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NEW DELHI, MONDAY OCTOBER 12, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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BENEDICT TO BE DOCTOR STRANGE AGAIN
10 VIVACITY

Aarey forest stays, car shed goes

Metro car shed will now be located at Kanjurmarg, additional 200 acre at Aarey Colony to be declared forest, announces Maha CM

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 10 months after the stay of its construction in the wake of protests by environmentalists, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday announced that the proposed car shed for the Metro phase-III project would now be located at Kanjurmarg in north-east Mumbai to save forests at Aarey Colony at Goregaon in north Mumbai, where the project was initially located.

Meanwhile, former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis — under whose regime the Mumbai Metro-III car shed construction started — slammed the Uddhav Government for its decision to shift the project, saying its re-location would result in an additional cost of ₹ 4000 crore.

Addressing the people across the State through social media, Uddhav said the Maharashtra Government would not spend any money for acquiring the land for shifting the Metro phase-III car shed project from Goregaon and locating it at Kanjurmarg as it owned land at the new location.

"We will now shift the car shed for the Metro phase-III project from Goregaon and locate it at Kanjurmarg. We will



Fadnis slammed the Uddhav Govt. says its re-location would result in an additional cost of ₹ 4000 cr
 The Maharashtra Government would not spend any money as it owns land at the new location
 We will now add another 200 acres area to the earlier 600 acre area and declare a total of 800 acre area as forest area
 at Aarey colony, said the CM
 The State Government will not do anything that would affect the lives of Adivasis living in the Aarey forest area, he said

not be spending even paisa to acquire the land, as we have our land at Kanjurmarg. The structure that was earlier constructed for the car shed will be utilised for some other purpose.

"Since the State Government has invested ₹100 crore on the construction of the structure, we will utilise the structure constructed for the car shed at Goregaon for some other purpose," the CM said.

Uddhav said his Government had declared ear-

lier 600 acre at Aarey Colony as forest area.

"We will now add another 200 acre area to the earlier 600 acre area and declare a total of 800 acre area as forest area at Aarey Colony. The State Government will not do anything that would affect the lives of Adivasis living in the Aarey forest area. We will take all steps to protect the animals in the Aarey forests," he said.

"After the shifting of proposed car shed Metro phase-III, the two Metro corridors — Colaba-Bandra-Seez (Line 3)

and Swami Samarth Nagar-Vikhroli (Line 6) will be integrated," Uddhav said.

The CM — who in his first major decision taken after assuming the highest office in the State had on November 29 last year stayed the work on the construction of a car shed for Metro phase-III at Aarey Colony in the wake of Shiv Sena-supported protests — said his Government had already withdrawn cases filed against all the green activists who had opposed the location of Metro car shed at Aarey

Colony.

It may be recalled the MVA Government's decision to stay the construction of Metro phase-III car shed project and order a review of the project should be seen in the developments that took place in the run-up to the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls.

The Shiv Sena had vehemently opposed "illegal" tree felling at Aarey Colony to pave way for the construction of a car shed for Metro phase-III.

After the Bombay High Court on October 4, 2019 dismissed all petitions challenging the proposed felling of 2,646 trees in Aarey Colony at Goregaon, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) felled 2,141 trees on October 4 and 5 following the HC's order upholding of the BMC's Tree Authority's permission to fell 2,185 trees at Aarey Colony.

After the MMRCL felled the trees indiscriminately at Aarey Colony on the night of October 4, 2019, the Shiv Sena, which was ruling the State in alliance with the BJP then, had two days later joined the activists and various political parties against the tree felling and also the arrest of 29 activists who had resisted the tree felling by the workers hired to fell the trees on the previous night.

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Article 370 will be restored with China's help: Farooq

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

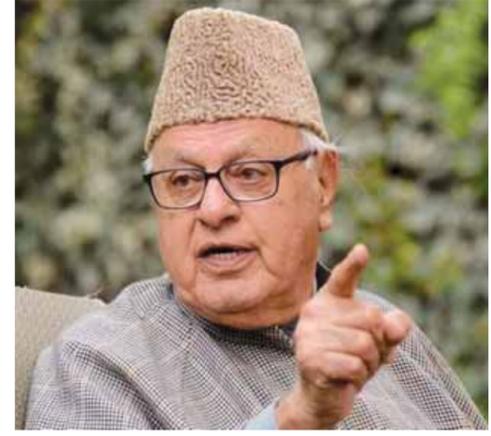
Ex-CM holds Centre's move to change J&K status responsible for Chinese aggression

Sitting Member of Parliament from Srinagar and former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on Sunday made yet another provocative statement claiming China "never accepted" the Abrogation of Article 370 and hoped that it will be restored with China's support.

It is for the second time Farooq has attempted to link the issue of Abrogation of Article 370 and the Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.

In the last week of September 2020, Farooq had also claimed in an interview with a news portal that after the abrogation of Article 370, the Kashmiri people "do not feel or want to be Indian" and they would rather prefer to be ruled by China, instead of India. Speaking to a reporter of a private news channel on the sidelines of a function in Srinagar on Sunday, the National Conference president, wearing a black hat, also held the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 responsible for the Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. Further provoking New Delhi, Farooq went on to claim that China "never accepted" the Abrogation of Article 370, and hoped that it will be restored with China's support.

"Whatever they are doing at LAC in Ladakh all because of the abrogation of Article 370,



which they never accepted. I am hopeful that with their support, Article 370 will be restored in J&K," Farooq said.

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Farooq claimed, "I never invited the Chinese President, it was the Prime Minister who not only invited him to Gujarat but did jhoola sawari with him.

"He even took him to Chennai and had food with him. Even then the decision (Abrogation of Article 370) taken by the Government was not unacceptable to them".

Referring to the recent Parliament session, Farooq

said he was not even allowed to speak on the problems of Jammu & Kashmir in Parliament. In his brief speech inside the Parliament on September 22, Farooq had sought the restoration of Jammu & Kashmir's special status which was abrogated on August 5 last year.

"There will be no peace in Jammu & Kashmir unless decisions taken on August 5, 2019 are not revoked and the region's special status is restored".

Farooq had also participated in the protest outside Parliament along with sitting PDP MPs.

CBI takes over Hathras case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday took over the investigation into the gangrape and murder of a Dalit woman in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh and registered an FIR under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections related to gangrape and murder, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The agency assigned the case to its Ghaziabad unit with a special team to investigate the crime that has led to a nationwide outrage, officials said.

The 19-year-old girl was allegedly raped by four men on September 14. She succumbed to severe injuries at a hospital here a fortnight later. Her death culminated in reportedly a hushed up cremation at night allegedly at the behest of the district administration. The political slugfest was further accentuated following the controversial statement by the State police claiming there was no evidence of rape.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

'SVAMITVA' HISTORIC MOVE: PM MODI

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched the physical distribution of property cards under the 'SVAMITVA' (ownership) scheme via video conferencing, and asserted that it is a "historic move" that will transform rural India.

ONLY AC COACHES FOR TRAINS AT 130 KM/H

New Delhi: Trains running on identified routes at a speed of 130 kmph or above on the railway network will have only air-conditioned coaches in the near future as part of the Railways' plans to upgrade the network, an official said on Sunday.

BAR ON MIN FLIGHT FARE FOR PREMIUM ECO TOO

New Delhi: Lower fare limits decided by the Government for economy class seats of domestic flights on May 21 would now also be applicable to premium economy class seats, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has said.

No road tax for battery-operated vehicles in Delhi

AAP Govt's EV Policy aims to register 5L vehicles by 2024

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Transport Department of the Delhi Government has issued a gazette notification stating full waiver of road tax on the battery-operated vehicles under the electric vehicle policy of the Delhi Government. The decision was taken on the direction of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The Department has also sought suggestions from the public on the exemption of the registration fee even as the orders to waive the fee will be issued in the next three days.

Kejriwal had announced the Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy (EV) 2020 last month with a focus to increase the adoption of electric vehicles in Delhi by incentivising the purchase and use of the EVs. The



policy aims to register five lakh electric vehicles in the city by 2024.

Taking to twitter, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gehlot said, "Congrats Delhi! As promised by CM @ArvindKejriwal when announcing landmark EV Policy, Delhi govt has exempted road tax on Battery Operated Vehicles. With right incentives & supporting infra, we are determined to ensure Delhi leads the country in rapid transition to Electric Vehicles."

Continued on Page 2

UP Cong woman leader thrashed for opposing ticket to rape accused

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Tara Yadav was manhandled after she allegedly threw a bouquet at party national secretary and Purvanchal co-incharge Sachin Nayak in protest against the party's decision to give a ticket to a "rape accused" leader from the Deoria Assembly seat in the upcoming bypolls.

Meanwhile, two party workers of Deoria, Deendayal Yadav and Ajay Kumar Sainthwar, have been expelled from the party for the incident.

A video has been doing rounds on social media in Deoria district in which a group of Congress workers is seen thrashing a woman party leader at an event. Yadav alleged on Sunday that she was thrashed by party workers for questioning the party's decision to give a ticket to a rape accused to contest bypoll. She said, "I was thrashed by party workers when I questioned the party's decision to give a ticket to a rape accused, Mukund Bhaskar Mani Tripathi, for the bypoll.

Continued on Page 2

Farmers can use Agrix1 drone sans Govt nod to protect crops

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tech-savvy farmers in the country can now look towards using an indigenous-manufactured microdrone, 'Agrix1', equipped with multispectral sensors and artificial tools, to identify crop diseases and pests and take timely remedial steps to boost their agronomy. And in doing so, they need not require the Government's permission.

Agrix1 drone is the first remote-controlled unmanned vehicle in the country under the micro category to get the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) nod for the agriculture sector, requiring no special permit for flying.

"It can be flown without requiring a special UAOP permit from the Government. In other words, farmers do not need to seek special pilot



approval and can fly them on their own. However, since the technology is new, we are interfacing with the interested farmers," said Ashish Sinha, CEO of Omnipresent Robot Technologies which has launched the micro agriculture drone with multispectral capabilities.

The remote-controlled vehicle allows farmers to detect crop diseases up to 10 days

before any visual features of the malady show up, thus helping them save the crop from damage and boost yield up to 20 per cent, Sinha said.

He further explained that detection of the disease is achieved with the help of on-board five-band multispectral sensor that can gather information in red, green, blue, infrared, near red and red-edge bands.

Continued on Page 2

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Zindagi ke saath bhi, Zindagi ke baad bhi.

Rlys to upgrade non-AC sleeper coaches with AC

For trains running at 130/160 kmph

New Delhi: Trains running on identified routes at a speed of 130 kmph or above on the railway network will have only air-conditioned coaches in the near future as part of the Railways' plans to upgrade the network, an official said on Sunday.

Stressing that the ticket prices of such trains will be "affordable", railway ministry spokesperson D J Narain clarified that it should not be misconstrued that "all non-AC coaches will be made into AC coaches."

Currently on most routes, speeds of mail/express trains have a ceiling of 110 kmph or lower.

Premium trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Durontos are allowed to operate at 120 kmph on significant parts of the Golden Quadrilateral and Diagonals. The rakes for such trains are fit to operate at 130 kph or above, officials said.

"AC coaches have become

a technical necessity wherever the speed of the train is going to be above 130 kmph. Indian Railways is working on a massive plan to upgrade the railway network to high speed potential," Narain said.

Tracks on the Golden Quadrilateral and Diagonals are being upgraded to cater to speeds of 130 kmph to 160 kmph. The non-AC sleeper coaches would be replaced by AC coaches only for such trains which will be running at 130/160 kmph.

"Non-AC coaches will continue to run in trains running at 110 kmph," he said.

"It will be ensured that while the price of tickets of modified AC coaches remains very affordable for the passengers, the comfort and conveniences increase manifold and there is substantial reduction in travel time," Narain said.

He said that a prototype of such an AC coach is being manufactured at Rail Coach Factory at Kapurthala and

should be ready in a few weeks.

"Presently, an 83-berth coach is being designed. It is planned to have 100 such coaches this year and 200 next year. The coaches will be evaluated and experience gained from the running of these coaches will lead to further progress," he said.

Officials said that the new AC coaches will be economical as their tickets will be priced between AC 3 and Sleeper coaches.

Compared to 72 berths in a sleeper coach, this new AC coach will have 83 berths, but the number of berths in a coupe will remain the same. However, there will be no extra middle berth between side-upper and side-lower berths. The coaches are being redesigned by moving the electrical units and removing the space reserved for storing blankets and bed sheets, since Railways will stop providing them due to coronavirus.

Agencies

AAP MLA Pandey slams BJP over shops demolition at Kargil Society Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and MLA Dilip Pandey on Sunday slammed the BJP over the demolition of the shops of essential items at Kargil Society Dwarka where families of retired and martyred army men stay but today, the BJP and MCD is destroying the dreams of late Prime Minister by continuously harassing the residents of the society. To ensure the day-to-day necessities of these families the government also built shops of essential items in this society, he said.

"The BJP and MCD which takes money to build any shop or building in Delhi have now demolished these shops.

"We demands that the BJP should put forward unconditional apology to all these families of martyrs," he said.

"The AAP will hold gherao

of the BJP leaders and dharna against the BJP's inhuman act," he said, adding that in the year 2003, former prime minister of India late Atal Bihari Vajpayee established a housing society at Dwarka named as Kargil society. In this society, the families of retired and martyred army men stay but today, the BJP and MCD is destroying the dreams of late Prime Minister by continuously harassing the residents of the society. To ensure the day-to-day necessities of these families the government also built shops of essential items in this society, he said.

Meham MLA Kundu, his brother, two others booked for ₹14 crore fraud

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

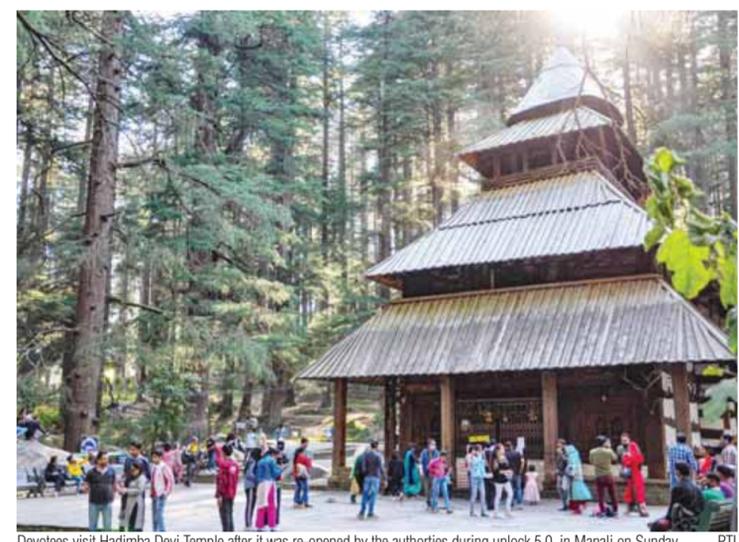
The police have registered an FIR under Section 420, 467, 468 and 506 of the IPC against Independent MLA from Mehram Balraj Kundu, his brother Shivraj Kundu and their company officials Mohammad Hashim and V K Lamba on the basis of a complaint of ₹14 crore fraud lodged by a city resident. Following the complaint, a senior police official has also confirmed the registration of the case.

The complainant, Parivartan Singh, a resident of Sector 51, has maintained that Balraj Kundu and his brother Shivraj Kundu a resident of Nirvana Country at Sector-50 and two of their company officials, who runs a construction company 'KCC Buildcon' had given him ₹75 crore road construction work in Madhya Pradesh.

Jail warden, aide held for supplying drugs in Bhondsi jail

Gurugram: Unearthing a racket involved in supplying drugs inside the Bhondsi Jail in Gurugram, a crime branch team of the district police arrested two accused, including a jail warden during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday and recovered 110 grams of Sulfa and 24 grams of Smack from their possession.

The accused jail warden has been identified as Prem Chand, a resident of Mahendragarh district in Haryana. The second accused was identified as Ankit of Rewari district. According to the police, the accused were intercepted by the crime branch of DLF phase-4 near the Bhondsi Jail after a tip-off. The police recovered 110 gm of sulfa and 24 gm smack from the Jail warden. They were booked under relevant sections of the NDPS Act at the Sector-65 police station here. ACP (crime) Preet Pal Sangwan told reporters on Sunday that during interrogation Ankit revealed that he used to supply the contraband to another accused Deepak alias Deepu, through the Jail warden, who was lodged in the Bhondsi Jail and around 10 cases of Arms Act, snatching and NDPS Act were registered against him.



Devotees visit Hadimba Devi Temple after it was re-opened by the authorities during unlock 5.0, in Manali on Sunday PTI

UP schools to reopen from Oct 19

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government has conditionally permitted the reopening of schools from class 9 to 12 across the state on October 19 after a gap of almost seven months.

Online education will continue for children from class 8 and below. The in-person classes will be held under the advisory of the Centre's Home Affairs Ministry and the guidelines of the Uttar Pradesh government.

According to the guidelines, the classes will run in two shifts and a written consent from the parents would be required. Schools would need to take regular necessary precautions like sanitization near gates, classes and washrooms; compulsory wearing of face masks; and maintaining social distancing between students.

The schools cannot exceed a specified number of students in a class and no morning prayer meetings will be allowed in an effort to avoid gatherings.

Covid recoveries outnumber fresh cases in Telangana

Hyderabad: The number of Covid-19 recoveries again outnumbered new positive cases detected in Telangana during the last 24 hours, officials said on Sunday.

With 1,717 new cases, the cumulative tally rose to 2,12,063. For a fourth consecutive day the daily count was below 2,000 mark.

Five more people succumbed to the Covid-19, taking the cumulative death toll to 1,222.

The fatality rate stands at 0.57 per cent against the national average of 1.5 per cent.

Officials said the percentage of deaths due to Covid-19 was 44.96 while the remaining 55.04 had comorbidities.

Last 24 hours ending 8 p.m. Saturday saw more recoveries than the new cases. With 2,103 more people recovering from the virus during the period, the total recoveries jumped to 1,85,128. The state's recovery rate climbed to 87.29 per cent while the national average is 85.9 per cent.

The state now has 25,713 active cases, including 21,209 who are in home/institutional isolation.

Both the state capital and districts continued to show declining trends in new cases. Greater Hyderabad reported 276 cases. Rangareddy district recorded second highest number of cases at 132 followed by Medchal Malkajgiri (131), Karimnagar (104), Nalgonda (101), Bhadradi Kothagudem (87), Siddipet (85), Khammam (82) and Sangareddy (59).

During the last 24 hours, 46,657 tests were conducted. With this the cumulative numbers have gone up to 35,47,051.

Farmers can use Agrix1 drone...

From Page 1
Sinha pointed out that the Artificial Intelligence software called 'Nerve Centre' (developed by his firm) helps quickly identify crop diseases from UAV data and automates the process of digitisation and classification of crops.

Given that at least 50 per cent of India's GDP is still agriculture-based, it is hoped that such drones can play a big role in boosting agriculture yield by 10-20 per cent. Crop diseases and pests have become a major headache for the farmers in recent years due to pollution and climate change impacts.

However, as Indian farms tend to be small and a single farm's plots are often scattered throughout a region, Agrix1 is currently helpful for large agricultural areas only.

To this effect, Omnipresent is working jointly with a large agriculture industry player in Telangana using the drone. "We are developing machine learning algorithms to quickly identify diseases in crops using large amounts of training data. Additionally, we plan to deploy a sprayer drone for taking appropriate corrective action on affected crops."

"Automated disease identification and remedial measures using drones would be a big game changer for the agriculture industry and farmers and we are looking forward to disrupting this segment," said Sinha.

Family of victim upset on Naxal connection

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH/HATHRAS

The victim's family is extremely upset with the Naxal connection on the Bulgadhi episode. When the media asked the question, the victim's brother got angry and said that we have lost our sister, suffered persecution and now Naxal connection is being connected with our relatives. SP Vineet Jaiswal has also denied the woman related to Naxal connection. He said that there is no such input.

Unnecessary things are happening. Is it time to talk like this? Meanwhile, the deceased's kith and kin are angry over the fact that a woman with family has a Naxal connection. It was told that the woman had become a sister-in-law and stayed with the family. SP Vineet Jaiswal has also denied the woman related to Naxal connection.

Lower fare limits to be applicable to premium economy class seats: Aviation Ministry

New Delhi: Lower fare limits decided by the government for economy class seats of domestic flights on May 21 would now also be applicable to premium economy class seats, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has said.

However, the upper fare limits set by the government for economy class seats would not be applicable on the premium economy class seats, according to a ministry order dated October 5 which was accessed by PTI.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) had on May 21 placed upper and lower limits on domestic airfares through seven bands, classified on the basis of flight duration, till August 24. Later, it was extended till November 24.

Among the Indian domestic carriers, only Vistara has premium economy class seats in its flights.

Domestic passenger services resumed in India on May 25 after nearly two months of suspension owing to the coronavirus pandemic situation.

Modifying its May 21 order, the MoCA in its October 5 communication stated, "The fares indicated... are not applicable for business class and premium economy class. However, in premium economy class, the lower fare band would be applicable." The ministry had on May 21 said that there would be seven bands of ticket pricing with lower and upper fare limits based on flight duration.

The first such band consists of flights that are of less than 40 minutes duration. The lower and the upper fare limits for the first band is Rs 2,000 and Rs 6,000, respectively.

The subsequent bands are for flights with durations of 40-60 minutes, 60-90 minutes, 90-120 minutes, 120-150 minutes, 150-180 minutes and 180-210 minutes. The lower and upper limits for these bands are: Rs 2,500-Rs 7,500; Rs 3,000-Rs 9,000; Rs 3,500-Rs 10,000; Rs 4,500-Rs 13,000; Rs 5,500-Rs 15,700 and Rs 6,500-Rs 18,600, respectively, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

Agencies

UP Cong woman leader thrashed for opposing...

From Page 1
"Now, I am waiting for Priyanka Gandhi to take action."

"On one hand, our party leaders are fighting for justice for Hathras victim and on the other, party ticket is being given to a rape accused. It is a wrong decision. It will malign the image of our party," Yadav said.

The leader, who has been associated with the Congress for the past four years, said she went to the party office to meet Nayak to oppose the party's decision to give ticket to a tainted candidate but was manhandled by the male party workers. Three other women were also manhandled, Yadav alleged.

The Deoria assembly seat fell vacant after the demise of Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Janmejaya Singh. The bypoll for the seat will be held

on November 3. The Congress announced Mukund Bhaskar Mani Tripathi as its candidate after a meeting on Saturday. Tripathi has rubished the allegations, saying they were baseless.

He said that he was not convicted in any case. However, taking cognisance of the incident, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said the top leadership had taken notice of the incident in Deoria and had assured that strict action would be taken against the guilty.

The three-member team comprises AICC member Talat Aziz, president of Mahila Congress' Purvanchal unit Sahala Aharari and vice-president Mahila Congress Purvanchal unit Chandrakala Pushkar, will submit its report to Lallu within three days.

