 39 Afghan prisoners, farmers and civilians.

Australian Defence Force Chief Gen. Angus Campbell said Thursday the shameful record included alleged instances in which new patrol members would shoot a prisoner in order to achieve their first kill in a practice known as "bleeding."

He said the soldiers would then plant weapons and radios to support false claims the prisoners were enemies killed in action.

Campbell said the illegal killings began in 2009, with the majority occurring in 2012 and 2013. He said some in the Special Air Service encouraged "a self-centered, warrior culture." He said the report recommended 19 soldiers be



investigated by police for possible charges, including murder.

The chief was announcing the findings of a four-year investigation by Paul Breton, a judge who was asked to look into the allegations and interviewed more than 400 witnesses and reviewed thousands of pages of documents. **AP**

Obama's newly-released memoir breaks first-day sales record

Washington: Around 887,000 units were sold in the US and Canada, which includes pre-order sales and first-day sales, CNN reported citing Penguin Random House. The publisher said this sale represented "the largest first-day sales total for any book ever published" by the company.

Another publisher said Obama's new book will be a book of "rare consequence" and will do good business, at par with the likes of the Harry Potter series.

"This will be a book of rare consequence. That it will sell as no other book has done since July 21, 2007 — when Harry Potter and the

Deathly Hallows came out, is immensely cheering to book-sellers," said Barnes & Noble CEO James Daunt, CNN quoted.

Prior to the opening day, Obama had asked his followers on Twitter to read his memoir to get an insight on events and people that shaped him during his early years.

"My memoir, A Promised Land, is out today. I hope you'll read it. My goal was to give you some insight into the events and people that shaped me during the early years of my presidency. Most of all, I hope it inspires you to see yourself playing a role in shaping a better world," Obama tweeted on Tuesday.

US names first ambassador in decade to Venezuela amid tensions

Caracas (Venezuela): Washington has its first ambassador to Venezuela in a decade despite the US having no diplomats at its Caracas embassy amid a breakdown in relations.

James Story's nomination as ambassador to Venezuela was confirmed on Wednesday by a US Senate voice vote. The South Carolina native takes the job that he will carry out from the capital of neighbouring Colombia as Venezuela endures a historic economic and political crisis.

Story, 50, will likely be at the centre of helping guide US policy on Venezuela during the transition of President-elect Joe Biden. Relations have had a long, rocky past that

include President Donald Trump's administration winning an indictment against Venezuelan Nicolas Maduro as an alleged narcotics terrorist.

Biden's win has sparked debate among those who back Trump's hard-line approach against Maduro and others who say it is time for a new approach. The critics say heavy sanctions have failed to remove Maduro from power while making life harder on millions of Venezuelans.

The US and Venezuela haven't exchanged ambassadors since 2010, when relations first started to fray under the late President Hugo Chávez. The two nations totally broke diplomatic ties last year, each with-

drawing its diplomats shortly after Washington backed Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the country's legitimate leader.

The US leads a coalition of dozens of nations that rejected Maduro following his election in 2018 to a second term in a vote widely considered fraudulent because the most popular opposition leaders were banned from running.

The US has since heavily sanctioned Maduro, his inner circle and the state-run oil firm, attempting to isolate them. The Trump administration offered a \$15 million bounty for Maduro's arrest after a US court indicted him on drug charges. **AP**

FROM PAGE 1

CM YOGI LAUDS LU FOR WORKING TOWARDS AATMANIRBHAR BHARATA

are not aware of government schemes," he added. Yogi said his main concern when he took charge was how he would be able to create jobs, and so he carried out mapping of all the districts and realised that UP had immense opportunities.

"In 1947, UP's per capita income was more than that of the country, and it has come down to one-third now. In such a situation, the youth are bound to migrate in search of work. The educational institutes should take ODOP forward with the help of new technologies," he said.

Yogi said that the country has been able to fight coronavirus because of technology. "PM Modi's vision for opening 'Jan Dhan' accounts in 2014 should be lauded and that is how the money reached the general public in a transparent manner in Covid-19 times," he added.

4 JEM FIDAYEEN SHOT, MAJOR ATTACK FOILED

He said, "We were receiving regular inputs about the possibility of infiltration by a group of terrorists from across the border to smuggle arms and ammunition ahead of the DDC polls in Jammu & Kashmir.

"In order to prevent them from disturbing peace in the region, we had also beefed up and alerted our security checkpoints along the Jammu Srinagar National Highway to prevent any terror strike," the DGP added.

Soon after the encounter was called off, a team of officers from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) visited the site near Ban Toll Plaza. The team members interacted with some of the officers present during the operation and gathered feedback.

The forensic samples were also lifted by the different teams before the traffic was allowed to ply on the busy highway. The NIA is expected to take over the probe in the case only after the receipt of a formal order.

Terror revisited the spot after a gap of more than nine long months. Earlier, three JeM terrorists too were neutralised during a gunfight at the same location on January 31, 2020.

Vehicular traffic on the busy highway remained disrupted for over six hours. The commuters were allowed to ply vehicles only after the security forces completed the routine drill of sanitising the encounter site past 11 am.

Addressing a Press conference here at the police control room in Jammu, Inspector General of Police Jammu range Mukesh Singh said, "The group of terrorists were pushed inside the Indian territory ahead of the DDC polls to carry out some bigger plans".

Sharing details of the successful operation Singh said at about 5 am during checking at Ban Toll Plaza a truck bearing No. JK01AL-1055 was checked during which the driver tried to flee away and the terrorists hidden in the truck opened fire on the police party.

The IG said the group of terrorists may have infiltrated via the International Border.

According to the official sources, the truck had passed through a toll plaza in Samba district around 3.44 am before reaching Ban Toll Plaza. Preliminary investigations have so far revealed that the registration number JK01AL 1055 was also fake.

The same registration number was registered in the name of a goods carrier (Mahindra and Mahindra) in the office of RTO, Srinagar.

Meanwhile, Jammu & Kashmir Police has registered an FIR no. 426/2020/U/S 307,120b, 121,122,123 7/25/27 Arms Act 16/18 ULA at PS Nagrota ahead of initiating probe in the case.

