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OF FUNGI

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PAK OPP PARTIES HOLD MASSIVE ANTI-
GOVT RALLY DESPITE SECURITY THREATS

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CHENNAI BEAT RCB
BY 8 WICKETS

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TOUGH: BHUMI
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India wants peace, won't surrender an inch: Rajnath

Jawans' martyrdom at LAC will be written in golden letters in history, says Defence Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While it wants to end the ongoing border tension with China, India will never allow even an inch of the country taken away by anyone, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh asserted on Sunday. He also said the bravery of the Indian soldiers at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) will be written in golden letters in history.

Though Rajnath did not mention the action, it was in obvious reference to martyrdom of 20 Indian Army personnel, including the commanding officer on June 15, in a bloody brawl with the Chinese troops in the Galwan valley. "I can say with confidence and on the basis of concrete information that the courage and deeds of Indian soldiers during whatever has happened at the India-China border in Ladakh recently will be written in golden letters by the historians," he said.

On a two-day visit to the eastern sector where India shares the LAC with China in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, Rajnath said, "India wants an end to the ongoing border tension with China and restoration of peace. This is our objective. But at times, some nefarious incidents keep happening. I am very confident that our soldiers will never allow even an inch of our land to be taken away by anyone."

Rajnath made these remarks after performing "shastra puja" on the occasion of Dussehra at 33 Corps mili-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh performs Shastra Puja on the occasion of Dussehra at the Sukna Army Camp in Darjeeling on Sunday

tary base in Sukna, West Bengal. This base is responsible for guarding Sikkim.

Army Chief General MM Naravane and several senior officers of the Army were present on the occasion when the Defence Minister performed the "puja."

The Defence Minister later inaugurated a new 19-km long road in Sikkim — Alternate Alignment Gangtok-Nathula Road — via video conferencing from the Sukna-based headquarters of 33 Corps through video conference from Sukna as he could not go there due to inclement weather.

He was scheduled to per-

form the puja at Sherathang, a high-altitude border barely two km away from the LAC China in Sikkim.

Rajnath's visit came at a time when the Armies of India and China are engaged in five-month long stand-off at the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Several rounds of military and diplomatic level talks so far have failed to break the logjam.

Given the current volatile situation at the border, both the sides have increased their troop strength at the border besides deploying heavy weapons. India has bolstered its all round military presence all along the 4,000 km long LAC stretching

from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim in the east.

Moreover, Rajnath's remarks on Sunday came a day ahead of the high-profile 2+2 Ministerial level dialogue with the US here starting Monday.

Rajnath and S Jaishankar will hold wide ranging talks, including the present situation at the LAC and growing assertiveness of China, with Mark Esper and Mike Pompeo. The two visitors will also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval.

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LAC situation to dominate Army Commanders' meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh will figure prominently during the four-day Army Commanders' conference here beginning Monday. The top brass will brainstorm the strategy to counter the challenge from China and review operational preparedness to meet any contingency.

Held twice a year, the conference will be addressed by Defence Minister Rajnath

Top brass will brainstorm strategy to counter challenge from China, review op preparedness

Singh on Tuesday. Army Chief General MM Naravane, IAF chief RKS Bhadauria, Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat will also address the conference.

The forthcoming conference will see the commanders taking steps to plug gaps if any in guarding the 4,000-km long

LAC and 750-km long Line of Control (LoC) facing Pakistan. The conference will also have a look at the readiness to fight a "two-front" war simultaneously with China and Pakistan, sources said here on Sunday.

The logistical support to the troops now guarding the LAC in Ladakh will come under the scrutiny of the commanders. Ready for a long

haul as the successive round of talks at the military and diplomatic levels have failed so far to defuse tension, the Indian Army has gone all out to prepare for deployment during the harsh winter months.

The top brass will ensure that adequate quantities of winter clothing, pre fabricated huts and other related items are available to help the soldiers withstand temperatures dipping to minus 20 in the next few weeks, they said.

Continued on Page 2

India's response stunned China, says RSS chief

Grow bigger strategically, economically to contain Beijing's demonic aspirations: Bhagwat

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maintaining that India "stunned" China through its response to the latter's efforts to intrude into the country's borders, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday the only way for New Delhi to neutralise the neighbouring country's "demonic aspirations" was to grow bigger than Beijing economically, strategically, in matters relating to internal and border security

and also by way of improving the ties with neighbours and bettering international relations.

Addressing a customary Dussehra rally at the Reshimbaug ground in Nagpur, Bhagwat minced no words when he spoke against China's expansionist attitude in general and its recent efforts to intrude into the Indian territory in particular. Keeping in view the social distancing norms arising out of the Covid-19 crisis, the RSS chief — for the first time in the history of his organisation — addressed a rally of mere 50 swayamsevaks. However, his speech was televised across the country as has been practice in recent years.

Continued on Page 2

Bhagwat afraid to admit truth of China occupying Indian land, claims Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat believed that India needs to be militarily better equipped against China as he secretly knew that Beijing has illegally occupied Indian territory in eastern Ladakh. Rahul said Bhagwat was "just scared" to face the truth.

Rahul's jibe at the RSS chief came after the latter's annual address to the country on the occasion of Vijaya Dashmi at the organisation's headquarters in Nagpur.

Rahul said Chinese intrusion was not a secret and took place because the Narendra Modi Government and the

RSS, which is BJP's ideological mentor, allowed it to happen.

"Deep inside, Bhagwat knows the truth," the Congress leader tweeted.

"He is just scared to face it. The truth is China has taken our land and Government of India and RSS have allowed it."

Rahul is facing two defamation cases filed by RSS workers in Maharashtra — one for linking journalist Gauri Lankesh's killing with the "BJP-RSS ideology" and the other for blaming the Sangh for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

Rahul and the Congress have repeatedly attacked the Government over the long stand-off with China in Ladakh.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

DELHI AIR VERY POOR, MAY IMPROVE TODAY



New Delhi: Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category on Sunday but is likely to improve marginally on October 26, Government agencies said. The national capital's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 349 on Sunday.

KAPIL DEV DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

New Delhi: India's first cricket World Cup winning-captain Kapil Dev was on Sunday discharged from a city hospital, two days after undergoing angioplasty following a heart attack. The 61-year-old complained of chest pain on Thursday.

POLITICAL SLUGFEST OVER RAPE OF DALIT IN PUNJAB

New Delhi: The rape of a minor Dalit in Punjab triggered a political slugfest on Saturday, with the BJP accusing the Congress of "selective outrage" by not visiting the victim's family and the grand old party hitting back by calling the ruling dispensation insensitive.

India's Covid recovery rate 90%

71 L persons recover in total, 62,077 in last 24 hours; active cases down to 7L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's recovery rate touched 90 per cent on Sunday with 62,077 persons having recovered from Covid-19 and discharged nationally in the last 24 hours even as the new confirmed cases stood at just a little over 50,000. Active cases also continued to remain below the seven-lakh mark for the third day in a row.

As many as 71 lakh persons have recovered from the infection with half of them hailing

from the top four worst-affected States, which account for 44 per cent of the active caseload of the country, according to the data available by the Union Health Ministry.

The decline in new cases is in contrast to the resurgence of the infection in many countries like the US, Spain, France, and the UK among others. The United States, for example, reported more than 83,000 new cases on October 24, the highest single-day spike since July 16.

France has reported more than 40,000 cases for the last two days even as curfew has been imposed there. Record levels are being reached in Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom as well which are witnessing the second phase of Covid-19. Countries like Ireland and Britain are mulling a second lockdown.

In India, there are 6,68,154 active Covid-19 cases as on date, which accounts for 8.50 per cent of the total caseload, as per the Ministry. Seventy-five per

cent of the new recoveries were observed to be concentrated in 10 States and Union territories — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Delhi, Andhra, Assam, UP and Chhattisgarh.

Continued on Page 2

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 79,09,049

DEATHS: 1,19,030

RECOVERED: 71,33,993

ACTIVE: 6,54,686

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	16,45,020	43,264	14,60,755
Andhra Pradesh	8,07,023	6,587	7,69,576
Karnataka	8,02,817	10,905	7,10,843
Tamil Nadu	7,09,005	10,924	6,67,475
Uttar Pradesh	4,70,270	6,882	4,36,071
Kerala	3,92,931	1,333	2,94,910
Delhi	3,56,656	6,258	3,23,654
West Bengal	3,49,701	6,487	3,06,197
Odisha	2,81,215	1,298	2,64,102
Telangana	2,31,252	1,307	2,10,480
Bihar	2,12,192	1,049	2,00,920
Assam	2,04,171	906	1,85,752
Rajasthan	1,86,243	1,839	1,67,736
Chhattisgarh	1,74,591	1,793	1,48,899
Madhya Pradesh	1,67,249	2,858	1,53,127
Gujarat	1,67,173	3,689	1,49,648

RBI GOVERNOR TESTS CORONA POSITIVE

New Delhi: Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Sunday said he has been tested positive for Covid-19 and will continue to work from isolation. Das said he is asymptomatic and has alerted those who came in contact with him in recent days.

US SETS CORONA INFECTION RECORD: 83K +VE IN A DAY

Boise (US): The US coronavirus caseload has reached record heights with more than 83,000 infections reported in a single day, the latest ominous sign of the disease's grip on the nation, as states from Connecticut to Rocky Mountain West reel under the surge.



An effigy of demon king Ravana burns during Dussehra festival in New Delhi on Sunday

Cong suffers 4th setback since July in MP, another party MLA embraces BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In yet another blow to Congress party in Madhya Pradesh, its another MLA, Rahul Lodhi from Damoh, resigned from the Assembly on Sunday, further denting the already depleted party in the State.

With his resignation, the effective strength of the party has reduced to 87 in Madhya Pradesh Assembly. Lodhi was said to be in touch with the BJP leadership for long. He finally handed his resignation letter to MP Assembly protem Speaker Rameshwar Sharma on Sunday. Three Independent MLAs — Surendra Singh Shera,

Pradip Jaiswal and Rana Vikram Singh had already extended support to Shivraj Government, while the fourth one, Kedar Davar had announced his support to the BJP Government days ago. Suspecting defection from Lodhi, Kamal Nath had met him in the past.

Lodhi is the cousin of ex-MLA Pradyumn Lodhi who had resigned from the Congress and is in the contention for the Bada Malhera seat. This is Congress fourth setback since July. Lodhi joined BJP in the presence of CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Continued on Page 2

Delhi Police ASI suspended after driver dies in police custody

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) was suspended and two constables sent to district lines after a 45-year-old auto-rickshaw driver died in police custody in south Delhi on Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, the family members of the deceased alleged that police assaulted him brutally in custody leading to his death.

The deceased has been identified as Dharambir, a resident of Najafgarh.

Continued on Page 2

Light diyas for jawans, go local in festival season, exhorts Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asked people to go "local" while shopping during the ongoing festival season and also asked them in his monthly "Maan-ki-Baat" radio address to light a "diya" remembering the soldiers protecting the nation at the borders.

In his 70th radio talk, the PM reiterated his caution to people to exercise in celebrating the festivals on account of the coronavirus pandemic. "Previously, a large number of people used to gather in Durga Pandal. It was a fair-like atmosphere during Durga Puja and

Dussehra, but this time it didn't happen. Many more festivals are to be observed, we've to work with restraint during this corona crisis," he said.

The PM also appealed to the citizens to light a "diya" remembering the "soldiers protecting the nation at the borders even during the festivals". Continuing with his focus on "atmanirbharbharat" and thereby, the need to go with "vocal for local" campaign, the PM lauded new initiatives taken up by enterprising people across the country, particularly women.

"This time when you go shopping, remember your

resolve of "Vocal for Local". When purchasing goods from the market, we have to give priority to local products," he said.

Modi drew attention of his listeners to the popularity of local Indian products abroad and cited the example of "Khadi" that has become famous in Mexico's Oaxaca. "Khadi's popularity is increasing. In many places in the world, Khadi is also being made. One such place in Mexico is Oaxaca. There are many villages in this area where the local villagers work for weaving Khadi.

Continued on Page 2

Nitish will be behind bars if LJP comes to power, vows Chirag

ANI ■ BUXAR

Chirag Paswan, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader, claimed at a rally on Sunday that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar would be behind bars if his party is voted to power. "Nitish Kumar and his officers will be behind bars if we come to power," Paswan said.

Addressing a rally in Dumraon, Buxar in the run-up to polling in Bihar, Paswan raised several questions before the present State Government. "Alcohol ban in Bihar has failed. Illicit liquor is widely being sold and Nitish Kumar is receiving kickbacks," Paswan said. The LJP leader sought votes from BJP supporters for

a "Nitish-free government".

"I request you to please vote for LJP candidates to implement #Bihar1stBihari1st. Everywhere else vote for the BJP. The coming government will be a #Nitish-free government," he tweeted in Hindi.

Paswan, chief of the LJP — a former ally of the NDA — has been vocal in his criticism of Kumar, who is the chief ministerial candidate of the NDA. He has, however, pledged support to the Prime Minister, calling himself "Modi's Hanuman".

Bihar Assembly elections will be held in three phases on October 28, November 3, and November 7. The result will be declared on November 10.

Coronavirus casts shadow over Dussehra festivities in Delhi

New Delhi: Dussehra celebrated on Sunday evening under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic lacked the usual festivities and revelry in the national capital as many Ramleela committees shelved plans to hold the customary torching of effigies of the demon king Ravana along with Kumbhkarn and Meghnad. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal greeted people on the occasion and said the pandemic will end soon and the bravery and determination of human race will emerge victorious.

The Ramleela Maidan at the Red Fort that used to be hub of Dussehra festivities, attracting commoners as well as dignitaries, including the president and the prime minister every year, wore a deserted look this time as the Ramleela committees shelved plans to hold Dussehra programmes. Despite the COVID-19

scare and tough guidelines issued by the government for holding large gatherings, organisers in some areas like CBD ground near Karkardooma and GTB Enclave performed 'Ravana Dahan'.

"We reduced the size of the effigies from over 30 feet to around 18 feet this time. Special attention was given to manage the crowd and ensure social distancing," said Harish Rawat, general secretary of GTB Enclave Ramleela Committee.

With the authorities imposing a limit of maximum 200 people for gatherings during festivals and strict measures to prevent COVID-19 infection, prominent Ramleela committees stayed away of Dussehra festivities surrounding 'Ravana Dahan' at the Red Fort grounds. The lack of festivity was further heightened by the government guidelines banning food stalls and

'jhoolas' in and outside Ramleela and Dussehra programme venues.

With lack of adequate time for preparation for Dussehra and fear of COVID-19 infection, many organisers stuck to the tradition of 'Ravana Dahan' by using old video footage as well as light and sound effects.

Organisers of one of the oldest Ramleelas in the city, Luv Kush Ramleela Committee, held a Dussehra programme at Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's residence, in a symbolic end of coronavirus and pollution personifying Ravana. "Defeat pollution and corona which are the real Ravana of today," Sisodia said on the occasion. In view of the COVID-19 threat, difficulties in keeping the crowd size under 200 and enforcing social distancing norms, many Dussehra festival organisers had to depend on safer ways to maintain the tradition.

"The use of light and sound effects mixed with old footage of 'Ravana Dahan' is safe as controlling the crowd at the festival is very difficult," said Ashok Goel of Sri Keshav Ramleela Committee in Model Town.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) issued guidelines for holding gatherings ahead of the festivals, on October 11, limiting number to maximum of 200 people and putting restrictions on setting up food stalls, swings, squatting among others at the venues. Anil Sharma, president of RK Puram Ramleela Dharmik Samiti, said a short version of a four-day long Ramleela was held that concluded with a symbolic 'Ravana Dahan' with the use of sound and light effects. **PTI**

Devotees pray in front of an idol of Goddess Durga at a community pandal of Aram Bagh Puja Samiti, in New Delhi on Sunday **PTI**



Bhagwat afraid...

From Page 1

To Congress demands that the Government make a full disclosure of the events in Ladakh and the land under Chinese occupation, the Centre and the BJP have responded with references to the 1962 war during the Opposition party's rule then. "The Chinese have taken our land. When exactly is GOI planning to get it back? Or is that also going to be left to an 'Act of God'? Rahul had tweeted earlier sarcastically after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement that the economy was in bad shape due to the pandemic which is an act of God.

"How can they say there is no incursion and nothing has happened when our Army is having a stand-off? We have to raise these issues," Rahul had said on another occasion.

"Even though the media and Narendra Modi are trying to divert it, they can't hide the issue beyond a point," he had said, comparing the Government to people "wearing ear plugs".

Over 1,700 challans issued on Dussehra for violating Covid norms

New Delhi: The Delhi Police issued over 1,793 challans on Sunday on the occasion of Dussehra for violation of COVID-19 norms, officials said. A total of 1,711 challans were issued to those who were found not wearing masks, 18 challans for spitting and 64 challans were issued to those found violating social distancing norms, according to the Delhi Police data.

A total of 1,793 challans have been issued for various violations till 4 p.m. on Sunday, officials said. Citing the collective data, the Delhi Police said since June 1, 54,26,561 challans have been issued for mask violation, 3,112 challans for spitting and 33,439 challans for violation of social distancing norms. **IANS**

Delhi Police ASI suspended...

From Page 1

Dharambir is survived by his wife Sumita, daughter Poonam and two sons Saurav and Sachin. He was the sole earner in the family. Poonam got engaged a couple of days back and her marriage had been fixed for March 25 next year.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, a case of car theft was reported on Thursday at Lodhi Colony police station.

"The vehicle was stolen from Lodhi Colony and investigation was marked to ASI Vijay. During examination of the CCTV footage, it was found that the accused persons had come on an auto-rickshaw. The son of the deceased was found to be the registered owner of the auto-rickshaw. His father Dharambir had rented out the auto," said the DCP. "Dharambir was asked to join the investigation. Based on his disclosure, a man named Satish, who was driving the auto at the time of the incident and another person named Ghevar Ram Chowdhary, both residents of Fatehpur Beri, were arrested," said the DCP.

"The role of Dharambir was being probed. ASI Vijay was questioning him in a room on the first floor at Lodhi Colony police station. Vijay went to the bathroom, leaving Dharambir in the room. When he returned, he did not find Dharambir there. He found

India wants...

From Page 1

Necessitated due to the previous alignment having seen extensive damages due to sinking and other natural hazards, the road serves as an important link to bolster defence preparedness in the Nathula Sector in particular and in whole of East Sikkim in general.

He had a few days back dedicated 44 permanent bridges mostly in border areas thereby

enhancing the logistical support to the front line troops at the LAC and the Line of Control (LOC) facing Pakistan. Sikkim got four bridges. In an address to a group of soldiers at the base on Saturday evening, Rajnath said India always tried to maintain good relations with its neighbours, but situations arose from time to time when its armed forces had to make supreme sacrifices to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

that Dharambir was lying on the floor in the central courtyard of the police station," said the DCP.

"He was immediately rushed to AIIMS by the police personnel. During treatment at the Trauma Centre, Dharambir died, following which his family members were informed. Further needful action is being taken. Information has been sent to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate for the needful action. Disciplinary action has been initiated and ASI Vijay has been suspended," said the DCP adding that two constables - Rajender and Sandeep - have been sent to district lines. Meanwhile, Saurav Kumar (24), the son of deceased said that on Saturday, two constables - Sandeep and Rajender - came to their house and showed a picture of an auto-rickshaw to his father.

"My father told them that the auto belongs to him, following which they said the SHO had sent them and he needs to come to Lodhi Colony

police station. My father went to the police station along with them. Later, his phone got switched off and we did not have any communication with him. Sometime later, my father called us and said the police were demanding Rs 50,000. He asked us to bring the money," Saurav said. "I went to the Kalkaji temple and as there was a huge rush at the temple, his turn came after three hours later. When I came back from the temple, police informed us that my father was admitted at a hospital as he got injuries in his legs and head. Later, one of the constables blocked our number and another switched off his phone," said Saurav.

"I along with my family searched for my father and went to the police station and later reached AIIMS hospital. Police assaulted him brutally in their custody for no reason due to which he died. My father cooperated and helped police arrest the accused persons in theft case," he said.

Cong suffers 4th setback...

From Page 1

State BJP Chief VD Sharma in Bhopal was present on Sunday.

Welcoming Lodhi in the BJP, Chouhan accused Kamal Nath of running a one man show in Congress party and advised him to introspect why the Congress party was going from bad to worse. Alleging that Congress leaders have been calling him names, Chouhan asked Congress to talk about development. Lodhi after joining the party affirmed he wishes that the BJP wins all the 28 seats in the state.

CM Chouhan asked was the BJP apprehensive of dismal show in bypolls was including Congress MLA in BJP, claimed that if an able worker wished to be included in BJP, our party decided him to let him do so. MP Congress in a tweet put up a brave face saying the BJP by 'buying' another Congress MLA proved that the ruling party wasn't winning a single seat in MP bypolls. In present scenario the BJP will need seven wins to reach to the majority mark of 115 in MP assembly while the Congress will need to win all the 28 seats to reclaim majority.

Light diyas...

From Page 1

"Today, the Khadi here has become famous as 'Ohaka Khadi,'" he said in his radio address.

"Khadi has been a hallmark of simplicity for a long time, but, today, our Khadi is being known as an eco-friendly fabric. In terms of health, it is body friendly fabric, all weather fabric and today Khadi fashion statement is being made," he said.

Continuing with his stress on innovation and developing local solutions, the PM gave the example of women in Jharkhand who created an app to deliver vegetables straight from the farm fields.

"During lockdown, many uses of technology-based service delivery have taken place in our country, and now it is no longer that only big technology and logistics companies can do this. In Jharkhand, this work has been done by women's self-help group. These women took vegetables and fruits from the farmers' fields and delivered them directly to their homes. These women built an app called 'Livelihood farm fresh' through which people could easily ask for vegetables," Modi said.

"Through this whole effort, farmers got good prices for

their vegetables and fruits, and people also got fresh vegetables. The idea of 'livelihood farm fresh' app is becoming very popular there. During lockdown, the app has brought fruits and vegetables worth more than 50 lakh rupees to the people," he said.

In the same vein, Modi pointed to enterprise and experiments of people in their business to earn better livelihood and gave example of Manzoor Ahmed Ali, a woodcutter in Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir who overcame his poverty by first making boxes of apples and then starting business of pencil manufacturing.