No road tax for...

From Page 1
As per the notification issued by the department, the rules issued in the policy for the exemption on registration fee have been opened for public opinion.

"The draft will be taken into consideration after expiry of a period of three days from the date on which the copies of this notification as published in the Gazette of Delhi are made available to the public. Objections or suggestions in this behalf should be addressed to Secretary-cum-Commissioner (Transport), Government of National Capital of Delhi, Transport Department," it said.

The Delhi Government led by Kejriwal has implemented the electric vehicle policy to promote the use of electric vehicles to reduce Delhi's air pollution. Thereafter, the Special Commissioner of transport

department Shashi Kaushal has issued a notification with the order of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, under which tax exemption on all battery electric vehicles has been provided. This policy has come into force from the date of issue of this notification, i.e., road tax will not be paid on the electric vehicles starting October 10 this year.

As per the notification, the Delhi EV policy 2020 has been hailed as one of the most progressive EV policies in the world, which aims to have 25 per cent of total vehicles as electric by 2024.

It also focuses on the creation of employment in sectors such as driving, selling, financing, and charging of EVs, and heavy incentives for the rapid adoption of EVs, it said, adding that the policy was framed to adapt to the use of EVs, with an aim to reduce air pollution in the capital.

CBI takes over Hathras case

From Page 1
The brutal injuries suffered by the victim and the local administration's move to cremate her body late at night triggered massive outrage among people resulting in a political battle from the national capital to Lucknow and Hathras.

The political slugfest was further accentuated following the controversial statement by the State police claiming there was no evidence of rape. The widespread public outcry compelled the State government to transfer the case, originally registered at Chandpa police station in Hathras.

The Hathras police had registered a case of attempt to murder on a statement by the victim's brother who had said the accused had tried to strangle his sister in a millet field and escaped when she raised an alarm.

Following the State government's request to probe the case, the notification issued by the centre had asked the CBI to probe rape, murder and atrocity and "any attempt, abetment and/or conspiracy, in relation to or in connection with such offence(s) and/or for any other offence committed in the course of the same transaction or arising out of the same facts."

"The complainant had alleged that on September 14, 2020 the accused tried to strangle his sister in the millet field. The case has been registered by CBI on the request of Uttar Pradesh Government and further Notification from Government of India," the CBI said in a statement.

A team has been constituted and investigation is continuing, it added. Agency sources said the CBI will not probe the international plot and criminal conspiracy to defame the Uttar Pradesh Government as claimed in an affidavit by the State Government before the Supreme Court.

Aarey forest stays...

From Page 1
Yuv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray, who had steadily been opposing the tree felling at Aarey Colony and was among the first lot to raise a protest against massive tree felling that took place on the night of October 4 2019, had tweeted, "A project that should be executed with pride, the Metro 3, @MumbaiMetro3 has to do it in the cover of the night, with shame, slyness and heavy cop cover. The project, supposed to get Mumbai clean air, is hacking down a forest with a leopard, rusty spotted cat and more."

On the following day, Aditya had come out with one more tweet, "The use of a large number of police personnel. Hacking trees in the dead of the night, even after winning in court (then why not broad daylight) and detention of peaceful protesters and citizens. Who is authorising this? During Code of Conduct? All these powers handed to MMRCL?"

Later on October 7 2019, the Supreme Court had restrained the MMRCL from cutting any more

trees at Aarey Colony till October 21. Hours after the apex court restrained it from cutting any more trees till October. On its part, MMRCL had said that while it "respected" the apex court's order, it had already felled 2,141 trees on October 4 and 5 following the Bombay High court's order upholding of the BMC's Tree Authority's permission to fell 2,185 trees at Aarey Colony.

However, on October 21, 2019 the Supreme Court clarified that the controversial Metro car shed project in Mumbai's Aarey Colony could continue, but the freeze on tree cutting would remain. The apex court had also asked for a White Paper on the issue, seeking details on the trees cut, transplanted and those that survived the transplant.

Subsequently, a day after it assumed office, the Shiv Sena-led MVA Government assumed office had on November 29 last year, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray stayed the work on the construction of a car shed for Metro phase-III at Aarey Colony in north

Mumbai, pending a total review of the project.

Within a couple hours after assuming the office at Mantralaya (State Secretariat), Uddhav said, "I believe in fulfilling promises I make... I have been thinking what to do for Mumbai... You may remember the Mumbai car shed issue had generated considerable heat during the elections... As a first, I have stayed the Metro car shed at Aarey Colony. The car shed work will not resume till we take a full review of the project."

Speaking to mediapersons after he was felicitated by the State Secretariat and Legislature Reporters' Association on his assuming the office, Uddhav said, "This (the review of Metro car shed work) is essential. I read news reports today that some trees were felled at Aarey Colony last night. I will not allow this kind of butchering of trees. I will take a total review of the whole thing," the Chief Minister had said.

Indicating that he was per se not against the Metro project, Uddhav had said, "Whatever necessary will happen. I am all for development. I have not given any thought on the development work. But, I do not want any development that

comes at the cost of our precious assets. Hence I have given direction to the people concerned that not even a leaf is removed from Aarey Colony."

"Unfortunately decision to shift Metro CarShed from Aarey to Kanjurmarg and that too just to satisfy ego. This decision will increase the cost of the project by at least Rs 4000 crore and this cost escalation is assessed by the committee appointed by this Government," Fadnavis tweeted.

"This means that the Metro project, which would have been in the service of Mumbaikars just next year, has now been postponed indefinitely. Rs 400 crore was already spent for Aarey Car Shed, Rs 1300 crore wasted due to staying of project & additional cost escalation of Rs 4000 crore... Rs 2400 crore cost burden if in case Kanjurmarg land dispute remains as it was. What will be today's cost?" the former chief minister tweeted.

"Metro project delayed for indefinite period. What exactly does the state Govt want to achieve by blocking the seamless journey of Mumbaikars? MVA Govt misleading Mumbaikars," Fadnavis added.

गाजियाबाद विकास प्राधिकरण
(ISO 9001 : 2015 एवं ISO 14001 : 2015 प्रमाणित संस्था)
विकास पथ, गाजियाबाद

पत्रांक : 786/प्र-सं/2020 दिनांक: 09.10.2020

शुद्धि पत्र

गाजियाबाद विकास प्राधिकरण, गाजियाबाद द्वारा प्राधिकरण की विभिन्न योजनाओं में रिक्त भवनों को "पहले आओ पहले पाओ" के आधार पर दिनांक 23.09.2020 को एवं दिनांक 27.09.2020 को शुद्धि-पत्र के माध्यम से समाचार पत्रों में विज्ञापित प्रकाशित कर दिनांक 09.10.2020 से प्रत्येक शुक्रवार (अवकाश को छोड़कर) हिन्दी भवन, लोडियानगर, गाजियाबाद में प्रातः 10.00 बजे से कैम्प आयोजित कर विक्रय किये जाने की सूचना प्रकाशित की गयी थी।

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि दिनांक 12.10.2020 से प्रत्येक दिन प्राधिकरण कार्यालय परिसर में कैम्प का आयोजन कर "पहले आओ पहले पाओ" की प्रतीति प्रकाशित की जायेगी एवं आवेदन प्राप्त किये जायेंगे। प्रतिदिन कैम्प में यदि एक भवन/सम्पत्ति पर एक ही आवेदन प्राप्त होता है, तो कैम्प में ही आवेदन किया जायेगा। एक भवन/सम्पत्ति पर एक से अधिक आवेदकों द्वारा आवेदन किया जाता है, तो आवेदकों के सम्म लॉटरी ड्रा के माध्यम से आवेदन किया जायेगा।

अपर सचिव

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एक सुन्दर शहर हमारा संकल्प

ग्रेंटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
बूथबंद संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क-04, ग्रेंटर नोएडा सिटी, गौतमबुद्ध नगर

सार्वजनिक सूचना

ग्रेंटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत M/s Sai Name Namah Construction Pvt. Ltd. से स्वरूप संख्या - GH-09/S-01 Sector Sports City Adjoining Technzone-4 ग्रेंटर नोएडा पर दिनांक 29.06.2015 को मानचित्र स्वीकृति (Technical Sanction) हेतु दिनांक 17.09.2020 को आवेदन किया गया है, जिसमें स्वीकृत भवन मानचित्र के डिजाईन व अन्य कतिपय संशोधन किया जा रहा है। अतः प्रत्येक आवेदकों द्वारा अपनी Consent सी गई है या नहीं के सम्बन्ध में अपारेंट और अपनी आपत्ति दर्ज कक्षा राखेंगे। इस सम्बन्ध में डिक्लरेशन प्रस्तुत (Declaration) एवं मानचित्र का परिवर्तन किसी भी शर्त बिना नवम्बर 9 20 से सारा 6:30 बजे के मध्य नियोजन विभाग के डिस्प्लेड में नये से किया जा सकता है। मानचित्रों में सडको अपारेंट डिस्प्लेड-2010 के प्राधिकरणों के अन्तर्गत उक्त प्रस्तावित संशोधन की घोषणा के सम्बन्ध में अपारेंट स्वामियों/संघ को नॉटिस जारी करने के साथ 30 दिन के अन्तर आपत्तियां आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

अतः उरोचित के निहाय अपनी आपत्तियां लिखित रूप से अपने आवेदन पत्र, यथा पूर्व सूचना के तालिका प्रस्तावित कार्यालय, बूथबंद संख्या -1, नॉलेज पार्क-04, ग्रेंटर नोएडा में लिख कर प्रस्तुत प्रस्तुत (आवेदन) विभाग में निर्धारित अवधि अर्थात् सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिनों में प्राप्त करवायी जा सकती है।

वर्षिक प्रबन्धन (वार्षिक)
ग्रेंटर नोएडा प्राधिकरण

Covid: Norms out before festivals

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of festivals, Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Sunday issued certain guidelines in view of Covid-19, first — fairs/melas/food stalls (inside and outside the venue) jhoolas/rallies/exhibitions/processions will not be permitted during festivals till October 31, 2020.

As Navratras/Devi Punjan is approaching, the area District Magistrate shall appoint an officer of suitable seniority as Nodal Officer for each site and venue of Ramlila and Pooja Pandas etc.

As per the DDMA guidelines aligned with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), all event organisers will have to obtain requisite permission from DM concerned for organising festival events, well in advance, besides obtaining permission from all other authorities concerned as per applicable laws/rules and practice in vogue.

As per the order, in continuation, in a closed space, a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 persons

while in open space, keeping the size of the ground/space in view but with strict observance of social distancing norms.

The DDMA notification for festivals signed by Chief Secretary Vijay Dev further read, "Each such permission (which is applied to DM concerned) will be jointly granted by DM and District DCP concerned on the basis of joint inspection report of area executive magistrate area SHO and licensing Inspector of MCD which shall clearly certify that the festival celebrations site is suitable for the conduct of the event and meets all the stipulations laid down in this order."

While DMs shall have to make arrangements of videography to ensure implementation of strict Covid-19 guidelines, at all events, related to festivals, no person will be allowed in standing or squatting position only sitting on chairs with social distancing norms shall be allowed. "Only such seating capacity would be ensured that permits compliance of Covid-appropriate behaviour," the order read.

10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute: CM takes stock at residence



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his wife Sunita Kejriwal participate in a dengue awareness campaign 10 Hafte-10 Baje-10 Minute, at their residence in New Delhi on Sunday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the sixth week of the 10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute anti-dengue campaign of the Delhi Government, CM Arvind Kejriwal inspected his residence for stagnant water to prevent dengue mosquito breeding along with his family members today. He also encouraged Delhiites to involve their family members in the 10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute campaign and

change the accumulated water to prevent dengue.

Taking to social media, Kejriwal tweeted, "Today is the sixth Sunday of the campaign against dengue, my family also joined the campaign this time. We checked the house and replaced the accumulated clean water. You must also involve your family in this campaign. We have to defeat dengue together #10Hafte10Baje10Minute Har Ravivaar, Dengue Par Vaar."

Announcing the 10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute campaign against Dengue, Kejriwal had said "We will stop the breeding of dengue mosquitoes and protect our family and all of Delhi from dengue through the collective efforts of all the Delhiites. This year, the Delhi Government has also launched a Dengue helpline — 01123300012 and WhatsApp helpline — 8595920530 to assist the general public with dengue.

NCRTC slapped ₹50L fine for not following anti-pollution directives

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Sunday said the Delhi Government has imposed a fine of ₹50 lakh against the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) for not following the anti-pollution directives of the Government.

Rai said only one anti-smog gun was found on the NCRTC site and directions issued to the facility not to start work until another anti-smog gun is installed. The Minister said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch spraying of anti-stubble burning solution from in Ghazipur village on October 13. He added so far we have received applications to spray the anti-stubble burning solution on nearly 1,500 acres of land.

The Environment Minister conducted an on-site inspection of the NCRTC as part of the anti-dust campaign. "Massive dust pollution is happening here. The guidelines issued by the Delhi Government regarding pollution control are not being fol-



Minister Gopal Rai inspects a demolition site where an anti-smog device is placed to control pollution at Netaji Nagar on Sunday

lowed by the agency, therefore, strict action will be taken against the NCRTC," he said.

The NCRTC is already aware that anti-dust operations are being carried out all over Delhi but they are not following the rules completely. "I have penalised the NCRTC of Rs 50 lakh. If despite this they continue the violation then the work will be banned," he said.

Rai said the anti-dust campaign is being carried out across the Capital and the teams of Delhi Government are inspecting at different places.

"There are 39 large sites in Delhi, covering an area of more than 20,000 square meters where either construction work or demolition work is going on," he said.

On the instructions of Delhi Government, anti-smog guns have been installed at 33 of these places to prevent dust pollution but six anti-smog guns have not yet been installed at six sites.

Earlier the Minister visited FICCI where the work was going on without notifying the Delhi Government.

Four robbers held for killing man, injuring his friend

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested four men for allegedly killing a person and injuring his friend during a robbery in central Delhi's GB road area.

The accused have been identified as Rahat Ali (19), a resident of New Seelampur, Fardeen (21), a resident of Gautam Puri, Suhaib (19) and Salman (22), both residents of Seelampur.

Police said Rahat Ali and Fardeen were arrested by Kalma Market police staff whereas Suhaib and Salman were arrested by the Crime Branch.

According to a senior police official, on October 5, one Anirudh Kumar Yadav called his friend Aman and made a plan to visit Aman's maternal uncle's house in Karawal Nagar.

"They met at ITO and went to visit G B Road to get cigarettes. Yadav was urinating whereas Aman was standing on the road. Meanwhile, Yadav heard Aman's voice who was saying that his phone has been snatched by one person," he said.

"Later, Aman caught the snatcher and started beating him, meanwhile, another person came there and attacked Aman with knife. Yadav intervened in the matter and tried to save Aman, but the accused also attacked him with knife. The accused persons, after robbing the mobile phone, fled from the spot," said the senior police official.

End harassment being faced by hotel industry due to trade license, says CM

New Delhi: A day after South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) Mayor Anamika said health licence is crucial to ensure hygiene standards of the restaurants premises and safety of visitors, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said restaurants contributes to Delhi economy in a big way facing harassment due to license raj.

The CM appealed to work together to remove harassment being faced by the hotel and restaurant industry due to trade license issued by municipal corporations.

Kejriwal said Central Government body FSSAI has directed Corporations to stop issuing food licenses. "I hope MCDs will comply soon with Centres directions," he said.

"Restaurants contribute to Delhi economy & taxes in a big way. They face harassment due to license raj. All Governments should work together to remove harassment. Centre Government body FSSAI has directed MCDs to stop issuing food licenses. I hope MCDs will comply soon with Centres directions," he tweeted. The AAP on Saturday accused the BJP-ruled municipal corporations of running "license-Raj".

AAP MLA and spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj had attacked the municipal corporations for continuing to issue health trade licenses to restaurant owners despite being asked by Delhi and Central Government to stop doing so.

3 killed after car rams into tractor in W Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three persons were killed in an accident between a car and a tractor on early hours of Sunday in west Delhi's Moti Nagar area.

The deceased has been identified as Rajesh Sharma (32), Tarun Gupta (42) and Charandeep Singh (38), all residents of Pandav Nagar.

According to a senior police official, a call was received at Moti Nagar police station regarding accident in front of Kirti Nagar metro station around 1.30 am following which n Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot.

"After reaching the spot, a car and a tractor, with a loaded

trolley, were found in accidental condition on the road towards Moti Nagar at Patel Nagar on Shadipur flyover," said the senior police official.

"Later, information was received from Acharya Shree Bhikshu Hospital, Moti Nagar that one Rajesh, Tarun and Charandeep were declared brought dead while one Parveen Singh (38), a resident of Jhilmil, was under treatment and not fit for statement," said the senior police official.

"An First Information Report (FIR) has been registered and all the three bodies were shifted to DDU hospital for autopsy. Vehicles have been seized and further investigation is underway," said police official privy to investigation.



Wreckage of Swift car that rams into a tractor loaded with iron rods, in New Delhi on Sunday

www.pfcindia.com

Growing Big and Caring More

This was the first full financial year post the successful acquisition of Govt. of India's 52.63% equity stake in REC by PFC. The PFC Group performed remarkably in the last year disbursing more than ₹1.4 lakh crore.

Ravinder Singh Dhillon
Chairman & Managing Director

34th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on 29th September, 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 34th Annual General Meeting of your Company. The Financial Year 2019-20 was a challenging yet promising year for PFC.

The end of the financial year was marked by the unprecedented global disruptions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and need no reiteration. The pandemic has not only caused severe impact on the manufacturing industries but also caused disruptions in financial markets worldwide including turbulence in the currency markets as well.

Considering the scale of COVID-19 pandemic, India has not been left untouched. Although, the full extent of its impact on the power industry is yet to be ascertained, but series of reforms unleashed by the government to tackle COVID-19 and its aftermath is surely going to limit the impact on the power sector.

This was the first full financial year post the successful acquisition of Govt. of India's 52.63% equity stake in REC by PFC. The PFC Group performed remarkably in the last year disbursing more than ₹1.4 lakh crore.

I am proud to share that your company is the largest Central Public Sector Enterprise in terms of the balance sheet size. Your company is also slated to be the fifth highest profit making Central Public Sector Enterprise in terms of consolidated PAT for the year 2019-20. Forbes has ranked your company in the top 250 best employers worldwide in its ranking for 2019, which also makes us among top 20 best employers in India. On a consolidated level, your company would make it among the top 500 global public companies in terms of the profit and asset size.

On the business front, the year saw some significant landmarks for PFC. Your company has recorded its highest ever disbursements for 4th year in a row, with this year's loan disbursements almost touching ₹68,000 crore. The loan assets also crossed the ₹3.5 lakh crore milestone and saw a robust growth of 10% during the year.

There have been significant developments on the stressed assets front. GMR Chhattisgarhi and Rattan India Amravati, two of PFC's large stressed assets were resolved during the year. Also, resolution plan for, Suzlon Energy and Essar Power Transmission were approved.

On the borrowing front, your company's efforts towards diversification of borrowing portfolio has started yielding results. In the last financial year, PFC raised

owing to its low cost. I am happy to share that the mobilization under the 54EC capital gains tax bonds has almost quadrupled since our first issue in financial year 2017-18. Due to the various efforts made by your company on the borrowing front, the cost of funds has reduced significantly from 7.95% in FY19 to 7.79% in FY20.

There have been significant developments in the global economy front. The disruptions in many supply chains dependent on China amid COVID-19 has come as a jolt to global manufacturing. These were further exacerbated with the geo-political developments in the Indian context. Using the opportunity provided by the pandemic, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has urged the nation to become self-reliant via his clarion calls for 'Local for Local' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

India Inc. and the power sector, which is critical for nation's march towards self-reliance, can utilize this push from the Government in promoting more domestic manufacturing, which will help in rebooting India's economy faster. It would also mean that sluggish power demand will witness more pickup in the coming quarters. Going forward, these Government initiatives can provide a huge impetus to the industry.

COVID-19 pandemic worsened the woes of power players across the country especially the distribution companies. The situation aggravated during the lockdown as power demand from commercial and industrial segment weakened, resulting in lower revenue realization for distribution companies, as these big consumers either remained shut or only operated partially, thereby leading to lower realizations. To ease out stress on cash flows, Govt of India had announced reforms-linked allocation of ₹90,000 crore for cash-strapped distribution companies under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. This financial package has been a welcome news for power producers and has given a significant boost to power sector reforms. I am happy to share that your company and its subsidiary REC shall be the only lenders to provide the financial support under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat liquidity package of ₹90,000 crore.

Furthermore, in line with the notification of Reserve Bank of India, to ease the liquidity crunch amid COVID-19, your company has provided moratorium on both principal and interest to its borrowers due from 1st March 2020 to 31st August 2020. This shall help the power utilities, both state and private owned, to improve their cash flows for sustaining business operations.

Your company has been publishing Performance Report on state power utilities on annual basis and is also involved in publishing the annual integrated rating of power distribution companies. These reports are widely used by stakeholders including policy makers, developers, lenders, equity analysts, regulators, public at large etc. and helps in decision making. To promote transparency and accountability at the distribution companies, Ministry of Power has advised to periodically publish performance of the distribution companies on key parameters, to enable people to know how their power distributor fares vis-à-vis its peers.

The renewable segment has also seen its share of positive news where the tariffs have stabilized and this provides huge opportunities to invest in clean sources of energy.

This also gives strong tailwinds to India's ambitious green energy target.

Government is also pursuing innovative models in distributed solar power generation in line with its goal of transitioning towards clean fuels. Since a one-size-fits-all approach may not be beneficial, Government is also making efforts to find specific solutions to incentivize every state for improving performance. Government is also focusing on indigenous production in various sectors and it is critical that share of power sector equipment manufactured in India should increase going forward. We believe that various government initiatives like 'Make in India' & 'Digital India' will go a long way towards building an ecosystem for manufacturing, water, ingots, cells and modules within the country. This will not only help the Indian Power Sector being self-reliant and self-sustainable but will also help in generating employment and providing entrepreneurial opportunities. Being a leading lender in the country, your Company is well positioned to wholeheartedly support creation of more assets for production of renewable power.

To strengthen the sector, Government is focusing on many reform initiatives in the power sector. The proposed amendment in the Electricity Act is aimed at addressing issues that are adversely impacting the financial viability and therefore the investments in the sector. We believe that Establishment of Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority to enforce the performance of contracts like PPAs/ FSAs/ TSAs related to generation and transmission of power will help in addressing the issue of renegotiation of PPAs by DISCOMs, which is leading to lot of uncertainties in the sector. Proposed amendments in the National Tariff Policy such as capping of losses at 15% for determination of tariff, higher penalties for non-compliance to RPOs, restrictions on creation of new regulatory assets etc. will also help in

On a consolidated level, your company would make it among the top 500 global public companies in terms of the profit and asset size.