Official sources said, "Due to the strong anti-infiltration grid established by the Indian security forces, Pakistan is unable to infiltrate terrorists and weapons into the Valley to increase violence levels".

They said, "Pakistan ISI has been given an ultimatum to push in maximum infiltrators along with weapons into Kashmir before onset of winters, when the undergrowth/bushes in most infiltration prone areas will die down due to dew and snow-fall".

"Pakistan based terrorist Group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) is based at Bahawalpur in Pakistan and is exploiting the International Boundary area in Punjab-Jammu sector to push in maximum terrorists," official sources said.

CBI CAN'T PROBE SANS STATE GOVT'S CONSENT, RULES SC

Two State officials were also found to be involved in the case. The officials had argued that the general consent given by the State Government was not enough and separate permission was required if they were to be investigated.

The Allahabad High Court had noted that the Uttar Pradesh Government had retroactively granted consent against the two Government officials, who were later named in a charge-sheet, and that was sufficient.

Confirming the High Court order, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said, "In the result, we find no reason to interfere with the finding of the High Court with regard to not obtaining prior consent of the State Government."

Several Opposition-ruled States have withdrawn general consent to the CBI to investigate cases, alleging that the BJP-led Government at the Centre is misusing the agency to harass political opponents.

The move means the CBI cannot carry out investigations in these States without seeking permission every time.

BIHAR EDU MINISTER RESIGNS OVER GRAFT CHARGE, CLAIMS INNOCENCE

Chaudhary had been named in an FIR lodged in 2017 pertaining to alleged irregularities in appointment of assistant teachers and junior scientists at the Bihar Agriculture University in Bhagalpur district.

Known to be close to the JD(U) boss, he was appointed as the VC when the varsity was established in 2010 and five years later, following expiry of his tenure, got elected from Tarapur Assembly seat on a party ticket which he retained in the recently held elections.

Chaudhary was also asked about stinging criticism by former Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who was then in the opposition and had strongly demanded action against the Tarapur MLA in connection with the corruption case.

"I think he was misled by some people," said Chaudhary about his mentor's trusted lieutenant Sushil Kumar Modi who has been replaced by two lesser known BJP leaders Tar Kishore Prasad and Renu Devi.

He expressed anguish over suspicions being raised in some quarters over the death of his wife Neeta who succumbed to injuries sustained in a gas cylinder explosion last year.

"I am going to send legal notices to those who are spreading canards against me. I will seek damages worth Rs 50 crore," he fumed.

Chaudhary's wife had represented Tarapur in 2010-15.

After he retained the seat for the second consecutive term, he was sworn in as a member of the cabinet on Monday and allocated the education portfolio a day later.

TV footage of Chaudhary's official residence showed hundreds of bouquets and sweet packets lying in the forecourt, with only a handful of supporters roaming about desultorily.

Meanwhile, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, who had been targeting the newly installed Government over Chaudhary's induction, came out with angry tweets over the 'isteefe ka naatak' (the drama enacted around the resignation).

"Respected Chief Minister, we have the people's mandate to keep you on your toes...just one resignation is not enough. We shall be taking on you over issues like 19 lakh jobs and pay parity for contractual workers. Jai Bihar, Jai Hind," Yadav tweeted in Hindi.

"Had I not said that you have become tired and, therefore, lost your power of judgement? You got a corrupt man appointed as minister, allowed him to take charge despite so much of condemnation and then got a drama enacted around his resignation. You are the real culprit...you will no longer be allowed to get away with your duplicity," Yadav said in a series of tweets.

JD(U) MLC and spokesperson Neeraj Kumar, who was a Minister in the previous Government, however, said Chaudhary's resignation was "yet another proof of Nitish Kumar's zero tolerance for corruption".

"I would now like RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav to take a leaf out of our leader's book. He and his family are neck deep in corruption cases. Hence, he must not remain the leader of the Opposition," the JD(U) leader said.

BRICS' NDB TO LOAN \$500 MN FOR RRTS

Civil construction work on the project is in full swing over a 50km stretch between Sahibabad in Ghaziabad and Shatabdipuram in Meerut. The 17-km long priority section between Sahibabad and Duhai is scheduled to commence operations in 2023 and the entire corridor will be operational in 2025. Three corridors are enlisted in the first phase - Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, Delhi-Gurugram-Alwar and Delhi-Panipat. They will converge at Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi and will be interoperable.

The RRTS stations will be seamlessly integrated with nearby transport modes such as Metro Stations, ISBTs, railway stations, and airports. This clean and green rail-based system will set a benchmark for similar future projects. Lack of efficient options for public transport and rapid growth in vehicle traffic have made the National Capital Region one of the most polluted regions in the world. By 2030, NCR is projected to be the most populous urban areas in the world, which will increase pressure on housing, water supply, electricity and transport facilities.

Notably, Indian consumers have mostly stayed away from purchasing China-made products this festive season. According to a LocalCircles survey, 71 per cent of local consumers did not purchase goods that carried a 'Made in China' tag.

Now, pay ₹2K for not wearing mask in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of surge in coronavirus cases in the national Capital, the AAP Government braced itself for the occasion and on Thursday it announced several measures, including a steep ₹2,000 fine for not wearing masks, reservation of 80 per cent ICU beds in private hospitals, doubling testing centres in every district and postponement of non-critical surgeries at health facilities.

In the all-party meeting held on Thursday, all political parties have agreed to collectively serve the people of Delhi keeping their political differences aside, said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Private hospitals have also been directed to increase the percentage of non-ICU Covid-19 beds from 50 per cent to 60 per cent. The Government will increase the number of RT-PCR test to 27,000 a day in Delhi and MBBS students and interns will be engaged to tackle the Covid-19 situation.

Addressing an online media briefing, Kejriwal said the fine for not wearing masks has been raised from ₹500 to ₹2,000. The hard line by the

AAP Government comes days after Kejriwal repeatedly appealed to Delhiites to wear masks amid a surge in coronavirus cases.

He announced the slew of measures after meeting Lt-Governor Anil Baijal and apprising him of the decisions taken by the AAP Government. He also appealed to political, social and religious organisations to distribute masks among people saying masks very much reduce the chances of coronavirus infection.