"Manzoor found this very beneficial and his income also started increasing significantly. With time he bought a pencil slate manufacturing machinery and after that he started supplying pencil slate to the big companies of the country. Today, his business turnover is in crores and they are also giving livelihood to about two hundred people," the PM said explaining a wood-cutter's success story by sheet dint of enterprise and hard work.

Modi referred to the new farm laws which allow contract farming saying youth are seeing new possibilities in the agriculture sector and "joining in large numbers."

"Atul Patidar has digitally connected 4,000 farmers of his region in Barwani, Madhya Pradesh. These farmers are getting agricultural goods, for example, manure, seeds, pesticide, fungicide at home delivery through Atul Patidar's e-platform. Modern agricultural equipment is also available on this digital platform," he said.

Talking of local innovation, the PM also spoke about Tamil Nadu man who converted his salon into a library.

"During Mann Ki Baat today, we will get to know about an interesting person-Ponmariappan from Tamil Nadu. He has a very small salon where he has done exemplary work. He has converted a small portion of his salon into a library," said Modi.

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Date:- 22/10/2020

E-Tender Notice

The following E-Tender For the year 2020-2022 are being invited registered organization.

Sr. No.	Description of work	Approximate Cost of work	EMD Amount	Tender Form Fee
1.	E-Tender for the examinations conducted by OMR Method.	Rs. 40.00 crores	Rs. 40.00 Lakh	Rs. 40 Thousands

Tender Related Process:-

Sr. No.	Description	Date	Time
1.	Preparation and submission of E-Tender	26/10/2020 to 17/11/2020	From 11.00 am to 5.00 pm
2.	Pre Bid of Meeting	05/11/2020	11.00 am
3.	Opening of Technical tender	20/11/2020	11.00 am or as per convenience of MSCE

Note:-
1. All vendors are hereby informed that all the required information should be filled / submitted online & have to deposit EMD amount and Tender Fees through online payment on the website : <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
2. The MSCE Pune reserve the rights for the partial/complete acceptance or rejection of the tender response.
3. When uploading the require documents in the tender context should be readable.

Sd/-

(Tukaram Supe)
Commissioner,

Maharashtra State Council of Examination
Pune - 411001.

DGIPFR/2020/2021/1017

LAC situation to dominate Army Commanders' meet

From Page 1

They also said the commanders will deliberate on matters related to Human Resource Management and various agenda points projected by the various Army Commanders.

The last day of the conference will include an update by the Director General of Border Roads (DGBR) on the various infrastructure development projects being undertaken by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and allied formations. Automation initiatives to optimise utilisation of manpower at various levels of the Army will also be discussed.

India's...

less aligned over issues of values and ethical code with us," Bhagwat said.

"We must now pace up our efforts to secure cooperative bonds with these countries. The impediments in this journey like the differences of opinions, conflicted issues and old grouses must be settled sooner than later," the RSS chief said.

"We intend to be friendly with all. This is our nature. But mistaking our benevolence for weakness and attempts to disintegrate or weaken us by sheer brute force is unacceptable. Our reckless detractors should know this by now. The indestructible patriots and their formidable valour, leaders with a sense of self-respect and the indomitable ethical-patience of the citizens should have sent a loud and clear message to China," he said.

"This must compel it to reform its attitude but if push comes to shove we will not fall short of alertness, firmness and readiness, this resolve is clear among our countrymen," Bhagwat said.

Alluding to the protests over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which he said "doesn't oppose any specific religious community",

Bhagwat charged that "opportunists took advantage of this delicate situation by unleashing organised violence and causing social unrest in the name of protests". "As a consequence, a tense atmosphere was created in the country that put our communal harmony at stake," he said.

"The CAA was lawfully passed in Parliament as per the due constitutional process. This law envisaged expediting the process of granting citizenship to our brothers and sisters who face discrimination and persecution in some of the neighbouring countries and are displaced to seek refuge in our country. These countries have a history of religious persecution against minorities. This amendment in the Citizenship Act does not oppose any particular religious community, Bhagwat said.

"The constitutional provisions for granting citizenship to foreigners who come to Bharat continue to be the same. But those who wanted to oppose this new law misled our Muslim brothers by propagating a false notion that it was aimed at restricting the Muslim population."

"Even before something could be thought out and done to resolve the CAA-triggered situation the corona pandemic crept in and gradually took hold. In the background, the efforts by rioters and opportunists to reignite the conflict still continue," the RSS chief said.

Averting that the corona pandemic had shadowed all other developments issues in India and across the country including "many noteworthy incidents that took place between the last Vijayadashami and now", Bhagwat said: "While Article 370 was abrogated well before the Vijayadashami last year, the Honourable Supreme Court on November 9, 2019 passed an unambiguous, verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi case, thereby making a historical judgment."

The RSS chief said that the exemplary patience and understanding displayed by Indians regarding this judgment became evident in the restraint along with piety and festive fervour displayed on August 5 in Ayodhya at the boomipujan and shilanyas samaroh of the soon-to-be constructed Ram Mandir there.

On the corona crisis, Bhagwat said: "The corona pandemic has bestowed the wisdom to differentiate regular from irregular and eternal from temporary upon all of humanity. With many families actively deliberating sustainable lifestyles compatible with the time and space and the ways to transition into those, people have become acutely aware of the merit of cultural ethos. Humans have once again realised the importance of family systems and the need for harmonious coexistence with nature."

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Chhand Kiran Jolly S/o Sh. Chaman Lal Jolly and Mrs. Neelam Jolly W/o Chhand Kiran Jolly Both R/o 11/24, Arjun Vihar, New Delhi, who is the original allottee of Residential Flat No. 108, Block-A, Sector-21, Noida U.P., had sold the said property on Power of Attorney basis to Mrs. Kiran Saxena W/o Lale Bipin Bihari Saxena, R/o A-108, Sector-21, Noida-201301, which is registered on dated 15-8-1995, vide Book No. 4, Volume No.1650/1681, on pages 196/689 to 696, Document No. 1195, and the Agreement to Sell has not been Registered. So it is informed to all concerned that the said flat in going to be transferred in favour of Mrs. Kamna Mehrotra D/o Late Bipin Bihari Saxena W/o Shri Rajendra Mehrotra, R/o B-401, Edeco Apartment Sector-4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad 201010, U.P. on basis of Power of attorney. If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Group Housing Department of Noida authority within 15 days from the date of Publication of this Notice. **Kiran Saxena**

Sisodia calls to defeat today's evils pollution, corona

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has given a call to defeat the evil symbolised by Ravana, personified today by pollution and coronavirus.

The Deputy Chief Minister said "Dussehra is not just a festival but it also symbolises a battleground against the evils of today. "We must resolve to defeat today's evils pollution and corona," he said.

Sisodia said this during the celebration of Dussehra at his residence, with a symbolic burning of a Ravana effigy. The famous Luv-Kush Ramlila Committee, which burns Ravana effigy every year at Red Fort, organised an eco-friendly symbolic event this year because of the on-going corona and pollution crisis.

During this time, Sisodia performed a symbolic destruction of Ravana by shooting arrows at the effigy. The effigy



and its destruction was purely for symbolism as no cracker was burnt.

On this occasion, Luv-Kush Ramlila Committee - Red Fort Committee's General

Secretary Arjun Kumar, Leela Mantri Ankush Aggarwal and Chamber Of Trade & Industry

(CTI) Chairman Brijesh Goyal were also present. Sisodia congratulated the



Luv-Kush Ramlila Committee for setting an example of how to celebrate a pollution-free Dussehra this year - by not burning any Ravana effigies. He said that we will also have

to take a pledge to celebrate a green, cracker-free and pollution-free Diwali this year. Sisodia said, "In our daily lives, particularly in cities, we contribute to pollution through

our use of vehicular transport and other unavoidable means. But now we have to take a pledge to pollute as little as possible by acting responsibly in areas where we have choices."

BJP doing hooliganism to suppress protesting doctors, nurses: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak on Sunday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is now doing hooliganism to suppress the voices of the protesting doctors and nurses.

The AAP leader said that BJP-ruled MCD has suspended four CMO level senior-most doctors of the Hindu Rao Hospital because they were supporting the protest of the doctors and nurses for the pending salaries.

Pathak also said that BJP leaders are continuously threatening the protesting doctors and asking them to withdraw the protest. "The AAP opposes the transfer of these senior doctors and such hooliganism by the BJP. AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar who was also present at the press conference said that the BJP-ruled MCDs have become a den of corruption, therefore, they are unable to pay the salaries and now they are threatening the COVID warriors," he said.

Pathak said, "Doctors of the BJP ruled MCD hospitals are sitting on a hunger strike. "Unfortunately, the Covid warriors who have fought day and night to protect the lives of people are going through such



a situation. The BJP ruled MCD has not paid the salary of this Covid warriors for the last 5-6 months. This inhuman activity has created havoc on their lives and they decided to sit on hunger strike," he said. Pathak further said, "The BJP leaders are repeatedly threatening the resident doctors and the senior doctors of these hospitals. The BJP leaders are telling them to withdraw this protest or else the MCD will not anymore recognise these doctors. We believe that this is a very inhuman and unfortunate development."

"India is a democratic country and here every person has a right to protest. But today the BJP is trying to suppress the voices of the Covid warriors and this is completely unacceptable. The doctors have submitted in writing to the mayor that the BJP leaders are threatening them," he added.

Pathak said, "On behalf of the party I want to make it very clear that we oppose such inhuman behaviour. The MCD has completely destroyed the city by making it a garbage capital."

One member of inter-State gang of robbers arrested

Gurugram: The Gurugram police claimed to have nabbed a member of an inter-State gang from Jaipur, involved in a dozen of robberies across the country.

According to the police, the gang has committed over 16 big robberies in various states including Gurugram, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Neemuch, Ujjain and Jaipur.

Police said that the accused Gajraj, arrested on a tip-off, was involved in a theft case which he had committed along with his three other accomplices earlier in February at a courier office on Badshahpur-Kadapur road in Gurugram and fled with Rs 2.48

lakh from the office.

However, in connection with this incident the district police had arrested the trio in February. The accused were identified as Rajesh Kir of Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan, Prince alias Bhola of Charkhi Dadri in Haryana and Anil of Bhondsi village in Gurugram.

Following, incidents of bank robberies in other states, the Gurugram police was in contact with the adjoining states police and it was only then that they got to know about this inter-state gang of bank robbers which had shifted its base to NCR.

Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP

(crime), said the gang was active since 2008. Rajesh, Prince and Anil were infamous bank robbers and have served jail terms in the past.

"The police are on a lookout for the other members of the gang," Sangwan said.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they usually targeted banks and courier offices because from these places they could loot huge amount. The accused have also confessed that the looted items amount to Rs 1.18 crore cash and 4 kg of gold from various banks and courier offices across the country.

IANS

Decomposed body of girl found in house at Nand Nagri area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Partially decomposed body of a girl was recovered by the Delhi Police from a house in northeast Delhi's Nand Nagri area on Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Shweta, who is around 17 to 18 years old. She is from Patna in Bihar and was residing here with her uncle and aunt, police said. According to Ved Prakash Surya, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Northeast district, the body -- which was partially decomposed -- was recovered from the house and preserved at the GTB hospital for post-mortem.

The senior police official said Shweta's aunt is a beggar. She came back home on Saturday night, but as nobody opened the door, she slept at her neighbour's house. On Sunday, she called the police after which Shweta's body was recovered. Shweta's uncle is missing, police said, adding that teams have been formed to trace him.

ANTI-DENGUE CAMPAIGN

CM checks accumulated water at home to prevent mosquitoes breeding

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Marking the eighth week of the '10 Hafte 10 Bajje 10 Minute' anti-dengue campaign, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal checked for accumulated water at home to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes at his residence.

This week of the anti-dengue campaign garners support from celebrities such as Shankar Mahadevan, who will be encouraging the citizens of Delhi to religiously follow the dengue prevention guidelines such as inspecting their residences for signs of stagnant water, draining the accumulated water or adding a layer of oil/petrol to it to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.

Last year, similar cooperation and support from prominent celebrities such as veteran cricketer Virender Sehwag and others had made the campaign of the Delhi government a huge success.



This year as well the campaign seeks to engage several celebrities and social media influencers, to take part in the campaign by recording themselves following the good practices advised during the campaign and share the content for the people through various channels.

The participation by Shankar Mahadevan has encouraged lakhs of Delhiites to follow the dengue prevention guidelines.

Kejriwal had also said that with the collective efforts of all the Delhiites, "we have to stop the breeding of dengue mosquitoes and protect our family and the entire Delhi from Dengue."

Taking to social media, Kejriwal tweeted, "On the 8th Sunday of Delhi's fight against Dengue, I inspected my house for accumulated water and changed it. To prevent Dengue, we have to stop the breeding of mosquitoes. Just like last year, dengue is under control in National Capital. Delhi is defeating dengue for the second consecutive year."

Man dies as cluster bus rams his bike, runs over him

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man was killed after a cluster bus allegedly hit him in northeast Delhi's Seelampur area. The incident took place on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Raj Kumar Sharma.

According to a senior police official, the incident took place on Saturday around 9.30 pm and the accident happened on the slip road near petrol pump.

"Sharam, who was on bike, died on the spot and his body was sent to GTB hospital for the post-mortem. The body was later handed over to the family members on Sunday after the autopsy," he said.

"The accused driver of the bus, identified as Ashok Kumar, fled from the spot after the incident, however, he was later arrested on Sunday, police said.



A scene from Ramlila at Mukherjee Nagar Ramlila Ground in Delhi on Sunday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer



An effigy of demon king Ravana burns during Dussehra at Mukherjee Nagar Ramlila Ground in Delhi on Sunday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Only 202 of 24,010 Covid recovered patients have donated plasma

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

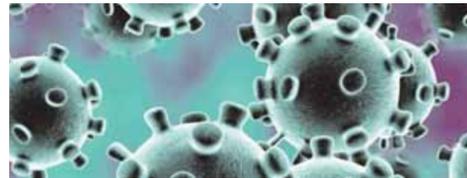
The Health Department of Gurugram had launched its first dedicated plasma bank for Covid-19 patients on August 15, but the district health facilities are still struggling to find donors for it.

According to official data of the health department, out of 24,010 recovered Covid-19 patients, only 338 came forward for plasma donation so far. Of these, 202 recovered coron-

avirus patients were found to be fit for plasma donation.

"Around 401 units of plasma at the Rotary Blood Bank have been received from these 202 patient's, after which 397 units of Plasma have been given by Rotary Blood Bank for treatment of other Corona infected patients," said Gurugram Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Virender Yadav.

He said there was a need to reach out to the masses through social and mainstream media to create awareness for



plasma donation.

Meanwhile, doctors said they are trying to motivate people to donate plasma.

Apart from this, the district administration has claimed that the fatality rate has come

down from 0.85% to 0.78% in the district.

The CMO, however, said that Gurugram was on the verge of being the first district in the State to conduct 1 lakh tests per million. "We have

already conducted more than 98,000 tests per million," he added. The recovery rate for COVID-19 is 91.79% in Gurugram.

Yadav said that the second round of serological survey has also been started from Wednesday, and 850 tests will be conducted across the district. "Plasma donation is a personal decision, but we urge people to come forward for plasma donation. Plasma donation is safe and can save someone's life," Yadav said.

Air quality in Capital remains in 'very poor' category

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Air quality in the National Capital remained in the "very poor" category on Sunday morning with areas like Mundka, Anand Vihar, Jahangirpuri, Vivek Vihar and Bawana recorded "severe" levels of air pollution. The Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 352 on Sunday.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), said some locations entered the "severe" zone but that will be shortlived as winds are expected to increase slightly.



The AQI was recorded at 346 on Saturday at 366 on Friday and at 302 the previous day. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

"The air quality could improve on Monday. "Delhi's AQI is in the 'very poor' category with few locations entering a higher zone but that will be shortlived. This is mainly because the extremely calm local surface winds, which were prevailing yesterday, are likely to increase slightly and may further pick-up by

October 26," the SAFAR said. It said that slow improvement in the current condition is expected by October 26, leading to a middle range of 'very poor', it said. The SAFAR said the stubble-fire count stood at 1,292 on Friday and its share in Delhi's pollution was nine per cent.

The Delhi government has kick-started its "Red Light On, Gaadi Off" anti-pollution campaign, for which it has deployed 2,500 environment marshals at 100 traffic signals across the city to generate awareness and curb vehicular pollution.



Ultras use burqa to outsmart security forces in J&K

BJP accuses Cong of forming radical syndicate

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

In a tweaked tactic, operatives of the terror groups in Jammu & Kashmir have adopted Burqa (veil) in their bid to outsmart the security forces and evade surveillance.

The move by the terrorists comes amid continuing attrition of the terror operatives at the hands of security forces and is aimed targeting the uniformed men in the Valley in the garb of veil.

Terrorists taking cover of the veil is indicative of the dwindling morale of the terror cadres who are resorting to such measures so as not to reveal their identities and protect themselves from the pinpointed operation of the security forces against the ultras in the Valley.

Sources in the security agen-

● The move by the terrorists comes amid continuing attrition of the terror operatives at the hands of security forces and is aimed targeting the uniformed men in the Valley in the garb of veil (burqa)

● Terrorists taking cover of the veil is indicative of the dwindling morale of the terror cadres who are resorting to such measures so as not to reveal their identities and protect themselves from the pinpointed operation of the security forces against the ultras in the Valley

● The tactic has been changed at the



behest of their handlers in Pakistan who have directed the terrorists to carry out hits against the security forces' personnel and their establishment under the cover of burqa

● The terror groups have also recently sought to change their names in order to deny Pakistan's involvement in terrorism in the Valley amid Islamabad facing continued scrutiny of the international community for terror financing including that of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

● Other changed tactics in play in the Valley is a step up in lone wolf attacks against security personnel and elected representatives or their family members wherein one or two terrorists on a motorbike executes such hits

cies said a number of operatives and even over ground workers (OGWs) of the Pakistan-sponsored Lashkar-e-Tayyeba have been spotted in Sopore district of the Union Territory.

The tactic has been

changed at the behest of their handlers in Pakistan who have directed the terrorists to carry out hits against the security forces' personnel and their establishment under the cover of burqa, they said.

LeT commander Fayaz War alias Umar has also been spotted in burqa. He is suspected to have been involved in a number of grenade attacks against the Forces in the Valley.

Earlier, various terror

groups had adopted locally made mobile applications to communicate with one another in order to evade the surveillance of the security agencies. This was also being done at the behest of the Pakistan army-ISI military complex.

The terror groups have also recently sought to change their names in order to deny Pakistan's involvement in terrorism in the Valley amid Islamabad facing continued scrutiny of the international community for terror financing including that of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). In the last few months, a new outfit has sprung under the banner of The Resistance Front (TRF) which is essentially a new avatar of the LeT, officials said.

Other changed tactics in play in the Valley is a step up

in lone wolf attacks against security personnel and elected representatives or their family members wherein one or two terrorists on a motorbike executes such hits.

The continuous bid to upgrade the terror tactics by the Pakistani masters comes amid difficulties in infiltrating terrorists through the tight security grid along the Line of Control (LoC). The terror groups are also facing crunch in finding new cadres due to a variety of reasons amid the continuous liquidation of the commanders and operatives by the forces.

Major achievements of the security forces in the last few years include the killing of Ansar Ghatwul Hind chief Zakir Musa and Hizbul Mujahideen commander Riyaz Naikoo.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the first phase of poll in Bihar closes by, the BJP on Sunday accused the Congress of forming a "radical syndicate" along with the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind) and the Popular Front of India and supporting extremism in the country.

Addressing a Press conference, Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and BJP leader Tom Vadakkan also asked if Tejaswi Yadav and his party RJD in poll-bound Bihar are also part of the alleged arrangement.

The BJP leaders questioned as to why the grand-old party had begun to form alliances with outfits that openly promoted "terrorism and jihadism".

Political group Jamaat-e-Islami has been banned by the Centre under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, while the PFI is an alleged radical group facing allegations of providing funds for protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

"The grand old party has formed a brand-new alliance with radical organisations -- Jamaat-e-Islami and PFI. For the greed of power, the Congress has formed this 'radical syndicate' to support radicalism in the country," Naqvi claimed while addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters.

"We want to ask Tejaswi Yadav whether along with Congress, his party (RJD) has

also made an understanding with Jamaat-e-Islami and other radical elements in Bihar. These are questions of national security, not politics," Naqvi added.

He said Shiv Sena, which has formed a government in Maharashtra in alliance with the Congress, would also have to answer similar questions.

Naqvi also claimed that when Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was contesting the 2019 general elections from Wayanad in Kerala, people across the country were shocked to see more flags of Jamaat-e-Islami than of his party in the political rallies there.

The Minister also alleged that Gandhi never misses a chance to meet the families of PFI members and those who were arrested by police for involvement in anti-national activities.

This was an apparent reference to the recent meeting of Gandhi, a Kerala MP, with the wife of a journalist from the state who was arrested while on his way to Hathras in UP, to meet the family of the Dalit woman who died last month after being allegedly raped by four upper caste men.

Journalist Siddique Kappan is alleged to have links with the PFI. The BJP in alliance with the JD(U) and other parties is facing a challenge from an alliance of the RJD, the Congress and left parties in the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections.

Domestic airlines to operate 44.3% fewer flights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic airlines will operate 44.3 per cent fewer flights at 12,983 departures a week in the winter schedule 2020-21 which runs from October 25 till March 27 next year. The new schedule has been approved at 60 per cent of the capacity that airlines were flying in the pre-Covid period. Accordingly, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has cleared a schedule for 12,983 weekly domestic flights covering 95 airports in winter 2020-21 - down 44.3% from 23,307 in winter 2019-20. Globally, airlines follow a winter and summer schedule.

As per the schedule released by the DGCA, SpiceJet will have 54.7 per cent fewer weekly departures during winter schedule 2020-21 at 1,957 as against 4,316 previously. Similarly, Air India will operate half of its flights at 1,126 weekly departures during winter schedule 2020-21 as against 2,254 weekly departures previously. GoAir will have 1,203 weekly departures in the latest winter schedule as against 2,308 weekly departures previously. Vistara will see a 38 per cent drop in weekly departures during the latest winter schedule at 852 as against 1,376 previously. AirAsia will see a 34.2 per cent decline in weekly departures in the latest schedule at 885 (1,345 weekly departures previously).

In comparison to last year's winter schedule, when 23,307 weekly domestic services were approved by the DGCA, this year's winter schedule has got just 55.7 per cent (12,983 flights) of those flights approved, according to the aviation regulator.