Your company has taken proactive steps to contribute towards the society amid COVID-19 by contributing ₹200 Crs to PM CARES fund and sponsoring meals for underprivileged section.

implementing projects of national as well as local importance. PFC has continued its efforts towards funding of projects to uplift the economically and socially backward citizens through their skill development, providing medical facilities to the backward regions, installation of solar street light and high mast lights etc. We have especially focused on the aspirational districts notified by NITI Aayog for implementing many of the schemes. Your company aims to touch the maximum number of lives to improve the quality of living and benefit the society as a whole. Your company has disbursed ₹97 crore under the CSR activities in FY20. Your company has taken proactive steps to contribute towards the society amid COVID-19 by contributing ₹200 crore to PM CARES fund and sponsoring meals for underprivileged section. At this critical time, when our nation's Corona warriors have been fighting the battle at the forefront, your company has contributed towards providing lunch facilities for the medical staff at the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi. Your company has also provided medical equipment, PPE kits, sanitizers, face masks etc. to various district administrations for fighting this pandemic.

I am extremely thankful to the shareholders, who have reposed faith in us. My sincere and heartfelt thanks go out to the Hon'ble Union Minister of State (I/c) for Power, New and Renewable Energy & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Secretary (Power) and officials of the Ministry of Power for their continued support and guidance. I am also truly grateful to Board of Directors, Investors and valued clients for their support.

I also convey my gratitude to Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of India, Department of Public Enterprises, Securities and Exchange Board of India, National Stock Exchange of India Limited, Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd., NITI Aayog, Central Electricity Authority, Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Statutory Auditors, Internal Auditors, Registrars, various Commercial Banks, Financial Institutions, Credit Rating Agencies and other concerned Government Department/ Agencies at the Central and State level for their continued support. I also appreciate the continuous and unwavering support by our partners in the Print and Electronic Media.

The success your company has witnessed and the feats that it has achieved over the years would not have been possible without the hard work and zeal with which employees have given their heart and soul to your company.

I am happy to share that your company and its subsidiary REC shall be the only lenders to provide the financial support under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat liquidity package of ₹90,000 crore.

Your company has taken proactive steps to contribute towards the society amid COVID-19 by contributing ₹200 Crs to PM CARES fund and sponsoring meals for underprivileged section.

**Place: New Delhi
Date: 29.09.2020**

**Sd/-
(R. S. Dhillon)
Chairman & Managing Director**

(This does not purport to be a record of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting held on 29th September, 2020).
For full text please visit www.pfcindia.com

POWER FINANCE CORPORATION LTD.
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SVAMITVA (OWNERSHIP) SCHEME

PM launches distribution of property cards via video link

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the property cards, which he distributed under the 'SVAMITVA' (ownership) scheme, as a "historic move" that will transform rural India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said this will pave the way for villagers to use the property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits, and end disputes among villagers over land ownership.

The Prime Minister launched the physical distribution of property cards under the scheme via video conferencing and interacted with several beneficiaries of the scheme called Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA). Modi said it is a big step for the country towards becoming 'aatmanirbhar' (self-reliant).



"Experts across the world have stressed that property ownership rights play a big role in a country's development," he said to highlight the significance of the measure and noted that only one-third population globally has a legal record of the properties they own.

The youth living in villages now can avail of bank loans against their properties to start out on their own, he said, asserting it is necessary

for a developing country like India to have clear land ownership rights.

Property rights will give the youth self-confidence that can lead to their self-reliance, he said.

The beneficiaries are from 763 villages across six states, including 346 from Uttar Pradesh, 221 from Haryana, 100 from Maharashtra, 44 from Madhya Pradesh, 50 from Uttarakhand and two from Karnataka.

Stay away from crowds, follow Covid guidelines: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India gears up for a string of festivals against the background of rising coronavirus cases, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday urged people to stay away from large congregations and diligently follow Covid-19 guidelines, saying no religion or God asks people to celebrate ostentatiously.

He also warned that upcoming winter season may see increased rates of transmission of the novel coronavirus, citing the nature of such pathogens.

Requesting people to celebrate the approaching festivals at home with their loved ones instead of going out to fairs and pandals, he said fighting against Covid-19 is everyone's foremost "dharma" and as the country's health minister it is his "dharma" to mitigate the virus and prevent deaths at any cost.

He invoked Bhagwad Gita message to make his point saying that the "Bhagwad Gita condones war for the warrior class. So, there is no need to



congregate in large numbers to prove your faith or your religion," he said during the fifth episode of 'Sunday Samvaad', a virtual interaction with people on social media.

"Extraordinary circumstances must draw extraordinary responses. No religion or God says that you have to celebrate in an ostentatious way, that you have to visit pandals and temples and mosques to pray," Dr Harsh Vardhan underlined.

He also discussed the possibility of increased novel coronavirus transmission during the coming winter season as transmission of respiratory viruses is known to increase during the colder weather.

These viruses are known to thrive better in the cold weather and low humidity conditions. In view of these, it would

not be wrong to assume that the winter season may see increased rates of transmission of the novel coronavirus in the Indian context too, he noted.

He stressed that if people congregate in large numbers to celebrate festivals, "we may be heading for big trouble". India has recorded 70,53,807 Covid cases while deaths have climbed to 1,08,334 as on Sunday.

"Lord Krishna says concentrate on your goal...our goal is to finish this virus and save humanity. This is our religion. The religion of the whole world," he said.

Answering questions on the efficacy of AYUSH formulations in the treatment of Covid-19, Dr Harsh Vardhan explained the concept of Salutogenesis and how these formulations target holistic recovery of patients.

Pointing to in-depth study of literature and scientific evidence generated from in silico studies, experimental studies, and clinical studies, he said, Guduchi, Ashwagandha, Guduchi and Pippali combination and AYUSH 64 have a sub-

stantial number of studies which prove their immuno-modulatory, anti-viral, antipyretic and anti-inflammatory properties.

On progress about the indigenously developed Feluda paper strip test for SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis, he said it could be rolled out in the next few weeks.

Presently Covid-19 vaccines are in various stages of phases 1, 2 and 3 of human clinical trials, the results of which are awaited. "Adequate safety and efficacy data is required for emergency use authorisation, vaccine approval for ensuring patient safety. Further course of action will depend on the data generated," the Minister underlined.

Categorically rejecting speculation that the government is prioritizing young and working-class for the Covid-19 vaccine for economic reasons, Vardhan said, "The prioritisation of groups for Covid-19 vaccine shall be based on two key considerations -- occupational hazard and risk of exposure to infection, and the risk of developing severe disease and increased mortality."

Asked how the government plans to roll out the Covid-19 vaccine, he said that it is anticipated that supplies of vaccines would be available in limited quantities in the beginning.

"In a huge country like India, it is critical to prioritise vaccine delivery based on various factors such as the risk of exposure, comorbidity among various population groups, the mortality rate among Covid-19 cases, and several others," the minister said.

Vardhan also highlighted the need for massive advocacy for building community sensitization activities to understand the reasons for vaccine hesitancy and address them appropriately.

Referring to reports of reinfection surfacing in various states, Vardhan said an analysis by the ICMR has revealed that many cases reported as COVID-19 reinfection have been misclassified because RT-PCR tests can detect dead-virus shed for prolonged periods after recovery.

Bihar poll: Surjewala named Cong poll mgmt panel chairman



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday formed several panels for the Bihar Assembly polls with party general secretary Randeep Surjewala named chairman of the election management and coordination committee.

Mohan Prakash was made the convener of the 14-member election management and coordination committee. The panel includes senior leaders like Meera Kumar, Tariq Anwar, Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad, Shaakeel Ahmed and Sanjay Nirupam.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi also approved the setting up of the publicity committee, media coordination committee, public meeting and logistics committee, legal committee and office management committee for the Bihar elections, a party statement said.

While Subodh Kumar has been appointed the convener of the publicity committee, Jaeya Mishra was named the co-convener of the panel.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara has been named the chairman of the media coordination committee for the polls, while Prem Chand Mishra will be the convener and Rajesh Rathor co-convener of the panel.

Brijesh Kumar Munan has been appointed convener of the public meeting and logistics committee, while Varun Chopra has been named the chairman of the legal committee.

The party's office management committee includes the likes of Ashok Kumar and Kaubak Quadri.

The party had announced a list of 30 star campaigners a day earlier with leaders like Sonia, Rahul Gandhi, Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad, Navjot Singh Sidhu amongst others in the star campaign panel.

Congress is contesting the Bihar assembly polls as part of the Grand Alliance. Under a seat-sharing formula for the upcoming assembly polls, the Congress will contest 70 of a total 243 seats.

The Bihar Assembly polls will be held in three phases on October 28, November 3 and November 7, and the counting of votes will take place on November 10.

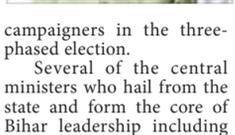
Modi, Shah, Yogi among star BJP campaigners for first phase polls



DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

As it kickstarted its campaign in the State, the BJP on Sunday released a list of 30 star campaigners for the first phase of Bihar Assembly elections, scheduled to be held on October 28. It also released names of 46 candidates, including some fresh faces, for the second phase of polls in the State.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, party president J P Nadda, General Secretary in-charge of the State Bhupendra Yadav, Bihar BJP President Sanjay Jaiswal, Deputy-Chief Minister Sushil Modi, Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and former Maharashtra Chief Minister, also state in-charge of campaign, Devendra Fadnavis, figure in the list of main



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

campaigners in the three-phase election. Several of the central ministers who hail from the state and form the core of Bihar leadership including Ravi Shankar Prasad, R K Singh, Giriraj Singh, Ashwani Kumar Chaubey, Nityanand Rai have been given charge of spearheading the campaign in the high-stake Assembly poll.

This apart, former central Minister R K Yadav, former Delhi BJP Chief Manoj Tiwari, former state Chief Mangal Pandey, Sanjay Paswan and Nivedita Singh are also to hit the campaign ground.

BJP has also enlisted services of former Chief Ministers of Jharkhand Raghuraj Das and Babul Marandi for the state poll besides Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, an old hand in the State affairs.

The BJP is contesting the assembly elections in alliance with the JD(U). Two other parties — Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) — have also been included in the alliance.



BJP will 'focus on the governance of the Modi Government' and its fulfilment of the centrally-funded state projects, including major bridges, roads, railway lines, power projects, many of which have been completed and inaugurated recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The brand Modi will play and work in the state," sources said.

Hours before releasing the list of 30 star campaigners, the BJP released a list of 46 candidates for the second phase of the Bihar Assembly elections which will be held on November 3.

Launching the party's campaign for the Bihar polls at the historic Gandhi Maidan in Gaya, Nadda listed out the BJP-JD(U) government's achievements and lauded Nitish Kumar for his handling of the coronavirus crisis in the State. "Leadership of India is secured in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it is important that the leadership of Bihar is secured with Nitish Kumar," Nadda further said.

Cong seeks resignation of K'taka CM over graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday sought the resignation of Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa over the ₹662-crore corruption allegations against him, his son, grandson and son-in-law.

Launching a sharp attack at the BJP Government in Karnataka, Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said that it is engulfed in a clutch of corruption with "denied and painted leaders ruling."

Singhvi was referring to the allegation levelled by leader

of opposition Siddaramaiah against Yediyurappa's son BY Vijayendra of taking a bribe from a Bangalore development authority contractor.

He also said that alleged audio and Whatsapp conversation involving Yediyurappa's son and grandson disclose their direct involvement in the corruption and asked why no criminal complaint has been filed so far. "You have a bribe giver and a taker in front of you".

"Why is he not subject to criminal proceedings?" he also asked. Is "Karnataka chief minister has special leverage?"

Singhvi said while questioning the Government's silence over the matter.

"If BJP and the chief minister has a basic sense of shame then Yediyurappa should resign or be sacked," Singhvi said at a press conference.

He further took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying, "Why the watchman is sleeping in Yediyurappa's case?"

"It is unfortunate that you (PM Modi) are being watchmen for others' homes but letting corruption take place in your own home," Singhvi said.

Major spike in pulses' price

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After vegetables, it is the turn of the pulses to witness a major spike in their prices. In the retail markets, tur (arhar) is being sold between ₹120 and ₹140 a kg while dhuli urad is between ₹90 and ₹120 a kg.

As per the Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA), the wholesale prices of gram, tur and urad is ₹6,700, ₹9,700 and ₹9,700 per quintal in the markets. Besides tur and dhuli urad, masoor dal prices increased from ₹60 to ₹80 per kg and moong dal prices increased from ₹80 to ₹90-100 per kg. The prices of kabuli chana (chickpea) and gram dal are also skyrocketing in the retail markets.

Traders say prices of pulses are rising due to short supply. Another reason is that there is a possibility of a further increase in pulses stocks. The rainfall in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh has led to the low production of pulses. The traders complain that the speedy increase in prices has reduced the sale by 60 percent. They added that the price hike has taken a toll on retail business with the con-



sumption of pulses which is drastically reducing.

Prices of vegetables are also high in the retail market. Potato prices have increased from ₹25 to ₹40 per kg, capsicum from ₹80 to ₹120, cauliflower from ₹70 to ₹100, green chilli from ₹70 to ₹100, onion from ₹30 to ₹50 per kg.

In an attempt to check the rising price of pulses, MoCA has offered 'urad' and 'tur' at subsidised rates for retail sale to state governments.

Tur is being offered for retail intervention at ₹85 per kg. Accordingly, dhuli urad is being offered to states at ₹79 per kg for K-18 variety and at

Rs 81 per kg for K-19 variety. According to the ministry, the retail packs are being provided for retailing fair price shops of Public Distribution System (PDS) and other marketing/retail outlets of the state governments such as dairy and horticulture outlets and consumer corporation society.

The ministry had earlier introduced a mechanism to supply pulses from the buffer stock to states at minimum support price plus 10 percent other charges.

Overall, India is a pulse-deficient country, with the overall domestic production falling short of consumption.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

No. EL-50-DNR-OPEN-21-2020-21 The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway, Danapur for and on behalf of the President of India is inviting online (E-Tendering) Open for the reputed contractors working in State/Central Govt. having valid Electrical contractor license for the required voltage level issued by State/Central Govt. licensing board for the following work fulfilling the Eligibility Criteria and terms conditions mentioned in tender document.

Tender No.: EL-50-DNR-Open-21-2020-21

1. Name of work with its location : Provision of Automatic Power Factor Controller (APFC) panel along with Harmonics Filter in power distribution network at RUPB, Danapur & Jhajha. 2. Approx cost of the work (NET value) : Rs. 11549209.00 3. Earnest money to be deposited : Rs. 207800.00 4. Date & time for online submission and closing of all above tenders : On 02.11.2020 up to 12.00 Hrs. 5. Website particulars, notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where all the above tender form can be seen : CRIS website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>, Office of the Sr. DEE (G)/DNR, D.R.M. Building, 1st Floor, East Central Railway, Danapur. Note : All corrigendum will be uploaded on website before 15 days if required.

Divinl. Railway Manager (Elect/G) E. C. Railway, Danapur PR/735/DNR/ENGENT/20-21/44

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

e-tender Notice

e-tender Notice No. 36 of 2020&21 (Open)-Engg/DDU Division

On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRM/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings.

Tender No. 19-DDU-DEN-HQ-20-21

(i) Name of work with its location : Repairs to Engineering office in modular form at Mughalsarai under ADEN/HQ/MGS. (ii) Approx. cost of the work : ₹4362875.63 (iii) Earnest Money : ₹87300.00 Tender No. 22-DDU-DEN-HQ-20-21 (i) Name of work with its location : Replacement of deep tubewell and connection of pipeline due to failure of deep tubewell no. 24 opposite BOXN training school near wagon care center under ADEN/HQ/DDU (ii) Approx. cost of the work : ₹3007442.07 (iii) Earnest Money : ₹6200.00 (iv) Date & time for submission of e-tender : 02.11.2020, up to 12.00 hrs. (v) Website particulars of e-tendering : www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager East Central Railway, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya PR/736/DDU/ENG/T/20-21/52

'Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana' brings smile on potters' face

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Just two years ago, nobody had even thought that the marginalised potters' community in Bihar would have their day. But life is changing for hundreds of them now thanks to the "Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana" launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to empower the Kumhar community in Bihar.

"It was the dream of none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi to empower the Kumhar community through modern technology and revive the dying art of pottery making in the country," says KVI chairman VK Saxena.

Saxena points out that one such beneficiary of the program is Jai Shankar Pandit, a potter in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar who along with his father used to work earlier on stone chaak. His life has changed after he received an electric potter wheel from KVIC. High productivity and higher income are all that he can boast of now. And the family has a unique way to express their gratitude to the Prime Minister.

Jai Shankar is now making the idols of the Prime Minister and also earning a respectable livelihood by selling them in Bihar and West Bengal. Pandit could now also earn a sustainable livelihood. "The idols of the PM are selling in good numbers and fetching me good



price. So far he has sold 75-80 such idols at a rate of ₹800 per piece," Saxena points out.

Keeping in view the festive season and the ban on Chinese clay items by Modi, he is also making idols of deities - Durga, Laxmi and Ganesh - and a variety of diya (earthen lamp) and decorative items to reap maximum advantage.

"Empowerment of the marginalised potters' community is the dream of the Prime Minister and it is heartening to see potters like Jai Shankar expressing their gratitude to the

Prime Minister in such a noble way," Saxena maintains.

Connecting the potters' community with the mainstream of society by increasing their production and income is the sole objective of Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana. The program has been currently suspended in Bihar due to the Model Code of Conduct but soon after the elections, the Mission will be restarted and spread to the remotest parts of Bihar empowering every potter family.

In just two years KVIC has

distributed 500 electric potter wheels to an identical number of potter families and empowered nearly 20,000 people in Bihar with an estimated 10 lakh potters population. KVIC has distributed electric chaak to potters in districts like Rohtas, Bhojpur, Nawada, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur, Patna, East & West Champaran, Khagaria and Sitamarhi.

Earlier, a potter could hardly make 100 to 150 diya or Kulhar a day, but on the electric chaak, he is able to make 500 to 600 of them daily.

Agriculture Ministry invites farmers' outfits for meet again on Oct 14

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Punjab's farmers' organisations continuing with their agitation against the farm laws, the Ministry of Agriculture has once again invited them for a meeting on October 14.

Beginning October 13, the BJP has lined up its Cabinet ministers to address farmers, arthiyas, agriculture experts, educationists and the media over eight consecutive days in a bid to counter the protests.

The ministers namely Hardeep Singh Puri, Kailash Chowdhary, Smriti Irani, Anurag Thakur, Dr Sanjiv Kumar Balia, Som Parkash, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Dr Jitendra Singh will address and answer queries over farm bills in district-specific video conferences.

The farmers' organisations had last week rejected the Union agriculture department's



invitation to participate in a "conference to address their concerns" on October 8. "We have received an invitation for a meeting on October 14," said Jagmohan Singh, general secretary of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Dakaunda).

"Though the invite has come from the agriculture secretary, it mentions that the central government wants to talk to farmers," he said. "All farmers' organisations will decide whether to go to Delhi for talks in a meeting slated for October 13 in Jalandhar," he added. Farmers in Punjab have been demanding that these three laws be repealed.

Farmers from Amritsar, Ferozpur in Punjab have been holding a 'rail roko' agitation against the "anti-farmer" laws, with protesters squatting on railway tracks at various places in the state since September 24. In Haryana, farmers are protesting in sporadic manner across the state.

Farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws will destroy the minimum support price mechanism, end Agricultural Produce Market Committees and allow corporates to arm-twist them. The Government, however, has been saying that these laws, which were passed by Parliament recently amid a vociferous Opposition protest, will raise farmers' income, free them from the clutches of the middleman and usher in new technology in farming.

Pak violates ceasefire in J&K's Poonch, Rajouri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The Pakistan Army late Sunday evening resorted to "intense" artillery/mortar shelling along the line of control in Poonch and Rajouri sectors. In response the Indian Army retaliated befittingly. Till the time of filing the report, tensions prevailed in the Poonch sector as two back to back incidents of ceasefire violation were reported in Degwar and Khari Karmara sectors of Poonch. Artillery shelling was also reported from Sunderbani sector of Rajouri. Unconfirmed reports claimed, by regularly targeting several forward posts of the

Indian army, the Pakistan army is attempting to push small groups of heavily armed infiltrators inside the Indian territory. In retaliatory strikes, some of the Pakistani forward posts suffered heavy damages after they caught fire. Meanwhile, according to eyewitness reports, several shells fired by the Pakistani army landed in thickly populated areas. A cordon and search operation was also launched in the Balakote area of Poonch in the wee hours of Sunday after several rounds of firing was reported from the close vicinity of a house of a local BJP leader. According to a Jammu based Defence spokesman, Lt-

Col Devender Anand, "a total number of three incidents of ceasefire violations were reported along the line of control in Rajouri and Poonch sectors on Sunday evening where Pakistan reported intense artillery shelling." According to a Defence Spokesman, "at around 6.45 p.m Pakistan initiated 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and artillery shelling along LoC in Sunderbani sector of Rajouri. Indian army retaliated befittingly. Earlier, the Pakistan army had also targeted forward Indian locations in Degwar and Khari Karmara sectors of Poonch using intense mortar and artillery shelling."

SIKH MAN HECKLING CASE IN BENGAL

Sikh delegation meets Guv, State says incident given communal colour

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A Sikh delegation on Sunday met Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar seeking justice for Balwinder Singh whom a cop allegedly pulled down by his Pagdi (turban) during the Thursday's BJP march to the State secretariat even as the Bengal Home Department rejected the allegations saying what happened with Singh was non-discriminatory and that the "Sikh brothers and sisters live in Bengal peacefully and happily." With Assembly elections scheduled to take place in mid 2021 and the BJP managing to make it a pan-India issue questioning Mamata Banerjee Government's true secular credentials, the State Home Department tweeted a clarification saying the Sikh man was

detained after he was found with a gun in the middle of the rally. "Our Sikh brothers and sisters live here in West Bengal in perfect peace and harmony, in happiness and tranquility, with respect from all of us for their faith and practices. A recent incident when one isolated individual got caught with one illegally carried firearm ... in an agitation that was not authorized is now being twisted out of context, being distorted, and being given communal colors in fractious and partisan interest," an official statement from the Home Department said. Stopping short of naming the BJP the Government said "One political party is giving communal colour to the subject in narrow partisan interest in a manner that Bengal does not

believe in. Policing was done as per law, but highest respect for the Sikh panth and ways from GOWB is affirmed." The Government statement came almost in tandem with a delegation led by Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee member Manjinder Singh Sirsa meeting the Governor seeking speedy justice for Balwinder Singh. "We are determined to take this issue to its logical conclusion," said Sirsa after meeting the Governor wondering "is this the way you treat your men in uniform who have taken all the risks to fight the terrorists near the border." SGMCM had lodged a complaint with the Howrah Police Station. Balwinder Singh who was reportedly present in the BJP crowd in the capacity of a per-

sonal security guard of a saf- from leader Priyanshu Singh when he was caught carrying a gun is an ex-central forces officer. Subsequently he was detained and forcibly pinned down by an overenthusiastic police man following a minor scuffle. The accused who was earlier given four-day police custody was on Sunday presented before a local court one day in advance where the magistrate allowed another 8-day police custody for him. With the Sikhs having a sizeable presence in parts of Bhawanipore area (Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's constituency), Asansol, Siliguri and Kharagpur the BJP has been firmly backing Singh accusing the Government of religious persecution.