Arrangements are being made for over 1,400 ICU beds, including 663 in Delhi Government hospitals and 750 at a Central Government facility, Kejriwal said, adding 7,500 normal and 446 ICU beds are currently available for Covid-19 patients in Delhi.

"From today we have implemented the decision to reserve 80 per cent ICU beds in all private hospitals for Covid-19 patients. It will increase ICU bed availability by 300-400 for coronavirus patients in Delhi hospitals," he said.

The percentage of normal, non-ICU beds reserved in private hospitals for corona patients, are being increased

from 50 per cent to 60 per cent till the peak of the pandemic is there, he said. Hospitals have also been asked to postpone non-critical planned surgeries for the time being, he added.

The national Capital has witnessed a spurt in coronavirus cases since October 28, when the daily rise breached the 5,000-mark for the first time, and it crossed the 8,000-mark on November 11. On Wednesday, the infection tally in Delhi rose to over 5 lakh with 7,486 fresh cases reported, while 131 new fatalities, the highest single-day death count till date, took the toll to 7,943.

According to Kejriwal, he received assurance of cooperation from various political parties at an all-party meeting on the Covid-19 situation in Delhi. He said that he urged them to distribute face masks to save people from the infection.

After the meeting, ruling AAP MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj said the Delhi Government will increase the number of RTPCR tests conducted daily from around 18,000 to 27,000 and the Chief Minister will also meet market associations if any decision is taken on shutting down markets.

Maha deaths shoot up to 154

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A major cause for concern, the Covid-19 deaths shot up 154 in Maharashtra on Thursday, while the infections went up marginally to 5,535 in the state.

A day after Maharashtra logged 100 deaths and 5,011 infections, the deaths rose more than 50 per cent, while the infections rose by 524.

With 154 fresh infections, the Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra mounted from 46,202 to 46,356. Similarly, with 5535 fresh infections, the total infected cases jumped from 17,57,520 to 17,63,055.

As 5860 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 16,35,971 The recovery rate in the state rose marginally

from 92.75 per cent to 92.79 per cent.

Of the 154 deaths reported, Solapur accounted for a maximum of 25 deaths, followed by 17 deaths each in Thane and Palghar, 12 each in Mumbai and Satara, and 11 deaths in Pune.

In the lower range, there were 8 deaths in Nashik, 7 in Nagpur, 6 in Amravati, 5 in Chandrapur, 4 each in Nandurbar and Nanded, 3 each in Jalgaon, Aurangabad and Yavatmal, 2 each in Ahmednagar, Kolhapur, Sangli, Sindhudurg, Latur, Akola and one death each in Osmanabad, Beed, Washim and Bhandara. In addition, one from outside the state died in Maharashtra.

With 12 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai climbed from 10,615 to 10,627, while the infected cases rose by 924 to trigger a jump in the infections in the metropolis from 271,531 to 272,455.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases rose from 80,221 to 79,738.. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.63 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,43,213 to 3,44,002, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7195 to 7206.

Thane district remained in the third spot - after Pune and Mumbai - after the total number of infections rose from 2,32,411 to 2,33,169, while the pandemic toll climbed from 5406 to 5423. Currently, 5,60,868 people are in home quarantine while 4284 people are in institutional quarantine.

In a related development, out of 99,65,119 samples sent to laboratories, 17,63,055 have tested positive (17.69cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday.

Trend Slazer

'I repeat my clothes and shoes'

Actor **SUSHMITA SEN** says she cannot live with the idea of spending big amounts of money on clothes or shoes just to be photographed once in it, and that is why she likes to repeat what she wears.



"As many have come to see the way I dress, I am hardly conscious about the fashion critics while picking my outfits. Whether it is with heels or clothing, comfort is my top priority," Sushmita said. After her appearance in the 2015 Bengali film *Nirbaak*, Sushmita made a comeback earlier this year in the web series *Aarya*. At the moment, she is judging a digital reality fashion show.

'It was my love for cinema that made me enter this field. I wanted to do something different and make a difference in the way costumes were seen in films. I introduced the concept of styling and look. It's been a non-stop journey of 30 years and I am still working. Isn't it the most defining moment of my career?'



—Manish Malhotra



AMITABH BACHCHAN has shared his wisdom about acting on his latest post on Instagram.

In a picture, Big B posted, he looks dapper in formal suit and points at his figure that is dressed as a politician in Khadi Nehru jacket, matching Khadi cap and a deep pink kurta. "An actor is a fool for god. Stop explaining yourself. Shut up and act," he wrote.

He will next be seen in Nagraj Manjule's *Jhund*, the Emraan Hashmi co-starrer *Chehre* and Ayan Mukerji's *Brahmastra*, starring Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt.

Jason finds yoga the 'hardest thing'

Actor **JASON MOMOA** is always in great shape thanks to his fitness regime. But yoga, he says, is the hardest thing he has ever tried.

The *Aquaman* star recalled how he has been staying active during the past few months amid the pandemic, and how he tried practicing yoga with his wife Lisa Bonet. "So I tried yoga the other day, and it was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," Momoa said. "I'd rather squat a car. Climbing El Capitan would be easier than doing two hours of yoga. I can't bend over anymore! My hamstrings are so tight. It's pathetic," the 41-year-old joked.



LET'S REBUILD BETTER

School closures, isolation and a lack of face-to-face interaction have deprived kids of quality education and necessary exposure. On World Child Rights Day, we analyse how the rights of children can be safeguarded amid the pandemic

As people rebuild their lives post-lockdown, they face new realities and feel the need to change their ways and means. The arena of the development sector is no different. In particular, the pandemic has brought to the forefront the challenges of protecting and upholding the well-being of children, young people, their families and communities, especially those marginalised, worldwide. Millions have been rendered homeless and without a livelihood. The health and safety of their children are endangered. A long-term adverse impact on children's health, development and overall well-being are inevitable.

Children without parental care or those at the risk of losing one are among the most vulnerable. It is perhaps debatable whether the virus per se affects children as severely as adults, but it is certain that children are adversely impacted by containment measures. School closures and isolation have meant that they are deprived of quality education, face to face interaction and playtime with other kids and social connect at large. While this phase might be an aberration to most adults, it is, however, rather disruptive for children, who are in their formative years, denying them opportunities for physical, intellectual and emotional well-being and development. Their survival, developmental, protection and participation rights are at stake. All children's rights must be protected, promoted and taken into consideration in response to the

COVID-19 outbreak and its aftermath.