These 55.7 per cent flights will be operating from 95 Indian airports between October 25 and March 27, 2021, the DGCA said.

The domestic airlines will fly to 95 airports including six in Tamil Nadu like Salem, Tuticorin, Madurai and Chennai, four in Kerala including Cochin and Thiruvananthapuram and eight in Karnataka, including Vidyanagar, Hubli, Belgaum and Bengaluru.

India resumed scheduled domestic flights on May 25 after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus pandemic. At that time, airlines were permitted to operate just 33 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic flights. This figure was gradually increased in the later months.

18% MP bypolls candidates have criminal cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) on Sunday said a total of 18 per cent of the candidates in fray for the November 3 by-elections in 28 Assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh have criminal cases pending against them, with 11 per cent declaring cases of very serious nature.

The ADR has analysed poll affidavits of 355 candidates revealed that 63 had declared pending criminal cases, with the Congress leading the list in this category. According to the ADR report, when it comes to candidates with serious criminal cases, the BJP tops the list followed by SP.



● Among the major parties, 14 (50%) out of 28 Congress candidates, 12 (43%) out of 28 BJP candidates, 8 (29%) out of 28 candidates from Bahujan Samaj Party, 4 (29%) out of 14 Samajwadi party candidates and 16 (9%) out of 178 Independent nominees — whose affidavits were analysed — declared the pending

criminal cases. Among the major parties, 14 (50%) out of 28 Congress candidates, 12 (43%) out of 28 BJP candidates, 8 (29%) out of 28 candidates from Bahujan Samaj Party, 4 (29%) out of 14 Samajwadi party candidates and 16 (9%) out of 178 Independent nominees — whose affidavits were analysed — declared the pending criminal cases.

Those who have declared serious criminal cases are 6 (21%) of the 28 Congress candidates whose affidavits were analysed, 8 (29%) out of 28 BJP candidates, 3 (11%) out of 28 BSP candidates, 4 (29%) out of 14 SP candidates and 13 (7%) out of 178 Independents, ADR said. Meanwhile, only one candidate declared a pending

murder case, and seven the attempt to murder cases against themselves. Ten of the 28 constituencies are in 'red alert' category, meaning there are 3 three or more candidates who have declared criminal cases against themselves. All major parties have given tickets to 25% to 50% of their candidates with pending

criminal cases, the ADR said.

"Out of the 355 candidates, 80 or 23 per cent are crorepatris. Among the major parties 23 or 82 per cent out of 28 candidates analysed from BJP, 22 or 79 per cent out of 28 candidates analysed from Congress, 13 or 46 per cent out of 28 candidates analysed from BSP, 2 or 14 per cent out of 14 candidates analysed from SP and 14 or 8 per cent out of 178 Independent candidates have declared assets worth more than ₹1 crore," it said. By-elections are being held in 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh on November 3. Most of these 28 seats fell vacant when rebel Congress members resigned from the party and the assembly to join the BJP.

2 Indo-Myanmar border villages get regular water supply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Once infested with insurgents and sans development, two villages located a few kilometres away from the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur, have now started getting regular water supply under the Union Jal Shakti Ministry's Jal Jeevan Mission.

Chief Minister of Manipur N Biren Singh on Sunday inaugurated the two water supply projects for the two villages Khangbarol and Khengjoi in Khengjoi Sub Division of Chandel district in the North-eastern State.

In Khangbarol, there are 82 households and the water supply system has been designed keeping in mind the projected population of about 1,000 till 2041.

With an estimated cost of ₹60 lakh, this gravity-based water supply system ensured tap water connection to all 82 households with a present population of about 450. There is a perennial source of water from "Khangbarollok" located at a distance of 6 km away from the treatment site, said an official from the Mission.

He said as the source is located at a higher elevation than the treatment site, gravity-based water supply scheme was taken up.

For another village Khengjoi which is located about 20 Km from the Indo-Myanmar border, the newly inaugurated water supply system caters to the water need of 73 families by providing tap

water connection. Now, the operation and maintenance of the scheme is with the Village Water & Sanitation Committee as envisaged under the Jal Jeevan Mission to ensure regular and long-term supply of potable water in rural areas.

The official said providing water in these villages was not easy as accessibility remain the biggest challenge in implementation of the water supply schemes as like those in many hilly areas as the region is inaccessible during the monsoon season.

Transportation as well as communication are biggest challenges as the area has poor network coverage. In most cases, dedicated man-power mobilisation remains a challenge.

In spite of Covid-19 pandemic, the officials of the Public Health Engineering Department had worked hard to ensure that tap water reached every rural home in these far-flung villages, sources said.

Manipur has around 4.5 lakh households, but only 30,379 households have tap water connections. During 2020-21, the State aims to provide 2 lakh functional tap connections. During the current year, the State is planning for 100 per cent coverage of 1 district and 15 blocks and 1,275 villages.

The State has planned for 100 per cent provision of household tap connections by 2023 under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Wholesale onion prices fall by up to ₹10/kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale onion prices are said to have fallen by up to ₹10 per kg in key consuming markets such as Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai with the increase in the arrival of the perishable commodity after the Government imposed stock limits on traders to check hoarding and price rise.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs data for October 25 quoted the maximum price to be ₹94 per kg and the minimum ₹34. The model price is at ₹70 a kg. Interestingly, there are several parts of the country including Rampurhat, Malda, Rajkot, Pune, Bhopal, Ahmedabad and Ambikapur where it is being sold at ₹35-40 per kg.

Onion prices showed a declining trend even in produc-

ing areas. For instance, in Lasalgaon in Maharashtra, Asia's largest wholesale onion market, onion prices dropped by ₹5 per kg to ₹51 per kg in just one day after the Government's order on stock limits.

Among consuming markets, Government data showed that wholesale onion prices in Chennai declined to ₹66 per kg on October 24 from ₹76 per kg on October 23. Similarly, the rates in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Bhopal too fell by ₹5-6 per kg to ₹70 per kg, ₹64 per kg and 40 per kg, respectively, in just one day, the data showed.

The prices dropped following some improvement in daily arrival of onion in these consuming markets. The prices of onions increased due to

shortage of supply as onion crops in Karnataka and Maharashtra damaged due to extensive rain.

According to the data, the daily arrival in Delhi's Azadpur mandi, the world's largest vegetable market, increased to over 530 tonnes, while it improved to 1,560 tonnes from 885 tonnes in Mumbai. In Chennai, daily arrivals rose to 1,400 tonnes from 1,120 tonnes earlier. Similarly in Bengaluru, daily arrival in mandis rose to 3,000 tonnes from 2,500 tonnes. However, in cities such as Lucknow, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Kolkata and Pune, the arrivals are yet to increase.

On October 23, the government had invoked the Essential Commodities Amendment Act and imposed stock limits of 2 tonnes for retailers and 25 tonnes for wholesalers till December 31 in



order to check hoarding and cool down prices which have touched ₹100/kg in some retail markets.

"The improvement in arrival shows that some traders were hoarding and have started offloading it on fear of action. The other reason is that onion is a perishable commodity and one cannot hold it for long, especially in areas facing heavy rainfall," a senior government official said. The government has also taken several measures to boost domestic availability and check price rise. It has banned

exports and relaxed norms for import of the commodity.

Besides, the government is releasing onion from its buffer stock in retail market and key mandis to provide relief to consumers from price rise. Onion prices have come under pressure due to heavy rainfall in key growing states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh that has damaged the standing kharif crop, which is expected to hit mandis from next month. The government is estimating about 6 lakh tonnes fall in onion production to 37 lakh tonnes this kharif season.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inspects a weapon at the Sukna Army Camp in Darjeeling on Sunday PTI



Ravan dahan in Navi Mumbai PTI



Devotees perform 'Hawan' inside a temple during Durga Puja celebration in Patna on Sunday PTI



Devotees immerse an idol of Goddess Durga in Prayagraj on Sunday PTI



Devotees wearing PPE kits perform the traditional 'Dhruvuchi dance' in front of an idol of Goddess Durga during Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata on Sunday PTI



In Jammu



In Mumbai



In Thane

SHASTRA PUJA ON DUSSEHRA

Argument at PDP office between youths, leaders to hoist Tricolour

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu office of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has suddenly become a new battleground to exhibit the spirit of 'patriotism' in Jammu & Kashmir.

For the last two days ding dong battles have been going on between the PDP leaders and the local youth representing different organisations who are converging there to hoist a tricolour in the PDP office.

To prevent any attack on the PDP office the security personnel had spread concertina wire but the same failed to deter the enthusiasts from

climbing the boundary wall of the PDP office.

The events took an ugly turn soon after the PDP Chief made an announcement that she would not raise the national flag until Jammu & Kashmir's flag, constitution and the special status were restored.

On Saturday she along with other constituents of the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration also adopted the flag of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir as its party symbol.

After the battle lines were drawn by the rag-tag coalition of Kashmiri politicians some of

the political activists in Jammu reacted to the sudden political development.

The first incident of flag hoisting in the PDP office was reported late Saturday evening by the local media.

A small group led by an activist Amandeep Boparai climbed the boundary wall of the PDP office and attempted to hoist the tricolour. Some of the PDP leaders including former MLC Firdous Tak rushed out of the office complex and resisted such efforts. They even exchanged hot words with these activists and directed the security personnel on duty at the gate to evict them from the



party office. Boparai told reporters, "we will not tolerate the insult of the tricolour. They are trying to convert the PDP office into another Lal Chowk of Srinagar where we cannot hoist a tricolour".

After the activists left the place the tricolour was apparently brought down by the PDP leaders. Ironically, PDP leaders from Jammu had hoisted tricolour outside the party office at a simple ceremony on August 15, 2020 and also recited National Anthem on the occasion. On Sunday even posters of

The events took an ugly turn soon after the PDP Chief made an announcement that she would not raise the national flag until Jammu & Kashmir's flag, constitution and the special status were restored

the PDP leaders were painted with different colors and several flags were hoisted by these activists to register their protest

against the PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti.

On Sunday, the situation turned grim when several small groups including supporters of Amandeep Boparai took out a Tiranga rally and assembled outside the PDP office and hoisted several tricolours.

Activists of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) also arrived there to register their anger and painted the faces of PDP leaders in different colors.

The police personnel present in large numbers were seen making half hearted efforts to prevent these activists from hoisting the tricolour.

5-year-old girl raped by 13-year-old boy in UP's Fatehpur: Police

Fatehpur (UP): A five-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a teenage boy in a village in the Khaga area of this Uttar Pradesh district, police said on Sunday. "An FIR was registered on Saturday on a complaint against a 13-year-old boy, who allegedly raped the girl. We have detained the accused," Khaga Station House Officer (SHO) RK Singh said. According to the FIR, the incident took place at around 2 pm on Saturday and the locals tried to settle the matter but subsequently, the family members of the victim informed the police about it. The girl was playing near her house when the accused took her to a secluded place and allegedly raped her, the family members alleged. The FIR was lodged on the charges of rape (section 376 of the IPC) and under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the SHO said, adding that the girl was sent to a hospital for medical examination.

GST has failed, we should back to old taxation system: Uddhav

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday unleashed a new debate in the country, by asserting that if the GST system of tax collection had failed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi should admit the mistake, make course corrections in it and if need be, go back to the old system of taxation in the country.

Addressing a Dussehra rally at the Savatnra Veer Savarkar hall near Shivaji Park in north-central Mumbai, Uddhav said: "I have a strong reason to believe that the GST system has failed. The Prime Minister should admit that the system has failed and make improvements in it. Otherwise, if necessary, the Government should go back to the earlier system of taxation".

Uddhav slammed the Centre for the delay in the release of a staggering Rs 38,000 crore, which is due to the state towards compensation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and devolution of taxes for the current fiscal (2020-21).

"On one hand, the Narendra Modi government does not release the GST compensation due to us. On the other, the ruling BJP announces that it would give vaccines free to all people in Bihar free of cost. We would like to know from the BJP as to whose it is spending to give free vaccines to the people of Bihar?" Uddhav asked.

"In between the Centre came with a proposal that the states borrow money to fund the development works. Now the Centre says it will borrow money for the state. I would like to know who will repay the borrowed money," Uddhav asked. The chief minister said that when the powers to raise taxes were with the states, the Shiv Sena had opposed GST. The taxes from the states would go to the Centre, which would in turn disburse money to the states.

"If the Centre cannot give us compensation of GST, I would invite all chief ministers on one platform to decide on the way out of the problem the states are facing currently," Uddhav said.

Maha deaths drop to 112, cases fall to 6,059

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

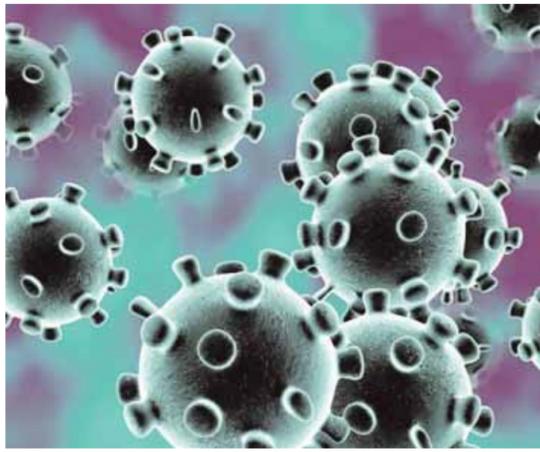
In line with the ongoing downward trend in Covid-19 graph, the deaths dropped further to 112 and the infections went down further to 6,059.

A day after the infections dropped to 6,417 while the deaths came down to as low as 137, Maharashtra logged in 112 deaths and 6059 infections which are the lowest in more than four months now.

With 112 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll mounted on 43,152 to 43,264. Similarly, with 6059 infections, the total infected cases jumped from 16,38,961 to 16,45,020.

As 5,648 more 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 14,60,755. The recovery rate in the state rose from 88.78 per cent to 88.88 per cent.

Of the 112 deaths reported on



Sunday, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 46 deaths.

In the lower range, there were deaths each in Pune and Satara, 6 each in Thane and Nagpur, 5 in Sangli, 3 each in Nashik, Solapur, Jalna, Osmanabad, Chandrapur

and Gadchiroli, 2 each in Palghar, Raigad and Jalgaon and one death in Ahmednagar, Ratnagiri, Beed, Nanded, Buldhana and Washim. In addition, one person from outside the state died in Maharashtra. With 46 deaths, the Covid-19

toll in Mumbai shot up from 10,059 to 10,105, while the infected cases rose by 1,222 to trigger a jump in the infections from 250,059 to 251,281.

Meanwhile, the mortality rate in the state stood at 2.63 per cent. The number of "active cases" in the state rose from 1,40,194 to 1,40,486.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,29,205 to 3,29,856, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 6595 to 6604.

Thane district remained in the third spot - after Pune and Mumbai - after the total number of infections from 2,18,352 to 2,19,086, while the pandemic toll rose from 5,268 to 5,274.

Out of 86,08,928 samples sent to laboratories, 16,45,020 have tested positive (19.11 per cent) for COVID-19 until Sunday.

Currently, 25,18,016 people are in home quarantine while 13,572 people are in institutional quarantine.

Maha: Teenaged tribal girl raped in Palghar

Palghar: A 16-year-old tribal girl was allegedly raped by a man when she took her cattle for grazing in a field in Maharashtra's Palghar district, a police official said on Sunday. The incident took place at Manor in the district on October 21, he said.

While the girl was out in the field with her cattle, the man dragged her to the bushes and allegedly raped her, the official said.

Based on a police complaint filed by the victim, a case was registered against the accused on Friday under Indian Penal Code Section 376 (rape) and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he said.

Hathras case: CBI camps in Aligarh, seeks CCTV footage from JNMC

Aligarh: The CBI team investigating the Hathras incident has camped in Aligarh. CCTV footage has been sought by CBI from JNMC where the victim was admitted for the treatment so that those who visited the victim can also be brought under questioning.

The CBI team investigating the incident of gang rape and subsequent death of the victim in Hathras has now made Aligarh as their headquarters. The team members are now staying here in the civil line area at night. According to the sources, the members of the CBI team are constantly in contact with some doctors of JN Medical College. It has been said that the doctors are very satisfied with the way the CBI is investigating this case and said that the way of their inquiry is highly respected. It has been told that the CBI has now sought CCTV footage and details from the medical college of all the places where the victim was admitted before being referred to Delhi. The team wants to know who came to meet the victim and how long he has been with her. The team wants to know what the sequence of improvement is or decline in the health of the victim during treatment. The medical college staff is also fully assisting the team in this investigation.

NCB arrests TV actress, seizes 99 gm of Ganja

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Continuing its drive against drug peddlers and those possessing the contraband, the Mumbai Zonal unit of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested television actress Preetika Chauhan and a drug peddler Faisal for allegedly possession of drugs.

Giving details of the arrests made and contraband seized, an NCB official said here on Sunday that following a tipoff of a Marijuana deal, the his department officials arrested the duo from Fishermens Village at Versova and seized 99 gms of Ganja from them. During the interrogation, the two revealed that they got the drug from one Deepak Rathaur, who lived at Versova in north-west Mumbai.

Preetika (30) and Faisal were produced a designated court on Sunday

for remand and further investigations are underway. Hailing from Himachal Pradesh, Preetika has acted in several TV serials like CID, Savdhaan India and Hanuman during the last five years. Meanwhile, in a separate operation, the NCB officials arrested a Tanzanian national -- identified as Bruno John Ngwale -- near Masjid Bunder station on Saturday night and seized 4 gms of Cocaine. Subsequently, the officials raided a place in Versova and a vehicle to make more drug seizures last night. During the raids, the officials seized 4.40 gms Ecstasy and 1.88 gms MDMA and arrested one Rohit Hire from Versova. They also intercepted a vehicle with 325 gms Ganja, 32 gms Charas and 5 gms Methamphetamine along with Rs.12,990 cash.

Aligarh to become hub of tele-medicine

Aligarh: Aligarh Division is now going to be the hub of Tele-Medicine, Tele-Consultant. Tele-Medicine and Tele-Consultant control Room will improve the health services of CHC, PHC of Kasganj, Etah and Hathras.

Tele-Medicine, Tele-Consultant control room will be set up in Aligarh. It will work on the logic of the E-Sanjeevani control room. CHC and PHC's patients will be able to undergo treatment by the doctors of the Divisional Headquarters. Tele-Medicine, Tele-Consultant control room will be built in 18 divisions including Aligarh.

The state government has taken the initiative of this scheme to provide health facilities in all the districts under which the district sub-centers, urban and rural primary health centers and health and wellness centers will be facilitated. Through Tele-Medicine, Tele-Consultant control, CHO and medical officers will be able to take advice from medical college and divisional level MBBS doctors and specialists. In the first phase, this facility is going to be started in 5 medical colleges in the state and 18 divisions in the second phase. Tele-Medicine, Tele-Consultant Control Room will be made in Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Aligarh with the cost of Rs 24 lakhs.

West Bengal logs highest one-day discharge of 3,753 Covid patients

Of the fresh fatalities, 19 were registered in Kolkata and 14 in Hooghly. The remaining other deaths were reported from various other districts

Kolkata: West Bengal on Saturday reported the highest single-day discharge of 3,753 COVID-19 patients, taking the total number of recovered people to 3,02,340, the health department said in a bulletin. The discharge rate is now 87.49 per cent.

The coronavirus tally in the state rose to 3,45,574 after 4,148 people tested positive for the disease, while 59 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 6,427, it said. The number of active cases is now 36,807.

The 4,148 new cases included 896 from North 24 Parganas district, 895 from Kolkata, 229 from South 24 Parganas and 224 from Howrah, the bulletin said.

Of the fresh fatalities, 19 were registered in Kolkata and 14 in Hooghly. The remaining other deaths were reported from various other districts.

The bulletin said that 44 of the 59 deaths were caused because of comorbidities where COVID-19 was incidental.

In the last 24 hours, 44,724 samples were tested for COVID-19 in West Bengal, taking the total number of such tests to 42,55,801, the bulletin added.

Envelope of cheque given by Rahul not yet opened, say relatives of Hathras victim

Aligarh/Hathras: The relatives of the victim said the cheque given by Rahul Gandhi as financial help is still sealed and not opened. Family members said in a month or two, CBI should complete their investigation so that they will get justice. They also said that they are very much thankful to the people who are supporting them in this time of grief.

After the accident, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi visited and met the family of the victim and gave a cheque as financial help. Now in this connection, the father of the victim told that he is aware of the

cheque in this envelope, but he has not yet opened the envelope. He said that he does not know the cheque amount. He is thinking of opening a new account and putting this cheque in that bank. Family members said that CBI should complete their investigation in a month or two so that they will get justice.

They also added that they all are very much thankful to the people who are supporting them in this time of grief. The same situation is for the way to the village. The routine of the village is coming on the track, but the family is not going out of the village.

Hope to convert Viraat into museum fades

Ahmedabad: The hope to convert the decommissioned warship 'Viraat' into a museum is fading as the company which purchased it for dismantling has finally started towing it towards its scrap yard at Alang in Gujarat after waiting for nearly three weeks.

Mumbai-based private company Envitech Marine Consultants Pvt Ltd, which last month showed interest in converting the aircraft carrier into a museum, is yet to get a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) for the project from the Ministry of Defence.

The warship, inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 2017, was bought by Shree Ram Group, an Alang-based ship-breaker, for Rs 38.54 crore at an

auction in July this year. "We have started the process of pulling Viraat towards our scrap plot. It was 3,000 feet away in the sea and now it is being brought nearer. It is still 1,500 feet away," Shree Ram Group Chairman Mukesh Patel told PTI on Saturday.

Further towing of the vessel towards the scrap plot will be done during the next high tide, he said.

The company which has shown interest in buying it and converting it to a museum is still not able to procure the NOC from the defence ministry and is working on it, he said. "The company had asked us if the vessel can be salvaged. I replied that it is possible with the latest technology, but it will be very difficult and too costly," Patel said.

UP city Varanasi wows global clientele with its glass beads

Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh): Famous for its Banarasi sarees and wooden toys, the city of Varanasi is now wooing a global clientele with its famous glass beads.

These glass beads are among the 12 products from Varanasi included for Geographical Indication (GI) tags. The Varanasi glass beads industry -- which dates back to 200 years -- produces beads used in artificial jewellery, adornments for curtains and door hangings etc. With the US government increasing the import duty by 20 per cent on Chinese products, the decision has come as a boon for city's manufacturers of glass beads.