Meghalaya reports 139 new +ve cases, one death

Shillong: At least 139 persons tested positive for Covid-19 in Meghalaya on Sunday, pushing the tally to 7,683, while one more death raised the toll to 63, a senior health department official said. East Khasi Hills, of which state capital Shillong is a part, continues to be the worst-affected district with 74 new cases, Health services director Aman War said. Ri Bhoi registered 25 fresh cases, followed by West Garo Hills at 17, East Garo Hills at nine and South West Khasi Hills at five. Four cases were recorded in South West Garo Hills, two each in West Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills and one in South Garo Hills. PTI



Farmer carries a basket of papayas at Relthare village in Karad on Sunday

Yogi announces 5% quota for ex-servicemen

SIANS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh has announced a 5 per cent reservation for jobs in the Group C posts for former service personnel. Adityanath said that retired and former service personnel from all three services -- Army, Navy, Air Force -- will be eligible for the 5 per cent reservation. To be eligible for the job, one will have to be an original resident of Uttar Pradesh and the reservation will be provided at each level on a 'horizontal basis'. "This move will encourage former officials and workers and help their families financially," said a government spokesperson.

He added that Uttar Pradesh also sends the majority number of people in the defence services and at present, a large number of former service personnel reside in the state. The state government has also recently increased the financial assistance given to the family of a slain serviceperson from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 50 lakh. "The government is also providing jobs to a member of a martyr's family. It was decided that a member of the family of any defence services and paramilitary forces, who is martyred after April 1, 2017, will be given a government job. An order to this effect was issued on March 19, 2018," the spokesperson said, adding that there was no such provision under previous governments.

Recent chain of events in Bengal call for imposition of President's Rule: Supriyo

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A war of words broke out between the BJP and the Trinamool Congress with Union Minister Babul Supriyo on Sunday prescribing imposition of Article 356 in Bengal even as he said that the State combined all the material conditions required to enforce President's Rule. Supriyo, a second-time MP from Asansol, said that the recent chain of events in Bengal demanded imposition of Article 356. "From the arrest of six Al Qaida terror moles from Murshidabad to murder of opposition workers including BJP councillor Manish Shukla to insulting the Sikh community by assaulting a Sikh man by his turban during a BJP rally, shows that Bengal is a fit case for Article 356," the singer-turned-politician said drawing sharp remarks from senior Trinamool Congress leadership. Senior TMC MP Sougato Roy promptly hit back saying Babul Supriyo was a political greenhorn with little knowledge of the constitutional laws. "A novice as he is, Babul has jumped into politics from Bombay where he was a singer. He

has no idea of constitutional laws. He should know that before imposing Article 356 there is an advisory needed under Article 355," Roy said wondering whether in Uttar Pradesh where one person had killed 8 cops President's Rule had been imposed. He also said "the murder of Manish Shukla was an affair among the Bahubalis (strongmen) which however is being investigated into by the CID." He further said that union minister was making "absurd claims to hog attention, as he is not in good terms with State BJP president Dilip Ghosh which is why he is not getting any prominence in his party." Incidentally a BJP delegation led by its all-India vice president Mukul Roy on Sunday met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar with a demand for a CBI investigation into the Shukla murder case. This even as BJP strongman and MP from Barrackpore Arjun Singh on Sunday alleged that the State Government was trying to implicate him in the murder case. Shukla, a former TMC leader like Singh, was considered the right hand man of the Barrackpore MP.

Forged letters being sent out in Sankat Mochan temple's name; case filed

Varanasi: Letters with objectionable content are being sent in the name of famous Sankat Mochan Temple to religious institutions and monasteries across the country, temple authorities have said. The Mahant of the temple, Prof Vishwambhar Nath Mishra, has filed a police complaint seeking a through probe into the matter. "The matter came to light when undelivered letters started coming to the temple's address in large numbers since the past couple of days. The content of the letter is highly objectionable and derogatory

against the Akshardham temple of the Swaminarayan sect," he said. The Mahant said that he has given a written complaint to the Lanka police with the bunch of such forged letters and has also informed higher authorities. "It seems to be an organised conspiracy to defame the temple. Since the letters bear the sender's address as Mahant Sankat Mochan Temple, the matter hurts our reputation," he said, adding that the matter should be investigated properly to expose the conspiracy. The Mahant said that he also

received phone calls regarding the letters, and he had to clarify that the letters were not sent by the temple. Meanwhile, Lanka Inspector, Mahesh Pandey, told reporters: "We have received a complaint in this regard. The matter is being investigated." In the letter, printed on an inland letter, the Akshardham temple of Swaminarayan sect has been termed as a threat to the Sanatan Dharma. The letter also discourages people from visiting the Akshardham temple in order to protect the Sanatan Dharma. IANS

Necessary to take extra precautions during festive season: K'taka CM

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday said it was necessary to take extra precautions during the upcoming festive season, amid Covid-19 pandemic. The Chief Minister held a meeting with Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar and other senior officials of the state government to discuss the precautions that need to be undertaken to check the spread of COVID-19, during the Mysuru Dasara. "It was necessary to take extra precautions during the upcoming festive season amid COVID-19 pandemic. A meeting was held with the Medical Education Minister, Chief Secretary and senior officials

regarding the precautions that need to be undertaken to control the spread of COVID-19 specially during the Mysuru Dasara," Yediyurappa tweeted. With COVID-19 pandemic casting a shadow, the government has decided to organise the world famous Dasara celebrations in the palace city of Mysuru in a "simple" way. Celebrated as "Naada Habba" (state festival), the 10-day event every year showcases Karnataka's cultural heritage resplendent with folk art forms, and attracts large crowds and tourists. This year Dasara festivities are likely between October 17-26, the last day being Vijayadashami. Recently,

The Government has already said that "Jambho savari" on the last day - "Vijayadashami", that marks the end of ten day long Dasara festival in Mysuru will be restricted to palace premises. COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has given some recommendations for conducting Dasara 2020 in Mysuru during the pandemic, for continuation of tradition and cultural activities and simultaneously ensuring that the events are COVID-19 safe. The recommendations, include Mysuru Dasara inau-

gural on October 17 being strictly limited to 200 people, cultural programmes in the evening for 8 days shall be limited to 2 hours per day by local artists only not exceeding 50 people, police personnel at strategic places shall prevent crowding and check wearing of facemasks by all. Only 300 people shall be allowed for the world renowned Jambho Savari (procession of caparisoned elephants) with all COVID precautions. The government has already said that "Jambho savari" on the last day - "Vijayadashami", that marks the end of ten day long Dasara festival in Mysuru will be restricted to palace premises.

The event usually attracts large crowds, as it is the most awaited one. The other recommendations include, to make Dasara 2020 celebrations virtual for the public, RT-PCR negative test report (done after 14th October 2020) shall be mandatory for all those attending the events, artists and other performers shall be local artists preferably from Mysuru and other districts of Karnataka only. Also adherence to COVID-19 precautions like compulsory facemasks, physical distancing, provision of hand sanitizers, hand washing facility with soap and water, and appropriate places to ensure physical distancing. PTI

Raj reports 2,144 fresh corona cases, 14 deaths

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan recorded 14 more fatalities due to the novel coronavirus on Sunday, taking the death toll in the state to 1,650, a health department bulletin said. The state also reported 2,144 new cases on Sunday. The total number of infected people now stands at 1,59,052, out of which, 21,412 are under treatment, it said. As per the bulletin, 1,35,106 people have been discharged after treatment till



now. In Jaipur, the COVID-19 death toll is 336 followed by 156 in Jodhpur, 123 in Bikaner, 119 in Ajmer, 107 in Kota, 85 in Bharatpur, 71 in Pali, 49 in Nagaur, 54 in Udaipur, 46 in Alwar, 42 in Sikar, 30 in Barmer, 26 in Dholpur and 25 in Rajsamand. Of the 2,144 fresh COVID-19 cases, 389 were recorded in Jaipur, 303 in Jodhpur, 100 in Bikaner, 152 in Alwar, 100 in Kota, 96 in Ajmer besides the cases reported in other districts of the state, the bulletin added.

Covid recoveries cross 7-lakh mark in Andhra

Amaravati: Covid-19 recoveries in Andhra Pradesh reached 7,03,208 on Sunday, health officials said. The southern state's recoveries have been consistently outnumbering infections for the past several weeks already. Among the 13 districts, East Godavari witnessed the highest number of recoveries at 97,630. On Sunday, the state registered 5,210 more cases, raising the tally to 7.55 lakh.

West Godavari accounted for the highest number of infections, 786, followed by Chittoor (713), East Godavari (701), Krishna (462), Guntur (431), Kadapa (418) and Prakasam (362) among others. With the new additions, Chittoor's tally crossed the 70,000 mark while West Godavari's reached 75,000. Meanwhile, 30 more patients succumbed to the virus, raising the statewide toll to 6,224.

Chittoor accounts for the highest number of deaths, 705, followed by East Godavari (568), Guntur (560) and Anantapur (524) among others. Of the 7.55 lakh cases, active cases currently stand at 46,295, even as the state has completed 65.6 lakh Covid tests. On Sunday, AP tested 75,517 samples for Covid even as the state's positivity rate currently stands at 11.56 per cent. IANS

Maha new cases drop to 10,792, 309 more die

TOTAL INFECTIONS JUMP TO 15,28,226, DEATHS MOUNT TO 40,349

With the fresh infections, the total infected cases in the state jumped from 15,17,434 to 15,28,226. Similarly, with 309 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in the state mounted from 40,040 to

40,349. On a day when 10,461 people were discharged from various hospitals in the state, the number of people discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year went up to 12,66,240. The recovery rate in the state rose from 82.76 per cent to 82.86 per cent. Of the total 309 deaths reported on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 42 deaths, followed by 35 deaths each in Thane and Nagpur, 30 in Pune, 25 in Kolhapur, 20 in Satara, 19 in Ratnagiri, 15 in Sangli, 14 in Solapur, 11 each in Nashik and Ahmednagar and 10 deaths in Nanded.

In the lower range, there were 9 deaths in Raigad, 5 in Jalgaon, 4 each in Palghar and Akola, 3 each in Beed and Gondia, 2 each in Amravati, Bhandara and Gadchiroli and one death each in Aurangabad, Jalna, Latur, Osmanabad, Yavatmal and Chandrapur. In addition, two persons from outside the state died in Maharashtra. With 42 deaths, the Mumbai Covid-19 toll went up from 9,391 to 9,433 while the infected cases rose by 2,170 to trigger a jump in the total number of infections from 227,276 to 229,446. Meanwhile, the mortality rate in the state stood at 2.64 per cent. The authorities pegged the number of "active

cases" at 2,21,174. Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases to up to 3,15,774, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased to 6248. Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai -- with 2,04,437 total cases, while the pandemic toll rose to 5201. Out of 76,43,584 samples sent to laboratories, 15,28,226 have tested positive (19.99 per cent) for COVID-19 until Sunday. Currently, 23,10,783 people are in home quarantine while 24,726 people are in institutional quarantine.



High-rise buildings are vaguely seen during haze in Thane on Sunday

Prevention vs cure

Govt, IMA clash on Ayush COVID protocol; doctors say evidence merely anecdotal and a placebo, not clinically proven



When Kerala, the hub of Ayurveda with some of the best practitioners, arrested the spiral of the pandemic in the early stages, its Health Minister KK Shailaja made a crucial observation. That once the disease had set in, there was no alternative to the clinically proven and medically tested protocols. And that traditional systems of medicine, like Ayurveda and homeopathy, were good for overall well-being and body resistance. So they could be used only as part of a protective or convalescent routine. The deadly virus itself had to be treated with proven drug combinations. This distinction is very important in a country growing up in

a culture of naturopathy and home remedies, and, therefore, prone to trusting conventional wisdom. But this is a novel virus we are dealing with. There is no doubt that traditional systems of medicine in India have not only survived but flourished over the centuries and there are virtues embedded in our huge herbal heritage that are good for disease prevention, improving immunity and overall health management. So far, the evidence of their curative potential has largely been anecdotal than empirical. But overplaying our herbs as part of a COVID-19 medicare protocol, when they are yet to cross the threshold of medical reason, comes with the attendant ills of misconception that they are just as effective as allopathic drugs. Particularly in a country where most cannot understand the fine line between preventive care and cure. This is the reason why the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has taken umbrage to Health Minister Harsh Vardhan's upgradation of protocols on October 6 for managing and treating COVID patients with mild symptoms in AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) hospitals and by AYUSH practitioners. It asked the Minister to authenticate efficacy claims made from studies done on asymptomatic COVID patients, make them public and available for scientific scrutiny or else be responsible for "inflicting a fraud on the nation and gullible patients by calling placebos as drugs." In a sharp attack, the IMA asked how many of Vardhan's ministerial colleagues have so far made the informed choice of getting treated under these protocols. It wondered if the proponents of this claim and his Ministry would subject themselves as volunteers to an independent prospective double-blind control study in the prevention and treatment of COVID. This is a pertinent question considering almost all of our Ministers have chosen private multi-speciality hospitals with advanced allopathic protocols to treat themselves when they got infected. The IMA even asked what was stopping the Minister from handing over COVID care and control to the AYUSH Ministry. The problem with the AYUSH protocol at hospitals is that it legitimises Ayurveda as a line of treatment when fact is that there has not been a sustained trial and a consistent similarity of results to prove that it works in arresting the spread of the disease. Till then, AYUSH treatments can at best be prophylactic in nature and must be emphasised as such in officialese.

It is true that a few Ayurveda pharmaceutical companies have been working on simulation studies where few plant molecules have shown the ability to halt the alarming multiplication of the SARS CoV-2 virus in an Artificial Intelligence (AI) modelling. Researchers at IIT Delhi, in collaboration with Japanese scientists, have found that properties of the Ayurvedic herb Ashwagandha have "therapeutic and preventive value" against COVID-19 infection. But they are working on more conclusive proof that could allow for pharmacological interventions. Let us not forget that callous official endorsement can lead to outrageous claims like the recent one made by Yoga guru Baba Ramdev that he had found two new medicines — Coronil and Swasari — that had shown a 100 per cent recovery rate in patients within just 14 days. He quoted clinical trials at the Jaipur-based National Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (NIMS) which denied them subsequently. He applied for a licence duplicitously, claiming that his was a cold, cough, fever drug with immunity-boosting properties. And once the licence was got and the time for a rollout came, he claimed it was a cure. Besides, Ramdev's Patanjali group sidestepped the Drug Controller General of India, whose approval must be sought before a medicine is put out in the market. In our search for a cure among herbs, we are doing a disservice to what Ayurveda stands for. It is not just about COVID prevention but a holistic system of medicine involving herbs, diet, lifestyle and other measures that helps the body fight off all kinds of pathogens and diseases. Ayurveda has never been in conflict with science and is actually about scientific management of life. The IMA statement is all the more significant because it draws attention to the flawed pandemic management in India as we race to become the worst affected country. With the disease expected to see a painful peak by November, in no small part aided by the festive season and the opening up of every sphere of human activity, spare a thought for our overworked healthcare personnel. Most of them are battling depression, exhaustion and pay cuts even as the stream of patients is constant. Hundreds of them have lost their lives while on frontline duty and the IMA has been demanding martyr status for them as they went down fighting a new age battle. The infrastructure, even in bigger cities, is still short of handling a bad winter surge should it happen as predicted. Rather than upgrading AYUSH protocols, we need to upgrade practical solutions.

The hunger project

World Food Programme rightfully wins the Nobel Peace Prize as it fights a global nutrition crisis caused by the virus and war



It was a long time coming but in the end, the United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP) was awarded the coveted Nobel Peace Prize 2020 for its efforts to combat hunger, its "contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict." It is in a long time that a cause has been prioritised over a face. The WFP which was set up in 1961 at the behest of then US President Dwight Eisenhower, combines humanitarian work along with ensuring peace in war-torn regions because it firmly believes that without tackling war, hunger

cannot be eradicated. How much effort the WFP puts in and how much the world needs its help can be gauged by the fact that there are 690 million hungry people around the world and around 60 per cent of them live in conflict-torn nations. In 2019, the WFP assisted 97 million people, the largest number since 2012, in 88 countries. It manages one of the world's largest logistics chains as on any given day, it has 5,600 trucks, 30 ships and nearly 100 planes on the move. The Nobel Peace Prize to it couldn't have come at a better time as the UN has been under a cloud with its health watchdog, the World Health Organisation (WHO), mishandling the Coronavirus crisis. The honour is also a validation of the UN's yeoman's service to humanity and has silenced its detractors.

Like all other countries that have benefitted from the WFP, India, too, has a long association with it. The aid organisation has been working with respective governments to eradicate hunger since 1963, when India was a major food importer and was battling shortages. Now the WFP is working to reform our notorious Public Distribution System (PDS) through its Annapurta initiative whereby automatic grain dispensers — or ATMs for rice — will be set up across States. It is also working on fortifying food distributed under the mid-day meal scheme. Now, with the pandemic disrupting food security, it is setting up supplementary nutrition production units in Uttar Pradesh. Its mobile storage units in Odisha have contained starvation deaths there. The Nobel Peace Prize, which has often been under a cloud of controversy due to the selection of people who are deemed "undeserving" or "unworthy" of it, will be heartily endorsed by the global community, which owes the WFP a lot. This year the selection committee has got it bang on.



PRAFULL GORADIA

Politics is the engine of society. The best of carriages, bogeys and saloons would come to naught if the engine was not maintained well. India has had satisfactory governments and poor ministries but still little thought has been given to the quality of men and women who should govern the country. Neither voters nor parties and their leaders or even our political scientists have given much thought to this subject. If the latter have thought about it, they do not seem to have written or propagated any ideas about it.

Indian elections have experienced positive polling, negative voting, voters choosing with their feet and polarised mandates, caste, class or community-wise. People have been heard saying that they voted to feel safe as a country after Indra Gandhi's assassination in 1984. Never have I heard anyone saying that he/she voted to try and ensure good governance. Although after the 2019 polling, I did hear some Kolkata voters say that they voted for Narendra Modi for he was the fittest ruler among the choice before us at the Centre, although they did not agree with his party's ideology.

That a successful democracy needs an effective Opposition is universally agreed. To add, a credible Opposition should also have an inner-party democracy. Out of the 68 years of India's democratic functioning, most of the time we have either not had an adequate Opposition or the main Opposition party lacking internal democracy that would have injected fresh energy and perspectives. Lately, we have the doubtful benefit of hereditary parties or family-led organisations. The flip side to this problem is that most politicians in recent decades belong to mainly three categories — a family tradition, the unemployables and the freaks. Most others and their parents prefer secure careers or pursuits. Even well-to-do, financially secure families do not encourage their offspring to risk years in politics. Yet it is the same India which sent out their best youth, grown-ups and old, women and men to agitate for freedom. Was this patriotism spontaneous to the people or was it inspired by the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi? Before 1920, there was no tradition of such mass participation in the country's polit-

Leadership quality

People vote for a party depending on various factors but little or no importance is given to the quality of the person chosen to lead it



ical destiny, although India, certainly large swathes of it, was under the heels of invaders since the 12th century. And soon after 1947, the patriotic enthusiasm began to dry up.

Independence from the British did not mean that freedom was guaranteed or even secured forever. We experienced a shock in 1962 in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh (then North-East Frontier Agency, NEFA) at the hands of China to the extent that the Prime Minister appeared to weep on All India Radio when he said, "my heart goes out to the people of Assam". Radio China was broadcasting in November 1962 that the brave soldiers of People's Liberation Army (PLA) were looking forward to spending Christmas at Calcutta. And the State Bank had unlocked its treasury at its branch in Tezpur and currency notes were being blown by the breeze on the streets.

Retaining freedom is more important than winning it. Therefore, the best talent in the country should try going into politics. Everyone would not succeed. As planned, I rounded up my commercial career and came to Delhi nearly 40 years ago en route Gujarat. In those years caste mattered so much that even the most generous political party could not allot any seat (Lok Sabha). I, therefore, held back in Delhi and worked here quietly for 16 years and then got to the Rajya Sabha for a part term as a result of a byelec-

tion. I did my best and that was my satisfaction out of the service I performed. For example, I was able to build 49 Sulabh *shauchalayas* in Baroda city and in all 88 bus stops in the district with the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds I was allotted. In India, members of the elite and intelligentsia often console themselves that politics is a dirty game and good people should avoid it. This is not true. In my years, I found politics was cleaner than my earlier 25 years in business. Let me quote one example, most of the non-performing assets (NPAs) with the banks are purely business failures. There are much fewer scams in politics.

If I did not go farther in politics, it was because of my peculiarities. I was an ethnic Gujarati, brought up in Bengal and had spent 25 years in business with no experience in politics. We must remember that while business management is a game of selection, politics is one of elimination and in business one generally succeeds without grabbing anyone else's money. In politics, one wins by dispossessing someone else of his seat. Nevertheless, one's attitude should be similar to the military national service. Whether one likes soldiering or not, two years are to be devoted to training as a matter of duty. In Britain, many Oxbridge graduates join politics as do a significant number of public school boys and girls. True, in the US it has not been

quite the same. When my father was at the University of Boston, between 1929 and 32, he often said he would return to India and join the Congress party. Gandhi was already an acclaimed leader and yet the reaction was often, "After such expensive studies, why go to politics?" Yet the American standards are reasonably good.

Our voters should be more demanding and not so tolerant of standards as they often can be. Take the issue of dynasty. In May 1981, when Rajiv Gandhi was contesting his first byelections from Amethi, I spent a few days motoring through the constituency accompanied by a colleague. One afternoon we stopped at a *dhaba* where an enthusiastic discussion was going on. The general tenor was how well Rajiv spoke. What chaste Hindi he used and so on. After 15 minutes or so I intervened to ask, "What service has he done for the country except for flying aeroplanes for Indian Airlines?" One sleepy person present suddenly woke up to assert, "He is learning his mother's vocation. Don't doctors bequeath their dispensaries to their children? Don't lawyers train their children how to be advocates? At least Rajivji had to come and get elected again and again to get the people's approval."

Coming to corruption, we came across a lucid explanation on the outskirts of Malihabad in the 1984 General Election. Again a *dhaba* discussion,

Anwar Ahmed, a Minister in the State Cabinet, was being praised for being such a good and honest man. One of the participants lost his patience and intervened to ask, "Yes, Anwar Saheb is very upright and honest, he has been a Minister for 10 years but has not been able to build a house for his family. If a person cannot do this least bit for his wife and children, what can he do to help common people like you and me?"