Among the most vulnerable children, who get left out in the developmental agenda are 'children without parental care'. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) mandates that every child has a right to a family and that 'children have the best chance of developing their full potential in a family environment'. Family-like alternative care for 'children without parental care' where the best interests of a child are the primary consideration, upholds and protects the principles of non-discrimination as well as their rights.

Therefore, more developmental efforts must be channelled to the welfare of such children as well as those who are at the risk of losing it. It is critical to ensure that the child protection initiatives are geared to prevent unnecessary family separation. This can be done by providing social protection services that support the income of families and their well-being. Such services can include: Implementing or augmenting cash transfer programmes, improving access to health, disability services, housing during and after the outbreak, directly delivering food, hygiene items and kits, enhancing connectivity access for remote education to bridge the digital divide, to provide parenting support and expanding access to mental health and psychosocial support to address the consequences of isolation on children and their families.



COVID-19 SHOULD NEVER BE USED AS A REASON OR AN EXCUSE TO NEGLECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY THE MOST VULNERABLE

In the case of children, who are separated from their families and are now without the parental care, we should guarantee good quality alternative care. It is all about building a safe environment — a place kids without parental care can call 'home', where they grow to achieve their true potential.

Also, we must not forget social workers who are at the forefront of containing and mitigating the impact of the pandemic on our children and their families. No resources should be spared to ensure the well-being, health, protection, training, preparedness and labor rights of social workers so that they can continue making their invaluable contributions.

COVID-19 should never be used as a reason or an excuse to regress or neglect the rights of all children, especially those most vulnerable. Promoting and protecting child rights is a moral obligation. We, the civil society, the government, the private sector as well as the communities need to come together to help every child build a future, support every family and strengthen our society as a whole. Reflecting on how to bring our lives back to gear after the pandemic and to build back a better world, we cannot help but think about how we must stand together stronger at these unprecedented times. The time to act is now.

(The author Sumanta Kar is the Senior Deputy National Director, SOS Children's Villages of India.)

Aditya explores various genres

Actor Aditya Roy Kapur who has completed 11 years in the industry this year is humbled because of the appreciation he has received for his role in the dark comedy — *Ludo*.

The actor portrayed the role of Akash Chauhan with an on point comic timing. Director Anurag Basu also needs to be applauded for exploring this new side of Aditya. Romancing co-star Sanya Malhotra for the very first time, it's a delight to watch their fresh chemistry on screen.



'It's really heartwarming to see so much love coming my way. It's always nice to see your hard work being appreciated. I hope to continue entertaining the audience with my next film'

What's interesting is that over a span of time, fans saw Aditya exploring different shades with each filmmaker that he has paired up with. While Mohit Suri's *Malang* established him as the new deadly action hero, its now with Anurag's *Ludo* that the audience has seen his comic avatar. In one of the portions where he's seen doing a mimicry of megastar Amitabh Bachchan, the actor has earned himself immense praise and made the sequence go viral on social media.

Humbled with all the rave reviews and love coming in, Aditya said, "It's really heartwarming to see so much love coming my way. It's nice to see your hard work being appreciated and I hope to continue doing so with my next film as well."

Being hailed by the audience as a versatile actor, he adds, "It's been a good year because of the kind of response *Malang* received and now *Ludo*. Bringing different genres to the audience is really fulfilling and exciting as an actor. I am really thankful to everyone for giving my character so much love and appreciation."

The film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Anurag Basu, Divya Khosla Kumar, Taani Somarita Basu and Krishan Kumar.

Puppy love

The BMW X3M is very effective in turning a frown upside down



KUSHAN MITRA



because speeding fines are petty change. You buy a BMW X3M because you want to understand how automotive engineering has developed to the point where you can stick a stonking big engine, in this case a 3-litre six-cylinder engine producing 480 horsepower, into a Sports Utility Vehicle (or Sports Activity Vehicle as BMW calls it) and still make it handle like a sedan.

The BMW X3M is no ordinary, it is a bonkers car. But you forget that you are in a two-ton SUV when you drive this car because you see the numbers on the heads-up display blur. You are at the urban speed limit in a few seconds and your eyes are scan-

ning overhead gantries for speed cameras. You see a corner or a sweeping turn and think you should dab the brakes but you don't need to as the tires hold onto the road even as they turn at speeds that should not be possible. Your brain thinks 'Seriously? How can a car do this?' And you smile, the widest smile you have in a long time, particularly in a year where everything else seems to have gone wrong. Although BMW has hardcoded speed alarms into the system. And once you stop you are awed at how far the Germans have gotten in developing cars that physics doesn't seem to matter anymore.

What genuinely surprises me about this X3M is the pricing, a standard X3 30i costs ₹60 lakh, this X3M which is an import and has all sorts of 'M' things such as the differential, costs just under a crore. Yes, it is expensive but not much when you consider what you get. It is not something that just takes you from point A to B and shows the world that you've done well. It is something that is an incredible feat of engineering and makes sense at various levels.

FOR A SWEET TOOTH

Chef DAVID EDWARD RAJ suggests how plant-based sweeteners can replace the traditional options to address the sugar cravings of diabetics

India is one of the largely infected countries by a disease other than the Coronavirus — diabetes. It has been here for the longest of time, and little or no attention has been paid to it unless it turns into a question of life or death. However, multiple efforts have been taken to educate the masses on limiting sugar intake. As a result, people are getting increasingly conscious about eating habits and are inclined towards reducing their intakes. In recent times, people have realised the fatality of consuming ample amount sugar and sugar-infused food products.

Sugar is an unavoidable part of our daily diet, however, could be highly dangerous too. To name a few of the side effects — cancer, diabetes, obesity, heart sickness, etc. As a result, we are witnessing a rise in people looking for alternatives for sugar, especially during the festive season where sweets

play a prominent role on the table. So why not add some sweetening elements through natural ingredients? They bring in the required taste and at the same time, keep the health in check. Following are some of the plant-based sweeteners that are the best replacements of refined sugar.