The local glass beads industry has witnessed a 20 per cent increase in production even during the Covid-19 pandemic, courtesy the Yogi Adityanath government's 'Varanasi Glass Beads Cluster' scheme under

the 'skill development' programme.

The estimated outlay of the scheme is Rs 50 crore, 70 per cent of which will be borne by the government and the remaining 30 per cent by the companies associated with the industry. According to Umesh Kumar Singh, Joint Commissioner, Industrial Development Department, Varanasi, a village in Rohaniya block has been selected for a cluster shed and will start functioning soon.

He said the production, demand and marketing of the glass bead products will be promoted under the Industrial Cluster Scheme by the state government.

The craftsmen employed in the industry will get further training in the traditional style of making glass beads while opportunities of self-employment will be generated.

Telugu States celebrate Dussehra on subdued note

Hyderabad/Vijayawada: Dussehra was celebrated across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh on Sunday with devotion but on a subdued note due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The usual festive buzz was missing in both the Telugu states. Wearing masks and maintaining social distance, people visited temples to offer prayers to Goddess Durga on the occasion of Vijayadashami.

Clad in their festive best, people thronged temples, from the crack of dawn, to worship the Goddess. Temples were decked up with lights and flowers and special pujas conducted as part of celebrations. Special puja was performed at Kanaka Durga temple in Vijayawada. Devotees queued up at the famous temple at Indira Kiladri for darshan. Union Minister of State for



Home, G. Kishan Reddy worshipped at Kanaka Durga temple. The BJP leader, who was in Vijayawada to inaugurate the state BJP office, said he prayed for people's protection from coronavirus.

Bhadrakali temple in Warangal, Peddamma temple at Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad and

Yellamma temple at Balkampet also saw major congregations. However, both the states saw low-key celebrations due to the pandemic. The usual hustle bustle associated with the shopping and celebrations of Dussehra was clearly missing.

Only few vehicles were seen at temples for the traditional

Ayudha puja as most people preferred to perform the puja at home.

Traders said the sale of flowers and fruits saw a big drop compared to the previous years. Many devotees preferred virtual darshan from comforts of their home to avoid the crowd at temples. Telangana Governor Dr Tamilsai Soundararajan, Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greeted the people on the occasion of Vijaya Dasami.

"The Navaratri festival renews us with the spirit of joy and jubilation. The main message of the festival is triumph of good over evil has an everlasting relevance," Soundararajan said in her message.

Ravana is not burnt but instead worshipped at some places

Aligarh: On one hand preparations for celebrating Dussehra were in full swing as a mark of the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana in whole country and on the other hand there was one section in Aligarh which observed the Dussehra as day of mourning. They believe that Lord Rama had killed Ravana who was a renowned scholar by ditching him. They say that Ravana is our family deity and we will observe condolence on that day and will keep a fast. Saraswat Brahmins believe that they belong to Ravana family tree.

Aligarh division has nearly 12 tribal communities which include Giraha, Bheel, Habura, Kanjad and Bheel who worship Ravana. Apart of that one section of Kanyakubj Brahmins also worship

Ravana. They believe that Ravana is the symbol of prosperity and is god of Kanyakubj community. It is a sect of Brahmin community and Ravana had also belonged to it. A section of Kanyakubj Brahmins is making efforts to construct temple of Ravana. There is a Ravana temple in Bishrikh village of Noida. In this connection, Rajababu, Secretary Kanyakubj Brahmin Sabha says that, "Ravana is not symbol of evils but of scholarship". He added that, "Ravana was scholar of Veda and Purans and it is not proper and justified to burn his effigy on Dussehra."

'BJP emerging as a strong force in Andhra Pradesh'

FIANS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that BJP has been emerging as a strong force in Andhra Pradesh.

Inaugurating the BJP's state office here on the occasion of Dussehra, he said the party had become the voice of the people in the state.

He exuded confidence that BJP will be further strengthened in the coming days under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President J.P. Nadda.

Kishan Reddy urged the party cadres to take the schemes being implemented by the central government to the

people at the grass-root level to further strengthen the party.

He also asked them to ensure that the beneficiaries get the benefits of various programmes being implemented by the Modi government.

The Minister claimed that BJP has the distinction of being the political party with the largest number of workers in the world.

"In India, BJP has the largest number of MPs, MLAs, women representatives and is ruling majority of the states."

He urged the BJP leaders to work together as a family to take the party ahead.

He also appealed to all the party leaders and workers to work together for the welfare of people and the development of Andhra Pradesh.

Onion wars, again

Be it a shortage or a bumper yield, the Govt ought to work on price stabilisation rather than resort to knee-jerk reactions



Onions have always had huge political implications. During the 1980 elections, their sky-high prices helped former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dislodge a coalition Government as her slogan, “a Government that cannot control prices has no business to rule,” became a part of electoral rhetoric ever since. In 1998, a sharp spiral led to the fall of the BJP Government in New Delhi as it became a measure of economic well-being and symptomatic of a bigger food inflation. And now with a spike in prices of the bulb, caused by low output as yields were washed out during the recent floods, the BJP certainly doesn't want to anger people in a pandemic-hit country in general and poll-bound Bihar in particular. That, too, when it is under fire because of the farm Acts and had to go back on the newly-amended Essential Commodities Act, 1955 — which freed onion from stock limits — compelling it to invoke special provisions to ration it once again. Now, as per the Central Government's order, retailers won't be allowed to hold more than two tonnes of onions, while for wholesalers this will be 25 tonnes till December. Onion prices in Chennai have jumped by over 107 per cent this month while Mumbai and Kolkata have seen a spike of over 40 per cent. And in Delhi-NCR, they have shot up to ₹70 plus per kg despite the lean demand in the Navratri week. The reason for this sharp escalation was the unseasonal rain in Maharashtra and Karnataka, which damaged the onion crops and affected supply to *mandis* across the country. Although the rabi crop is drier, the kharif one is more prone to retaining moisture, resulting in poor yields. To add to the Government's woes, the heavy rain in September not only destroyed the new crop in Karnataka but also took a toll on stored onions in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Even Maharashtra farmers suffered more than their usual share of storage losses, by 60 per cent compared to the normal 30-40 per cent. Stopping exports has not helped and though the Government is importing varieties from Iran and Turkey, price stabilisation won't be possible without a new crop from Alwar and Palwal. On a yearly basis, India consumes around 160 lakh tonnes of the kitchen staple with Maharashtra, itself a major onion producer, using up around 4,000-6,000 tonnes per day. Worse, farmers have barely been able to spare enough bulbs for flowering and are, therefore, running low on onion seeds for the next sowing season.

We are the second-largest producer of onions after China, yet a rainout or a crisis year means that we are forced to import the bulb from the very nations we export it to and at prices higher than what we sell to them. Clearly, we need a policy fix for this instead of debating alternatives like the virtues of an onion-less diet or varied food cultures. The pungency of the bulb has hit home many times in the past. Last year, prices in December had shot up to ₹165 a kg in some parts of the country, the highest in recent years. Export cuts then had affected our foreign relations with friendly neighbours like Bangladesh. While the amended Essential Commodities Act takes care of a bumper yield by freeing up pick-up limits, there is still no solution to the problem of shortages and distributors making money by hoarding. Why can't India increase the acreage under onion cultivation? Experts have suggested promoting onion cultivation in states like Uttar Pradesh and popularising onion production in the kharif season as well. We need to find out why despite technology-aided solutions, our onion has the lowest yield in the world, lesser than that of the US, which does not even fall under the top 10 onion-producing nations. China cultivates onion in land that's half of ours but is the largest producer because its yield is double. Of course, we have better irrigation facilities but fighting seasonal extremes of weather means we have to work on the onion's shelf life as well. We need to minimise post-harvest loss of a highly perishable crop with improved preservation facilities. Why can't we, for example, promote modern cold storage facilities in newer onion-producing States like Madhya Pradesh? Around 30-40 per cent of the crop is lost due to lack of storage facilities. If there are onion dehydrating and processing units across the country, then the supply-demand mismatch can at least be corrected. The Government can break the handful of trading cartels that pocket a major share of business in big markets like Maharashtra and Karnataka. The new Acts may not change that in favour of farmers greatly as their land holdings are too small to afford them the cushion to take a price risk. When it comes to onions, the Government is not short of well-intended suggestions and advice. But now it is time for it to work out a robust policy that holds throughout the year instead of resorting to last moment fire-fighting. Now the Opposition has found another reason to target the Government in a throwback to the comment made by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last winter session that she didn't have onions. That time the Congress had wondered if she had avocados instead. Let not the onion become such a costly proposition. Reports say that Mexico's criminal gangs are now heavily into avocado production and sales, with cartels demanding protection payments for farms. Rival gangs are reported to have targetted each other in deadly shootouts like any other case of drug violence. We don't want our appetite for onions to become so consuming that the crop generates an extortion economy too.

Pak on grey list

The FATF compliance is just about technical criteria and India must remember that it won't impact Pakistan's proxy war with it



Despite intense lobbying, Pakistan continues to be on the “grey list” of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) — the global watchdog that tracks terror-funding States and can disqualify them from aid by World Bank and other global institutions. Even after the Paris-based body extended the deadline because of the pandemic, it found “strategic deficiencies” and non-compliance of six key markers in its 27-point action plan. These have to be addressed by February. But given Pakistan's track record, it has rarely gone beyond token compliance. In August, it had imposed financial sanctions on 88 banned terror groups and their leaders, which included the mastermind behind the 26/11 Mumbai attack and Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed, Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar and underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. However, it failed to take substantial action against Azhar and Hafiz Saeed. It may have booked Saeed's charities through which he funded money but is yet to cap the money trail to listed terrorists or prosecute the financiers. Besides, their confinement doesn't mean that they cannot inspire or raise new outfits under different names. And imprisonment is just a euphemism for protection and nurturing their safe havens. Besides, as India pointed out, the names of over 4,000 terrorists suddenly disappeared from its official list.

Nothing much seems to have changed since Pakistan was first put on the list in February 2012 with the FATF's main concern being that the country did not have appropriate legislation to identify terror financing and to confiscate terrorist assets. This is the second time Islamabad is trying to wiggle out of the “grey list” and if it succeeds without guaranteeing it won't continue harbouring and aiding terrorist organisations, the credibility of FATF will also be in question. For now, with its economy already in the doldrums, it has brought time to “repair the outstanding issues.” Besides, Pakistan's all-weather friend China is trying to devise a workaround, arguing for a re-negotiation of the FATF brief itself, saying the grouping had no business to blacklist nations but should help them counter terrorist funding instead. India must realise that the shades of the FATF list mean nothing in terms of threat levels ever since the blacklist was diluted as a “call for action” and the “grey list” was downgraded to “other monitored jurisdictions.” It must remember that global penalties won't impact Pakistan's proxy war and it has to evolve its own dynamics about sponsored terror instead of focussing solely on isolating our neighbour diplomatically.

Use the power of fungi

Mushrooms can be grown on paddy straw and can be the natural solution to the problem of stubble burning, falling incomes and malnutrition in Punjab



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

A tablespoon of dust, two squeezes of petrochemical vapour, a dash of industrial fume and a lot of stubble soot is Delhi's favourite winter cocktail served at dawn. High on pollution, India dropped down the malnutrition index to number 94 on the hunger graph. But what could be the connection between crop residue burning, rising hunger and rural discontent in Punjab? It is an extractive agrarian economy working against nature.

The problem of stubble burning emerged in Punjab and surrounding areas when the native seeds and agriculture were replaced by the Green Revolution seeds — paddy and wheat. The Punjabi farmers were persuaded to grow cereals for the nation, a mission they accomplished well. But going against nature has its own consequences, which the rivers, soil and people of the State suffer each day. It's a race between cancer, addiction, crime, falling prices and ecological devastation to break their resilience. The extractive economy has made a few rich and many others greedy but it has destroyed the soil, transported the cows from the farms to industrial units, while the bulls have been slaughtered by the tractors. It has transmogrified the organic economy of Punjab into *Uda* Punjab.

The paddy straw, which fed cattle, is now being burnt, from far-flung villages to Bhatinda and Delhi. The smog effect came later as scientists and environmentalists forced farmers to delay the kharif sowing. They did manage to save water but the delay had other negative ramifications. The stubble smoke was now riding on retreating monsoon winds and polluting Delhi and the entire Ganga plains.

Yet our suffering has not ennobled us. We have fed the extractive economy again by giving hundreds of crores of public money for endorsing corporate solutions like “happy seeder” and more tractors. Allowing more resources — oil, metal and so on — to be mined from the earth and burnt in our fields. Ecological myopia, blinded by five-star seminars and social media, has failed the farmers and has been unable to curb the pollution.

Each time a cycle of nature is disrupted, cataclysms soon follow. Punjab and Haryana experienced a mini disruption as nature's econ-



omy was replaced by an industrial system of agriculture. True to Macaulay's principles, unfortunately, our Indian mind has not abandoned the conquest and control of nature. As each year passes, new problems emerge. Air pollution caused the death of over 1,19,000 children in India in 2019, as per a recent study. The farms that had given our ancestors nutrition and health now give us and our *Vasudeva Kutumbhukam* family — cows, bees, birds and so on — death and disease.

Two wrongs don't make a right; hence we need to innovate within nature and not outside it. We need to call upon our ancient brethren for help, we need fungi. Yes, we are talking about mushrooms. White, capped and nutritious mushrooms can be the solution to stubble burning, falling incomes and malnutrition in Punjab. Humans need to reconnect the soil and their lives with mycelium to solve these problems.

Ask any mycophile how by burning paddy straw, farmers are setting fire to gold. It is one of the preferred media of growth for many types of edible mushrooms in India. Whether they are oyster or button, a farmer can grow 600 to 900 grams of mushrooms per kg of straw. They don't require chemicals, pesticides or other expensive inputs. All that a farmer needs is to chop the straw, add spores/spores and wait. In about 20 to 25 days the first harvest is ready for plucking. The price of oyster mush-

rooms is somewhere between ₹150 to 500 per kg. Also, keep in mind, 500 grams of chopped paddy straw is being sold at as high as ₹300 on e-retailer websites for mushroom cultivation and garden mulch. Puthar area alone reported ₹2 crore from the sale of mushrooms with leftover paddy straw. This practice is slowly gaining ground but farmers are far from harnessing the power of fungi.

How can the Government help? Instead of putting more resources into the pockets of the automobile and petrochemical industry, the Government needs to get mycologists on board in the planning process. Our policy should be to use bio-solutions based on nature and explore innovative uses of fungi.

The first step is to study and develop mushroom clusters in Punjab and Haryana. As mushrooms grow well on paddy and wheat straw, farmers will have raw material after each rabi and kharif harvest. Adequate storage facilities should be encouraged at the block level to store the straw and grow mushrooms throughout the year as a second crop.

Next, farmers should be trained, so that each farmer can turn waste straw into gold by producing edible or medicinal mushrooms or selling straw to mushroom growers. This can be a boon for the small and marginal farmers of Punjab. Even in a limited area, they can boost production and diversity too. This step will substantially add to their income and also increase

nutrition produced per farm. A mushroom diet can bring the much-needed minerals and vitamin D in the rural *thali*, especially for pregnant women and growing children.

Along with the farmers, the mushroom cultivation might also boost the rural economy by creating a new eco-system. A new mushroom supply chain will create more rural green jobs. This will be an opportunity for farmers' daughters/sons to become rural entrepreneurs, engaged in training, marketing, aggregation and allied services, supporting the mushroom ecosystem.

They can also diversify by starting mini-spawn units in the villages. Spores/spores are like the mushroom seed, they need to be introduced to a medium so the mycelium can spread and produce mushrooms. Currently, the spores or spawn industry is still nascent in India and the opportunities are endless. The Government, under the National Horticulture Mission, may even create a portal dedicated for trading mushrooms. Potential buyers may interact with farmers through it and enter contracts.

NGOs engaged in hunger and poverty alleviation may reduce stubble burning and hunger by encouraging farmers to partner with them and producing food from waste straws for the urban poor and underprivileged people. Biodiversity institutions have a critical role, too, in categorising new varieties

of fungi in these areas and conserving them.

But apart from this, conservation of local mushroom species is a matter of India's security. In the words of the renowned mycologist Paul Stamets, “biodiversity is biosecurity” and India needs to still rediscover our fungi biodiversity to face challenges such as climate change, growing hunger and sustainability. Fungi-based methods are being used to create ethanol directly, without any chemicals, and also mycoremediation for soils and contaminated water resources. Punjab and Haryana both desperately need these to save their lands and people from cancer and chemical contamination. The children of the Green Revolution — farmers of Punjab and Haryana — need to embrace fungi to save themselves from the ill effects of industrial agriculture.

As for the policy-makers, we know they have failed as spirals of smoke enter our lungs daily. They need to reorient if they want to save public resources and the people. Since the industrial solutions are not working, we need to seek help from nature to rebuild the organic rhythms of our land and economy. It is about time the “Land of Soma” (also a mushroom) looks towards fungi to help us beat pollution and hunger together.

(The writer is programme director for policy and outreach, National Seed Association of India)

SOUND BITE

The ITBP has been given the approval by the Ministry of Home Affairs to establish 47 border posts, uniform special clothing and mountaineering equipment for high-altitude locations.



Union Minister — G Kishan Reddy

The people of Bihar are going out of the State for education and employment. Hospitals in the State are in a dilapidated condition and the education system is in a disarray.



RJD leader — Tejashwi Yadav

As part of the peace process, NATO has adjusted its military presence in Afghanistan. And our presence is condition-based.



NATO Secretary General — Jens Stoltenberg

His (Virat Kohli) ability to chase things down in the limited-overs format and to pace it as well as he does and be not out at the end is extraordinary.



Cricketer — Joe Root

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP's promise of free Corona vaccines

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of free Coronavirus vaccine shots for voters in Bihar is akin to the violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Given that this is the first item on the BJP's manifesto, the party leaders are eager to make the big promise, regardless of whether they can keep it or not. However, the MCC prohibits the announcement of new Government policies and initiatives once the election process begins. Thus, the Union Minister's promise raises concerns about health policy and public ethics.

The rash promise made by the party puts the spotlight on the fact that the political leaders are more concerned about electoral gains than with morals and principles. If this announcement had to be made, it should have been made by the Bihar Chief Minister and not by the Union Minister. This also brings into sharp focus the Central Government's lack of transparency as the responsibility of distribution of the vaccine rests with the Centre. It must be noted that India has neither



released any guidelines related to the procurement and distribution of vaccines nor its cost. Given that vaccine trials are still continuing, the promise of free vaccine is rather premature. It is also misleading, discriminatory and will only cause confusion and apprehension in the minds of people.

Venu GS Kollam

The exotic bulb

Sir — Due to the shortage of onions caused by heavy rainfall, their prices have witnessed a sharp rise over the last few days in Mumbai. The staple vegetable is now retailing for ₹100 per kilogram, higher than a pack of most exotic vegetables. However, this also highlights the failure of the State Government to regulate the

prices of vegetables during a pandemic-hit economy. Rather than making tall promises of offering free Corona vaccines in Bihar, which is yet to see the light of day, the Centre should look at regulating the prices of basic commodities, especially when the unemployment rate is high and the economy is in ruin.

Jayanthi Subramaniam Mumbai

Wake-up call

Sir — US President Donald Trump's remark on “filthy” Indian air during the presidential debate triggered a storm of reactions. While some questioned the relationship between the two countries and whether Trump is indeed an ally, many saw it as an opportunity for the Indian Government to take the

issue of air pollution seriously. A State of the Global Air 2020 report by the Boston-based Health Effects Institute and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, released last week, found that India had the highest exposure to PM 2.5 in the world last year. Additionally, every winter, the national Capital finds itself in a blanket of harmful smoke. This, coupled with the ongoing pandemic, can be detrimental to its 1.91 crore residents. It is easy to call out Trump for embarrassing India but we need to accept the reality in order to start looking for a viable solution.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee Faridabad

Listen to the people

Sir — The Central Government has recently approved the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Panchayati Raj Act. However, is this what the people of J&K really want, given the fact that they have been alienated ever since the abrogation of Article 370?

Khushboo Ved Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The best is yet to come

These are seminal times. The entire globe seems to be grappling with more fundamental changes than it seems to be realising



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

History has many shades. The rich and the powerful seek to find a place in it even while they are alive. Individuals seek it, communities try for it, ideologies make a bid for it. With the passage of time many aspirations, like many dreams, wither away. That which survives is often what cannot be controlled by interventions. Thus it is that efforts like inserting a time capsule seem a wishful endeavour. Each generation has its heroes and only a few of them become trans-generational. The truth of the matter is that whereas history repeats itself if people don't learn from it, history also has a logic of its own, beyond human manipulation. In the cacophony of ideologies of statecraft, governance, the real nature of heritage and history in the shaping of reality gets diluted and sometimes lost. Truth and historical processes are inexorable and they cannot be argued with.

Simply put, history, heritage, intellectual thought and all that goes with it are given. History is also a testimony to circumstances and providence thwarting the powerful efforts of the mighty. Recall how Fatehpur Sikri could never become a live city in spite of the efforts and the might of Mughal emperor Akbar who some people declare to be "The Great" king. History is shaped by a logical force of inheritance of resources, refinement of the intellect and the level of the material bases of culture. Thus it is that slash and burn agriculture evolved into genetic manipulation of seeds. Stone Age energy evolved into atomic energy. The type of energy base and its utilisation from burning wood to atomic fission shaped civilisations. In such a context, a retrospect of over 10,000 years of somewhat recorded history and over millions of years of human evolution have a message. The message is of some defining moments and some watersheds of time. This varies from location to location, region to region and occasionally can be a global phenomenon.

The present times are a watershed in the history of the globe. Whatever the suffering, whatever the trumpeting for a positive attitude, when the present times of anxiety, pain and uncertainty are over, the world would have woken into a new incarnation. The current reference to it is the "new normal." No one is quite clear what the contours of the "new normal" or for that matter even its contents would be. The present trends of extrapolating the past processes of change into futurological forecasting may be passé.

A look at the possibilities may be interesting. There has been a huge tendency in the post-World War-I situation, which is about a hundred years of time, to look at human activity in economic terms. There can be no denying the fact that processes of production, throughput and exchange are basic to human civilisation. Label it economics for want of a better phrase. This is seminal to the survival of Homo Sapiens on this planet. Yet what is called economic activity may not always have human dominance at the core of all activity and developmental experience.