What management is to a company and its success, the Government is to a country. Yet most of our people do not connect the country's stake when they go to the ballot box. The debacle of 1962 caused by unpreparedness needs recollection. The Indian Army did not have mountain guns or howitzers to fire in mountainous NEFA. The second batch of troops that was sent up to 16,000 feet had canvas shoes, no gloves and ordinary woollen pullovers. General Rob Lockhart, the interim Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army after Independence, said that we are a peace-loving nation. We do not really need an Army. And that the police is sufficient for our purpose. After all this, the same political party was re-elected in the following election. And in the 1990s, our Prime Minister told in a reply to a journalist that India is too large a country to worry about terrorism.

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

SOUNDBITE

If Beijing can heed Taiwan's voice, change the way it handles cross-strait relations and jointly facilitate cross-strait reconciliation and peaceful dialogue, I believe that regional tension can surely be resolved.



Taiwanese President — Tsai Ing-wen

Credit to him (Stefanos Tsitsipas) for fighting back. He's a fighter. He's one of the best players in the world... There was a lot at stake for him.



Tennis player — Novak Djokovic

In Haryana, around 1,500 to 2,000 kg of millet is produced in one acre of land but the farmers are not getting more than ₹850 per kg due to the BJP's anti-farmer policies.



Aam Aadmi Party leader — Sushil Gupta

The time has come to accept that dialogue and agreements will not persuade or compel the People's Republic of China to change.



US Security Advisor — Robert O'Brien

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AIADMK's woes

Sir — Jayalalithaa, the late Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and leader of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), never entertained any alliance with the BJP despite its repeated requests. And was adept at extracting favours that helped her State. On the contrary, the present leaders of the AIADMK have started to play second fiddle to the saffron party by adhering to all their dictates despite most of their plans being detrimental to the interest of the people of Tamil Nadu. Their subservient attitude is visible and the electorate is angry with the ruling dispensation for pawning the self-respect and rights of the State for the personal interests of its leaders.

It is time the AIADMK realises its folly and drops the saffron party from any plan it might have on seat adjustments. This way it can save its face by winning at least a few seats in the forthcoming Assembly elections. The people of Tamil Nadu, who are fed up and angry with the functioning of the AIADMK Government as well as the BJP at the Centre, are eagerly waiting to pack both off lock, stock and

Reforms in post-retirement jobs for judges

There has been a long-standing debate on the issue of post-retirement jobs for judges. Generally, a resting period is advocated for top civil servants and judges before they take up a new post after retiring from service. Earlier jurists favoured a five year cooling off period for judges. But that's in a way too long, considering the enactments of Parliament from time to time providing for the appointment of sitting or retired judges to various commissions and authorities. However, it is pertinent to note that the present Government has ruled out a cooling off period for retired judges before their appointment to tribunals or commissions.

Over the years, the trend of judges taking up post-retirement posts has drawn heavy criticism. Many of the 50 Supreme Court judges, who have retired over the past decade, went on to take up other jobs all too quickly. Of these, at least 26 accepted Government jobs while 13 started practising law again.

In 2012, BJP leaders Arun Jaitley and Nitin Gadkari had suggested that the clamour for post-retirement jobs



was affecting the court's judgments. The reality is that the Government holds the power to offer a post-retirement position to judges and this leads us to question the independence of the judiciary and judicial bias. Reforms are urgently needed to uphold the sanctity of this august institution.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

barrel in the polls, paving the way for Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam led by MK Stalin.

Tharicus S Fernando Chennai

Economic boost

Sir — When the pandemic muted our growth completely across the globe, our immediate response should have been to

absorb the shock and embrace the new normal. But unfortunately, a conservative investment approach holds the economy, something that has never truly benefited society at large. Also, business houses are conserving cash across organisations, leading to a significant shrinkage in the market economy. Thus, big-spending decisions must start from somewhere to support

the growth of credit demand. Fortune 500 companies should come forward, lending a hand to rebuild the ecosystem with their high-risk appetite, like rolling out a capital expenditure outlay plan, without waiting for this pandemic to be over. However, the conservative approach should not be completely foregone. Yet the limit needs relaxation up to a certain extent. Without that finan-

cial flexibility, the recovery is not expected to happen.

SK Nag Mumbai

Distasteful hate circus

Sir — The love for cricket in India is well known but nothing can remotely justify the disturbing incident of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's five-year-old daughter receiving rape threats from social media trolls following Chennai Super Kings' loss to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on October 6. It was Dhoni's wife, Sakshi, who received the threats on her Instagram account. It makes one wonder where the "New" India is heading?

While the Hathras rape-murder case questions the political will to bring justice to the 19-year-old Dalit gang-rape victim, obnoxious comments being made towards a child on social media highlight the mental state of the country. Rape threats should be taken seriously and the culprits should be punished.

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Some hope in grim times

In these difficult days, there is reason to believe that the tribe of progressive social critiques is still heard



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The COVID experience has been unique in more ways than what most of the webinars are talking about. For example, social media is not exactly known to elaborate concepts. However, the online versions of printed news media platforms appear to have widened and deepened their reach and impact as compared to the pre-Coronavirus era. The galloping use of smartphones in the country has enabled the reach and availability of news through a large part of the day, beyond the morning. At times, the impact is even clearer. Thankfully, the print media has not fallen prey to that claim that resonates through the electronic channel news daily: The phenomena called "breaking news."

The concept of "breaking news" has undergone a sea change over the years and it doesn't even titillate like before. "Breaking news" in years past used to be the equivalent of "Stop Press", in the print media, when they used to stop the printing presses because something of phenomenal importance just had to be reported in the next day's newspaper. For instance a war, or the declaration of Emergency, or demonetisation or the assassination of an important leader. Now, like many advertisements, "breaking news" seems more like an attempt to grab attention rather than share any meaningful news story that is unfolding at that time.

Then there is the claim of "impact-making" news. For instance, the gate of a VIP's residence was plastered with a quarantine notice, which was found to be very embarrassing by the bureaucrat who lived there. Reportedly, the notice was torn away. One of the news channels picked this story up and ran a campaign on "differential treatment." Soon after, the notice was restored by the authorities that be. Subsequently the news channel claimed to have run an "impact-making" story. Maybe, it was because of the news coverage of the channel that the notice was restored. Maybe it was not. Maybe colleagues persuaded the bureaucrat to tone down the reaction to the quarantine notice. Or maybe the bureaucrat's good sense prevailed in the end. However that may be, not long thereafter, the practice of pasting quarantine notices on the entrance of households with Coronavirus patients was reportedly discontinued by the Haryana Government.

The impact may not be monocausal. There may be many claimants to the impact and many perspectives. Be that as it may, one thing is obvious that the media does carry a clout, though one-to-one impact-change correlation is difficult to establish. However, when one notices a change after reading something in news columns, it does raise the possibility that the writing made an impact and caused the change.

In these columns on September 28, para three of the text said "... even today in a city that is the proverbial centre of power, pick up a phone and call a landline of the metropolitan telephone service, the ring is preceded by a recorded voice message which, when translated into English, goes something like this: 'In the entire country the process of un-lockdown has begun. In such circumstances, move out of the house only when it is totally necessary.'" What followed was a light-hearted banter on the intended impact of the message. Several days later that message was replaced by one from a well-known voice from Bollywood. Significantly, the text of the new message on the telephone service resonates far better than the preceding one. Now the person holding the telephone is reminded that not only India but the whole world is grappling with the impact of the Coronavirus.

The purpose of the above narrative is not to claim that the September 28 write-up in this column triggered this modification. Far from it! However, it pleases one to note that somewhere, someone has contributed towards a change for the better. In the past, too, I have flagged such correlations. It is possible that others have written on similar things, too. Others may have talked or others may have noticed what I noticed too. The important thing is we should be proud of having a responsive governance system at least in some kind of experiences and cases. Once should notice the brighter aspects of public life in an otherwise grim scenario. It keeps hope alive. Hope need not come in large parcels or in areas where someone feels fatigued. It is just the indicator of life. In these difficult times, there is reason to believe that the tribe of progressive social critiques is still heard. Whether it is heard often or not often enough is a matter of perception and appetite for favourable response. For some it is still a matter of joy that sometimes those who matter do hear and do respond. We are blessed!

(The writer is an internationally-acclaimed management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I AM NOT GOING TO WASTE MY TIME ON A VIRTUAL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE. I WANT A LIVE ONE.
—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



HIS RECKLESS PERSONAL CONDUCT SINCE HIS DIAGNOSIS, THE DESTABILISING EFFECT IT'S HAVING ON OUR GOVERNMENT, IS UNCONSCIONABLE.
—FORMER US VICE-PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

Cancel culture decoded

In spite of buzzwords such as diversity and heterogeneity, such a culture stands for homogeneity and singularity in thought and action



JYOTIRMAYA TRIPATHY

That an innocent sounding word, "cancel", has come to define contemporary culture in modern democracies may sound rather baffling to a lay person. The fact that it actually has, at least in select spaces involving debate and dialogue, reveals the degeneration of those spaces, theoretically given to welcoming diverse opinions. In everyday usage, cancel may mean withdrawal or scrapping of a contract, but the "cancel culture", which unfortunately has become the logic of an impatient generation, has many more layers of meaning that are interlocking and complex. Regardless of its advocates from contrasting ideological umbrellas, "cancel culture" implies that the country and its institutions have failed the people, prompting the militantly "conscientious" groups to take over. Needless to say, such campaigns remain predominantly urban and middle-class. Analysts have traced the prevalence of this culture as definitive of our intellectual reality to the #MeToo campaign in the US. A powerful and perfectly legitimate movement slowly became the weapon of a generation glued to the internet, though without any sincere commitment to the cause that defined earlier generations of protesters, involving marches or picketing, which were demanding in terms of time and energy. Before we realised its frequent occurrence and increasing moralising tendency, it had become part of our cultural sphere and expressed itself through withdrawal of support, challenging authority and advocating suspension of the offender. Thus, Starbucks was targeted for asking its employees not to wear "Black Lives Matter" badges, a gym club brand, Equinox, faced backlash after its owner was found collecting donations for US President Donald Trump. Opinion writer Bari Weiss resigned from her job when her employer, *The New York Times*, failed to protect her from constant harassment by her colleagues for holding on to different political values. JK Rowling was "cancelled" because of what was seen as her intolerance of trans-women.

The war among liberals: In-built into "cancel culture" is an ethical imperative on the part of the people championing it, who see themselves as the defenders of democratic ethos, prompting them to raise their voices against what they feel is unjust. What is ignored in this so-called ethical order is the reality of an anti-democratic force that betrays intolerance of difference and disagreement. That explains why the same group of people demanding freedom end up cancelling conservative intellectuals. So "cancel culture" remains anti-democratic and promotes a culture of purity where being different and adversarial are offensive. In spite of buzzwords such as diversity and heterogeneity, such a culture stands for homogeneity and singularity in thought and action. It always looks for new outrages almost as an obsessive compulsive and pounces upon the politically incorrect to threaten him/her or the organisation so as to impose costs.

If it silences democracy in the name of democracy, tramples upon freedom in the name of freedom, we must understand where this habit of speaking in a forked tongue is coming from. It is not difficult to understand that it emanates from within liberal discourse and survives on its propensity towards double-speak and obfuscation. Writing letters to put pressure on governments and organisations for protecting rights, which the Left liberal intelligentsia excels in, is a technique whereby they legitimise themselves. When JK Rowling joined hands

“ THE CULTURAL RIGHT IS LEARNING FROM ITS PAST MISTAKES AND USING THE VOCABULARY OF DEMOCRACY AND VICTIMHOOD FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE. LIKE ITS LEFT ADVERSARIES, ITS SUPPORTERS ARE WRITING LETTERS TO THE PUBLIC OR TO THE PRESIDENT TO RAISE AWARENESS. THEY ARE WRITING BOOKS AND SPEAKING FROM PUBLIC FORA AND FORCING THE LEFT TO DEHUMANISE ITSELF BY TURNING VIOLENT. EVEN AS THE RIGHT IS LEARNING FROM THE LEFT, THE LATTER IS GETTING INTO THE SLUSH OF WHAT IT ACCUSED THE RIGHT TO BE. THE LIBERAL LEFT, WHICH CLAIMED TO HAVE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OVER FREE SPEECH, NOW UNDERSTANDS THAT LIBERTY AND FREE SPEECH ARE NO LONGER ITS EXCLUSIVE DOMAINS



with Chomsky, Fukuyama, Rushdie, Atwood and so on, and called out this "cancel culture" as intolerance in an open letter published in *Harper's Magazine*, she was, to some extent, joining hands with those who gave oxygen to such a culture. They wrote, "Censoriousness is spreading more widely in our culture: An intolerance of opposing views, a vogue for public shaming and ostracism, and the tendency to dissolve complex policy issues in a blinding moral certainty." What these people often forget is that writing such letters is always more about protecting their authority over liberalism than the cause itself. If they suddenly realise the violence of "cancel culture", they should not look beyond themselves to find its provenance. "Cancel culture" is a product of their muscular approach to truth.

Even as "cancel culture" is a product of liberal discourse, it poses an existential threat to that discourse in its demand for a forced outcome rather than a process-oriented approach. It is equally protestant in nature in the sense that it has scant respect for liberal idols and high priests who symbolise entitlement. In fact, we may discern inter-generational conflict within this liberalism or a kind of castration anxiety (in Freudian terms). It marks the coming of age of the next generation of relatively young champions, who see their ideological fathers as patriarchs who have always benefitted from peddling liberal wares. When Pankaj Mishra trashed the *Harper's Magazine* letter, he showed a mirror to these ideologues and accused them of fighting for their own freedom rather than that of free speech. This competitive liberalism is not a fight between right and wrong, but the sign that a smooth transition is not taking place.

Unlike political parties or sports teams, the "liberal progressive" shop has the same set of owners who refuse to allow the new generation to replace them. Impatient, restless, combative and young, "cancel culture" warriors cannot see themselves waiting perpetually to be counted as intellectual adults. When Pankaj Mishra took issue with Rushdie for being called "the voice of the continent", he was protesting against an intellectual culture that condemns authors like him (Mishra) to the waiting room of intellectual history.

The Indian story: In India, unlike the US, this culture has traversed both Left- and Right-wing narratives as well as not so politically-conscious actors. In the recent Bloomsbury controversy relating to a book on Delhi riots, the first move came from the Left to cancel the book followed by backlash from the non-Left quarters, who took issue with Bloomsbury's cancellation and then cancelled Bloomsbury as a publisher of their choice. The death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput (SSR) also created a polarising climate where the outsiders to Bollywood, such as SSR, were pitted against the privileged insiders, who took their stardom for granted. This infuriated and angry group collectively trashed *Sadak 2*, a movie made by one who is seen as a promoter of nepotism.

However, it will be off the mark to project this as the expression of Right-wing angst. On most occasions Bollywood prima donnas of liberal hue have voiced their opinion against politicians, fellow actors and producers and whoever they imagined is expressing anti-democratic values. The present polarisation of Bollywood and its adoption of "cancel culture" implies the culture's traction, cutting across ideological lines.

"Cancel culture" in India remains derivative of American leads, as in the "Black Lives Matter" movement being converted into "Dalit Lives Matter". However, the cultural Right is learning from its past mistakes and using the vocabulary of democracy and victimhood for its own purpose. Like its Left adversaries, its supporters are writing letters to the public or to the President to raise awareness. They are writing books and speaking from public fora and forcing the Left to dehumanise itself by turning violent. Even as the Right is learning from the Left, the latter is getting into the slush of what it accused the Right to be. The liberal Left, which claimed to have exclusive right over free speech, now understands that liberty and free speech are no longer its exclusive domains. Leftists fear that liberty can be effectively used by the Right and this makes it suspect liberty as an impediment to its ideals of democracy and justice.

Economic imperative: There is yet another dimension of "cancel culture", namely the economic imperative. Sometimes, acting on public outrage, as in sacking an employee for contrarian political values or insensitive posts, organisations seek to arrest a backlash or cash in on public outrage or hold on to their clientele. Given that the US intellectual sphere is totally dominated by the Left and the so-called multi-culturalism complex, and common people do not care much until election time, the media and publishing industry actually gain from this competitive outrage. In India however, due to its millennia old culture that has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary, such disruptive changes remain confined to select, elite spaces.

(The writer is Professor, IIT, Madras)

Understand psychology for better decision-making

This approach can help in reducing stock market movements and losses on the bourses



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Ever wondered why stock markets have huge upswings or downswings? Most of the times, they are like a domino effect, a chain reaction, caused by herd behaviour. Herding is an inclination of investors to follow the crowd, thus destabilising stock prices. It is a very powerful bias, and in the process of mimicking each other, the impact on the stock prices gets intensified, leading to bubbles when the demand is high and crashes when investors detect overpricing.

This is contrary to the classical finance theory, which believes that investment decisions are taken by rational investors. But are investors really rational? A Boston-based research group reported in 2007 that

an average stockholder earned 4.3 per cent per annum returns where the returns of American S&P 500 Index averaged at 11.8 per cent per annum. The reason for this variance was the irrationality of investors of buying high and selling low.

A peek into the past can show that players in the stock market have been irrational since the time the bourses have existed. One of the earliest instances of unreasonable herd behaviour is the Dutch tulip bubble of the 1630s, also known as "Tulip Mania." When the tulip was introduced as a new variety of flower in the Netherlands, the Dutch people, because of some strange reason, became excited about this new exotic flower and vied to invest in tulip bulbs.

Progressively, the investments grew huge and at the pinnacle of this mania, a single bulb was sold at a price that was more than ten times the annual income of a skilled worker. But when people realised that investments in tulip bulbs were way more than their actual worth, they panicked and started selling tulip stocks, leading to a sharp fall in the

stocks, resulting in huge losses.

This and many other subsequent events after this, like the dot.com bubble and the more recent real estate bubble, have led to the belief that investors do not behave rationally and that their decisions are mostly driven by emotions like panic, fear and greed. These instances are in contradiction of the traditional financial theories that are based on efficient market hypothesis, that assume that all the information is reflected in the stock prices efficiently and in a timely manner. So much so that the investors are unable to make any abnormal profits by buying stocks. There are four pillars of traditional finance: Rational investors; efficient markets; traditional portfolio designs; and linear expected returns-risk relationship.

However, stock markets in reality are largely inefficient, which is evident due to various market anomalies, speculative bubbles and over or muted reaction to any new information about stocks. These prevalent conditions in the stock markets suggest that investors are more emotional than rational about their invest-

ment decisions, leading to creation of bubbles.

A bubble is created when the stock price is driven higher than its fair value as people invest in these stocks, neglecting the fundamental valuation. Such investments strengthen the overpricing even more and put pressure on the stock prices to generate higher returns for investors, failing which, the selling starts and picks up momentum when investors follow one another, leading to the bursting of the bubble. Behavioural finance, as a discipline, emerged as an attempt to explain the psychology of financial decision-making and how the human angle affects the same. Several researchers believe that principles and morals of people influence their economic, social and financial decision-making. Sentiments like pride, shame, insecurity and egoism also play an important role in investment decisions. By accepting the fact that investors are irrational and have biased decision-making, behavioural finance extends the limitations of traditional finance theories into possible inefficiencies in the financial

markets and provides a realistic view.

Research has identified two types of behavioural biases. The first one, a heuristic-driven bias, also known as cognitive bias, acknowledges that investors are investigative in nature and use rules of thumb to process data for decision-making. For example, people predict future performance of stock market movements through historical data. Emotions like overconfidence, anchoring and adjustment, reinforcement learning, excessive optimism and pessimism form a part of this bias. The second one, frame-dependent bias, is where the investors' decision-making process is affected by the way they frame their options, like narrow framing, mental accounting and the disposition effect.

It can be concluded that awareness about behavioural biases is indispensable since it is unequivocally associated with human beings and its implications are far and wide. Ignoring such behaviour of the decision-making process can prove to be quite expensive in the financial markets as it can result in stock market

anomalies. Financial investment managers and advisors can identify investment mistakes if they have a good understanding of this behaviour of retail investors and become more effective by understanding their clients' psychology and needs. It helps them in creating a behaviourally-adjusted portfolio, which best suits their clients' requirements. Investment bankers can put this knowledge to use by correctly timing the IPOs and understanding the general sentiment in the stock markets. Behavioural finance also helps financial analysts in forecasting future stock market movements and recommending appropriate stocks for investments. Finally, individual retail investors can use this expertise to make wise, rational and effective financial decisions.

Investors, financial advisors and fund managers are all humans and are subject to biases. Understanding the psychology of financial decision-making can help in reducing the stock market movements and reducing losses on the bourses.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)



FOREIGN EYE



THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING LIFE

The health of people-facing, service-sector organisations matters enormously to their employees. But it matters to people too. By emptying out shops, cinemas, market squares, that people used to spend more time at home, the pandemic has made them less public and more private. An end to this anti-social chapter and reclamation of the outside world of friends and fun cannot come soon enough. (The Guardian, editorial)

Trump accuses Biden of shipping jobs to China

Washington: US President Donald Trump has alleged that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden in his previous capacities as Senator and vice president was busy shipping jobs to China, prompting the latter to hit back.

Biden said Trump will be the first president in modern American history to "leave office with fewer jobs than when it began."

Making his first public address from Blue Room balcony of the White House after being discharged from hospital where he was treated for COVID-19 infection, Trump charged Biden and his campaign of taking the country on the path of socialism, which he vowed would not let him do.

"The Democrats' is a socialist program and platform -- and it really is more than socialist. It's not just socialist; it's beyond socialism," he said.

As one member from the audience screamed "communist", Trump said, "Communist. That's about right."

Biden, who was campaigning in Erie city in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, on the other hand alleged that Trump was only protecting the interests of the rich and billionaires.

"The Trump presidency will be the first presidency in modern American history to leave office with fewer jobs than when it began. And President Trump is leaving us a 'K-shaped' recession, where those at the top keep going up, while everyone in the middle and below are seeing things get worse," Biden said.

"It means that while the top 100 billionaires in America have done pretty well, they're up more than USD 300 billion this year -- you get the bottom half of that K-shape. The downward slide. Because the fact is, President Trump can only see the world from Park Avenue. I see the world from Scranton. From Erie. And that's who my Build Back Better agenda is for," he said.

The Democratic presidential candidate's campaign does not allow a large gathering because of COVID-19 restrictions, with at the most a score of people sitting at a distance.

On the other hand, Trump's first public event at the White House was full of enthusiasm and energy with his black and Hispanic supporters chanting "We Love You" and "Four More Years".

Trump, 74, and First Lady Melania, 50, tested positive for COVID-19 last week. The president was taken to a military

hospital for treatment. After spending four days there, he came back to the White House on Monday.

His White House address on Saturday to "Peaceful Protest for Law and Order" was described as an official event, but had all the inklings of an election campaign.

"We're starting very, very big with our rallies and with our everything, because we cannot allow our country to become a socialist nation. We cannot let that happen," Trump said.

"Black and Latino Americans are rejecting the radical socialist left, and they're embracing our pro-jobs, pro-worker, pro-police -- we want law and order; we have to have law and order -- and pro-American agenda," he said.