COCONUT & PALM SUGAR

Even though sugar is usually extracted from sugarcane, which is also plant-based, but the only difference is that normal sugar is refined and hence, unhealthy. Hence, coconut and palm sugar are healthier options to choose from. For example, if one uses jaggery or coconut sugar to prepare *Kheer*, the taste will not be compromised rather would make the dish full of nourishment and will be very rich in flavour. Coconut *laddoos* made with coconut sugar are also delicious and at the same time, nutri-



tious. We just need to avoid eating regular sweets and replace them with coconut laddoos made with millet and ragi flour, blended with cashew nuts and almonds. It tastes really good and at the same time, the health factor is kept in check. They add nutrients to the food and have low glycemic index. Hence, coconut sugar is considered to be one of the best options for diabetes.

DATES

Dates are rich in dietary fibre as well as minerals like calcium, magnesium and potassium. It is one of the best substitutes for refined sugar. This can be used in desserts and other dishes as a date syrup and satisfy the sugar cravings for a diabetic person, providing the necessary nutrition.

BANANAS

The fruit is a good source of vitamins B6 and C and is rich in fibre and potassium. Due to its delicate taste, it's an ideal natural sweetener.

JAGGERY

When it comes to replacement of white sugar, a lot of options are available in the

market. For example, we all use jaggery at home and it is one resource, which is the most commonly-used alternative for sugar.

STEVIA

Last, but not the least, is stevia, a plant-based sweetener. A pinch of it can fulfill the requirement for a teaspoon of refined sugar. It is one of the most commonly-used replacement for diabetics to maintain their sugar level without hindering the taste.

HEALTHY DESSERTS

First, the Honey coconut pudding with chia seeds topped with berry — sugar less. Second, an Avocado chocolate mousse is a go-to healthy but delicious dessert. Another is the Honey, raisin and carrot cake — the name itself sounds perfect, isn't it?

When it comes to satisfying the sweet tooth, we mostly think of the traditional sweets. However, with people wanting to bring a change in their lives by adopting healthier-eating practices after the current pandemic, changing the way we consume sweets should be the priority.

(The writer is director, culinary development & innovation, Elhor India.)

R E C I P E S

CARROT CORN PANCAKE



WHAT YOU NEED

- Carrot (peeled and grated): 1 cup
- Corn (blanched): ¾ cup
- Whole wheat flour: 1 cup
- Onions (finely chopped): 1/3 cup

- Sandwich spread: 5 tbsp
- Coriander (finely chopped): ¼ cup
- Yogurt (whisked): 1/3 cup
- Eggs: 3
- Baking powder: 1 tbsp

- Baking soda: ¼ tbsp
- Green chillies (finely chopped): ½ tbsp
- Butter as required
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- In a large bowl, add eggs, yogurt and sandwich spread. Mix well. Add carrots, onions, chillies, corn and season with salt and pepper. Mix it well again.
- In another bowl, add flour, baking soda and baking powder. Blend it.
- Then put the dry flour mixture to the veggie-spread mixture. Mix to form a thick pancake

batter. The batter should be of thick creamy consistency. Add coriander leaves and mix well.

- Heat flat griddle or pan. Grease it with little butter.
- Pour a ladle full of pan cake batter and cook for a couple of minutes.
- Gently flip to cook on the other side for another two to three minutes. Take the pancake off the heat. Repeat the same for the rest of the batter.
- Serve hot with Del Monte mint mayonnaise along the side.

Courtesy: Del Monte.

PAD THAI NOODLE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Pad Thai sauce
- Pad Thai noodles
- Oil
- Protein
- Veggies (fresh bean sprouts and shredded carrots)
- Garlic
- Green onions
- Eggs
- Toppings (chopped peanuts, fresh lime wedge, extra crushed red chilli flakes)
- Warm water: 30 ml

METHOD

- In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook flat noodles until



cooked and then drain.

- In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, brown sugar, fish sauce, soy sauce and cayenne

pepper. Set aside.

- In a large non-stick pan over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add ginger garlic paste and cook until fragrant. Then add bell pepper, red cabbage, pok choy and cook until it gets tender for about four minutes.
- Add soy sauce, vinegar, chili sauce, sweet chilli and mix it well until coated. Then season it with salt and pepper.
- Add cooked noodles and toss until combined. Pour in the lime juice and toss until the noodles are coated.
- Garnish with green onions and roasted peanuts before serving.

Courtesy: Atul Vashistha, Pablo, The Food Cartel.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

The struggle of the LGBTQ+ people, especially children, needs more attention from the world to bring an effective change, says RUCHA SATOOR

Joe Biden, the newly elected President of the USA had vowed to enact the Equality Act in his first 100 days of commencing the office. The said Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protection for LGBTQ+ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, federally funded programmes and jury service. In India, after decriminalising homosexuality in 2018, the legality of same-sex marriage is now being raised in our courts. The LGBTQ+ rights across the world are slowly being recognised. However, the

struggle of the LGBTQ+ people, especially children, needs more attention from the world to bring an effective change.

In this regard, Raj Jaiswal, a 17-year-old, was interviewed over the phone because of COVID-19. When asked if they are comfortable sharing their story, a determined, mature and assertive voice from the other end of the phone said, "My story needs to be heard, so that the society starts growing out of its boxed mentality."

Raj lives in Mumbai's Goregaon and belongs to a low-income family.

While his mother is a homemaker, their father works for a food delivery application. With three younger siblings who are still in school, Raj is the eldest. Financially, things are stretched at home and the family struggles to make ends meet.

While sharing his story, Raj said, "When I was younger, being myself was much easier. When I turned eight, my parents could tell that I was behaving 'like a girl'. I liked dressing up, which they didn't like. My relationship with my parents got strained once they started fitting me into boxes. For them, their

eldest son wasn't being 'normal'. Things slipped out of hands with frequent fights. Quite early in life, I realised that a soul cannot be changed."

He faced frequent bullying by their peers and violence at home as they did not fit into the gender binary. Burdened with questions about why he was considered 'different' as a child, he chose to live a life of dignity and self-acceptance very young. "I realised that I need to stand up for myself as only then can I have a dialogue with society about changing their minds," he said.