The time has come when other planetary resources, beings, lives including of plants and trees, will demand much more sensitive handling than they have received so far. Every resource need not be for the exclusive use of the perceived comfort of Homo Sapiens. The sheer non-renewability of resources or slower rejuvenation of animal and plant life than their depletion rate would have thrown the equilibrium of civilisation out of balance. Clearly, a new script of survival of life on this planet is going to emerge. Those who come with it are welcome. Those who ignore it will be sidetracked and indeed it will happen even with the people who would wish to resist it. This is the thrill of living in such seminal times as the present. That it will be open to those who will survive is yet another factor in the emerging reality. Unfortunately, there are no algorithms available as of today on who will survive and who will not. This situation is likely to continue to be so for the immediate future.

In the meanwhile, spirituality has come to occupy a greater space in people's minds than ever before. As a wag once put it, "politics is the last recourse of scoundrels." Similarly, spirituality, for many, appears, as the last recourse of helplessness. That many also have spirituality as an act of positive choice is a saving grace. In the century where the dominant theme was economics, spirituality was ignored by many, at the cost of a complete development of human civilisation. Now it is being progressively recognised that there is a critical spiritual quotient in human personality and existence.

These are seminal times if ever there were. The entire globe seems to be grappling with more fundamental changes than it seems to be fully realising. Clearly the best is yet to come.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute)

THE L-G MUST TAKE COGNISANCE OF THE SEDITIONARY REMARKS OF MEHBOOBA. WE WILL SACRIFICE EVERY DROP OF OUR BLOOD FOR OUR FLAG AND COUNTRY.

—JAMMU AND KASHMIR BJP PRESIDENT
RAVINDER RAINA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE FLAG OF INDIA WAS DISRESPECTED THE DAY BJP LEADERS CARRIED IT TO JUSTIFY RAPISTS OF A NINE-YEAR-OLD. SPARE ME THE LESSONS.

—FORMER J&K CHIEF MINISTER
MEHBOOBA MUFTI

Culture of suffocation

Proscribing on the basis of immorality, just because something might have offended an individual or community, has little to do with preserving the moral fibre of a nation



NADEEM PARACHA

In 1973, an Urdu film, *Insaan Aur Gadha*, was suddenly ordered by the Government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to be taken off the screens, just weeks after it was released in cinemas in Pakistan. Directed by the late actor and director, Syed Kamal, the film was a satire on the condition of people in Pakistan. Popular actor and comedian Rangeela played the role of a donkey who had turned into a person after praying to God to transform him into a human being.

In a biting reflection on the state of affairs in Pakistan, after the donkey's prayers are answered and he turns into a man, he soon realises that his existential purpose and sense of morality had more meaning, balance and clarity as an animal than as a person. Disappointed by humanity (or its lack thereof) he ends up asking God to turn him back into a donkey.

The reason the movie got taken down by the Government was a scene in which the donkey-turned-man addresses a large gathering of donkeys. He promises them that he would fight for their rights and against their cruel and unjust human masters. The late filmmaker, Mushtaq Gazdar, in his book *Pakistani Cinema: 1947-1997*, writes that the scene did not hide the fact that it was parodying Prime Minister Bhutto's signature style of populist oratory. This was what had angered him. But his Government's censor board shared this reservation only with the producers of the film. Publicly, the reason given for the ban was that the scene had ridiculed the masses by depicting them as a bunch of donkeys.

Even though the movie was eventually allowed to return to the cinemas, it is interesting to note the nature of the justification given by an offended Government for its removal from the country's cinemas.

Recently, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) banned the popular Chinese app Tik Tok just days after Prime Minister Imran Khan lamented that it was promoting "immorality" in the country. However, in a tweet, the senior political commentator Najam Sethi insisted that the app was banned because many of its local content-makers were parodying and satirising Khan's populist rhetoric, which is in stark contrast to his Government's political and economic incompetencies.

The ploy of using moral or religious rationale and angles to ban a popular cultural product that has offended a sitting ruler's inflated ego was not present in the country before the late 1970s. Had it been in use before that, the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto regime would not have hesitated to use it to ban *Insaan Aur Gadha*. Or for that matter, the Ayub Khan regime would have used it to outlaw 1959's *Jago Hua Saveri*.

Jago Hua Saveri, scripted by the famous communist poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz, is a story based on the struggles of a poor fishing village in former East Pakistan. Ayub saw it as commentary against his ambitious economic plans. But the reason given by the regime for banning it was that its content was "inflammatory" and that it could arouse hatred among East Pakistanis

“THE BAN CULTURE IS ALL ABOUT FEELING A SENSE OF POWER, WHICH FEEDS INFLATED EGOS, AND THE MONOMANIA OF THOSE WHO HAVE AN ENTIRELY ILLUSIONARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIETY THEY LIVE IN. UNLIKE THOSE WHO GO ON A BANNING SPREE TO AVENGE WHAT THEY BELIEVE HAS OFFENDED THEM INDIVIDUALLY, THE OTHER LOT ACTUALLY BELIEVES THEY ARE FIGHTING A HOLY WAR TO SAVE SOCIETY”



Bengali majority against their West Pakistani brethren. In today's Pakistan, Ayub could have simply banned it on the grounds of it being a communist film, and thus promoting atheistic ideas. In his 1967 book, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, the scholar Aziz Ahmad writes that the founders of Pakistan went out of their way to underline the fact that their idea of Islam was different to the one held by most *ulema* (Muslim scholars) and clerics. To the founders, their idea of Islam was inherently modern, rational, sophisticated and progressive, as opposed to the "reactionary" and myopic ideas of the faith propagated by the Islamists.

The State and various governments carried forth and further expanded this narrative till 1974. Therefore, till then, the notion of banning a cultural product on the basis of morality would have seemed contrary to this narrative or something that was the domain of unsophisticated *mullahs*.

However, things began to change rapidly after the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto regime handed the once-despised "forces of myopia" their greatest victory through the constitutional Second Amendment in 1974, which ousted the Ahmadiyya community from the fold of Islam.

Bhutto believed that he was ahead of the curve by noticing the rising interest in the Muslim world towards (albeit utopian) ideas of "Islamic rule." The French political scientist, Oliver Roy, in his 1992 book, *The Failure of Political Islam*, agrees that indeed from the mid-

1970s, politics in the Muslim world had begun to shift rightwards towards political Islam.

But Bhutto was giving himself too much credit for anticipating this shift, and, more so, for believing that he was monopolising it before the Islamic parties could. Because no matter how hard he tried, the Islamic parties understood the dynamics of this better than he did and were, therefore, more adept at exploiting its emotional and psychological appeal, as they did during their 1977 protest movement against the Bhutto regime.

The tactic of using the Islamic or morality card to proscribe a cultural product which, in reality, has only offended the ego of a ruler, earnestly began from 1977 onwards, with the coming to power of the reactionary Zia-ul-Haq dictatorship.

Before my father passed away in October 2009, he would often tell his friends the story of how, soon after the 1977 coup, when he was a reporter at a large Urdu daily, he was told that his name had been put by the dictatorship on a "blacklist" of "pro-Bhutto journalists." This meant he could not write anything on politics. So, a few days before 1978's *Eid-ul-Aza* — the day when Muslims sacrifice bulls, goats or camels — my father was allowed by the editor to do a completely apolitical piece on a makeshift market of sacrificial animals in Karachi's Gizri area. He went there, completed his report and submitted it.

The next day he was told that the report had been removed by the Zia

regime's Information Ministry, which used to scan newspapers before they went into print. A member of the ministry told the editor that there was a whole paragraph in the report about how people were checking the front teeth of the sacrificial goats. The Ministry man then added that the writer was being "cheeky" by indirectly mocking Zia's prominent front teeth. But the reason provided to my father was that the article was "ridiculing the holy tradition of animal sacrifice."

The act of proscribing a cultural product on the basis of immorality just because it offends the bloated ego of an individual or that of a community has little or nothing to do with preserving the moral fibre of a nation.

The ban culture is all about feeling a sense of power, which feeds inflated egos, and the monomania of those who have an entirely illusionary understanding of the society they live in. Unlike those who go on a banning spree to avenge what they believe has offended them individually, the other lot actually believes they are fighting a holy war to save society.

The result is a suffocating environment, which stunts the growth of creativity, tolerance and of democratic values in a society. This is what is happening increasingly in Pakistan and around the world, especially where populist or Right-wing regimes are in power. This must be stopped at all cost before we all lose our freedom of speech, creativity, innovation and thought. That will be a downright tragedy of epic proportions. (Courtesy: Dawn)

What matters in the US election?

Trump's economic benchmarks, like an increase in pension savings of the middle class and a booming stock market, might just save him



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

US President Donald Trump was warned about the possibility of a mysterious pneumonia-like virus outbreak in the country on January 28, during a discussion in the Oval Office of the White House, according to Bob Woodward, whose investigative reports in the past have played havoc with the lives of many presidents.

In his latest book *Rage*, which hit book shops across the world amid the pandemic, Woodward, who won two Pulitzer Prizes in his nearly half-a-century old career, says the callousness shown by Trump is likely to see his ouster in the November election.

He says that Robert O'Brien, the National Security Advisor (NSA),

had warned the President about the catastrophe which was to strike the US shortly. "This will be the biggest national security threat you face in your presidency," O'Brien had told Trump, according to Woodward.

"Trump's head popped up. He asked the Intelligence briefer, Beth Sanner, several questions. She said China was worried, and the intelligence community was monitoring it, but it looked like this would not be anything nearly as serious as the deadly 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak," Woodward writes in the prologue of the book.

Matt Pottinger, 46, Deputy NSA, who was present during the meeting, also agreed with the views of O'Brien. According to Pottinger, he had asked one of his contacts in China whether the pandemic reported from Wuhan province was as bad as the 2003 SARS outbreak. "Don't think SARS 2003. Think influenza pandemic of 1918," Pottinger's Chinese contact had told him.

The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 had killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide with about 6,75,000 deaths in the US, writes Woodward.

He says Trump did impose cer-

tain restrictions on travellers from China, a move opposed by a number of his Cabinet members. "But his public attention was focussed on just about everything except the virus; the upcoming Super Bowl, the technological meltdown in the Democratic caucuses in Iowa, his State of the Union address and most importantly, the impeachment trial in the Senate.

When the highly-infectious respiratory disease caused by the Novel Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, did come up in settings where he had an opportunity to reach a large number of Americans, Trump continued to reassure the public they faced little risk," says Woodward in the 450-page book.

He says the President did not elaborate about the disease in his State of the Union address on February 4, which was watched by nearly 40 million Americans. Neither did he talk about the warning given by the NSA. "When I later asked the President about the warning from O'Brien, he said he didn't recall it. And in an interview with Trump on March 19, six weeks before I learned of O'Brien's and Pottinger's warnings, the President said his statements in the early weeks of the virus had been

deliberately designed to not draw attention to it," writes Woodward. "I wanted to always play it down. I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic," the author quotes Trump as saying.

From the prologue, he goes on building a major chargesheet against Trump for his four-year-long acts of omission and commission. He has put Trump under a scanner and has completed a thorough analysis of the presidency under him. It took him 17 interviews with the President during the last four years to collate the materials with which he has built up this work. Also included in the book is how Rex Tillerson, the CEO of an oil giant, was appointed as his Secretary of State and Jim Mattis as the Defence Secretary, both resigning from their posts sooner than expected.

On February 7, when Woodward met Trump for the sixth interview of the series, the author asked the President what was the plan for the next eight to 10 months. "Just do well. Run the country well," Trump replied. The author asked him to define what does he mean by "well." "Look, when you are running a country, it's full of surprises. There's dynamite behind every door," Trump

replied. The remaining 11 interviews convinced Woodward that the "dynamite behind the door" was Trump himself. "The oversized personality. The failure to organise. The lack of discipline. The lack of trust in others he had picked, in experts. The undermining or the attempted undermining of so many American institutions. The failure to be a calming, healing voice. The unwillingness to acknowledge error. The failure to do his homework..." the chargesheet goes on and on.

The day Trump inaugurated his presidency in 2016 saw widespread riots all over the US as one of the news channels reported. The run-up to the election to be held in November is full of news that he is in for a sure defeat. How nice it would have been had the world worked as per the whims and fancies of political commentators and the media.

At the conclusion of the interviews, Trump told Woodward in July that he would triumph over COVID-19 and the economic calamity. "Don't worry about it. We will get to do another book. You'll find I was right," the author quotes the President as telling him.

Rage is Woodward's 20th book.

Maybe his 21st book could be one based on the re-election of Trump as things stand today.

Talking about the electoral system in the US and the forthcoming presidential election, Dr S Kalyanaraman, a one man think-tank based in Chennai, says, "Trump has achieved something phenomenal in the US economy. Pension savings of the middle class have more than trebled because of his handling of the economy. The stock market has boomed. So the electorate will think of its wallet and vote for Trump. Look at the State rallies. Trump is a phenomenon, remarkable ever since the days of Abraham Lincoln. Even the Black lives which matter will vote for Trump. Electoral college is only the *pakkavaadyam*; the real fat lady is the economy, stupid!"

"It is the economy, stupid!!!" This expression was coined by poll strategist James Carville during Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign. Remember, Hillary Clinton lost in 2016? Most likely former US Vice-President Joe Biden will lose in 2020. However, I am yet to get an answer to the query why Hillary Clinton opted out of the presidential race and allowed Biden in.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



A HEARTLESS GOVERNMENT

It is true that long-term solutions are needed but Conservatives can't lecture others when child poverty has deepened on their watch. In the past, the Conservatives' reputation for callousness was matched by a belief in their competence. That is being demolished by this pandemic. This is a post-shame Government, brazening out its failures, assured in its vast majority. How rich that Conservatives should lecture struggling UK families on responsibility, while refusing to take any themselves. (The Guardian editorial)

'Trump understands power of Indian-Americans'

Philadelphia (US): Indian-Americans have become a force to reckon with in the US and President Donald Trump understands their power, the president's re-election campaign official has said.



Al Mason, co-chair of the Trump Victory Indian American Finance Committee, said at an event organised on Saturday that Indian-Americans, particularly in the battleground states, can play an important role in getting Trump re-elected.

Explaining the reasons, Mason, based on a survey, said Trump has respected the community and Indian leadership in a way no other president has done in the past.

He said his recent survey in these battleground states reveal that the community members are moving towards the president in a big way.

"Trump has elevated India's stature on the world stage - the India-US relationship has been rock solid. Kudos to the brilliance of both President Trump and Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi for cementing the bond between India and US," he said in his remarks at the event organised by the Indian Voices for Trump.

"You, the powerful Indian Americans are a force to reckon with today. You have not realized your own power, but President Trump understands your power," he said.

In 2019, Mason explained, when the world was against Modi on the Kashmir issue and world leaders were criticising him, the only man "who had the guts to stand" by him was Trump.

For the first time in the history of presidential elections, more than 50 percent of Indian-American Democrats are moving towards the Republican party because of Trump, Mason said, adding the vote of the community will contribute to the victory of the president.

"The president went to the Howdy Modi event in Houston (last year) and never once injected himself into Kashmiri issue ... Never once interfered in the internal affairs of India... Kashmir is a very sensitive emotional topic for every Indian American," Mason said.

During his India trip early this year, Trump said, America loves India, America respects India and America will always be faithful and a loyal friend to Indians.

Biden: Trump has been weak, chaotic with China on trade

Washington: US President Donald Trump has been "weak and chaotic" with China on trade and could not lead an effective strategy to mobilise a true international effort to pressure, isolate, and punish China to actually strengthen manufacturing jobs in Pennsylvania and across the country," he said.

He (Trump) has been weak and chaotic with China on trade. All he has ended up doing is opening doors for big banks to make money in China and helped contribute to a surge of farm bankruptcies in America," Biden said.

Biden asked if President Trump and the Republicans did not have time to deliver a real economic relief to working families and small business, then how in the middle of this pandemic, do they have the time to vote to confirm a Justice to the Supreme Court.

"I'll tell you why — it's Trump's dream of wiping Obamacare off the books. Because his nominee has said in the past the law should be struck down. If they get their way, more than 20 million Americans could lose their coverage, including nearly 1 million Pennsylvanians," said the Democratic presidential nominee.

"I'll do what he's unable to do: lead an effective strategy to

mobilise a true international effort to pressure, isolate, and punish China to actually strengthen manufacturing jobs in Pennsylvania and across the country," he said.

Our values are shared by majority of American people: Kamala

Washington: Democratic vice presidential candidate Senator Kamala Harris has said her party's views on issues like healthcare and the coronavirus pandemic are shared by a majority of Americans, flaying President Donald Trump for an "utter failure" of leadership and refusing to condemn white supremacy.

Deflecting President Trump's remarks, who described her as a "female socialist", Harris, 56, said she and former vice president Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential candidate, are proud American patriots. "Joe Biden and I are proud American patriots. And the reality is that the values that we have, I think, are shared by the majority of the American people," Harris told reporters on Cleveland, where she was campaigning on Saturday.

She was responding to a question on Trump's statement a day earlier.

Trump wanted to talk to me about being his Secretary of State after 2016 polls: Haley

Philadelphia (US): Popular Indian-American Republican politician Nikki Haley has revealed that Donald Trump, soon after winning the November 2016 US presidential election, wanted to talk to her about being his Secretary of State.

"I was the Governor of South Carolina, the best job serving the state that raised me. And then I got a phone call (after the 2016 elections)," Haley, 48, said during a fireside chat organised by Indian Voices for Trump in Norristown in the battleground state of Pennsylvania on Saturday.

The important phone call, she said, was from Reince Priebus, the then chairman of the Republican National Committee who later went on to become Trump's first White House Chief of Staff.

president-elect wants to see you and I said, okay about what? He said he wants to talk to you about the Secretary of State. I said I can't be Secretary of State, I'm the governor. And he said, he wants to talk to you," she said during the conversation with Dr Merlynn Carson, co-chair of Indian Voices for Trump.

Haley flew to New York to meet Trump. During the meeting, Haley revealed that she told the president-elect that she was not the right fit for the job of the top American diplomat, but she was ready to help him in any way he wanted.

Days later, she received another call from Priebus, who told her that Trump would call her later with the offer of US Ambassador to the UN, she said.

The president called and asked her if she was going to do the job.

Hundreds march in Taiwan in support of 12 arrested Hong-Kongers

Taipei (Taiwan): Hundreds of people marched in Taiwan's capital on Sunday to demand the release of 12 Hong Kong anti-government protesters who were arrested by mainland Chinese authorities in August.

The 12 were allegedly traveling illegally by boat to Taiwan when Chinese authorities detained them. They are now facing formal charges for illegal border crossings in Shenzhen, a southern Chinese city that borders Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, people demonstrated in at least a dozen cities across the world — from New York to Vancouver to Adelaide in Australia — in support of those who were arrested, in a campaign called #save12hkyouths. Prominent Hong Kong

activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law helped launch the campaign on social media.

In the crowd in Taipei on Sunday were activists from several Taiwanese organizations, as well as other residents of the self-ruled democratic island and many Hong Kongers.

With many dressed in black and wearing face masks, they marched through the city, shouting "Glory to Hong Kong."

Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949, and Beijing has cut off ties with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's government over her refusal to accept its demand that she recognise the island as a part of China to be unified with the mainland eventually under the same "one country, two systems" policy enacted in Hong Kong.

Imran Khan vs Macron as feud over Islamophobia

AFP ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan accused French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday of "attacking Islam", after the European leader criticised Islamists and defended the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

Mr Khan's comments follow statements Mr Macron made last week after a French teacher was beheaded near Paris after he had shown cartoons of the Prophet during a class he was leading on free speech.

Mr Macron said the teacher "was killed because Islamists want our future."

In a series of tweets, Mr Khan said the remark would sound divisive.

"This is a time when Pres Macron could have put healing

touch & denied space to extremists rather than creating further polarisation & marginalisation that inevitably leads to radicalisation," Mr Khan wrote.

"It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists."

Mr Macron already sparked controversy earlier this month when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world".

The French teacher became the target of an online hate campaign over his choice of lesson material -- the same images that sparked a bloody assault by Islamist gunmen on the offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the original publisher, in January 2015.

Caricatures of Mohammed are forbidden by Islam.

Blasphemy is an explosive issue in ultra-conservative Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty.

"By attacking Islam, clearly without having any understanding of it, President Macron has attacked & hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims in Europe & across the world," Mr Khan said.

In an address to the United Nations last month, Mr Khan, a populist leader who has been known to play to Pakistan's hardline religious base, blasted Charlie Hebdo for re-publishing the cartoons, saying "wilful provocations" should be "universally outlawed".

Several Muslim countries have called for a boycott of French goods.



Pro-democracy protesters gather, flashing three-fingered salutes near a main shopping district in Bangkok on Sunday AP

Thai protesters rally ahead of parliamentary debate

Bangkok: Pro-democracy protesters in Thailand gathered again Sunday in Bangkok, seeking to keep up pressure on the government a day ahead of a special session of Parliament called to try to ease political tensions.

The rally took place at the busy Rajprasong intersection, in the heart of the capital's shopping district, an area that usually draws large weekend crowds. Few protesters turned out in the first hour of the rally, as a better publicized protest had already been called for Monday.

The rallies were called Saturday night after Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha ignored the protesters' deadline to step down.

The protesters' core demands also include a more democratic constitution and reforms to the monarchy. Public criticism of the monarchy is unprecedented in a country where the royal institution has been considered sacrosanct.

The protesters charge that Prayuth, who led a coup in 2014 as the army chief, was returned to power unfairly in last year's general election because laws had been changed to favor a pro-military party. The protesters also say that the constitution, written and enacted under military rule, is undemocratic.

Prayuth's government last week called the Parliamentary session, expected to last two days, to seek to defuse weeks of almost daily protests.

"The only way to a lasting solution for all sides that is fair for those on the streets as well as for the many millions who choose not to go on the streets is to discuss and resolve these differences through the parliamentary process," he said last week. Prayuth also lifted a state of emergency that he had imposed a week earlier that made the protest rallies illegal.

The protesters were not impressed by his efforts to appease them, declaring them insincere.

They noted on social media that the points of discussion submitted by the government for debate dealt not with their concerns but were thinly disguised criticisms of the protests themselves.

Mike Pence's chief of staff tests positive

Washington: Marc Short, Chief of Staff of US Vice President Mike Pence, has tested positive for the COVID-19, the White House has said, becoming the latest top official to have contracted the deadly disease.