Trump alleged the agenda of the Democrats was "much beyond socialism" and they had been "shipping jobs to China for half a century".

"Sleepy Joe Biden has betrayed black and Latino Americans. If you think he can run this country, you're wrong... For half a century shipping your jobs to China. That's what they've been doing. We are bringing the jobs back. We have been charging China a lot of money too, with the tariffs. Billions and billions of dollars," Trump added. **PTI**

Prominent cleric shot dead in Pakistan's Karachi

PTI ■ KARACHI

A prominent Pakistani Sunni Muslim cleric was shot dead along with his driver by unidentified assailants in Karachi, police said on Sunday.

Maulana Dr Adil Khan, head of Karachi's Jamia Farooqia seminary, was attacked in a market on Saturday evening, they said.

According to a senior police official, as the car-carrying Khan stopped near a shopping centre in Shah Faisal Colony to purchase sweets, armed pillion riders opened indiscriminate fire on the car and fled.

The police official said it appeared to be a targeted attack.

Khan was the son of late prominent scholar Maulana Saleemullah Khan, who founded the Jamia Farooqia, a seminary located in Shah Faisal Colony.

Jamia Farooqia adheres to the Sunni Muslim teachings of the Deobandi sect.

The seminary spokesperson, Amjad Rizvi, said that the Maulana expired in hospital from multiple bullet wounds while his driver, Maqsood Ahmed, died on the spot.

Khan was shifted to the Liaquat National Hospital

where he was pronounced dead on arrival. His driver was also declared dead on arrival at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), the hospital's executive director Dr Seemin Jamali said.

A third person, Umair, who was accompanying the scholar, survived the incident as he had gone inside the shopping centre to buy sweets.

"We are gathering statements from eye-witnesses," Police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said.

On Sunday, the funeral prayers of the religious scholar were offered by his brother Maulana Obaidullah Khalid. The deceased was buried in the vicinity of his father's grave in Jamia Farooqia.

According to Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in-charge Raja Umar Khitab, the attack is "a conspiracy to incite sectarian violence".

President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan strongly condemned the assassination of Maulana Khan.

Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa also condemned the assassination of Khan, said a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army.

Azerbaijan, Armenia report shelling of cities despite truce

Baku (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan on Sunday accused Armenia of attacking large cities overnight in violation of the cease-fire deal brokered by Russia that seeks to end the worst outbreak of hostilities in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Azerbaijani authorities said that nine civilians were killed and more than 30 others wounded after Armenian forces fired missiles at Ganja, Azerbaijan's second-largest city, and hit a residential building. The city of Mingachevir also came under missile attacks, according to Azerbaijan's Prosecutor General's office.

Nagorno-Karabakh's military officials denied attacking Ganja and said the territory's army is observing the cease-fire. They added that during the night Azerbaijan forces shelled Stepanakert, the region's capital, and other towns in violation of the truce.

The recent bout of fighting between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces started Sept. 27 and left hundreds of people dead in the biggest escalation of the decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh since a separatist war there ended in 1994. The region lies in Azerbaijan but has been under control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia.

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a truce in Moscow after Russian



Rescuers work at the scene of damage after shelling by Armenian's artillery during fighting over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Ganja, Azerbaijan on Sunday. AP

President Vladimir Putin had brokered it in a series of calls with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian.

The ceasefire took effect at noon Saturday, after talks in Moscow that were sponsored by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The deal stipulated that the ceasefire should pave the way for talks on settling the conflict.

If the truce had held, it would have marked a major diplomatic coup for Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but also cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan. However, minutes after the cease-fire took force, both sides accused each other of continuing attacks in violation of the deal. The situation in the region was "relatively calm" on Sunday morning, according to Nagorno-Karabakh leader Arayik Harutyunyan, with only minor hostilities along the front line. But it was unclear whether the calm would last, he said.

"There is no shelling of our towns and villages. At the front line, there is some shooting with the use of artillery. There are some skirmishes on the border," Harutyunyan said. "Since the morning, it seems calm, but within minutes the situation can change."

Nagorno-Karabakh's army in a statement Sunday promised a "disproportionately harsh" response if Azerbaijan "continues to violate the cease-fire." The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said that "the political and military leadership of Armenia bears the responsibility for the aggravation of the situation in the region." **AP**

China grants \$90m to Sri Lanka after visit by top official

Colombo: China announced on Sunday that it was providing a \$90 million grant to Sri Lanka, two days after the island nation's president sought help from a visiting Chinese delegation in disproving a perception that China-funded megaprojects are "debt traps."

Calling the financial assistance a "timely grant," the Chinese Embassy in Colombo said that it would be used for medical care, education and water supplies in Sri Lanka's rural areas and that it would "contribute to the well-being of (Sri Lankans) in a post-COVID era."

The announcement follows a visit to the Indian Ocean island nation Friday by a Chinese delegation led by Yang Jiechi, a Communist Party Politburo member and a former foreign minister.

During talks with Yang, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa asked China to help him in disproving a perception that China-funded megaprojects are "debt traps" aimed at gaining influence in local affairs.

China considers Sri Lanka to be a critical link in its massive "Belt and Road" global infrastructure building initiative and has provided billions of dollars in loans for Sri Lankan projects over the past decade. The projects include a seaport, airport, port-city, highways and power stations.

Critics say that the Chinese-funded projects are not financially viable and that Sri Lanka will face difficulties in repaying the loans.

In 2017, Sri Lanka leased out a Chinese-built port located near busy shipping routes to a Chinese company for 99 years to recover from the heavy burden of repaying the Chinese loan the country received to build it.

The facility is part of Beijing's plan for a line of ports stretching from Chinese waters to the Persian Gulf. China has also agreed to provide a USD 989 million loan to Sri Lanka to build an expressway that will connect its tea-growing central region to the Chinese-run seaport. **AP**

China backs Iran nuclear deal, calls for new Middle East forum

Beijing: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has called for a new forum to defuse tensions in the Middle East after a meeting with his Iranian counterpart where he reiterated Beijing's support for Tehran.

Wang and Javid Zarif also reaffirmed their commitment to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, according to the Chinese foreign ministry, an implicit rebuke of the United States for abandoning the accord during their Saturday meeting in China's southwestern Tengchong city.

Iran has been locked in an acrimonious relationship with Saudi Arabia, the other major Middle Eastern power, over the war in Yemen, Iranian influence in Iraq and Saudi support for Washington's sanctions on Tehran.

"China proposes to build a regional multilateral dialogue platform with equal participation of all stakeholders," said the Chinese foreign ministry statement.

The forum would "enhance mutual understanding through dialogue and explore political

and diplomatic solutions to security issues in the Middle East", the statement added.

Wang added that support for the Iranian nuclear deal, negotiated by the Obama administration but ultimately abandoned by Donald Trump, would be a precondition of entry to the forum.

Zarif said on Twitter his "fruitful talks" with Wang amounted to a rejection of "US unilateralism" and had also focused on strategic ties and collaboration on the development of a coronavirus vaccine. **AFP**

enforcement response is in reaction to this escalation," police tweeted.

They said that on Friday night, protesters had Molotov cocktails and other fire starting agents and guns were spotted in the crowd.

Protesters have gathered every day since prosecutors announced Wednesday that they would not charge Officer Joseph Mensah in 17-year-old Alvin Cole's death. Mensah, who is Black, shot Cole after a foot chase outside a Wauwatosa mall in February. **AP**

In rare public appearance, Maryam Nawaz to address PDM rally in Karachi on October 18

Karachi: In a rare public appearance, Maryam Nawaz, Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), will address the grand anti-government rally on October 18 here organised by the alliance formed by the opposition parties to oust the Imran Khan-led government.

On September 20, the leaders of 11 major Opposition parties announced formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and launch of a three-phased anti-government movement under an "action plan" starting with countywide public meetings, protest demonstrations and rallies before a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad in January 2021.

The first anti-government rally is scheduled on October 16 in Gujranwala in Punjab province followed by another rally on October 18 in Karachi, in Quetta on October 25, Peshawar on November 22, Multan on November 30 and then a rally in Lahore on December 13.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former prime minister and senior PML(N) leader, said that Maryam, daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, would address the rally on October 18.

"She will address the rally. The momentum has now been

built against the government and is in fact a reflection of the people's annoyance over the current situation in the country," Abbasi said.

Abbasi said that Maryam's appearance at the rally will boost the confidence of the people in the PDM.

The schedule announced earlier showed that the first rally would be held on October 18 in Quetta. The change was made at the request of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), one of the main Opposition parties in the alliance, which commemorates the day October 18 to pay homage to victims of Karsaz bombing in 2007 that killed scores of people attending a rally in Karachi to welcome slain prime minister Benazir Bhutto. She escaped unhurt in the blast.

The Opposition leaders had announced that they would use all political and democratic options, including no-confidence motions and mass resignations from Parliament to seek "the selected prime minister's resignation and an end to the role of the establishment in politics." **PTI**



Chachoengsao, Thailand: At least 18 people were killed and more than 40 injured in Thailand on Sunday when a freight train crashed into a bus taking passengers to a religious ceremony, officials said.

The morning collision, around 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of the capital Bangkok, toppled the bus on its side and sheared off part of its roof.

Dozens of injured passengers were rushed to nearby medical facilities for treatment, said provincial hospital director Sombat Chutimanukul.

"Four are in critical condition and eight remain under observation" out of the 23 admitted to her hospital, she told reporters.

State Railway of Thailand governor Nirut Maneephan confirmed the death toll at the site of the crash to reporters.

Footage shared by a government department showed the bus edging from the road onto train tracks before a blue cargo train slammed into its side.

Early photos taken by rescue workers showed gnarled metal and debris, with bodies lying by the tracks and people's belongings scattered around the scene. **AFP**

28 arrested, tear gas used in Wisconsin protests

Wauwatosa: Police used tear gas on demonstrators and arrested 28 people during a third straight night of protests over the lack of charges against a suburban Milwaukee police officer who fatally shot a Black teen, authorities said, as they took to Twitter on Saturday to outline what they called an "escalation in force by the protesters."

About 100 people gathered outside City Hall on Friday past Wauwatosa's 7 pm curfew and refused multiple orders to disperse, according to police.

Police said they used tear

gas on the crowd, after bottles were thrown at officers.

On Saturday, the Wauwatosa Police Department posted on Twitter that people have been asking valid questions about the police response over three nights of protests.

Police posted a picture of bottles they said were found in a backpack, including a bottle of lighter fluid, noting that the materials can be used to start fires.

"Over the past three nights, we have seen an escalation in force by the protesters. Our law

enforcement response is in reaction to this escalation," police tweeted.

They said that on Friday night, protesters had Molotov cocktails and other fire starting agents and guns were spotted in the crowd.

Protesters have gathered every day since prosecutors announced Wednesday that they would not charge Officer Joseph Mensah in 17-year-old Alvin Cole's death. Mensah, who is Black, shot Cole after a foot chase outside a Wauwatosa mall in February. **AP**

Jamaicans in Florida energised by Kamala Harris on 2020 ticket

Fort Lauderdale (US): President Donald Trump and Joe Biden are entering the final stretch of the campaign in a fierce battle for Latino voters who could sway the results in Florida and determine who wins the White House.

But in this ultimate battleground state where nearly 10 million voters participate in elections often decided by a mere percentage point, other communities could suddenly become critical.

That's where the booming Black Caribbean community centered in Broward County comes in.

Voters in this Democratic stronghold are eager to defeat Trump, but say they are even more energized to turn out in support of California Sen. Kamala Harris, Biden's running mate whose father is Jamaican.

"The fact she has a lineage means you are going to see a lot of Jamaicans voting even if they were not doing so before," said Antoinette Henry, director of corporate relations at the Dutch Pot Jamaican Restaurant, a company with several locations in South Florida.



"We also know that there is a lot of mobilization that goes on in these communities."

Laura Uribe, who is getting her doctorate in political science at the University of California, San Diego, has closely studied five immigrant groups in Broward County.

She said 77% of voters of Jamaican origin are Democrats whereas 3% are Republican and 20% have no party affiliation.

In the last presidential election, 78% of Jamaican-American voters turned out to vote, while the total turnout was about 66%. Between October 2016 and September 2018, more Jamaicans became naturalized US citizens than did Venezuelans, a group pursued by the GOP, according to the most recently available data from the Department of Homeland Security.

"I can tell you Kamala is in the tongue of everyone. They are talking about what must be done to make sure we deliver for the team of Biden and Sen. Harris," said Jamaican-born Hazelle Rogers, the mayor of Lauderdale Lakes who in 1996 became Florida's first Jamaican to be elected to office. **AP**

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TENDER NOTICE NO: SK/RC / 04 of 2020-21
Annual Rate Contract

Sr No.	Item	Tender ID
1	Supply of Three Phase Submersible Pump Sets, (from GWSSB Approved Vendors only)	430040
2	Supply of Single Phase Submersible Pump Sets (from GWSSB Approved Vendors only)	430032
3	Supply of 3 Core Flat PVC Copper Cable for Submersible Pumps (from GWSSB Approved Vendors only)	430009
4	ISI Marked 200mm & 250 mm dia M.S. ERW Pipes, (only Indian Manufacturer)	430003
5	Various Size of Cubical Control Panel Board (from GWSSB Approved Vendors only)	430027
6	ISI Marked (IS: 15500/2004 with latest amendment) Deepwell Handpump with Normal & telescopic and Assembly with rate contract from Indian Manufacturers having BIS Licence only	430024

Pre-bid meeting on Dtd. 20/10/2020 at 12.00 Hrs. at GWSSB Last Date of Online Submission of Tender: 09 / 11 / 2020 Bid Opening Date: 10 / 11 / 2020 at 15.00 Hrs Contact Office : Executive Engineer, Public Health Mechanical Store Division, "A" Block, Patnagar Vojana Bhavan, 2nd Floor, Near GH-4, Sector-16, Gandhinagar-382 016, Gujarat State. Tel/fax. No. (079) 23222844, 9978406605.

The detailed tender notice and tender documents are available on web site: www.gwssb.org and www.nprocure.com For Village Level Drinking water Complaint Please Contact our Toll Free No : 1916

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Guj. W.S. & S. Board
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No/NF/VPN/2020/G/1065
Date:- 09/10/2020

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POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.

The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd.

The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice	2. Date of Possession	3. Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1. Mr. Monish Paul S/O Kishan Chand Paul R/O Flat No. 201 2nd Floor Tower T-15 Park Floors BPTP Sec 76 Faridabad Haryana-121003 Also At : Mr. Monish Paul S/O Kishan Chand Paul R/O 101 Pace City-1 Sector-37 Gurgaon Haryana-122001	IMMOVABLE ASSET Fully finished Flat No. T15-201 on Second Floor of Tower 15, having a super area of 1225 Sq. Ft. (113.805 Sq. Mtrs.) situated in Group Housing Project known as Park 121003 Also At : Mr. Monish Paul S/O Kishan Chand Paul R/O 101 Pace City-1 Sector-37 Gurgaon Haryana-122001	15-Sep-18	27-Oct-20	3, Rs 3,705,424/-
Also At : Mr. Monish Paul S/O Kishan Chand Paul House No. 2460, G.F., Sector-16, Faridabad-121001, Haryana	Floors, Sector-76, Faridabad Haryana, alongwith the proportionate, undivided, impartible share only in the land underneath the said building in which the said unit is located, together with the right to use and access all common areas, paths, passages, benefits, and advantages, appurtenant whatsoever to the said unit or any part thereof and to hold the same unto and to the use of the Vendee Situated within the revenue estate of Village Mansarovar, Jaipur-302001, Rajasthan	15-Sep-18	27-Oct-20	3, Rs 3,705,424/-
2. Mr. Rajender Kumar S/O Mr. Budh Ram R/O House No-2619, Azad Nagar, Mjesar, Sector-24 Faridabad-121004 Haryana	East: As Per Title Deed West: As Per Title Deed North: As Per Title Deed South: As Per Title Deed	15-Sep-18	27-Oct-20	3, Rs 3,705,424/-

The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgagee properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days' from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : 12-10-2020, Place : Delhi

Sd/-
Authorized Officer,
Axis Bank Ltd.,

GST Council to discuss compensation issue

THIRD TIME IN A ROW ON MONDAY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council in its meeting on Monday is likely to discuss the suggestion of non-BJP ruled states of setting up a ministerial panel to develop consensus on the issue of compensation, sources said.

The Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising of State finance ministers, will for the third time in a row discuss the issue of funding the shortfall of Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue of States.

While some opposition ruled states are demanding that a Group of Ministers be set up to arrive at a decision on the

mechanism for funding compensation shortfall, BJP ruled states, which have already opted for the borrowing option given by the Centre, are of the view that they should be given a go ahead so that they can get money quickly.

The single agenda 43rd meeting of the Council will discuss on the way forward, sources said.

In its previous meeting last week, the Council had decided to extend the surcharge on taxes on luxury goods such as cars and tobacco products beyond June 2022, but failed to reach a consensus on ways to compensate states for loss of tax revenue.

The projected total compensation shortfall in current fiscal stands at ₹2.35 lakh crore.

The Centre in August gave two options to the states to borrow either ₹97,000 crore from a special window facili-

tated by the RBI or ₹2.35 lakh crore from market and had also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022 to repay the borrowing.

Following demand by some states, the amount of ₹97,000 crore was increased to ₹1.10 lakh crore. As many as 21 States - which are BJP ruled or have supported it on various issues -- have opted to borrow ₹1.10 lakh crore to meet the compensation shortfall. The Centre has released ₹20,000 crore to the states towards compensation shortfall so far in the current fiscal. Under the GST structure, taxes are levied under 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent slabs. On top of the highest tax slab, a cess is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods, and the proceeds from the same are used to compensate states for any revenue loss.

'Don't levy GST on auto, realty, hospitality for 6 months'

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

As the pandemic has severely hit businesses and more so in the case of automobiles, hospitality and real estate sectors, a PwC report has suggested the suspension of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on these sectors for a minimum of six months.

The report titled "Reimagining GST@3" said that such a measure will provide much-needed cash liquidity to these sectors and ensure business continuity.

It noted that considering the impact on the economy, the Centre provided relief to the industry by extending deadlines for payment of taxes. Businesses were allowed to delay their tax payments for 15 days without incurring interest.

"However, several sectors such as hospitality, automobile and real estate have been severely impacted and the government should consider sus-

pending the GST payments of these sectors for at least six months," it said. It has also recommended the implementation of a facility to deposit GST to the government treasury on cash basis and suggested dispensation of credit reversal requirement on expired stock during this period. Among other suggestions, the report has also recommended expanding the tax base under GST.

It noted that a reason for the implementation of GST was to levy a single tax on all goods and services, resulting in free-flowing credit in the country. However, at present, certain items such as petroleum products -- petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel and natural gas -- and alcohol are outside the GST net. To reassure states regarding protection of their fiscal autonomy, the government had initially decided to keep petroleum products, which form a major part of state revenues, outside the

ambit of GST till revenue collections stabilise.

However, it is notable that due to the inward supplies of these sectors being subject to GST and the output supplies being beyond the scope of GST levy, the tax incidence in these sectors is significantly high, it said, adding that moreover, their compliance-related requirements have become fairly complicated. "This is to some extent defeating the Government's purpose of implementing the new tax regime. Representations have been made to bring industrial fuel, including natural gas and ATF, under the GST net," it said.

Noting that bringing the petroleum sector within the GST net requires more consensus-building, however, in the absence of constitutional limitations, it is only a matter of time before this shift takes place and states are assured that they can maintain their levels of tax revenues.

Govt may consider allowing GST deposit on cash basis: PwC report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government may consider allowing India Inc to deposit GST on cash basis to help them tide over the liquidity woes during the Covid-19 pandemic, a PwC report said.

It said while formalising its support strategy for the industry in the next phase, the government could also consider suspending GST payments for select sectors during the COVID-19 period.

In its report titled 'Reimagining GST@3', PwC said cash liquidity support schemes that advance business continuity are the need of the hour.

"The government has announced a timely budgetary support scheme in line with the relief packages of various developed nations. Despite these steps, much ground remains to be covered," it said.

The report said that some key issues which require immediate attention of the government before taxpayers get entangled in long-drawn litigation include eligibility of ITC on expired stock, intermediary services and taxability of discount schemes.

"The government should consider issuing clear guidelines around these critical issues, keeping in mind the evolving international taxation principles and business models prevalent in the trade and industry," it said.

With regard to suggestions to overcome the current crisis, the PwC report suggested some measures the government could consider while formalising its support strategy for India Inc in the next phase.

These are facility to deposit GST to the treasury on cash basis, suspension of GST payments for select sectors during the COVID-19 period, dispensation of credit reversal requirement on expired stock

PwC report suggested some measures the government could consider while formalising its support strategy for India Inc in the next phase

during this period.

It also suggested one-time dispute settlement scheme under Goods and Services Tax (GST). "The government can consider introducing a scheme under the GST regime for voluntary disclosure of tax payments before the taxpayer undergoes GST audits. The GST law has evolved over the past three years and the government has clarified several provisions after its introduction. Therefore, a one-time scheme to clear previous irregularities can be considered, which will help the industry in clearing past baggage and reduce litigation," it said.

PwC India, Partner & Leader, Indirect Tax Pratik Jain said with the wealth of data available with the government and measures such as coordination between direct, indirect tax administrations and technological advancements such as E invoicing and E waybills, tax base is likely to expand further.

"We now need a 'white paper' articulating what is the form of GST we want in the next few years. The regime requires more stability, simplicity and transparency. The report provides some food for thought as we reimagine the new and much improved GST regime," Jain added.

Digital payments soar manifold in 5 years to FY20: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Concerted efforts by the Reserve Bank to move to a non/less-cash economy by pushing digital payments have begun to pay rich dividends as the volume of such payments has jumped manifold in the past five years, the latest data from the central bank showed.

Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, digital payments have grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 55.1 per cent -- from 593.61 crore in the year to March 2016 to 3,434.56 crore in the year to March 2020.

In absolute terms, value has grown from ₹920.38 lakh crore to ₹1,623.05 lakh crore during this period, clipping at an annual compounded rate of 15.2 per cent.

Giving a year-wise data, in 2016-17 digital payments jumped to 969.12 crore from 593.61 crore in the previous year in volume terms, while in value the same rose to ₹1,120.99 lakh crore.

Similarly, the numbers continued to scale new peaks with volume growing to 1,459.01 crore and value jumping to ₹1,369.86 lakh crore in 2017-18.

Come 2018-19, the numbers clipped at a faster pace with volume jumping to 2,343.40 crore transactions while the value rose to ₹1,638.52 lakh crore.

However, FY20 saw a massive spike in volumes over the previous year to 3,434.56 crore but in value slipped down to ₹1,623.05 lakh crore, which can be attributed to the steep

fall in the overall economy and the massive job losses, forcing people to spend less and preserve more cash.

Yet from a five-year growth perspective, the numbers shine with an annual growth rate of 55.1 per cent in terms of transaction volumes and 15.2 per cent in terms of value, show the RBI data.