In 2019, a Child Rights organisation

called PratYek invited him and several other children for a session. "I learnt about what child rights are, what is their history. I used to meet a didi who was a counselor and she listened to all my concerns patiently. She helped me get familiar with the term 'LGBTQ+' and I realised this wasn't my 'problem.' It is the society that needs to change! But rights do come with responsibilities, so I decided to take the conversation around queer rights to my community, where people are not even educated," explained Raj.

Today, he is a part of Young

Advocates for Social Harmony (YASH), a community-based initiative of PratYek's which is led by children. By giving them a common platform, the programme cultivates active citizens of today while supplementing their educational and developmental rights. They organise sessions on understanding gender for other children and adults in the community. Raj is also an active member of International forum for Child Rights and motivates children in the community to participate in child-led advocacy and campaigns.

"Haq hain, ladhma hain, ladhma

hain," said Raj with determination in an otherwise composed voice. "As young adults, we're fighting for ensuring that nine per cent of the country's budget is allotted for children's needs." Today, he is leading the fight for ending violence against children.

Preethi Mutha, the programme manager for organisation's Maharashtra office, shared, "Even after facing difficulties, I admire how Raj continues to have conversation in a community where no one is familiar with what being a member of LGBTQ+ community means for a child. Sharing small houses with siblings and parents doesn't allow you any privacy or a safe space that other children growing up in middle class households have. It's difficult. Yet, he continues to have difficult conversations with neighbours, teachers and friends."

He has found a larger support system in his friends who are also a part of the YASH programme.

Once his mother had a conversation with Raj's friends about his behavior. She asked them to tell him to act normally. The friends, in turn, asked his mother to really start accepting her child. "In the transgender community, there is no caste, religion or gender. It is a space to be yourself," believes Raj.

COVID-19 has posed several challenges for seeking education and Raj is currently looking for part-time employment to supplement their family's income.

—Charkha Features



India will feel extra pressure without Kohli in Tests: Ponting

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India will “not be clear in their own mind” about their batting order after the departure of talismanic captain Virat Kohli at the end of first Test Down Under, feels Australian great Ricky Ponting.

The 32-year-old Kohli has been granted paternity leave by the BCCI to be with his wife for the birth of their first child. “India will feel that without Kohli there (for three Tests), for his batting and leadership, that’ll put all sorts of pressure on different players,” Ponting was quoted as saying by *cricket.Com.Au*.

“You’d think (Ajinkya) Rahane will take over the captaincy, which will put extra pressure on him, and they’ve got to find someone to bat at that really important No 4 spot. “I don’t think they’ll be clear in their own mind, even now, what their batting order will look like for the first Test. Who’s going to open, who’ll bat at four when Kohli goes?” Ponting added.

The Indian bowling attack will comprise Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami in lead roles. The tourists will call on Ishant Sharma if he recovers from the side injury sustained at the IPL while Umesh Yadav and Navdeep Saini are also part of India’s Test squad.

With so many options, Ponting feels India will have to answer more questions than the



Indian skipper Virat Kohli arrives at crease to bat during 4th Test against Australia at SCG in January 2019

cricket.com.au

hosts.

“The questions that are being asked around Australia with Pucovski and Green, I think India have got a few more questions to answer.

“Shami, Jasprit Bumrah — will it be Ishant, will it be Umesh Yadav, will it be a young guy like Saini or Siraj?”

“They’ve got a lot of ques-

tions to ask as well. And which spinner? They’ve got a few spinners in their squad and they’ve got to figure out which one to pick for the pink-ball game in Adelaide,” Ponting said.

India made history by winning their first Test series on Australian soil in the 2018-19 series. However, the hosts were

then without their star batsmen David Warner and Steve Smith, who were serving bans for their involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering incident.

“The one thing we haven’t spoken enough about is yes India were really good here last time, but with those guys (Smith and Warner) missing at the top of the order, that leaves

a big gap in any team,” Ponting said.

The 45-year-old backed incumbent opener Joe Burns to start ahead of the young Will Pucovski.

“Burns hasn’t done much wrong. If you go back to last summer, he played really well in the first Test in Brisbane and I remember saying then to lock him in and give him a good go at it for a while.

“We read a lot into what’s happened in the first few rounds of Shield cricket, and because they haven’t played a Test match for so long, a lot of people are forgetting what happened last summer.”

Pucovski is coming off back-to-back double hundreds in the Sheffield Shield and is in sensational form. His inclusion has set up a competition with Burns, who is feeling the heat after a disastrous start to the first-class summer.

“But I think that’s where this one becomes a unique one; Burns is about 30, and you’ve got a young guy who seems to be at the peak of his powers, who’s been touted as a very good player for Australia and has been for a few years.

“That’s where the decision is going to be a really tough one for them.”

Head coach Justin Langer and and skipper Tim Paine both have hinted at persisting with the experienced Burns at the top.

“I’m just reading the tea

Green’s ODI debut hinges on ability to bowl: Langer

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Cameron Green has earned the right to make his Test debut as a batsman but needs to make his case as an all-rounder for the ODIs against India starting November 27, said Australian coach Justin Langer.

Green, who can also bowl express pace, and Will Pucovski are among the five fresh faces in the Australian squad for the high-profile Test series against India, which will take place after three ODIs and as many T20s.

“In one-day cricket he’ll only play if he can bowl a few overs because that’s how we’ll set up the team. He hasn’t had the white-ball experience to come in as a pure batsman but



if he can bowl a few overs, my gosh he becomes a good prospect,” Langer was quoted as saying by *cricket.Com.Au*.

“But Test cricket is different. He’s earned the right to play Test cricket on his batting.

I love watching him bat. For such a tall batsman, he’s got so much time.”

Green has been rated highly by the likes of Greg Chappell, who called the 21-year-old the best batting talent he had seen since the great Ricky Ponting.

Green said he would gain a lot of experience from his debut series, whether he plays or not.

“The results I’ve had in four-day cricket are definitely a lot better than what I have shown in T20s. If I don’t play, I’ll get a lot of experience and hopefully take a lot out of it.