The vice president and the second lady have tested negative. Pence's Press Secretary Devin O'Malley said in a statement on Saturday.

"Today, Marc Short, Chief of Staff to the Vice President, tested positive for COVID-19, began quarantine and assisting in the contact tracing process," he said.

"Vice President Pence and Mrs. Pence both tested negative for COVID-19 today, and remain in good health," O'Malley said.

Reacting to the news, President Donald Trump said, "I did hear about it just now. I think he's quarantining. I did hear about that. He's going to be fine. But he's quarantining."

O'Malley said that while Vice President Pence is considered a close contact with Short, in consultation with the White House Medical Unit, the vice president will maintain his schedule in accordance with the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for essential personnel.

Short did not travel with Pence to Florida on Saturday, where the vice president addressed election rallies. In addition, staffers deemed close contacts with Short were pulled from the trip before departure as well, either leaving the plane or not arriving to travel.

Pence plans to continue to operate as an essential worker and plans to travel again on Sunday. President Trump and First Lady Melania tested positive for the virus on October 1, after one of the president's closest aides Hope Hicks had contracted the virus. Both have now recovered from the disease.

Pak Opp parties hold massive anti-Govt rally despite security threats

Karachi: Pakistan's major Opposition parties on Sunday held their third massive joint rally despite security threats in the troubled southwestern Balochistan province's capital Quetta, as part of their nationwide campaign to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a coalition of 11 Opposition parties formed on September 20, earlier held two massive back-to-back gatherings in Gujranwala and Karachi this month.

As the public meeting began at the Ayub Stadium in Quetta, the city witnessed a blast that killed three people and injured seven others in Hazarganj area, 35 to 40 minutes away from the rally site.

According to police, an improvised explosive device (IED) was planted in a motorcycle.

Undeterred by the blast, the PDM leaders went ahead with the rally, which was attended by PDM president Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other top leaders of the coalition.

Addressing the rally via video link from London, PML-N supremo and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif again blamed Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI Director General Lt Gen Faiz Hameed for Pakistan's current situation.

"Gen Bajwa, you will have to answer for record rigging in the 2018 elections, for horse-trading in the Parliament, for making

Imran Niazi prime minister against people's wishes and [by] tearing apart the Constitution and laws, for pushing people towards poverty and hunger," 70-year-old Sharif said.

He also accused the ISI chief of "interfering in politics for several years with impunity" in violation of his oath. Sharif said that he names individuals "because I don't want my army to be defamed".

Pakistan's powerful army has denied meddling in politics. Prime Minister Khan also denies the army helped him win the election in 2018.

"Looking at this enthusiasm, I am sure that no one will be able to violate the voter's mandate now. I saw this enthusiasm in Gujranwala and Karachi, and

now I'm seeing it in Quetta," Sharif said, addressing the huge crowd at the stadium.

"I am aware of Baloch people's problems, Nawaz Sharif knows [...] the missing persons issue is still there. I feel pain when I see the victims," he said, in an apparent reference to the forced disappearance of hundreds of Baloch people.

He said that the PDM has risen against "unconstitutional powers that have made Pakistan hollow from inside and out".

This is not the first time Sharif has made such allegations against top army brass; he made similar ones in the Gujranwala rally after which a furious Prime Minister Khan had declared that he would get "tougher" with the Opposition.

Afghanistan claims killing an al-Qaida leader wanted by FBI

Kabul: Afghanistan claimed on Sunday it killed a top al-Qaida propagandist on an FBI most-wanted list during an operation in the country's east, showing the militant group's continued presence there as US forces work to withdraw from America's longest-running war amid continued bloodshed there.

The reported death of Husam Abd al-Rauf, also known by the nom de guerre Abu Muhsin al-Masri, follows weeks of violence including an Islamic State-claimed suicide bombing Saturday at an education center near Kabul that killed 24 people.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government continues to fight Taliban militants even as peace talks take place between the two sides in Qatar for the first time.

The violence and al-Rauf's reported killing threatens the face-to-face peace talks and risks plunging this nation beset by decades of war into further instability. It also complicates America's efforts to withdraw,

19 years after it led an invasion targeting the Taliban for hosting al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Details over the raid that led to al-Rauf's alleged death remained murky, hours after Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security intelligence service claimed on Twitter to have killed him in Ghazni province. Al-Qaida did not immediately acknowledge al-Rauf's reported death. The FBI, the US Military and NATO did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Afghan raid happened last week in Kunsaf, a village in Ghazni province's Andar district some 150 kilometers (90 miles) southwest of Kabul, two government officials said.

Amanullah Kamrani, the deputy head of Ghazni's provincial council, told The Associated Press that Afghan special forces led by the intelligence agency raided Kunsaf, which he described as being under Taliban control.

Thousands rally in Iraq to mark one year of protests

Baghdad: Thousands of protesters took to the streets on Sunday to mark one year since mass anti-government demonstrations swept Baghdad and Iraq's south, sparking hope for change and calls to end rampant corruption.

Protesters marched in the capital and several southern cities including Najaf, Nasiriyah and Basra to renew demands proclaimed a year ago to bring an end to corruption by politicians.

Mustafa Hussein, in his 20's, participated in the demonstrations last year and returned to Baghdad's Tahrir Square on Sunday. He said little had changed.

"Our demands that we wrote with the blood of our martyrs are still on the lists of officials without implementation," he said.

More than 500 people were killed during the months-long movement that began last year, many of them protesters shot



Federal police surround the protest site during clashes between security forces and anti-government protesters in central Baghdad, Iraq on Sunday AP

by Iraqi security forces who used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse crowds.

Often tear gas cannisters struck the heads of demonstrators, killing them instantly. By February, the protests had petered out in the wake of coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions, prompting activists to call off mass marches and sit-ins.

An order by the Baghdad Operations Command, which oversees security forces in the capital, kept many hundreds

more demonstrators from entering the city on Sunday from the provinces of Babylon and Diwaniyah.

In Baghdad's Tahrir Square, which has been the epicenter of the protest movement, Iraqi youth carried banners with portraits of those killed by Iraqi security forces.

The protesters erected tents and created their version of utopia replete with food vendors, cinemas and bookshops.

Malaysia's king rejects PM's proposal to declare emergency

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's king on Sunday rejected a proposal by embattled Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to declare a state of emergency to fight a new outbreak of the coronavirus.

The plan by Muhyiddin, which involves suspending Parliament, has sparked national outrage, with critics slamming the move as an undemocratic means for him to hang on to power amid challenges to his leadership.

The palace said in a statement that Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah "is of the opinion that there is currently no need for His Majesty to declare a state of emergency in this country or any part of Malaysia."

Muhyiddin met with the monarch on Friday to seek royal assent. Earlier Sunday, the king held a meeting with other royal households to discuss the prime minister's proposal.

He said in the statement that he believes in Muhyiddin's ability to cope with the crisis and urged a halt to "all politicking" that could disrupt the government's stability.

The king can declare a state of emergency that allows the country to be governed through ordinances that cannot be challenged in court.

Muhyiddin took power in March after investigating the cause of the former reformist alliance, but his government is shaky, with only a two-seat majority in Parliament.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has alleged that he has the support of a majority of lawmakers to topple Muhyiddin, but hasn't managed to secure the monarch's support.

Still, Muhyiddin faces a key test early next month when his government is due to seek approval for its 2021 budget in Parliament. If he is unable to pass the bill, pressure will build for him to resign or call new elections. A state of emergency could allow him to delay that vote and consolidate support.

Malaysia's coronavirus cases doubled to more than 26,000 in just three weeks following a new outbreak, mainly in Sabah state on Borneo island.

Govt to seek Parl nod for additional ₹37K cr infra push

New Delhi: The Government will seek Parliament's approval for ₹37,000-crore additional spending on infrastructure development in the second batch of supplementary demands for grant.

Earlier this month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced additional budget of ₹25,000 crore as capital expenditure (capex) on roads, defence, water supply, urban development and domestically produced capital equipment.

Besides, the central government approved issuance of a special interest-free 50-year loan to states of ₹12,000 crore for infrastructure development.

Approval for this additional spending will be sought

through second supplementary demands for grants, sources said.

This was part of the third stimulus announced by the government earlier this month to boost demand during the festive season. The additional spending of ₹37,000 crore is over and above ₹4.13 lakh crore capex plan approved by the government in Budget 2020-21.

For various schemes of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package, the government sought approval of additional spending through first batch of supplementary demands for grants last month.

The second supplementary demands for grants usually

presented during the winter session of Parliament.

The government has assured various infrastructure related ministries and departments that it will provide more money if needed and it is ready to provide the additional funds even at the revised estimates level, sources said.

Highlighting the importance of infra development, the finance minister recently said money spent on infrastructure and asset creation has a multiplier effect on the economy. It not only improves current economy but also future GDP, she had said while announcing Rs 37,000 crore extra spending for infrastructure.

PTI

Enterprises will push AI to new frontiers in 2021: Report

San Francisco: In 2021, one in four forward-thinking enterprises will push Artificial Intelligence to new frontiers, such as holographic meetings for remote work and on-demand personalised manufacturing, according to new predictions by Forrester Research.

They will gamify strategic planning, build simulations in the boardroom, and move into intelligent edge experiences, said the report.

Consultancies like Capgemini, EY, and KPMG will provide strategy and governance chops, while software companies like DataRobot, IBM, and Tecton will provide scale and speed to fuel this imagination, it added.

"Plan to quadruple your investment next year. Build

your internal AI team, engage consultancies to implement domain-specific solutions, and upgrade your data, analytics, and machine learning (ML) platforms to rethink how you use AI," Forrester advised.

But here are many deterrents to AI success -- a lack of trust, poor data quality, data paucity, a lack of imagination, and a dearth of the right power tools to scale.

However, the next year will see companies tackle these head on, not because they want to or suddenly have the wherewithal to overcome these in this unprecedented year, but because they have to.

"They have to rebuild their businesses not for today or even next year but to prepare to compete in an AI-driven future," Forrester said. **IANS**

Petrol, diesel prices unchanged as crude prices subdued

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies continued to hold the pause button on retail fuel prices on Sunday also due to subdued global crude prices.

The Brent crude is currently below the \$42 per barrel mark.

Petrol prices have been unchanged for over a month now while diesel prices remained same for the 23rd straight day across the metros.

In the national capital, petrol was sold for Rs 81.06 per litre. In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, it was priced at Rs 87.74, Rs 84.14 and Rs 82.59 per litre respectively.

The prices of diesel in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were Rs 70.46, Rs 76.86, Rs 75.95, and Rs 73.99 per litre respectively. **IANS**

Nudge consumers efficiently to build your brand: FB India

New Delhi: The world has changed significantly in terms of every single variable in the pandemic times, including human behaviour, and it is the right time consumers are efficiently nudged into in order for brands to build and deliver effective campaigns in the run up to Diwali and beyond, a top Facebook executive has said.

This nudging has to be done keeping the fact in mind that most of the buying decisions are now being made on smartphones -- via Facebook and its family of apps, Sandeep Bhushan, Director and Head of Global Marketing Solutions (GMS) by Facebook India, told IANS.

"More than half the purchases in key festive spends of fashion and tech devices are

now influenced by what consumers see on their mobile phones," Bhushan said.

A significant digital acceleration has happened on the back of social media in India.

"With over 400 million Indians connected on the Facebook family of apps in India, we will play a consequential role this festive season in both brand discovery and delivering truly incremental business outcomes," he added.

Nearly 70 per cent mobile consumers in urban India are now expected to be digitally influenced.

"While 55-60 per cent apparel consumers are expected to be digitally influenced, 85 per cent urban automobile consumers have already been digitally influenced," Bhushan informed. **IANS**

Coal imports rise 12% to 19 MT in Sep on improved consumption

New Delhi: India's coal import rose 11.6 per cent to 19.04 million tonnes in September on account of a recovery in consumption by thermal power plants and other industries as also helped by competitive prices in international markets.

The country imported 17.06 million tonnes (MT) of coal in September 2019, showed data available with mjunction services limited.

Mjunction -- a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL -- is a B2B e-commerce company and also publishes research reports on coal and steel verticals.

"The steady recovery in consumption by thermal power plants and other industries coupled with competitive prices in the international markets led to a resurgence of demand for imports ahead of the festive season," mjunction Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Vinaya Varma said. The outlook for imports remains uncertain as it depends on the sustainability of operations and growth in consuming sectors in the coming months" Varma noted. **PTI**

India economy on verge of slow recovery as worst is over: PHDCCI

New Delhi: Industry body PHDCCI expects India's GDP to contract by 7.9 per cent in the current financial year and grow by 7.7 per cent in 2021-22, assessing that the worst is over and the economy is on the verge of a slow recovery.

The chamber, however, stated that unemployment remains a key challenge to be addressed by the government. The PHDCCI drew the conclusions based on its analysis of 25 high-frequency economic indicators which point out that there has been a pickup in business normalization.

However, the unemployment rate still remains a worry as it worsened to 8.3 per cent in August from 7.4 per cent in July, it said in a report.

"Going ahead, India should focus on moving away from imports from China, divert trade towards friendly economies, build domestic capacities and significantly scale-up indigenous production with a thrust to become self-reliant," PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) said.

It said also that efforts should be made to diversify the portfolio of export products in terms of more countries and also in terms of more products, where India has a core competence.

PHDCCI President Sanjay Aggarwal said on the back of various reforms undertaken by the government during the last six months, economic recovery has become visible in the high-frequency indicators. **PTI**

NITI looking at reform ideas in health sector, says member

New Delhi: Government think tank Niti Aayog is looking at many reform ideas in the health sector, including aligning traditional and modern approaches for a 'larger good', it's member (health) V K Paul said on Sunday.

Paul said the government is committed to strengthening the traditional system of medicine (homoeopathy and Ayurveda) as well as the modern system of medicine (allopathy).

"It makes eminent logic that the best of traditional medicine and best of modern medicine therapies be brought together for a larger good of people and there are ways of practising integrated medicine," he told PTI.

Paul, pointed out that it has already happened to an extent, as yoga is now part of practice in several conditions like in hypertension.

"There is a scope to align these approaches for the larger benefit of society... As a think tank, we are looking at many reform ideas in the health sector, aligning traditional and modern approaches for a larger good," he said. Integrative medicine is an approach that combines modern medicine with alternative systems like Ayurveda and yoga.

India's National Health Policy (NHP) also recognises the need for integrated courses for ISM (Indian systems of medicine), modern science and Ayurgenomics (a combination of Ayurveda with the study of all the genes of an organism, called genomics). **PTI**

Yes Bank lacked cost control; aim to cut op expenses by 2% in FY21: CEO Kumar

Mumbai: Yes Bank lacked a culture of cost control, and under the new management, the lender is targeting to reduce operational expenses by 20 per cent in FY21 by rationalizing branches and ATMs, giving up unwanted leased spaces and renegotiating rents, a top official has said.

The city-based lender is experiencing delays in loan recovery efforts as big defaulters are approaching courts, its new chief executive and managing director Prashant Kumar told PTI.

Kumar was asked to lead Yes Bank in March after its rescue by a SBI-led consortium of lenders after alleged governance lapses under co-founder and chief executive Rana Kapoor. The bank reported a 21 per cent reduction in operating expenses in September quarter. "Unfortunately, there was no control on costs," Kumar said, adding that a global consultant has charted out a step-by-step agenda to reduce spending through which it aims to save 20 per cent on operating expenses in FY21 over FY20.

The bank has already surrendered two floors in Central Mumbai's upscale Indiabulls Finance Centre, which houses its corporate offices, Kumar said.

Besides, it is aiming to renegotiate rent contracts for all 1,100 branches. Kumar said the bank is targeting reduction in rents, a major operational overhead for lenders, by 20 per cent through the exercise. It will be shutting down 50 branches as part of a rationalization effort, which will reduce its overall network in FY21 as there will be no new openings, Kumar said. **PTI**

CSB bank's branches inaugurated

New Delhi: VK Shukla, General Manager and Zonal Manager of CSB Bank Limited formerly known as The Catholic Syrian Bank Limited, Northern Zone has inaugurated three branches of CSB Bank, namely Rohini Sector-7, Okhla-Phase 2, and Shalimar Bagh on 23.10.2020. He has further indicated about the expansion of the Bank in Northern and Eastern region by opening of 50 more branches.

The proposed branches are identified at areas where there is good demand for Gold Loans, MSME, Corporate Loans and to extend support to other needy customers. The occasion was graced by Mr. Umang Garg along with Cluster Head, Mr. Soni Daniel, Northern Zone at Rohini Sector7. Gold loan is the unique selling product of CSB Bank Limited with its attractive interest rate, higher LTV upto 90%, low turnaround time and easy takeover facility from other financial institutions.

During inauguration ceremony, Mr. Shukla appreciated the efforts of Northern Zone for 115% growth under Gold loan during last financial year. The aim of the Bank is to attain a Gold loan portfolio of Rs. 10,000 Cr. by March 2021. CSB Bank Limited is one of the oldest private sector banks and celebrating the centenary year. The Bank has a strong base in Kerala along with significant presence in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra. It offers a wide range of products and services to their overall customer base of 1.35 million. The Bank has been listed in the year 2019 and launched IPO on 22.11.2019. M/s Fairfax has infused capital of Rs. 1400.00 Cr in the year 2019 and the bank is well set to grow faster.

ON THE DEVELOPMENT HIGHWAY

The pandemic was utilised as an opportunity to transform the tribal economy into a digitised market place. Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED, in a conversation with Saimi Sattar, describes how he managed to achieve the impossible



What is the Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan, about?

Before the pandemic we had 15 teams which would visit tribals in every state twice to educate them about how we are trying to change and digitise but during the pandemic this operation came to a standstill. So we started a programme with UNICEF called Livelihoods with Safety through which livelihoods would not be affected and the tribals would remain safe at the same time. One webinar was held in each state where we gave them strategies about mask wearing, social distancing and how they could continue with their forest and handloom activities. Through this we connected with around 10-15 lakh people in the villages. A message went out to the tribal clusters in the 30 states about how they can continue their livelihood while keeping safe.

We worked with 21 States to procure 73 items. For the first time in the history of India, Rs 4,000 crore of procurement of minor produce in India took place which was transferred to the tribal ecosystem. With the help of State Implementation Agencies and the Village Procurement Centres we could procure products worth Rs 1,000 crore in the government sector and over Rs 3,000 crore in the private sector above MSP.

The starting point of this programme was the raising of the MSP by almost 90 per cent and this gave a big boost to their income which quadrupled. In the Van Dhan programme, we set up 1,200 clusters of 300 tribals each which produce 500 items. These products, called Van Dhan Organics, are value added, processed, branded and sold through TRIFED stores and the States sell these too. Manipur, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Kerala and Karnataka have done excellent work in this. Over 3.5 lakh tribals are a part of this enterprise. The pandemic was a difficult situation but, also, an opportunity to convert the tribal ecosystem into a more technologically advanced one. They reacted spontaneously so that these programmes took off.

states or areas where these products were sourced from?

In the 21 states we identified 73 items like imli, amla, safed museli and some products from the North East that were non-timber produce. Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra did some wonderful work in this. Since the government gave a high MSP, the traders were forced to give a higher price for the products. For example, imli was earlier selling for Rs 16/kg and we brought it for Rs 30. So the traders had to buy it for Rs 40 or 45 per kg.

Then we have the Van Dhan value addition processing scheme where we are giving training in processing and marketing. Through Van Dhan, these products are processed, marketed and sold. While 500 are in production, another 1,500 will be in production soon. There are 2,000 Van Dhan units already in the country another 1,000 are in the offing in the next 12 months. By December we should have 3,000 Van Dhan clusters of 300 tribals each. We would be spending about Rs 1.5 crores on each of these clusters during the next two years to develop them as a tribal production and enterprise hub. They will be given a working capital, equipment would be provided and packaging, marketing would be taken care of in these clusters.

This is the supply end of the change. On the demand side, which are the products that have seen a very high demand?

We have identified 1,200 fast-moving items. These are organic immunity boosters from Tribes India. We have identified 121 outlets of TRIFED and Tribes India to sell these. Additionally, we have Tribes India on Wheels which are 150 vehicles that move around the country in various cities where the products are practically taken to the homes of consumers. We are setting Tribes India marketplace which has the potential to provide an e-commerce platform to five

lakh tribals in the country. This will be like a tribal Amazon which will link them to national and international markets.

Tribal produce is world-class but it is bogged down by limitations of access as the tribals stay in deep forests. They cannot aggregate it and market it and so they have to sell it off at low prices to the middle man. This scheme will enable them to sell it directly to the large market at a good price. TRIFED will be facilitating and promoting this to provide five lakh tribal families get access to a digital market for non-timber, organic products, handlooms and handicrafts.

Tribesindia.com is already online and it is a dream come true for every one at TRIFED and the tribal eco system.

What is the Trifood Project and how does it impact the tribals?

Large-scale factories which would cater to around 10,000 suppliers are being set up in Bastar, Chhattisgarh and Raigarh, Maharashtra. About Rs 11 crore would be spent on putting in place a state-of-the-art centres for organic products and we will be collecting the raw materials, processing, marketing and packaging the products on a large scale. It will be manned by a selected team of professionals.

How does Tech for Tribals impart entrepreneurship skills to tribal forest produce gatherers? How many tribals has it trained and in what manner?

Partnering with Delhi and Kanpur IITs, IIMs from all over the country, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Art of Living, top business and management institutions, it will train about 35,000 tribals in marketing, branding and packaging of their products. So the same item that sells for Rs 100 could command a price of Rs 1,000 and tribals would get the money that was earlier pocketed by the mid-

dlemen. Tamarind sells for Rs 30 after the increased MSP but if you remove the seeds and fibre, it would sell for Rs 400 or if it is powdered or made into a chutney, the price would go up to Rs 1,000. This is the value chain in which the tribal is right now getting just Rs 30. We are trying to get them more.

Around 30,000 tribals from Dantewada, Kanke, Mayurbhanj and more would be trained in their habitats by IIT professors. They would first learn from the tribals, refine the learning and get the product to the market. The training programmes are being developed according to the products and the need.

These training centres would be set up in coordination with the District Administration. The MSME has helped us to take this up.

What are the new initiatives being planned by TRIFED?