Given the pandemic and the lockdown restrictions, digital payments volumes are set to jump manifold while the value could see a further plunge given the mammoth crisis that everyone faces following the pandemic.

Digital payment push started almost a decade back with limited access to NEFT, RTGS and ECS payments. Later with the government push following the controver-

sial note ban, digital payments rose sharply.

The development of UPI-based payments as well as app-based payments just pushed the boundaries and has since witnessed blossoming of a myriad of payment systems, entry of non-bank players, and a gradual shift in the customer behaviour from cash to digital payments.

Behind all these, the Reserve Bank has played the crucial role of an operator, catalyst and facilitator, regulator and supervisor, as the occasion demanded towards achieving its public policy objective of developing and promoting a safe, secure, sound and efficient payment systems.

Some of the initiatives introduced decades ago in

payment systems to safeguard the interests of customers are valid even today.

Some of the recent RBI initiatives for enhancing security and increase customer confidence in digital payments include mandating use of only EMV chip and PIN-based debit and credit cards from January 2019; tokenisation from January 2019, when RBI issued a framework for tokenisation of card transactions which allowed all authorised card networks to offer tokenisation services, irrespective of the app provider, use case; facility to switch on/off transaction rights; mandatory positive confirmation to remove any ambiguity for funds transferred through NEFT and RTGS from March 2010, and

January 2019, respectively.

Another innovation has been contactless cards which allows cardholders to "tap and go"; mandatory data storage within the country; harmonisation of turnaround time for failed transactions from September 2019 and setting up of a digital ombudsman and also institution of the Central Payment Frauds Information Registry among others.

One of the biggest outcomes of these measures is the massive change in the behavioural trends of customers--for instance, as percent of card usage, they are being used increasingly for payments--from 20 per cent in FY16 to 45 per cent in FY20, with debit card turnover outpacing credit card values.

Mobile operators' revenues to improve in Q2 on more recharges, reverse migration: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Revenues for mobile operators are expected to improve sequentially in September quarter, as factors like increased recharges, reverse migration, and easing of lockdown curbs helped overcome what is otherwise a seasonally weak quarter, say sector analysts.

In its note on earnings preview, Axis Capital said revenue for wireless service providers is expected to improve in the second quarter on increased recharges as lockdown restrictions eased.

"Subscriber addition expected for Jio/Bharti Airtel (though at muted levels), while Vodafone Idea to continue losing subscribers," it said adding that margin improvement from revenue increase is likely to be partially offset by higher commissions, and sales and marketing cost.

The Axis report said Jio will benefit from higher subscriber addition than competi-



tors, as well as per user realisation improvement from addition of higher ARPU Jio Fiber customers.

"Bharti Airtel's and Vodafone Idea's revenue also to improve quarter on quarter in seasonally weak Q2, as recharges improve on easing of lockdown restrictions," it said but added that margin expansion will be "muted" in Q2.

For infrastructure providers, it expected a gradual

sequential recovery.

"Bharti Infratel to post flat ex-penalty rental revenue though tenancy addition is expected to pick up QoQ," Axis said. In its September quarter preview, Emkay talks of a "stable quarter despite seasonality". It said, in a seasonally weak quarter, wireless revenue will inch up sequentially driven by the reverse migration, better gross additions and data subscriber additions.

Festive season: Majority to shop online, 80% to look for local items

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Online shopping is likely to get a new boost in the coming festive season, as around 51 per cent consumers are likely to shop online during the period, according to a recent survey.

In the 2019 survey of 'LocalCircles', only 27 per cent of those planning festive spending had indicated using e-commerce sites as their primary channel for shopping.

"This shows that 51 per cent of those doing festive shopping this year will use e-commerce sites and apps as their primary channel, a sizable change from previous years," said the 2020 survey for festive season by LocalCircles.

Further, on the question of willingness to buy from MSMEs, small businesses, emerging brands, weavers and artisans, around 80 per cent said a definite 'yes' while only

10 per cent said 'no'. Around 10 per cent were unsure.

The survey received over three lakh responses from over 330 districts of India.

In the survey, 61 per cent consumers have indicated that they will engage in festive spending this year, a reduction from 2019 when 78 per cent consumers had indicated that they will shop during the festive season.

"When consumers in the 2020 survey were asked about the primary channel they would use for their festive shopping, in response, 26 per cent said e-commerce sites and apps, 11 per cent said they will call local retail stores and get home delivery, 25 per cent said local stores and e-commerce sites, while 24 per cent said they will visit malls, local retailers, and markets. Only 14 per cent were unsure about it," said a statement by LocalCircles.

IRDAI panel suggests lower capital requirement for microinsurance firms

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

A committee constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has suggested that the capital requirement for entities entering into the microinsurance segment should be lowered to Rs 20 crore.

Currently the entry-level capital requirement is at Rs 100 crore under the Insurance Act.

The 'Report of the Committee on the Standalone Microinsurance Companies' noted that the penetration of insurance is "all the more urgent" now in the context of the pandemic when millions of Indians, especially in the informal sector, have lost their livelihoods. It said that dedicated standalone microinsurance institutions can play a major role in such situations by making insurance affordable and available to low-income families, thereby providing a mea-

sure of risk mitigation and security.

"The committee therefore recommends that the government and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) license such businesses which can cater to the low-income segment," it said.

Recommending a cut in the capital requirement, the report said that the minimum capital requirement of Rs 100 crore stipulated under the Insurance Act has acted as the biggest impediment to the expansion of the microinsurance market. It also recommended that the risk-based capital (RBC) approach should be adopted to enable the progressive growth of the microinsurance business while maintaining the highest prudential standards. Further, microinsurance companies should be allowed to act as composite insurers to transact both life and non-life business through a single entity.

Global PC market growth breaks 10-yr record with 13% rise

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The global PC market climbed 12.7 per cent from a year ago to reach 79.2 million units in the third quarter of this year, registering the highest growth the market has seen in the past 10 years, according to the latest report from Canalisys.

After a weak Q1, the recovery in Q2 continued into Q3 this year in which Lenovo regained the top spot, showed data released by the analyst company. Global notebook shipments touched 64 million units -- almost as much as the record high of Q4 2011 when notebook shipments were 64.6 million -- as demand continued to surge due to second waves of Covid-19 in many countries and companies continued to invest in longer-term transitions to remote working.

Shipments of notebooks and mobile workstations grew 28.3 per cent year-on-year.

FPIs pump in net ₹1,086 cr so far in October

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have invested ₹1,086 crore on a net basis so far in October in Indian markets, tracking encouraging factors including improved GST collection, acceleration in economic activity and positive global cues.

According to the depositories data, overseas investors pumped in a net ₹5,245 crore into equities and withdrew ₹4,159 crore from the debt market during October 1-9.

This translated into a total net inflow of ₹1,086 crore.

In September, FPIs were net sellers at ₹3,419 crore.

Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww, said that both domestic as well as global factors contributed to net inflow so far in October.

"Better than expected Q2 (earnings) performance, rising

GST collection and a general opening up of the economy are helping India in becoming an attractive investment destination," Jain said.

In addition, the global markets are performing at pre-COVID-19 levels, he added.

"Few of the Asian markets like Japan, S Korea and Taiwan also saw positive FPI flows this week. The reversal of INR Vs USD from 74 to 73.1 and correction in the dollar index have been supportive for FPI flows into India," Rasmik Oza, executive vice president, head of fundamental research - PCG, Kotak Securities Ltd, noted.

Going forward, continuation of accommodative stance by global central banks may ensure flow of foreign investments into emerging markets including India, said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research, Morningstar India.

Multiplexes still awaiting approval from State Govts to resume operations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Multiplex operators are still awaiting nod from many state governments to resume operations even though the Centre has already issued guidelines with regard to reopening of cinemas and theatres.

Multiplexes, cinema halls and theatres have been allowed to reopen from October 15, with up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been issued by the central government.

Though the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has given its go-ahead to resuming cinema and theatre activities under Unlock 5.0, it has left for the states to take a final call in this regard.

Multiplex chains including PVR, Inox, Cinepolis and Mukta A2 Cinemas are all set to re-open their cinema halls from October 15 with half of their seating capacity while ensuring contactless operations and maintaining social distancing norms. These oper-

ators have lined up "promising contents" to entertain the audiences in the coming months.

Leading multiplex operator PVR, which operates 875 screens in 22 states, would be able to open only 496 screens as only 14 state governments have granted permission to re-open its multiplexes, according to its CEO Gautam Dutta.

The company is yet to receive any direction from the state government of Maharashtra, where it operates the highest number of screens.

"Maharashtra is an extremely important market for us, occupying the largest percentage of our screen share," he said.

Mexican movie theatre chain Cinepolis said the company is fully ready and would abide by the directions issued by the government.

"We welcome the move from the central government. Almost 75 per cent screen of the 350 screens, which we operate in India would be open. We are requesting the other state governments to allow us to open the balance

The company is yet to receive any direction from the State Government of Maharashtra, where it operates the highest number of screens

thousands of people it employs, many of whom have been severely impacted by this shutdown," Mukta Arts MD Rahul Puri said.

Moreover, as the number of permissible seating in the auditorium has gone down to 50 per cent under the Unlock 5.0 guidelines, some multiplex chains are now exploring private screenings for families and smaller groups.

INOX Leisure CEO Alok Tandon said, "We are also looking to innovate with private screenings, where families or smaller groups of guests can book the entire auditorium and enjoy the content of their choice."

"Our shows will be programmed in such a manner that there are no simultaneous entries, intermissions and exits," he said.

All multiplex chains have assured that they will strictly follow the SOPs issued by the government in this regard.

"We have some very promising content lined up in the coming months, and Maharashtra opening makes us

hopeful of things speeding up in this direction. With that we must also reiterate our priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our customers through strict adherence to all the safety protocols and guidelines laid down..." said Dutta.

Besides mandatory temperature checks, masks, pedal-operated touch-free hand sanitisers, the multiplexes would now rely on the digital ways such as e-tickets instead of traditional paper tickets, self-check in with QR codes, sharing of auditorium's seat chart and location of the seat and online order of food and beverages, under the new normals.

Some multiplex operators like Mukta A2 Cinemas is using 'matrix seating' method, which will ensure an empty seat between patrons, while allowing families and groups to sit together.

"This starts right from the booking of the tickets, which will take place exclusively through the Mukta A2 Cinemas website and mobile application. Upon arrival at the theatre, customers will be able

to self-check by scanning a QR code. Social distancing will be also be maintained during screenings, with occupancy of the cinema hall capped at 50 per cent," Puri said.

Inox will also keep PPE kits available for purchases, which would include a mask, a pair of gloves and sanitiser. It would also provide a web link to its viewers through SMS to access the food and beverage menu to place order.

Many cinema halls were closed even before the lockdown period started.

Several states including Delhi, Kerala, J&K, Maharashtra etc had directed to close the cinema halls between March 11 to 16 for a temporary period, till March 31, 2020.

Later, the central government had directed a complete lockdown of the country, effective from March 25.

According to estimates, India has a total number of around 8,750 screens, in which 3,100 are in multiplexes and balance 5,650 are single screens operating mostly in small tier II, III and below cities.

Trend Glazer

A lion cub named after Urvashi

Actor **URVASHI RAUTELA** is ecstatic that a lion cub has been named after her. "I'm so delighted that after Jackie Chan and Rihanna, one of the most inspiring entrepreneurs Saif Ahmed Belhasa named one of the baby lionesses after my name 'Urvashi,' and it was a very lovely experience visiting the zoo in Dubai," Urvashi said. "When we got the invitation to visit the fame park, me and my team were delighted and happy as I'm passionate about animals. I played with a crocodile, snakes, giraffe, lions, and leopards. It was a very happy day out with animals," she added.



The novel Coronavirus has grabbed a large-scale attention across the globe. However, it also needs an effective solution of an equal scale to build awareness, bust myths and educate everyone about maintaining health and distance. The solution needs to be customised to cater to the audience being spoken to in different parts of the country, and even the world. Various government and health organisations have a huge responsibility here of keeping the public informed and educated about the preventive measures, a guide on the next steps to tackle infection, and enforce lockdown rules on a large scale.

The sudden and fast-spreading crisis has put all organisations and their communication measures to test. It now encourages governments and agencies to think beyond the traditional media (radio, TV, print) and basic one-way information-disseminating websites and to fully leverage cutting-edge technology that will reach and engage the audience from metros to rural cities using smartphones and the internet. And one such technology that has enabled authorities to build awareness and enhance their responsiveness to this mega-crisis is — Conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is the set of technologies behind automated messaging and speech-enabled applications that offer human-like interactions between computers and humans.

At the forefront of creating deep and engaging conversations via media interactions, conversational AI has proven itself to be of immense value in the current crisis with vast potential as a new powerful form of two-way communication. It enables brands to overcome the difficulties and limitations that they face while communicating digitally with their customers and always be accessible and consistent across multi-platforms.

THE NEED

False information about Coronavirus has been spreading faster than the virus itself. And has further given rise to concerns, questions, and requests for more information. It made its way to the top of search terms and trending topics on social media and has created a paranoia everywhere. Nefarious parties on social media add fuel to the fire with the esca-



THE MEDICAL FUTURIST

Here are some ways in which conversational AI can bring about a digital revolution in the healthcare sector and enhance the citizen-to-government engagement. By **KARTIK WALIA**

lated spreading of misinformation. There is a need to put an end to misconceptions regarding the outbreak and its risks, symptoms, and statistics, and disseminate real-time, up-to-date information on the ways to tackle it. It is very clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has strangely changed our work and life culture globally. Traditional forms of communication or mass-broadcasting were not as effective as the reach was still restricted with publications slow-

ing down or even closing during the lockdown, call centres employees being restricted to their homes for safety purposes. The speed of disseminating relevant information as the news and updates too kept changing quickly and what was being shared soon became stale. Even the text-based notifications executed by certain local authorities were not effectively reaching their target audience, leaving a large part of the population living amid outdated or erroneous information.



Apart from this, many companies faced problems while communicating with their customers due to the lockdown.

HOW IT COMES TO RESCUE

The importance and effectiveness of Conversational AI have always been spoken about in the ecosystem. In fact, before the pandemic, a Gartner report from July 2019 stated that by 2025, customer-service organisations that embed AI in their multi-channel customer engagement platform will elevate operational efficiency by 25 per cent. The Conversational AI platforms have also helped authorities in disseminating information

and solving crises across borders in real-time, enabling the pro-active distribution of real-time information, receiving feedback, evaluating needs, and anticipating outbreaks. These platforms are not restricted to linguistic barriers and support healthcare authorities and government in engaging in meaningful conversations and offering emergency services in times of the pandemic. From automated patient outreach to patient engagement and reminders, and providing the right drug information, the conversational AI can act as a complete remote medical equipment kit.

The best use of technology is when it can help enhance a human's

productivity and efficiency. In these unprecedented times, Conversational AI has also enabled call centres to deploy minimum human agents to maintain social distancing norms while functioning itself at the forefront of this battle. To fight back COVID-19, the Indian government deployed a conversational AI-based virtual assistant through MyGov, a government-to-citizen digital infrastructure, with more than half a billion users. This unique engagement solution is discoverable on the website (www.mygov.in) via whatsapp, on Google Search, Maps, Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp. Not only were these services accessed by millions of users across India but they were also accessed by people around the world that were monitoring the rapidly changing pandemic.

REDEFINE THE COMMUNICATION WAYS

Brands are also leveraging Conversational AI to redefine the way they communicate with consumers as their focus moves further into digital with always-on, real-time, and interactive experiences. These changes spurred on by the pandemic will become part of the new normal for digital communication. This shift is happening across the customer journey, from driving user acquisition to sharing updates about their orders, products, and promotions, Conversational AI superpowers are enabling natural language-driven, self-service engagement.

Well, the tool has certainly been a powerful one to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. It has proven its utility at scale, working to address the concerns of millions of citizens around the world while personalising the experience along the way, keeping millions informed and at ease, and most importantly, safe. It has brought about a digital revolution in the healthcare services and enhance the citizen-to-government engagement. It opens a lot of opportunities for government and healthcare authorities to tap into the power of Conversational AI to vastly improve the dissemination of important information and to engage constituents in interactive experiences that will enrich and empower citizens around the world.

(The writer is Head of Operations, India, Amplify.ai.)



'Netizens don't matter to me. I have never met them. How can they affect me? How do I even know they are real people? They could be anybody, codes or algorithms. Technology has reached such a stage that you really don't know what is happening. I would rather distance myself from them and be happy with those who love me.'

—Saqib Saleem

Actor **ANITA HASSANANDANI** announced her pregnancy on Saturday. Anita and her husband, businessman **Rohit Reddy**, posted a video to announce.



"Love you @rohitreddygoa #gettingreadyforreddy," Anita captioned the post.

Wishes have been pouring in. "Wow! Congratulations. This is awesome," actor **Karanvir Bohra** commented.

"This is such a beautiful news. Congratulations Anita! Enjoy this awesome journey of becoming momma," actor **Supriya Shukla**.

Anita and Rohit tied the knot in Goa on October 18, 2013.

Benedict to return as Doctor Strange

Actor **BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH** will reprise his role of the sorcerer superhero, Doctor Strange in the third part of the revived Spider-Man franchise. Tom Holland

returns as Spider-Man in the film. Cumberbatch's casting marks the third major crossover between the films produced by Disney's Marvel Studios and Sony Pictures' Spider-Man movies.

The move puts him in the role of Peter Parker/Spider-Man's mentor, which was previously carried out by Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017).



WEBBED



WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME

Live Broadway cast production of Heidi Schreck's play presents multiple facets, historical perspectives and her personal experiences with the Constitution of USA. The drama releases on October 16 on Amazon Prime Video.



SOCIAL DISTANCE

Conceived, cast and executed entirely remotely during quarantine, the narrative anthology series features both dark and funny takes on how people strive to stay connected while staying apart. It releases on October 15 on Netflix.



THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7

What was supposed to be a peaceful protest turned into a violent clash with the police. What followed was one of the most notorious trials in history — the 1969 trial of seven defendants charged by the US federal government. The film releases on October 16 on Netflix.



DRIVE PAST LODHI ART DISTRICT

India's first and largest public art display is the perfect Venue

The Hyundai Venue was the Indian Car of the Year (ICOTY) for 2020 because the jurors felt that the small Sports Utility Vehicle ticked all the boxes when it came to affordability and performance against some very stiff competition. The car was named what it was because it was a new space in itself — a 'Venue' in a manner of speaking and at The Pioneer we celebrate a year of tremendous sales and critical success of the Hyundai Venue by taking the latest 'Sport' variant of the car to some great venues across the capital, starting with India's first large public art district, the Lodhi Art District in Lodhi Colony, New Delhi.



CELEBRATING THE HYUNDAI VENUE

Lodhi Colony was among the last residential quarters built for government servants in colonial times, since then its low-rise houses and location next to areas like Meherchand Market and Lodhi Gardens have made it one of the most desirable areas for government servants. But back in 2015, the

St+Art India Foundation started work by painting the outside walls of the apartments with giant murals. Supported by the likes of Google Arts, St+Art had already commissioned giant murals of Dadasaheb Phalke in Mumbai as well as the famous mural of Mahatma Gandhi on the wall of the Delhi Police Headquarters. With the support of the central and the Delhi government and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation, 50 prominent street artists from across the world — Japan, Poland and many countries in between as well as both renowned and young Indian artists were let loose on the walls of the colony. What Delhi received was India's largest public art areas, a place where anybody and everybody can walk or drive through and while the pandem-

ic forced the closure of several public spaces, the Lodhi Art District remained open for families and everyone to visit at any time. Old murals are constantly being changed. The murals are not just colourful but many of them send a powerful social message as well. The NDMC has further added a skating and cycling park and is building cycling lanes across the area. It is a great 'Venue' indeed and is coupled with the fact that there are several top restaurants in Lodhi Colony Market and Meherchand Market in the area, including Jamun and Tres.

The Hyundai Venue 'Sport' edition has several touches to make it stand out from the crowd, including dashes of red on the interior and a very special 'Red Cross' on the grille. We were driving the 1.5 U2 CRDI diesel variant with 100PS of power and a six-speed manual gearbox that is both extremely economical and offers a lot of options to the driver when they want to have a splash of fun.

KEEP THE SPIRIT ALIVE

A teenage activist from Palghar, SALONI TODKARI uses Gandhian methods to fight for the rights of children and raise social concerns. By ALKA GADGIL



Give up resistance

We must be open to fresh ideas and perspectives and let go of our false beliefs and knowledge to transform ourselves positively, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us have a deep quest to know the truth that is complete and unmixed. However, it has been learnt from experience that generally, when a man is told the truth which does not square well with his current belief, he does not accept it, or at least, puts up a strong resistance towards it.

Man has so much attachment to his existing beliefs that he has learned from history that not only does he offer resistance to new ideas and knowledge but also becomes intolerant to new thoughts so much so that he can commit violence and indulge into destructive acts. This prejudice

is built not merely by people's ignorance or attachment to old beliefs but also by established schools or institutions of learning. They have been resisting knowledge that contradicts with what is stated in the course books or the authorised versions. However, the degree of the action has decreased nowadays because the educated people are more open to new ideas. The educational institutions also encourage research on various fresh and new topics. There is thus some change in the environment as compared to what it was about a hundred or fifty years ago. But the in-built prejudice towards new ideas and resistance and new beliefs has not yet completely vanished. There are religious fanatics around the world who still threaten people with death who vehemently express opinions opposite to their beliefs and try to influence the general mentality of the society.

It should be remembered that false knowledge or ignorance builds up deep prejudice, hatred and emotional attachment which leads to violent reactions. Hence, in order to remove prejudice and hatred, we need to work on its base, that is, false knowledge. For that, it is important to tell the truth so that people can frame right opinions. This might also lead to violence. Therefore, we should devise methods which can stop people from putting up violent reactions.

We must understand the fact that people who oppose new ideas or knowledge are too small in number. Through this, we must also understand that this has always been the case. Initially, only a small number of people would accept new knowledge. However, as time goes by, more and more people have started accepting the truth. Remember, the truth of the knowledge should not be judged by the number of people but by the change it brings in the life of those who accept it. Hence, we must now rise up from deep slumber and give up our resistance and opposition and try to learn a lesson from history. We must start recognising and accepting new ideas and knowledge which would help in bringing about a great transformation worldwide.



that read: "Since the officers don't get paid, they have turned to begging" and entered the office. We wanted to present the trophy to the officer but we were whisked away. Although none of the office bearers met us, the board took cognisance of our grievance and acted on the schools which were overcharging the students for the form," remembered Saloni.

She also informed about the protocols they had followed while organising the protests. "We had informed the nearest police station about our plans. We went by the regulations and used peaceful methods for making our voices heard," explained she emphasising on the need of following the constitutional norms while organising peaceful protests.