“There’s probably no better place to keep learning and evolving your game than around world-class coaches and players,” said Green.

Pujara gets into groove

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Cheteshwar Pujara, who has not played competitive cricket since March, had an extensive net session here on Thursday and looked comfortable facing the fast bowlers as he geared up for what promises to be a gruelling red-ball series against Australia.

Pujara batted both at the side nets and the centre strip where he faced Ishan Porel, Kartik Tyagi, who are with the team as net bowlers, Umesh Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin.

The BCCI posted a short video of Pujara’s net session on

social media.

The Indian team is allowed to train in its 14-day quarantine, having arrived here last week.

While most India players competed in the IPL, Test regulars Pujara and Hanuma Vihari joined the national team bubble in the UAE before reaching Australia.

Pujara, who last played the Ranji Trophy final, was instrumental in India’s historic win over Australia two years ago and his role at number three will be of immense value, especially after Virat Kohli’s departure following the first Test.

Proteas won’t take knee against Eng: Boucher

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

South African players won’t stake the knee in their limited over series against England at home as they have already expressed their support towards the *Black Lives Matter* movement during the 3TC game in July, coach Mark Boucher has said.

South Africa will appear in their first international assignment since the Covid-19-induced lockdown in March when they host England for three T20Is and as many ODIs, beginning on November 27 at Newlands.

South African players, match officials, administrators



SA pacer Lungi Ngidi

@OfficialCSA

3 SA cricketers isolated

Cape Town: Three players of the South African men’s cricket team have been placed under isolation after one of them tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the white-ball series against England, the country’s cricket board confirmed. Cricket South Africa though, did not disclose the names of the three players. **PTI**

and commentators, including director of cricket Graeme Smith, had taken the knee while wearing black arm-bands with the *BLM* logo on it at the 3TCricket match in Centurion for the Solidarity Cup on July 12.

“I have spoken to the guy (Lungi Ngidi) who was driving the whole movement within our set-up, he is pretty happy that we have done what we

needed to do, in particular at that (3TC) game,” Mark Boucher told *ESPNcricinfo*.

“It’s not something that we have to continue to show. It’s something that you have to live... If guys who brought it up are happy with it, that’s great, but if they feel we have to do more, that will be a chat and that they are open to express their opinions.”

SINGLES

ROHIT BEGINS FITNESS TRAINING AT NCA

BENGALURU: Australia-bound Rohit Sharma started his fitness training at the National Cricket Academy here on Thursday. Rohit is not part of India’s limited overers squad for the Australia tour but is in the revised Test squad after he played two IPL games for Mumbai Indians besides the final. Though Rohit said he was absolutely fine, the BCCI felt he needed more time to recover from his hamstring injury he had suffered during the IPL. Rohit’s fitness has become even more crucial since regular skipper Virat Kohli won’t be available after the first Test.

GAYLE, MALINGA PULL OUT OF LPL

COLOMBO: Chris Gayle and Lasith Malinga, two of T20 cricket’s biggest draws, have pulled out of the inaugural Lanka Premier League along with England pacer Liam Plunkett, dealing a huge blow to the tournament even before its take-off. While Gayle and Plunkett’s withdrawals were confirmed by their franchise Kandy Tuskers, Malinga pulled out citing “inadequate preparation time”, according to a report in *ESPNcricinfo*. England batsman Ravi Bopara, who was drafted into the Jaffna Stallions franchise, too has pulled out. He has confirmed to the franchise that he will not play.

PRAJNESH ADVANCES TO ORLANDO Q/F

ORLANDO: Prajnesh Gunneswaran reeled off seven games in a row before his opponent Tung-Lin Wu retired in the decider as the Indian player entered the quarterfinals of the Orlando Challenger event, here. The fourth seed Prajnesh was leading 5-7, 7-5, 2-0 when Wu opted out of the second round contest that had already spanned two hours 30 minutes. Prajnesh was trailing 5-7, 2-5 at one stage and the Taipei player was serving for the match but the Indian kept his nerves and forced a decider in the \$52,080 hard court tournament by winning the next seven games. He will now face Kazakhstan’s Dmitry Popko, ranked 172.

LAMICHHANE JOINS HOBART HURRICANES

HOBART: Nepal leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane will have a new Big Bash home this season as he has signed with the Hobart Hurricanes for the upcoming edition. The 20-year-old burst onto the radar of Australian fans when he made his BBL debut for the Melbourne Stars back in season 8. In his previous two seasons of BBL, he taken 26 wickets at an average of 19.80 in the 20 matches he’s played. “I am humbled and honoured to join the Hobart Hurricanes family for BBL 10. I have always got a lot of love and support in Australia, and the premium quality of competition in Big Bash is exciting. I can’t wait to play at the Blundstone Arena,” said Lamichhane.

BINDRA IS ADHM EVENT AMBASSADOR

NEW DELHI: India’s only individual Olympic Gold-medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra was on Thursday named event ambassador of the 16th Airtel Delhi Half Marathon scheduled to be held on November 29. “Today, the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon has motivated individuals, young and old, to adopt a healthy lifestyle, run for a cause and empower women to put their best foot forward. The spirit of the event energizes runners; instills faith. In spite of the challenges this year, the amateurs have the opportunity to participate from different parts of India but finish together in spirit through the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon Mobile App,” he said.

Agencies

We’ve charted a three-year plan under Kumble: Wadia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Frequently changing captains and coaches has hurt Kings XI Punjab in the past and that is why the franchise has decided to work on a three-year plan under Anil Kumble and K L Rahul to take the side forward, co-owner Ness Wadia has said.

It was a roller-coaster ride for KXIP this IPL. They lost six out of their first seven games before winning five in a row to storm back into play-off contention. The Rahul-led side needed to win its last league game against Chennai Super Kings to reach the top-four but it couldn’t.

Looking back at the recently-concluded season, Wadia said the umpiring error to call a short-run when it wasn’t, cost the team a play-off berth though it did not show the required consistency in the first year under captain and coach combine of Rahul and Kumble.

“It is a new captain, new team with a lot of fresh faces, sometimes it clicks and sometimes it doesn’t. The auction is coming up soon and we would be looking to plug the gaps in the middle-order and our bowling,” Wadia said.