We have completely digitalised tribal eco system so that not a single penny is paid to the master craftsmen and artisans in cash. There are 85 regional centres of TRIFED through which marketing, sourcing and payments to tribal eco systems are automated mode. All the supplies and resources are accounted for through a digitalised mapping system of each godown which is automated.

We have 81 TRIFED virtual offices which have been customised for us. Through this work-station, I can contact anyone and vice versa. All our partners have link of this facility including State Government, State Agencies, Chief Ministers' offices and more. Over a thousand meetings have been held in last three months through this.

All information is stored in our mobile app called Van Dhan. The pandemic was a great opportunity to digitise the tribal eco system, the tribal manufacturing and marketing system. We can say it with a lot of pride that the tribal economy is no longer a village system where technology is absent. We are a state-of-the-art system in the country. We have started social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and we aim to reach 15 crore people in the next three months. So that there is one TRIFED product in every household. In the next six months, we aim that this number should go up to 30 crore people and in 12 months, 100 crore people. It is called Sampark Setu campaign which translates as a social media bridge that we are building with the consumers.

Covid pandemic has pushed back luxury car segment in India by 5-7 years: Audi

New Delhi: The coronavirus pandemic has hit hard the luxury car segment in India, taking it back by five to seven years, and it will take two to three years to reach the levels witnessed around 2014-2015, according to a top official of German auto major Audi.

With gradual recovery taking place post COVID-19 induced disruptions, sales will witness growth next year, albeit on a lower base. "While we all are saying that sales are growing and there are positive sentiments and we will also grow next year...The base has become lower," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon told PTI.

"The number of cars that were sold in 2014-2015, we are not going to reach those levels immediately next year. So pandemic has actually taken us back by five-seven years," Dhillon added.

In 2014, luxury car sales in India stood at around 30,000 units, while it was at around 31,000 units in 2015.

When asked how soon the luxury car industry can turn around and recover the lost ground, he said, "For sure not next year, for the luxury segment (it will take) two to three years to reach those levels again."

Indian luxury car market, comprising top five players -- Mercedes, BMW, Audi, JLR and Volvo, is estimated to have sold nearly 35,500 units in 2019, down from 40,340 units in 2018.

Dhillon said the entire automotive sector has taken a big hit this year and "even last year for the luxury segment was also a degrowth year". So in terms of volume growth, it is going to start from next year, he said. "We are not coming back to the best of our years, but we are happy that we are moving in a positive direction," Dhillon said, while exuding confidence about the long-term potential of Indian automobile market. **PTI**

FPIs remain net buyers in Oct so far amid better than expected financial results

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net buyers in Indian markets in October so far, pumping in a net Rs 17,749 crore in the month as better than expected quarterly results, the opening of the economy, and resumption of business activities kept investors' interest intact.

In equities, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 15,642 crore and the debt segment saw an inflow of Rs 2,107 crore during October 1-23, the depositories data showed. The total net investment during the period under review stood at Rs 17,749 crore.

In September, FPIs were net sellers at Rs 3,419 crore. The investment in Indian markets has come at a time when most of emerging markets like Brazil, South Africa, Taiwan, and Thailand have seen net outflows in 2020, co-founder and COO at Groww Harsh Jain noted.

This shows that foreign investors perceive India to be performing well in the immediate as well as long horizon, he added.

Jain further noted that FPIs have continued to increase stake in Reliance and have reduced shareholding in other energy sector companies. **PTI**

IRDAI proposes changes in insurance advertisement regulations

New Delhi: In a bid to protect consumers, regulator IRDAI has proposed to prohibit insurers from issuing advertisements that make claims which are beyond reasonable expectations of performance.

The unfair and misleading advertisements will include those which fail to clearly identify the product as insurance and describe benefits that do not match the policy provisions, the regulator said in the draft Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Insurance Advertisements and Disclosure) Regulations, 2020.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is seeking to come out with new advertisement regulations and has invited comments from stakeholders on the exposure draft by November 10.

The objective of the proposed regulation, IRDAI said, is to ensure that the insurers, intermediaries or insurance intermediaries adopt fair, honest and transparent practices while issuing advertisements, and avoid practices that tend to impair the confidence of the public.

Another objective of the proposed regulation is to ensure that the publicity material is relevant, fair and

Bajaj Auto reports revival in export markets

New Delhi: Bajaj Auto is witnessing a strong revival in various export markets, including Africa and Latin America, as they were not hit as hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns as the domestic market, a senior company official said.

The company, which exports to around 79 countries globally, reported its best ever dispatches to international markets last month.

"In terms of recovery, international business is doing better than domestic because most of the countries where we export have not been impacted that much by the pandemic and lockdowns as India," Bajaj Auto CFO Soumen Ray told PTI in an interview.

The demand is very robust and various markets like Africa, Latin America Middle East and South Asia are doing very well, he added.

"We have only two areas of concern, one is ASEAN region where major markets like the Philippines and Cambodia are witnessing lockdowns and restrictions. Other is Sri Lanka, where the government has banned import of vehicles," Ray said. Barring these two, the company is witnessing very strong revival, he added. **PTI**

Were there any particular

Trend Slazer

'Role in Saand Ki Aankh was tough'

It was not at all easy for **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** to play the role of older woman in the film, *Saand Ki Aankh*.

Bhumi played the role of Chandro Tomar, the oldest sharp shooter in India, who along with her sister (played by Taapsee Pannu) has won laurels for India.

Recalling the challenges faced to play the role, Bhumi said: "I think SKA, in terms of difficulty where the physical work was concerned, was quite high because the make-up was specialised and that was honestly very tough to be in. Through that experience the make-up was so harsh on the skin to a point that I had actually burnt my skin and I had very major allergic reaction."



'I support the idea of people not flocking to Puja pandals this year. It is important that people should

stay home and make their offerings to the goddess from home. I know it is tough for Bengalis not to venture out wearing new clothes, eat out and have bhog, but if you want to see next year's Puja, you have to make sure you stay safe and don't catch the virus.'

—Chandan Roy Sanyal

TAAPSEE PANNU is tired of straightening her curly locks for her forthcoming film, *Haseen Dillruba*.



She shared her "curly hair" problems in an Instagram post.

"Last few days on *#HaseenDillruba* and that's my face when I have to roast my hair to straighten them everyday," she wrote along with a picture in which she gives a puffy-faced expression.

She tagged her post with *#CurlyHairIssues*, *#LookChange* and *#StressfulStraight*.

The Meg 2 to be directed by Ben

Filmmaker **BEN WHEATLEY** will direct the sequel of the 2018 pre-historic shark thriller hit, *The Meg*.

The announcement of the sequel comes two years after *The Meg* grossed \$530 million worldwide.

The star cast of the first film, topped by Jason Statham, is expected to be back.

The first film was directed by Jon Turteltaub and it cast Statham as a shark expert fighting a giant megalodon that surfaces from the Mariana Trench, the deepest part of the world's oceans located in the Pacific. The film was adapted from a novel by Steve Alten and it featured Li Bingbing, Rainn Wilson and Ruby Rose in pivotal roles.



On Dussehra, which emphasises on the celebration of the triumph of good over evil, actors have shared their favourite films that define the theme of the festival. For veteran actress Himani Shivpuri, it's the 1998 film Salman Khan-starrer *Bandhan*.

"*Bandhan* is easily one of my favourites as the title itself talks of eternal bonds. It is an excellent example of a film that shows truth always prevails. For all those have not seen it, the premise of the story was how Jackie Shroff's character falls prey to selfish motives and remarries. This leads to him spoiling his relations with his ex-wife and his brother-in-law. He realises much later the importance of relationships and the mistakes he made all along," she said, who also featured in the film.

"During this festive season, this film acts as a reminder to not fall prey to sinful or wrong thoughts and resentful actions

Hope and victory

Actors share their favourite films in which the good triumphs over the evil. A Dussehra special

but instead look for the good in people before it gets too late," added she.

Actor-producer Tusshar Kapoor picks his forthcoming film *Laxmmi Bomb*, starring Akshay Kumar. "I can't think of any other film right now about good winning over evil but *Laxmmi Bomb*. It's special because it's a film about good winning over evil, a film with Indian values, something that everyone will connect with, something that will teach you a lesson, something that will inspire and can bring equality within our society," he said.

Harleen Sethi went a little back in time to pick her favourite good-over-evil film. "*Rang De*



Basanti will never be outdated. It encourages the youth to stand up against injustice, sparks a sense of patriotism and shows collective integrity against moral

and political corruption. It forces you to think that letting injustice happen is also a form of injustice. It's necessary to raise your voice for important issues and not take things lying down," said the actress.

Mardaani 2 that saw Rani Mukerji in a cop avatar made many believe that good always beats evil. Actress Shamin Mannan thinks so, too. "The way Rani not just arrests, but beats the hell out of that serial rapist is just amazing. Everytime I watch that film, it gives me goosebumps. The way Rani's character SP Shivani gives that monologue in an interview talking about what all a woman has to go through, and why it should



not be even be compared to men, is just outstanding. Such performances beat everything else. Of course, the negative lead has done a good job too, we need more films like this," said Shamin.

Actress Saba Saudagar agrees with her. "The reason why I love *Mardaani* is because I find it very real and very non-filmly. The evil part of *Mardaani* reflects the society we live in and the good part also reflects the society we live in but take it for granted. The last scene of *Mardaani 2* where Rani sits exhausted outside a residence, and then beats the antag-

onist with a Devi idol behind her, literally gave me goosebumps," said Saba.

Actress Pooja Banerjee mentions *Kahaani*, starring Vidya Balan. "It had a fabulous plot, great screenplay, some power-packed performances and has Durga Puja as a background theme. It was the best for me as a film that shows victory of good over evil. Plus, seeing the reality of how some men treat women, specifically pregnant women, was really heart-wrenching. It really was the most impactful film for me," she said. —IANS

Designer Anushree Reddy's bridal collections have been the most sought after by the brides and their entourage for years. At Lakmé Fashion Week 2020 Digital First Season Fluid Edition, Anushree unveiled another offering *Nazira* (meaning glowing with happiness) for bridal trousseaux shoppers. Once again there was that uber reflection of romance and femininity in the ensembles as they glided through the show on models. Anushree's creative design directions have always been deeply rooted in traditions.

The colour spread showcased a delightful array of hues. There was the ever-neutral pristine ivory as well as the haute bridal favourites like peachy pink, cherry red, strong royal purple and regal navy. When it came to the embellishments, she allowed her designing skills to bring in large offerings of handcrafted 3D crystal work, which was balanced perfectly with *Katdana* and delicate thread work.

Embroidery was the star of her collection with fine detailing like ornate scalloped edges for hemlines, dupattas and cholis. Dazzling *latkans* hung tantalisingly at the waist while strappy gowns replete with the most exotic blooms splashed all over were mesmerising. The almost lacy treatment with embroidery given to the choli sleeves presented a fragile look. The saris were treated with great opulence as the embellishments were lavishly used for the pallavs, borders and cholis.

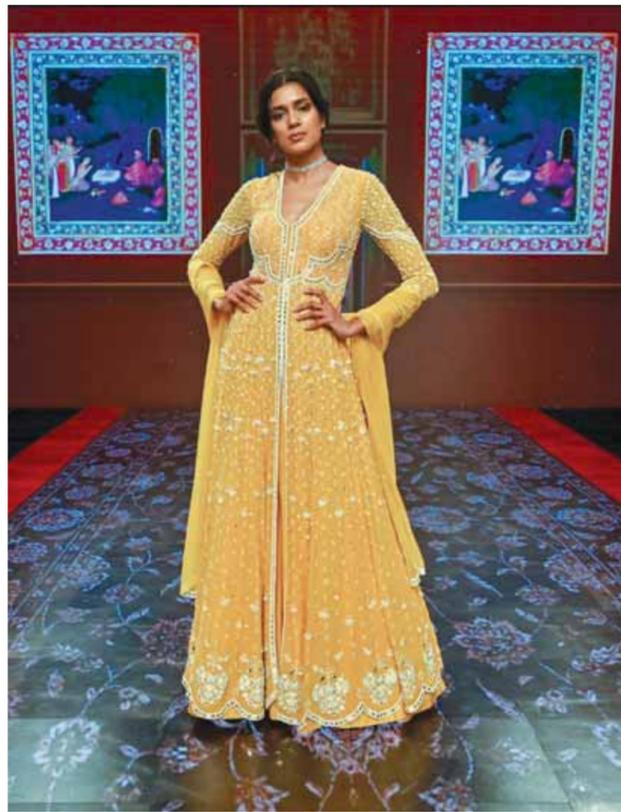
Ridhi Mehra's collections have always moved with the fashion-forward trends season after season. For Lakmé Fashion Week, her collection called *Reflections* moved from modifying to modernising the fashion story. The leitmotif of the line was the ever-popular mirror work that was balanced with innovative designs and techniques. The inspiration was the royal heritage of Kutch that brought forth the characteristic bohemian craft in a riot of colour power play but suited to the contemporary silhouettes.

Keeping mirror work as the focal point on the ensembles, Ridhi fused in mixed elements of *gota patti* and *zari* on the silks as well as the prints that highlighted the fabrics like chiffon and organza. Offering a variety of silhouettes to suit the ethnic and western dresser, she unveiled anarkalis and luxuriously embellished saris and then moved to stylish jumpsuits with interesting design directions.

When it comes to showcasing creativity at its best for occasion wear, designer Jayanti Reddy can dazzle her buyers with her collections. Her line of ensembles, *Rouge*, was an ode to the different shades of red, which is considered the celebratory offering for all festive Indian seasons. The collection was all about vibrant seductive adventurous and bold clothes that will win the wearer showers of accolades wherever she goes.

Jayanti's kaleidoscopic fashion directions started with the fabric base. Here it was the elegant silks, the sheer beauty of traditional *chanderi* and the sleek glamour of satin that enchanted her imagination. The silhouettes that fitted perfectly into the festive and bridal mood, moved from lehenga, choli, and dupatta trios, then added regal fluid capes and completed the fashionable menu with draped skirts.

From tiny cape blouses to regal long-sleeved cholis matched with asymmetric robes, Jayanti's homage to red moved to long-sleeved gowns with scal-



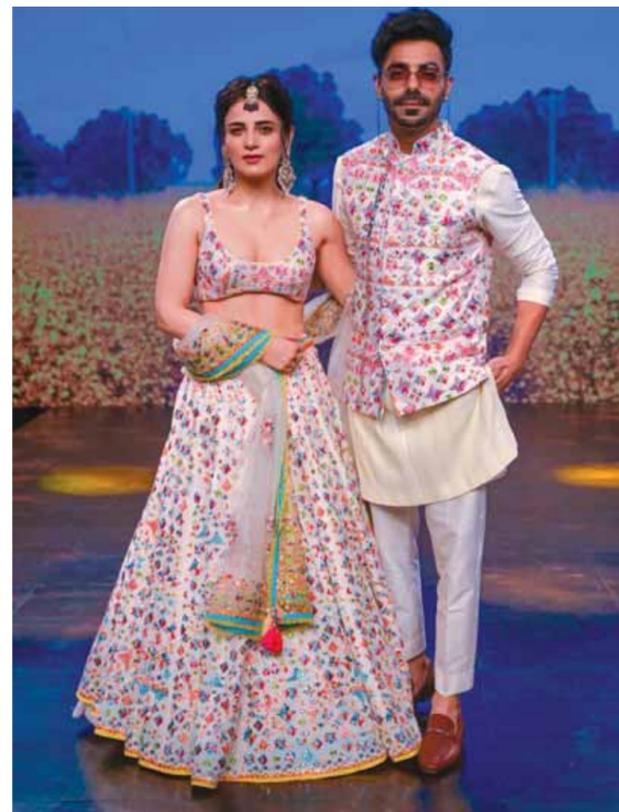
A power play of colours

While designer Anushree Reddy's collection spoke volumes about romance and femininity, the duo of Sukriti & Aakriti delved deeper into Indian traditionality, reflecting the festive season. Masaba Gupta chose to collaborate with music to lift spirits in these unprecedented times at the Lakme Fashion Week 2020



loped bib necklines, puff-sleeved jackets and innovatively woven matted cholis. The anarkalis and dupattas were edged with ornate silver borders, while the angarkha style kurtas had embroidered bodice as the focal point. A flame-red satin sari was edged with glittering border, but the accompanying choli was a glitzy one-button addition. Embellishments were always the focal point of the garments as they appeared in discreet but glittering forms though at times they were lavishly sprinkled on the garments.

Celebrating fashion for the festivities,



designing duo Sukriti and Aakriti unveiled their *Neo-Phulkari* collection. *Phulkari*, that often appears on bridal trousseaux, was given a revival touch by the designers, who incorporated it in fluid forms onto the Indian silhouettes. The base of the craft was the organic fabric as well as the naturally dyed *gota* work. In addition, Sukriti and Aakriti gave a creative contemporary thrust to *phulkari* so that it had a wider global appeal.

They started with a black and white offering comprising cropped pants with kurta. They kept the *phulkari* embroidery in all white for the black jacket. The designs included cropped jackets, white-on-white embroidered kurtas, kurtis, ghararas and flared empire line dress over calf-length pants. The ivory sherwani/lehenga duo, the peplum jacket, bralette and lehenga, choli, dupatta trio, as well as the seductive plunge 'V' neckline tunic over a white and gold maxi skirt brought formal wear into fashionable focus.

The black and white section was all about flamboyant styles as swirling long skirts looked perfect either with a bralette or giant balloon sleeved cholis, while a flouncy dupatta added that extra zing to the look. The showstopping pair, actors Radhika Madan looked radiant in a

colourful lehenga, deep, round neck choli and dupatta that perfectly balanced Aparshakti Khurana's embroidered *bundi* kurta and narrow pants look.

The electronics brand, boAt, teamed up with designer Masaba Gupta and unveiled a line of colorful headphone designs. Masaba will be back at fashion week next year to showcase her fashion collection that will be inspired by this collaboration.

She said, "We are super excited about collaborating with boAt. Lending House of Masaba's aesthetics to their headphones will invite a new consumer and excite the existing ones with cool, fresh and quirky products. Lakme Fashion Week and I have a long-standing association, it is where I made my debut. I think that it is a platform that has consistently brought some amazing talent to the forefront. I am sure it would have been a little challenging in these unprecedented times that we live in. This seems to be a perfect collaboration. Through these headphones and my summer collection, I will be able to transport people into a parallel universe which I can't wait to share with them. I am looking forward to this."



KAALI KHUHI

When a restless spirit curses a village that has a history of female infanticide, the town's fate lies in the hands of a 10-year-old girl. Starring Shabana Azmi, Leela Samson and Sanjeeda Sheikh, the film releases on October 30 on Netflix.

WEBBED



HOLIDATE

Fed up with being single on holidays, two strangers agree to be each other's platonic plus-ones all year long, only to catch real feelings along the way. The film releases on October 28 on Netflix.



DASH & LILY

Opposites attract at Christmas as cynical Dash and sunny Lily trade messages and dares in a red notebook they pass back and forth around New York City. Season 1 releases on November 10 on Netflix.

A HOPELESS SUMMER

Amid an already crisis-hit situation, a recent pest attack on paddy crop has wreaked havoc on the farmers of Chhattisgarh. By SHRAVAN HURRA

Farmers across the country have been protesting against the Centre's farm reform laws, particularly and more extensively, in Punjab and Haryana. Majority of farmers, on one hand, are unable to accept the new reforms and on the other, are suffering huge losses due to unpredictable weather conditions. The problems are several with no solution in sight. Drought and erratic monsoons have been a major concern for farmers across the states but this year, farmers in rural regions of the eastern state of Chhattisgarh are struggling hard to protect their ready-to-harvest crops from pests. The reason behind this sudden pest infestation on crops is the rainfall in October and the brunt is being faced by farmers — specially the small-holding farmers. According to the District Agriculture Department, outbreaks of pests have been observed in approximately 10 per cent of the total crops in the Kanker district of Chhattisgarh.

Bhanupratapur block, located about 50 km from the district headquarters in Kanker, are worried about their crops being damaged. Inhabited by merely 1,500 people, almost everyone in this village relies upon agriculture. Despite the unfavourable weather conditions in the initial half of the sowing season, farmers were hopeful of a good yield this year and a good monsoon held their hopes high. The rainfall in the months of August and September was helpful but the extended rainfall in October along with a strong sunlight made the environment too humid, leading to pest infestation. As a result, the standing crop of paddy began drying up. The troubled farmers are using different types of medicines to save the paddy from diseases like stem borer, blast fungus and manage the presence of brown plant hopper. To the disappointment of the farmers, none of their efforts have shown positive results so far.

Well, it's not just the crop they have to worry about. Most of the farmers, especially the small-holding ones, take



loan every year to sow the crops and return the debt after selling the harvest. This year, too, many had taken loan but looking at the current situation, the chances of returning the loan on time looks feeble.

Chaituram Uikay, a farmer in the village who had taken a loan of ₹60,000 from the large-sized Adivasi Multipurpose Society (LAMPS), said, "During the plantation of paddy, there was no rain. We somehow managed that time-hoping for a good yield but now when it is about time to harvest the crop, the unseasonal rains have wreaked havoc on us. Forget about repaying the loan, looking at the extent of damage, I don't think I will have enough to run my house this year."

Gangabai Chakradhari, another farmer from the same village, is worried that this year she might not be able to repay her loan of ₹35,000. The pest attack might result into lesser crop production than last year, forcing Gangabai to extend the time period for the repayment of loan to the next year. She is now worried about the interest, which she will have to continue paying along with managing her other everyday expenses.

taken a loan of ₹1 lakh and now, I landed in a huge debt crisis due to the pest attacks."

Explaining the official stance, Kiran Kumar Bhandari, the Rural Agricultural Extension Officer of the region, shared, "The weather has led to pest infestation in the paddy crop in the entire district, damaging 10 per cent of the total crops. Farmers in Ghotla village are too facing similar challenges. They have been advised to spray medicines to minimise the damage. Farmers who have insured their crops will receive the benefit if the damage is more than 30 per cent of their total crop."

Life of farmers has always been full of challenges and that too at different fronts. On one hand, while many have been waiting for policies that benefit them directly and get them the right price for their hard work, on the other, many keep suffering the damage caused by recurring and extensive natural hazards like drought, excessive rainfall, floods, and thunderstorms.

The country's agriculture sector accounts for around 14 per cent of the country's economy and 42 per cent of total employment sector. In these unprecedented times of the global pandemic of COVID-19, agriculture has been the only sector to grow for April-June 2020 and contribute to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Well, growth of this sector is certainly vital for our country and that is enough of a reason to hear the plight of the farmers.