Known for her understanding, peace-loving and empathetic nature at the boarding, Saloni was entrusted with the responsibility of reaching out to the neighboring Katkari Wadi (Hamlet), under Maitrakul's Chiranjeevi programme. The Katkaris are an aboriginal forest tribe who continue to live in abject poverty even today. Parents go for work leaving behind young children at home. It was found that schools in and around the area had limitations in meeting their educational needs and almost no



Katkari child was enrolled in school.

When Saloni entered the hamlet, she was welcomed with mud and stones, hurled at her by older children. Saloni persisted and tried to broker a truce with the children by proposing to play games. Soon, the children were playing games with her. In a month's time, she was able to hold an exercise on alphabets with them in the Katkari Wadi. Since then, regular *Baag Shala* is being organised by Maitrakul activists here.

As she grows older, her grasp on social concerns especially on the challenges faced by the deprived children has also matured. On her way to school, Saloni started noticing the child beggars stalking the walkers on the street for money and food. She felt for the children who have been robbed of their right to live with dignity.

Swayed by the issue, Saloni decided to act by staging a protest outside Kalyan station. Maitrakul backed the decision as she went on to fast for three days against the insensitivity of the administration, police and public regarding child beggars. Her protest and fast against child begging attracted the attention of the administration, media and political leaders. Saloni was just 15 when she launched the agitation and fast for the cause. But how did she cope with the pangs of hunger?

"When I decide, I act. There were friends from Maitrakul who joined my agitation and they took turns to fast for a day with me. When my mother came to see me, she was shocked and broken but didn't discourage me. She understood that I was doing it for a good cause and gave me her blessings," shared Saloni.

On the third and the last day of the fast, the local corporators and members of political parties came to meet her and promised to address the child beggars' issue. The fast was undertaken in the second week of March after which the pandemic had set in. Saloni has not been able to pursue the issue of child beggars since then but she keeps the issue alive by fasting once a month. Other children at Maitrakul also join her for the cause.

"Saloni is not all agony and anguish, she's fun loving and easy going. She's a good actor and a performer. Her coordination skills are great; she plans the schedule, helps in contacting the resource persons and seeks police permission for the camps," shares Ashish Jadhav, one of the functionaries of Maitrakul.

This adolescent is one of the many young minds who are trying to keep alive the spirit of the father of the nation by walking on the path of *Satyagraha* and *Shanti*.

—Charkha Features

Taking a cue from the edutainment show *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* (MKBKSH), a group of young women from Nawada district of Bihar have set up a sanitary napkin bank. They collect ₹1 a day from each girl and use the money to buy sanitary pads for themselves and other girls who may not have the means to purchase them. The girls decided to come together to assist each other when they saw how their individual menstrual needs were often not met due to lack of money. This initiative is helping young girls from the district to speak up about their menstrual needs.

Ahead of International Day of the Girl Child, they share how they were inspired to act by MKBKSH, a trans-media initiative launched by the Population Foundation of India to address issues of family planning, early marriage, unplanned or early pregnancies, domestic violence and adolescent reproductive and sexual health.

Addressing why and how the sanitary napkin bank was created, youth leader Anu Kumari from Amawa village says, "To help someone who doesn't have money, we deposit one rupee every day. That means each girl raises ₹30 a

Witness the change

Ahead of International Day of the Girl Child, the Population Foundation of India shares how its show, *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon*, has inspired young women to set up a sanitary napkin bank in their district and address issues of family planning and domestic violence

month. We buy sanitary pads and distribute it among poor girls, who cannot afford to buy them, in order to protect their menstrual health."

The creator of the show, film and theatre director Feroz Abbas Khan says, "When I wrote the concept for the show seven years ago, I could have never imagined the kind of impact we have seen over these years. I wanted to make a show that was effectively communicating important social issues without being preachy. It makes me happy that *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* has become an empowering slogan for young, adolescent girls who are now spearheading the change on the ground."

Not just creating and sustaining a sanitary napkin bank, the



message of self-reliance and empowerment in the show inspired these girls to also conduct dialogues about critical but taboo subjects like contraceptive options. As Mausam Kumari, a 17-year-old

youth leader from Hardiya says, "Now we talk about family planning too. We visit villages and explain these subjects to women. We tell them about options like Antara injection, Chhaya, Copper T and condoms."

The girls also came together to demand youth-friendly health clinics to be set up in existing public health centres. "Authorities hold a public dialogue twice a year and we expressed our wish of having a youth-friendly health clinic so that we can discuss our issues and talk without any fear. Our request was fulfilled and now all the girls of the village go there and use the services available," adds Mausam.

Poonam Muttreja, Executive Director of Population Foundation of India is delighted with how the show has given voice to young girls and women. Says she, "I am glad that the show is impacting their lives. That is our goal precisely. Through the character of Dr Sneha Mathur, the protagonist of the series, we have initiated difficult but important conversations about sex selection, violence, gender discrimination, safe sanitation, family planning, spacing, child marriage, mental health, drug abuse, nutrition and adolescent health."

The women watching this change unfold are recognising the shift in the conversation around menstruation. Community member Sangeeta Devi observes, "In the past, we used to suffer silently during menstruation. Our daughters told us about napkins. We also saw the show and felt encouraged."

The show revolves around the inspiring journey of Dr Sneha, a young doctor who leaves behind her lucrative career in Mumbai and decides to work in her village. It focusses on Sneha's crusade to ensure quality healthcare for all. Under her leadership, village women find their voices through collective action.

Over three seasons, it has dealt with various issues. The first season comprising 52 episodes discussed issues like child marriage, sex selection at birth and gender discrimination. The second season focussed on youth and adolescents. Season 3 of the show was produced with support from the REC Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The first 104 episodes were supported by DFID (UK's Department for International Development) and BMGF also supported 27 episodes of Season 2.

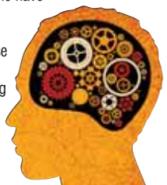
What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family. —Mother Teresa

RISE IN MENTAL HEALTH CASES DUE TO COVID

Public health experts have flagged a manifold increase in mental health cases amid the Coronavirus pandemic, with many attributing the rising stress and anxiety levels to isolation, loss of loved ones, economic uncertainty and the fear of contracting the disease.

According to a survey by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the pandemic disrupted critical mental health services in 93 per cent of the countries worldwide. World Mental Health Day is observed on October 10 every year with the objective of raising awareness about mental health, global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma.

During the pandemic people have been experiencing anxiety, fear, frustration, sadness and loneliness to the point that these feelings have become constant and overwhelming or prompting the urge to attempt suicide. Existing mental health conditions, including severe anxiety and major depression, have also worsened.



EGGS IMPORTANT TO BOOST IMMUNITY

Top poultry experts on the occasion of World Egg Day on Friday highlighted the importance of this protein-rich food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The experts got together to discuss the vision forward for the industry and the importance of eggs in diets. Eggs are counted amongst the most economical, accessible healthiest foods across the globe.

At a webinar hosted by Suresh Chitturi, Chairman of the International Egg Coordination Committee (IEC) along with Tim Labert, former chairman of IEC, Dr Raghav Sunil, MS Orthopaedics, and Sanjoy Mukerji, CEO, Indian Poultry Review, they discussed case studies and shared business insights about the industry during the new normal.

Suresh Chitturi noted that the egg supply chain remained strong in 2020 and even during the pandemic, egg farmers worked with gusto with their partners to deliver fresh, local, high-quality eggs in India.



PREGNANCY ISSUES MAY UP STROKE RISK

Researchers have found that pregnancy complications such as miscarriage, pre-eclampsia, diabetes in pregnancy (gestational diabetes) and pre-term birth are linked to a heightened risk of heart disease or stroke in later life.

Several other factors related to fertility and pregnancy also seem to be associated with subsequent cardiovascular disease, including starting periods early, use of combined oral contraceptives, polycystic ovary syndrome, and early menopause, the study published in the journal *The BMJ*, reported.

However, a longer length of breastfeeding was associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

Previous research has suggested that risk factors specific to women may be linked to cardiovascular disease and stroke but clarity on the quality of the evidence is lacking and on how the findings can be translated into public health and clinical practice.



WAYS TO OVERCOME CORONA FEAR, ANXIETY

As the COVID-19 has led to rise in mental health issues, experts have suggested some simple ways to overcome fear and anxiety about the pandemic and thus avoid feeling depressed.

The World Mental Health Day this year is being celebrated at a time when the world is in the grip of the pandemic, which is affecting mental health of millions of people.

Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety, says Dr Charan Teja Koganti, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, KIMS Hospitals, Kondapur.



NEW HYDROGEL CAN REPAIR DAMAGED NERVES

Researchers have developed a stretchable conductive hydrogel that could someday be used to repair damaged nerves.

According to the study, published in the journal *ACS Nano*, injuries in which a peripheral nerve has been completely severed, such as a deep cut from an accident, are difficult to treat.

A common strategy, called autologous nerve transplantation, involves removing a section of the peripheral nerve from elsewhere in the body and sewing it onto the ends of the severed one. However, the surgery does not always restore function, and multiple follow-up surgeries are sometimes needed.

The research team from Nanjing University in China wanted to develop an effective, fast-acting treatment that could replace autologous nerve transplantation.





Glad to be given this role, I am very happy bowling in the powerplay especially against two great batsmen, that too against a team like CSK, to be able to perform well.

I feel when it comes to our bowling we have shown we can restrict the opposition, (but) either we give too many in the first six or the last four.

I was trying to do too much and putting too much pressure on myself, taking focus away from what I need to do - watch the ball and bat.

If we don't get a good start at the top, we're falling into a hole. So we're looking for positive solutions. What I'd like is a little bit more intensity through the middle overs

ROYAL TRIUMPH

Tewatia takes centre stage again in Rajasthan's win against Sunrisers

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rahul Tewatia's uncanny ability to win tricky games rescued Rajasthan Royals yet again as they eked out a five-wicket victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad to snap their four-match losing streak in the IPL, here on Sunday.

Tewatia, who became a household name with five sixes in an over against Kings XI Punjab, smashed an unbeaten 45 off 28 balls as Royals overhauled the 159-run target with a ball to spare.

Along with Riyan Parag (42 not out off 26 balls), Tewatia won the game in 'Royals' style keeping Steve Smith's men in the mix after they were reduced to 78 for 5 in 12 overs.

With two needed off two balls, Parag hit Khaleel Ahmed for a six over extra cover and broke into an impromptu 'Bihu jig'. They added 85 runs for the sixth wicket in eight overs when their illustrious international stars flattered to deceive.

Tewatia brought back memories of the Sharjah night but this time it was Rashid Khan who was at receiving end in the 18th over as the left-hander struck three consecutive boundaries.

With 22 needed off two overs, Tewatia launched into T Natarajan, who lost his length trying to bowl yorkers, for a four and a six over short fine leg that



Rahul Tewatia and Riyan Parag during Indian Premier League at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium BCCI

swung the match in favour of Royals.

The bizarre decision to send comeback man Ben Stokes (5) up the order didn't work too well as the slowness of the track did him in. Left-arm pacer Khaleel got one to rear up outside the off-stump but the ball came late as Stokes, shaping for a pull, played it onto his stumps.

Steve Smith (5) chanced Vijay Shankar's arm in the deep but failed in the process while Jos Buttler (16) got a delivery from Khaleel that came in after the fingers were rolled over. The inside edge was taken by a diving Jonny Bairstow as Royals were reduced to 26 for 3 inside Powerplay.

Earlier, Manish Pandey struck an impressive half-century but Rajasthan Royals restricted Sunrisers Hyderabad to 158 for 4 in stipulated overs. With the pitches getting slower by the day and stroke-making becoming increasingly difficult, Pandey struggled initially but finished with two

I knew I could take the match deep and win it: Tewatia

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rahul Tewatia always had self belief that he can take the game deep during tough chases and win it for his team, something he did for the second time in this edition of Indian Premier League.

"The wickets were falling so I just wanted to hold one end up and wait for the boundary balls. I knew if I keep my self-belief and take it deep, I could pull it off," Tewatia said at the post-match presentation.

"I told Riyan (Parag) that the wicket was playing slow and the deeper we take it, the better our chances, even if we needed 50 off the last 4 because we have the shots," added Tewatia who was adjudged man of the match.

Talking about the chat he had with Riyan Parag, who also remained not out on 42, in the middle, Tewatia said, "Riyan asked me what to do. I told him to respect the good balls and take singles, and I could take on the attack."

"Against Rashid, I saw the opportunity to play the reverse sweep and took it."

Mumbai topples Delhi

PTI ■ DUBAI

Fluent and fiery half-centuries by Quinton de Kock and Suryakumar Yadav shaped Mumbai Indians' five-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in the clash between the two most consistent IPL sides of the season, here on Sunday.

Chasing 163, the defending champions overhauled the target with two balls to spare and claimed the top spot in the points table with five wins from seven matches so far.

Shikhar Dhawan scored his first half-century of the season and shared a 85-run stand with skipper Shreyas Iyer (42) to help DC post 162 for four.

DC's competitive-looking total proved insufficient in the face of some confident batting by the Mumbai Indians batsmen.

Kieron Pollard (11 not out) and Krunal Pandya (12 not out) took MI past the finish line after De Kock and Suryakumar laid the foundation with their knocks and Ishan Kishan (28 off 15 balls) chipped in with a useful cameo.

De Kock's 53 came off 36 balls with three sixes and four shots to the fence, while Suryakumar took 32 balls for his 53 that was studded with six fours and a six.

After losing Suryakumar and Hardik Pandya (0) in quick succession, MI also lost Kishan towards the end but there was no twist in the tale.

To their credit, Kagiso Rabada (2/28) and Anrich Nortje dragged it to the last over with their incisive bowling.

DC's spin all-rounder Axar Patel, who has made an impact since replacing Amit Mishra, got the big fish when he sent back dangerous Rohit Sharma just when he was looking to break the shackles.

Rohit was already struggling and it was De Kock, who was doing the bulk of scoring. The South African was in tremendous touch and in no time raised his fifty with a boundary off Harshal Patel.

Suryakumar, who replaced Rohit at the crease, also struck the ball hard and clean from the word go.

However, Ravichandran Ashwin applied some breaks by inducing a top-edge from De Kock, who tried a sweep and was holed out to Prithvi Shaw at deep square leg.

Suryakumar was watching the ball nicely but did not give enough respect to Rabada and paid the price. Similarly, young Kishan should have finished off the game himself but lost his wicket by being over aggressive against Rabada.

Earlier, Dhawan's unbeaten 69-run knock came off 52 balls with six fours and a six, while Iyer's 33-ball 42 had five shots to the fence.

Dhawan gave himself enough time to play the sheet anchor's role even as MI bowlers did a decent job in the slog overs to not let the batsmen play too many big shots.



Rohit Sharma receives special jersey before his 150th IPL game for Mumbai Indians

DUGOUT

MOTION PICTURE



Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma wife Ritika Sajdeh and his daughter Samaira Sharma along with others watch IPL game between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals in Abu Dhabi on Sunday



Rohit Sharma receives special jersey before his 150th IPL game for Mumbai Indians



Mumbai boys Shreyas Iyer, Ajinkya Rahane, Rohit Sharma, Tushar Deshpande, Dhawal Kulkarni and Suryakumar Yadav pose after IPL game between Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians

Smriti, Mithali, Harman to lead teams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's white ball captains Harmanpreet Kaur and Mithali Raj along with their 'double deputy' Smriti Mandhana have been named captains of Supernovas, Trailblazers and Velocity squads respectively for the upcoming women's T20 Challenge scheduled from November 4 to 9 in the UAE.

All the three senior players led the teams during last edition also and their appointments were on the expected lines.

The most notable inclusion was Thailand's Natthakan Chantham, who is the first from her nation to get a maiden call-up in the mini-league.

Chantham scored her country's first Women's T20 World Cup half-century in Australia earlier this year.

The T20 Challenge, to be played during the IPL play-offs, will begin with last year's finalist Supernovas taking on Velocity in the opening game.

"The best of Indian women's cricket will combine with some of the leading stars from England, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies, Bangladesh and New Zealand in a four-match tournament," BCCI secretary Jay Shah was quoted in a media release.

Each team has four overseas players each. Amid the raging COVID-19 pandemic, there were question marks over the event with no selection committee in place till 10 days back.

However BCCI president Sourav Ganguly was always confident about holding the event and once Neetu David led selection committee was appointed, the decks got cleared.

The other issue was the dates of the tournament clashed with Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), which starts later this month.

Neither the top players from Australia nor the star attractions from England and New Zealand are available this time around.

In fact, BCCI's move to have the T20 Challenge in October invited criticism from star keeper-opener Alyssa Healy who didn't hide her disappointment on social media.



Kohli challenge for KKR

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Kolkata Knight Riders will have a lot on their plate when they take on a resurgent Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match here on Monday with their lethal weapon Sunil Narine blunted by a chucking complaint and fitness clouds hovering over enforcer Andre Russell.

Narine, who has had multiple complaints of suspect action against him, is again in trouble after on-field umpires' report post KKR's thrilling two-run win against Kings XI Punjab in which the spinner played a massive role.

Not only KXIP, the match against CSK also witnessed Narine's entry after 10 overs, stifling Mahendra Singh Dhoni's men. It seemed that the spinner was getting his mojo back and could have been a hand for Virat Kohli's in-form men.

However, the first warning (a second one would bar him from bowling) from the IPL authorities is certain to ring alarm bells in the KKR camp as he was supposed to be Dinesh Karthik's 'go-to' man in pressure situations.

It has been learnt that Narine has a problem with a few deliveries, especially the one that breaks back into a right-hander where there is believed to be an elbow flex beyond permissible limit.

With his batting also not exactly clicking, how KKR fits him in the playing XI will be interesting, knowing that another offence could end his tournament as a bowler.



Virat Kohli celebrates the victory

inconsistency in batting has been an issue for both the teams.

KKR are placed third in the standings and the two-time champions will be going all out for a victory at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium after registering two back-to-back wins against Chennai Super Kings and Kings XI Punjab.

Andre Russell, who hurt his knee when he accidentally dived into the advertisement boards after missing a catch on Saturday, could also be a doubtful starter.

Skipper Dinesh Karthik did not reveal the extent of the injury after the match against KXIP.

"Whenever Russell gets injured, you know it is hard. He is a very special player, he is a very special person. We need to go and look at him," he said.

RCB, on the other hand, are coming into the game following a 37-run morale boosting victory against CSK and will fancy their chances.

The biggest positive for RCB is that captain Kohli is slowly hitting the peak with the tournament reaching halfway stage. His unbeaten 90 off 52 balls against CSK with gold standard running between wickets will be remembered for years to come.

Young Devdutt Padikkal has been in good touch, but AB de Villiers, who played some exquisite knocks at the beginning of the tournament, has looked off colour in recent outings.

NARINE REPORTED FOR ACTION

Kolkata Knight Riders' West Indian spinner Sunil Narine has been reported for a suspect action during his team's IPL clash against Kings XI Punjab here and another such instance could lead him to being barred from bowling in the league. "The report was made by the on-field umpires according to the IPL's Suspected Illegal Bowling Action Policy. Mr Narine will be placed on the Warning List and is permitted to continue to bowl in the tournament," read a statement from the IPL. "Another report will result in Mr. Narine being suspended from bowling in the Dream11 IPL 2020 until cleared by the BCCI Suspect Bowling Action Committee," it added. In 2015, Narine served suspension from bowling in international cricket after his action was declared illegal by the ICC.

POINTS TABLE

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS	
1	MI	7	5	2	+1.327	10
2	DC	7	5	2	+1.038	10
3	KKR	6	4	2	+0.017	8
4	RCB	6	4	2	+0.820	8
5	SRH	7	3	4	+0.153	6
6	RR	7	3	4	-0.872	6
7	CSK	7	2	5	-0.588	4
8	KXIP	7	1	6	-0.381	2

Hamilton equals Schumacher's record



Lewis Hamilton

Lewis Hamilton matched Michael Schumacher's record of 91 wins in Formula One with victory in the Eifel Grand Prix on Sunday as he took another stride toward his seventh championship title.

Hamilton started behind his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas but took the lead when the Finn ran wide on lap 13. Bottas retired with a car problem five laps later. Hamilton comfortably held off Max Verstappen in the Red Bull after a safety car bunched up the pack late in the race. Hamilton took the win by nearly five seconds from Verstappen, with third for Daniel Ricciardo in Renault's first podium finish since 2011. Another record fell as Kimi Raikkonen started his 323rd race, beating the mark set by Rubens Barrichello from 1993 through 2011.

Raikkonen placed 12th after he picked up a time penalty for colliding with George Russell and sending the Williams driver into a spin.

Nadal 20/2020

AP ■ PARIS

Rafael Nadal tied Roger Federer with 20 Grand Slam titles by producing a nearly perfect performance against Novak Djokovic in the French Open final.

Nadal equalled long-time rival Federer for the most major singles tennis championships won by a man and added to his own record at Roland Garros with No 13 on the red clay, courtesy of a surprisingly dominant 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 victory over the No 1-ranked Djokovic on Sunday.

When Nadal ended it with an ace, he dropped to his knees, smiled widely and pumped his arms. He did not cede a set in his favorite tournament this year.

Nadal, No 2 in the rankings, improved to 100-2 at the French Open, including a combined 26-0 in semifinals and finals, and picked up his fourth consecutive title in Paris.

The 34-year-old left-hander from Spain previously put together streaks of four French Open championships from 2005-08, then five in a row from 2010-14, to go alongside his four trophies at the US Open, two at Wimbledon and one at the Australian Open.

Nadal is now even with Federer for the first time since each man had zero Slams to his name in 2003. Federer's first arrived at Wimbledon that year; Nadal, naturally, earned his first in France in 2005, by which point he trailed 4-0.

Djokovic's loss left him at 17 majors; had he won, the trio's standings would have read 20-19-18. Nadal is the oldest French Open champion since 1972 and the more than 15 years between his first and most recent Grand Slam titles is the longest such span for a man.

This was the 56th installment of Nadal vs Djokovic, the most meetings between any pair of men in the professional era, and their ninth in a Grand Slam final, equalling Nadal vs Federer for the most. Djokovic had won 14 of the last 18 matchups against Nadal, and led 29-26 overall, including a 6-3 6-2 6-3 win at the 2019 Australian Open final.

Nadal allowed Djokovic one fewer game this time. Nadal maintained his relentless push, going to a double break for 4-1 as even the Serb's usual deft touches on the drop shot deserted him.

Nadal wrapped up a two-set lead with his unforced error count at just six to Djokovic's 30.

Nadal broke for the sixth time for a 3-2 lead in the third before Djokovic suddenly restored his reputation as the sport's best returner by carving out his first break of the afternoon for 3-3.

However, there was to be no miracle recovery as a double fault handed Nadal a 6-5 lead and he took the title with an ace.



Rafa equals 20th Grand Slam title feat of Federer, 13th French title

Nadal added to his own record at Roland Garros with No 13 on the red clay, courtesy of a surprisingly dominant 6-0 6-2 7-5 victory over the No 1-ranked Djokovic

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