“The international players did not perform to the expected level,” he said referring to the likes of Glenn Maxwell and Sheldon Cottrell, for whom KXIP paid big money at last year’s auction.

He also said that Chris Gayle,



Kings XI Punjab coach Anil Kumble

IPLT20

who was surprisingly not picked in the first half of the tournament, had done enough to be playing from game one next season.

“The team management did what it thought was best for the team. It is important to back experienced players and Gayle has demonstrated that he should play every game next season,” said the co-

owner.

Talking about the future under Kumble and Rahul, Wadia said: “We have a charted a three-year strategy with Anil. We revamped this season and finished sixth and lost (the play-off spot) only by one game.

“K L has been with us for three years and there was a reason why we went after him so aggressively. He has proved us right,” he said, referring to the tournament’s highest-run getter.

“It is tough for the top order when your middle order is not performing. The good thing is that we have an established core now (Rahul, Agarwal, Pooran, Gayle and Shami) and we need to plug the gaps which are quite apparent (middle-order and death bowling).”

Kumble took over from Mike Hesson, who parted ways after one season, while Rahul was appointed captain after R Ashwin’s switch to Delhi Capitals.

“...KXIP’s record of making too many changes in captaincy and coaching is something which we want to correct,” he said.

“Rahul captained exceedingly well and gained in confidence with each game. We are lucky to have him. Shami has been brilliant too and has adjusted brilliantly to the T20 format. Pooran and the young Ravi Bishnoi and Arshdeep Singh too performed well.”

Medvedev beats Djoker

AP ■ LONDON

Daniil Medvedev is enjoying the ATP Finals a lot better in his second appearance.

Medvedev secured a spot in the semifinals of the season-ending tournament by dominating five-time champion Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-3 on Wednesday for his second straight win of the group stage.

Medvedev, who lost all three of his group matches last year on his tournament debut, has now beaten Djokovic in three of their last four meetings. The top-ranked Serb can still advance if he beats 2018 champion Alexander Zverev in a winner-takes-all match on Friday.

Zverev kept his tournament hopes alive with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Diego Schwartzman earlier on Wednesday.

Medvedev broke Djokovic three straight times to go from 3-3 in the first set to a 3-0 lead in the second. The first break came after a marathon game when the Russian finally converted his third break point when Djokovic missed a forehand after a long rally.



Djokovic then double-faulted on set point and never looked likely to stage a comeback in the second.

Medvedev saved the only break point he faced at 2-0 and then secured the victory with a forehand winner on his first match point.

“He was just better, no question about it,” Djokovic said.

“Just not a great match from my side. I thought I could have and should have done better, but credit to him for playing on a high level.”

Pep extends Man City stay

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola has ended speculation over his Manchester City future after signing a new two-year contract extension on Thursday.

Guardiola was due to be out of contract at the end of this season and it had been suggested he might be ready to leave City. But the 49-year-old has now agreed to stay at the Etihad Stadium until at least 2023.

“Manchester City are pleased to announce that Pep Guardiola has signed a new two-year deal with the club,” a statement on Man City’s website said.

Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola is

midway through his fifth campaign with the Premier League and his new deal will extend what is already his longest stay at any club.

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Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola is midway through his fifth campaign with the Premier League and his new deal will extend what is already his longest stay at any club.

Guardiola has ended speculation over his Manchester City future after signing a new two-year contract extension on Thursday.

Guardiola was due to be out of contract at the end of this season and it had been suggested he might be ready to leave City. But the 49-year-old has now agreed to stay at the Etihad Stadium until at least 2023.

“Manchester City are pleased to announce that Pep Guardiola has signed a new two-year deal with the club,” a statement on Man City’s website said.

Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola is midway through his fifth campaign with the Premier League and his new deal will extend what is already his longest stay at any club.

Belgium, Italy into Nations League finals



Italian players celebrate after win against Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Sarajevo thanks to a goal in each half from Torino’s Andrea Belotti and Domenico Berardi of Sassuolo.

That ensured they finished a point ahead of the Netherlands, who came from behind to beat Poland 2-1 away with captain Georginio Wijnaldum scoring the winner after Memphis Depay’s penalty cancelled out Kamil Jozwiak’s opener.

Italy and Belgium join Spain and World Cup holders France in a final tournament which is expected to be held in Italy in October next year.

Before the finals, European national teams will start their 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign in March and then the delayed Euro 2020 is set to go ahead next June and July.

England have more than one

eye on that tournament, with the semi-finals and final scheduled for Wembley, and Gareth Southgate’s team rounded out their Nations League campaign with a 4-0 win over Iceland.

Declan Rice and Mason Mount scored in the first half and

Manchester City’s Phil Foden got his first international goals with a late brace as England had three players aged 21 or younger score in the same match for the first time since 1883.

Birkir Mar Saevarsson was sent off for Iceland who, like

Bosnia, are relegated and will compete in League B in the next edition.

WALES MOVE UP

Wales won promotion to League A with a 3-1 win over 10-man Finland that allowed them to top Group B4.

Despite manager Ryan Giggs being missing after his recent arrest on suspicion of assaulting his girlfriend, Wales came good with goals from Harry Wilson, Daniel

James and Kieffer Moore. Teemu Pukki netted for Finland, who had left-back Jere Uronen sent off after just 12 minutes.

While Wales go up, Scotland missed out on promotion from League B, Group 2 after losing 1-0 in Israel, their second consecu-



tive loss since clinching qualification for Euro 2020.

Manor Solomon’s first-half goal sunk the Scots, and the Czech Republic won promotion at their expense after beating Slovakia 2-0.

Also securing promotion to the top tier were Austria, who drew 1-1 with a Norway side deprived of stars Erling Braut Haaland and Martin Odegaard after being ordered to quarantine because of a positive coronavirus test in their squad.

Hungary won promotion too thanks to a 2-0 victory over Turkey combined with a 5-0 hammering for Russia at the hands of Serbia.

The Republic of Ireland avoided relegation to League C after drawing 0-0 with Bulgaria, but Northern Ireland and Turkey were among the sides to go down, while Montenegro, Armenia, Slovenia and Albania go up to the second level.