—Charkha Features



Listen to the whispers from within

If human values are not restored now, a great moral disaster is inevitable, which will land the world into a series of economic, political, social and civilisational crises, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The West, where there are high percentages of literacy, per-capita income, standards of living, etc. is considered as a civilised society. But is it really civilised? Looking at the increasing number of cases of rape, murder, child sexual abuse, and robbery, can we really call it that?

A country, where the government manufactures weapons for mass killing, people alter their level of consciousness by using alcohol or intoxicating drugs, where there are illicit children, broken homes, divorced spouses and everyone is running after money, sex and sensuous entertainments, can we call such a society civil? Deforestation of jungles, building sky-scrapers, using knife and fork to eat, and handling sophisticated gadgets — does this all determine a society's civilised status? We can say that there are hospitals, courts, police stations, fire brigades, schemes for social welfare and child care, etc. but are they really personally civilised as a society? Doesn't the existence of more police and courts indicate how there is a lot of crime and litigation because people have no integrity or honesty. Else, why do we need more and more police, law courts, lawyers, the jurisdiction and jails?

Similarly, doesn't the existence of a very large number of doctors, dispensing chemists and hospitals, indicate that a lot many people are suffering from various diseases? Further, why are they suffering from so many psychosomatic diseases, which are caused by, or are linked to, mental stress, tension, worry, fear, fatigue, etc? Doesn't that mean that there are no happy relations, there is no sense of belonging or feeling of love and everyone is selfish? Doesn't all this mean that there is a serious violation of moral, social, human or spiritual values? We need to understand that the real problem, underlying all problems, whether these be labelled as economic, social, political, communal or by whatever other name, is man. Man who violates human values, cares only for himself and is after fulfillment of his own ambitions, irrespective of what happens to others, they are always harmful for the society's peaceful functioning. We should, therefore, realise that life today has become so much linked and interdependent in a complicated way, that one's capacity to do wrong or bad has multiplied manifold.

In view of this, we must lay proper emphasis on observance of values, else we will be inviting our own doom in the form of environmental pollution, nuclear weapons, high growth rate of population, global warming, etc. Our present-day society is marching towards barbarity, worse than we could have even conceived a century ago. Man's inner conscience has become more vulgar and beastly than it ever was and he has fallen further into quagmire of vices. The worst thing is that man has lost his conscience, moral voice, and the whispers of silence from within. Even at this stage, if values are not restored, then a great moral disaster is inevitable, which will land the world into a series of economic, political, social and civilisational crises and, eventually, all our wonderful global progresses will mix into the dust! Let us, therefore, understand what a "civilised society" actually means and how much we need to let each one of us individually inculcate the values in us if we want to create a better world to live in.



When a weather report recently announced on the radio, "Freezing temperatures are predicted for tonight, thus ending the gardening season," the deadpan delivery of this dramatic — for gardeners — statement made me realise that the announcer was no gardener. Freezing temperatures do not end the gardening season!

Despite that frost, aren't there still leaves on trees, some of them still to turn spectacular, fiery colours? If I can't consider trees part of my "garden," how about some shrubs in the flower beds? Butterfly bush are still coughing out a few fragrant blossoms. Rhododendron and heath look as spry the morning after the freeze.

Hardier vegetables and flowers

Okay, so maybe the guy on the radio meant vegetables and herbaceous flowers when he was talking about gardening. Yes, bean and marigold plants definitely froze to death as recent night temperatures plummeted to 29 degrees Fahrenheit at my New York home, as did zinnias, corn, peppers, cosmos and bachelor's buttons.

But even weekend gardeners grow more than just these tender vegetables and annuals. Black-eyed Susans are still dressed up like it's summer, and mums — doesn't just about



Forever bloom

Freezing temperatures do not end the gardening season, say experts

everybody plant mums? — are unfolding new blossoms. Perennial flowers generally are unfazed by temperatures down into the 20s.

Among annual flowers, there are plenty that likewise are unfazed by freezing tempera-

tures. Strawflowers, for example, as well as snapdragons and pansies are still perky. These latter two are actually perennials that are grown as annuals this far north, and they survive our winters if temperatures don't dip too low.

Microclimates

Look around and you might even find some tender annual flowers still treading water through the frosty spell. A wall, paving or tree canopy each prevent temperatures nearby from dropping as low as in more exposed locations. In a flower bed butted up against the west wall of my house, zinnias and marigolds still look spry.

Let's go back to the vegetables now. Although freezing temperatures snuffed the life from tender veggies, there are plenty of cold-

hardy ones in the garden. Kale, spinach, broccoli, lettuce and radishes look fine after a night or a few nights of below-freezing temperatures. In fact, these vegetables look and taste better during this kind of weather than they do in the summer heat.

With a bit of planning, a fall freeze doesn't need to leave the vegetable or flower garden looking forlorn. If you have planted plenty of hardy vegetables and flowers, the freeze acts on the garden the way a developing solution acts on a photograph — as tender

plants wilt and are cleared away, hardy plants come into prominence.

Effecting this transformation means choosing hardy plants and giving them enough time to grow. With sunlight at a premium this time of year, all plants, whether hardy or tender, make little growth. That weather reporter might more correctly have stated that the growing season, not the gardening season, was drawing slowly to a close. Not because of one frosty night though.

—AP



The most precious resource we all have is time.

—Steve Jobs



STARS AND PLANETS GROW AS SIBLINGS

In a unique study, astronomers have found compelling evidence that the planets begin forming while stars are still infants and they grow up together like siblings.

The high-resolution image obtained with the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) shows a young proto-stellar disk with multiple gaps and rings of dust.

This new result, published in the journal *Nature*, shows the youngest and most detailed example of dust rings acting as cosmic cradles, where the seeds of planets form and take hold.

An international team of scientists led by Dominique Segura-Cox at the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics (MPE) in Germany targeted the proto-star IRS 63 with the ALMA radio observatory.



ALGORITHM PREDICTS ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY

A new artificial-intelligence-based tool can help clinicians predict which hospitalised patients face a high risk of developing acute kidney injury (AKI), say researchers, including one of Indian-origin.

AKI is common among hospitalised patients and has a significant impact on morbidity and mortality. Unfortunately, it's difficult to predict which patients are most likely to develop AKI and could benefit from preventative treatments. To address this, the research team at Dascena Inc. in the US developed and evaluated a prediction algorithm based on machine learning, a type of artificial intelligence. The algorithm analysed 7,122 patient encounters and was compared with the standard of care, the Sequential Organ Failure Assessment (SOFA) scoring system. The Dascena algorithm outperformed SOFA, demonstrating superior performance in predicting acute kidney injury 72 hours prior to onset.



PTSD PERSON PRONE TO ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) linked to alcohol use disorder, say researchers adding that males and females exhibit their own distinct symptoms and brain features of PTSD and alcohol use disorder. The findings, published in the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, present a new model for identifying biomarkers that may indicate a person with PTSD is more likely to develop alcohol use disorder.

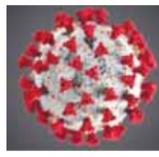
"Having PTSD significantly increases the risk of developing alcohol use disorder, as individuals use alcohol to cope with stress and anxiety," said study author Dean Kirson from the Scripps Research Institute in the US. Yet the underlying biology of comorbid disorders is generally not well understood. "We hope our new knowledge of sex-specific changes in the brain will help propel the development of more targeted treatments," Kirson added.



COVID DOUBLE BLOW FOR CHRONIC PATIENTS

Researchers have revealed that COVID-19 pandemic came as a double blow for people with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancer, respiratory problems or cardiovascular conditions in countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and others. The study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, found people with NCDs are more vulnerable to catching and dying from COVID-19 and their exposure to NCD risk factors — such as substance abuse, social isolation and unhealthy diets — has increased during the pandemic.

The researchers also found COVID-19 disrupted essential public health services which people with NCDs rely on to manage their conditions. They reviewed the literature on the synergistic impact of COVID-19 on people with NCDs in low and middle-income countries such as Brazil, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Nigeria.



MOLECULAR LINK BETWEEN MEAT DIET, CANCER

An international team of researchers has identified a direct molecular link between meat and dairy diets and the development of antibodies in the blood that increase the chances of developing cancer.

This connection may explain the high incidence of cancer among those who consume large amounts of dairy products and red meat, similar to the link between high cholesterol and an increased risk of heart disease. According to the study, published in the journal *BMC Medicine*, Neu5Gc is a sugar molecule found in the tissues of mammals but not in poultry or fish. Humans develop antibodies to Neu5Gc in infancy, when they are first exposed to dairy and meat products. While it is known that these antibodies increase the risk of cancer, especially colorectal cancer, no direct link had been found between the antibodies and meat and dairy consumption.



TODAY
Kings XI Punjab vs Rajasthan Royals
Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS 1

IPL 2020

KL Rahul | 567 runs
Kagiso Rabada | 23 wickets

I felt this one was one of the perfect games. Everything went to plan, and execution was there. We kept picking wickets, and kept them to a total that was slightly below par

It is really important for someone like Rituraj especially, they are getting opportunities now, which is the future probably of a team like Chennai. Really pleased that he got some runs today

That is what we have lacked, our experienced players going on to make match-winning contributions and getting the team close to home or home, as they did tonight

Sometimes in life you have to do that (say well played to the opposition). I thought Hardik brought us back into the game, but well played to Stokes and Samson

Master Stokes

Centurion Ben adds 152 runs for third-wicket with Samson to help Royals chase 195 against table toppers MI

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Ben Stokes' spectacular hundred overshadowed Hardik Pandya's six-hitting spree as Rajasthan Royals spiced up the IPL play-offs race with an emphatic eight-wicket win over Mumbai Indians here on Sunday.

Stokes, who plundered 14 fours and three sixes in his unbeaten 60-ball 107, found an able ally in Sanju Samson (54 not out off 31) as their unbroken 152-run partnership allowed Royals to make short work of the 196-run target. They cantered to victory in 18.2 overs.

Mumbai had put up an imposing 195 for five courtesy a 21-ball 60 Hardik Pandya, who smashed seven sixes and two fours. It was the fourth loss for Mumbai, who remain in comfortable position at the top of the standings.

The comprehensive win over defending champions not only kept Royals alive in the tournament, it also eliminated Chennai Super Kings from the competition.

The night belonged to Stokes, who tore into the Mumbai attack after RR lost opener Robin Uthappa (13) and Steve Smith (11) early. The southpaw was back to his very best, having struggled with his timing in the earlier games.



Sanju Samson celebrates with Ben Stokes after Rajasthan Royals eight wicket win over MI | IPLT20

Samson joined Stokes, who had collected four boundaries off Trent Boult in the third over.

The Englishman then went on offensive against Krunal Pandya, collecting two fours before a boundary and six against Rahul Chahar with Royals racing to 75 for two after eight overs.

Stokes and Samson played shots at will with RR collecting 18 and 19 runs off the 13th and 14th over bowled by James Pattinson and Chahar.

Stokes completed his 100 in 59 balls, with a thumping six over deep mid-wicket and fittingly finished the match with a boundary.

Earlier, Mumbai suffered a mini-collapse in the middle-overs and but late hitting from Hardik and Saurabh Tiwary (34 of 25) enabled the defending champions to amass 74 runs in the last four overs.

Tiwary and Hardik shared a 64-run stand for the fifth wicket.

Tiwary was brutal against Archer (2-31) in the 17th over, smashing two fours and a maximum while Hardik hammered four sixes off Ankit Rajpoot

(0-60) in the 18th over, which went for 27 runs.

Hardik launched into Kartik Tyagi (1-45) in the final over, hitting him for three sixes and two fours. His blitzkrieg can prove to be the difference in the game.

After Mumbai lost opener Quinton De Kock (6) early, Ishan Kishan (37 off 36 balls) and Suryakumar Yadav (40 off 26) rallied the innings with their 83-run second-wicket stand.

Kishan and Surya again tore into pacer Rajpoot, smashing a six each as Mumbai raced to 59 for one after six overs.

Surya went on the offensive against Shreyas Gopal, collecting two boundaries in the ninth over.

But Rajasthan pulled things back by dismissing Kishan, Surya and Kieron Pollard (6) in quick succession as Mumbai slipped to 101 for four.

Kishan perished courtesy a one-handed blinder from Archer at third-man, off Tyagi, and then Gopal removed Surya and Pollard in the 13th over. While Surya gave a sitter to Ben Stokes, Pollard was undone by a googly, which uprooted his stumps.



Rituraj Gaikwad chats with CSK skipper MS Dhoni during team's run chase against RCB | IPLT20.com

Chennai out despite win

PTI ■ DUBAI

Chennai Super Kings finally displayed the much-needed intent, keeping themselves just mathematically alive before RR win knock them out of top four race, with a comprehensive eight-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Sunday.

The fearless cricket that skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni so expected came to the fore as they chased down a target of 146 in 18.4 overs to take their tally to eight points.

Young Rituraj Gaikwad (65 not out off 51 balls) showed his potential with a maiden fifty but skipper Dhoni wouldn't be wrong in thinking that it came too late in the day when the Yellow Brigade is out of the playoff reckoning.

Gaikwad and veteran Ambati Rayudu (39 off 27 balls) added 67 runs in 8.2 overs for the second wicket to finish off a chase in style.

On Sunday, CSK looked purposeful in their pursuit of a small target.

Gaikwad, one of the most talked-about young players in this league, finally had a good day in office, hitting four fours and three sixes. He looked assured while choosing the loose deliveries as he swept Yuzvendra Chahal for a boundary and came down the track to loft Moeen Ali for a six.

DUGOUT

MOTION PICTURE



Virat Kohli's wife Anushka Sharma watches IPL match between CSK and RCB in Dubai on Sunday | IPLT20.com

It's just a game...
You win some you lose some!
Years gone by are witness to many enthralling victories and a few agonising defeats!
Celebrating one and being heartbroken by the other!
Some reasonable responses others not so...
Some win, some lose and others miss...It's just a game!
Many preachers and varied reactions!
Allow emotions not to blot the very essence of sportsmanship...
It's just a game!
No one wants to lose, but not all can be winners!
When struck down, stumped, the walk back from the field seems long...
Foliant sounds and signs add to the pain, inner strength takes control...
It's all just a game!
You were winners then, you are winners now!
True warriors are born to fight as they will
Always be Super Kings in our hearts and in our minds!
Sakshi 833 (23.10.2020)

MS Dhoni's wife Sakshi Singh Instagram post after Chennai beat RCB in IPL clash on Sunday | sakshisingh_r/instagram



Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer posts a photo with caption: "Finding peace amidst the chaos" | @ShreyasIyer15

IPL FINAL IN DUBAI ON NOVEMBER 10

Dubai will host the Qualifier 1 and IPL final while the other two play-off games will be held in Abu Dhabi, the BCCI announced on Sunday. The Qualifier 1, to be contested between the top two teams in the league standings, is scheduled for November 5 while the Grand Finale will be held on November 10. The Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi will host the Eliminator, to be played between third and fourth placed teams, on November 6, as well as the Qualifier 2 (winner of Eliminator vs loser of Qualifier 1) on November 8. The BCCI also announced the schedule of the Women's T20 Challenge which will take place in Sharjah from Nov 4 to 9. The final will be played on November 9. The teams — Supernovas, Velocity and Trailblazer — will play each other once to decide the finalists.

POINTS TABLE						
		P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1	MI	11	7	4	+1.252	14
2	DC	11	7	4	+0.434	14
3	RCB	11	7	4	+0.092	14
4	KKR	11	6	5	-0.476	12
5	KXIP	11	5	6	-0.103	10
6	RR	12	5	7	-0.505	10
7	SRH	11	4	7	+0.029	8
8	CSK	12	4	8	-0.602	8

KXIP look to carry winning momentum



KXIP all-rounder Glenn Maxwell arrives during team's practice session | KXIP/Twitter

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Belatedly getting into the groove with four wins on the trot, Kings XI Punjab will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on a resurgent Kolkata Knight Riders in a mid-table clash here on Monday.

KXIP are placed fifth on the points table having won five games from 11 outings, while KKR are a notch better, occupying the fourth spot with 12 points.

A win for Punjab will elevate them to the top four, while a victory for KKR will take them to 14 points, the same as the top three teams in the contest, strengthening their playoff chances.

With the race to play-offs heating up, both sides know the value of a win on Monday.

KXIP had roared back to form, snapping their five match losing-streak with a win over third-placed Royal Challengers Bangalore. Since then the KL Rahul-led side has not looked back, defeating the top two sides in the tournament — Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals — besides Sunrisers Hyderabad.

However, they must also win their remaining matches for a shot at the playoffs.

KXIP's bowling has been their weakest link. Barring Mohammad Shami and Ravi Bishnoi, none of the bowlers have inspired confidence, especially in the death overs.

But when their batting unit failed to put runs on the board on Saturday, the KXIP bowlers produced an excellent display of death over bowling against Sunrisers Hyderabad. They defended 126 by taking five wickets in the final two overs to eke out an incredible win.

KXIP have the in-form batsmen in skipper Rahul, who is the leading run scorer of the tournament, and Mayank Agarwal. The presence of flamboyant Chris Gayle has inspired the team, and since his inclusion in the playing XI, the Punjab-based outfit has not lost a single game.

Nicholas Pooran, too, has looked dangerous but the shaky form of Glenn Maxwell remains a concern.

Agarwal missed the match against SRH due to a bruised knee

but the opener is expected to be back for the clash against KKR.

KKR will also be all fired up after their comprehensive win over the formidable Delhi Capitals and would be desperate to keep the winning momentum going.

After the embarrassing eight-wicket loss to RCB, the two-time champions did well to regroup and inflict a 59-run defeat on the Capitals, who occupy the second spot in the points table.

Promoted to open the innings, Nitish Rana revelled in his new role and smashed a whirlwind 81 while sharing a game-changing 115-run stand with Sunil Narine (64). Leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy then tore apart the DC middle-order with a five-wicket haul.

If KKR wish to seal a play-off spot, their batsmen need to step up, shrug off their inconsistency and win matches for the team. Barring Rana (81) and Narine (64), everyone else failed against DC.

The KKR bowlers have done well to fashion victories and the addition of Lockie Ferguson has only strengthened the pace attack, which also includes Australian Pat Cummins.

Sabalenka wins Ostrava title

AP ■ OSTRAVA

Third-seeded Aryna Sabalenka cruised to the title at the inaugural Ostrava Open on Sunday, defeating fourth-seeded Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 6-2 in the first WTA all-Belarusian final.

The big-hitting 22-year-old Sabalenka dominated the match but her former top-ranked opponent was visibly limited by an unspecified health problem in the second set and needed a medical time out and one more brief treatment.

It was the second title of the season for the 12th-ranked Sabalenka after the Qatar Total Open in Doha in February, and seventh overall of her career.

"I hope you'll get better soon," she wished Azarenka in a brief on-court speech after her victory.

The 14th-ranked Azarenka tried to come back after she received treatment when she



was 4-1 down in the second set, breaking Sabalenka who then replied immediately with her fifth break and served out the match.

Last month, Azarenka eliminated Sabalenka 6-1, 6-3 in the second round of the U.S. Open before reaching the final.

The indoor hard-court event was added to the WTA tour after tournaments in China were canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.



AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool came from behind to beat struggling Sheffield United 2-1 and join Everton at the top of the Premier League table.

Jürgen Klopp's champions, without injured defensive talisman Virgil van Dijk, are now unbeaten in 62 Premier League home games at Anfield, but had to dig deep after falling behind to an early penalty scored by Sander Berge.

Roberto Firmino hauled them level shortly before half-time and the home side overcame the disappointment of

Delightful Diogo 92 & COUNTING

SAINTS BEAT EVERTON

AP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Premier League leader Everton slumped to its first defeat of the season and lost Lucas Digne to a second-half red card as Danny Ings inspired Southampton to a 2-0 win at St Mary's Stadium on Sunday.

Ings is Southampton's top scorer this season but he turned provider against Everton, setting up James Ward-Prowse's 27th-minute opener with a delicate through-ball and then crossing to the far post for strike

seeing an audacious Mohamed Salah goal ruled out for offside to score the winner through a Diogo Jota header.

The victory at Anfield means the champions have 13 points, level with neighbours Everton, who still lead the table on goal difference, with a game in hand.



partner Che Adams to score a deflected finish in the 35th.

Everton's worst display of the season was capped by the 71st-minute sending-off of left back Digne, who raked his studs down the back of Kyle Walker-Peters' leg as he chased after the Southampton right back.

"I'm not surprised at all — you always have to work hard against Sheffield United," said Klopp. "It's hard to take for (manager) Chris Wilder.

"The penalty was not even a foul. During a season there are so many different periods, we have had an injustice and we have had to go again.

Hamilton breaks Schumacher's record of most F1 wins

AP ■ PORTIMAO

Lewis Hamilton has moved clear of Michael Schumacher to become the most victorious driver in Formula One history.

The six-time world champion sealed the 92nd race win of his illustrious career at the Portuguese GP on Sunday.

Hamilton did not initially have everything his own way at the Portimao Circuit in the Algarve despite clinching his 97th career pole on Saturday, dropping down to third during a truly hectic, wet opening lap behind McLaren's Carlos Sainz and Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas.

However, the Briton remained focus and eventually claimed back the race lead from Bottas on lap 20 and did not let up thereafter, constantly extending his lead and cruising to a historic 92nd win and eighth of the coronavirus-impacted 2020 season despite a



late touch of painful cramp in his right calf.

The manner of victory was eventually an emphatic 25.5 seconds ahead of Bottas, with Max Verstappen taking the last podium spot for Red Bull.

"It's going to take some time for it to fully sink in," Hamilton — whose father Anthony was in attendance — said of his achievement in an interview with Sky Sports.

"I was still pushing flat out

coming across the line, so I'm still very much in race mode mentally. I can't find the words at the moment.

"I owe it all to these guys here and back at the factory for their tremendous work. They are continually innovating and pushing the barrier even higher every year.

"It's been such a privilege working with them and I'm so grateful for all the moments. The reliability has been absolutely incredible.

Hamilton had initially equalled the iconic Schumacher's record at the Eifel Grand Prix at the Nurburgring a fortnight ago, after which he was presented with one of Schumacher's race helmets by the German's son, Mick.

Another world title for the 35-year-old this season — F1 champion in 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019 — would see him match Schumacher's record haul of seven.