

OPINION 6
WHAT MAKES
BENGAL UNIQUE?**WORLD 8**
TURKISH LEADERS CONDEMN
HEBDO'S CARTOON OF ERDOGAN**SPORT 12**
LIVERPOOL, MAN CITY,
BAYERN WIN IN CLDELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
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Bihar voters defy corona, throng booths

Final turnout to be higher than provisional 54.26% in first phase of polls for 71 seats

PNS ■ PATNA

Voters of Bihar defied coronavirus as the provisional turnout of 54.26 per cent in the first phase of the Assembly polls for 71 seats matched the figure of 2015. It is expected that the final percentage could go still higher as the Election Commission is updating the data with more inputs from 71 constituencies spread across 16 districts.

Election Commission Secretary-General Umesh Sinha told reporters that the "projected" voter turnout was expected to be more than those in the last Assembly and Lok Sabha polls.

The large turnout of "maskless" people in the rallies of political leaders during the last two weeks showed that despite repeated appeal by the Prime Minister himself, the people were not ready to live under the fear of the virus anymore. On Wednesday, they exhibited the same disdain for the virus and queued up before the polling booths, much to the relief of poll officials.

The majority of the 71 seats came under what was once known as the "flaming fields of Bihar" due to bloody clashes between the private army of upper caste landlords



Voters, adhering to social distancing norms, stand in queues outside a polling station to cast their votes for the first phase of Bihar Assembly elections at Paliganj constituency in Patna on Wednesday

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who addressed three more rallies in the State on Wednesday did not mention Chirag's name or said anything to clear the air among the cadres of the BJP about speculation that Chirag enjoys the blessings of the BJP big wigs.

This is the first major election being conducted amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic in the country. According to the provisional data, the highest poll percentage is recorded in Banka district at 59.57 per cent. It had recorded 56.43 per cent in 2015.

While the overall number was satisfactory for a State like Bihar which is not known for huge turnouts, the police firing during the immersion of Goddess Durga's idols two days ago played a spoiler in Munger. The district registered the least voter turnout at 47.36 per cent. It had recorded 52.24 per cent turnout in 2015.

The poll panel said since the announcement of the elections, 534 arms, 193 cartridges and three bombs were seized from the areas that went to polls in the first phase. As many as 159 people were detained as a preventive measure during the polling on Wednesday, the poll panel said.

Continued on Page 2

and the Maoists. The situation is near normal and the influence of the Maoists is limited to only some pockets now. Still, in the 35 Naxal-hit areas, the polling hours were curtailed.

Polling was conducted till 3 pm in four Naxal-affected constituencies of Chainpur, Nabinagar, Kutumba, and Rafiganj while in the other five Naxal-hit constituencies it went up to 5 pm. In the remaining

26 Naxal-affected constituencies, polling was held till 4 pm.

Of the 71 seats, 12 of them were decided by very narrow margins in the 2015 polls. The victory margin of the CPI(M-L) candidate from Tarari in

2015 was just 271 votes.

The presence of Chirag Paswan-led LJP has turned the contest interesting as his party has fielded candidates on each and every seat against the JD(U) candidate. Incidentally,

Suspension of global flights to/from India extended till Nov 30

DGCA takes call in view of 2nd Covid-19 wave

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday extended the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till November 30 amid the coronavirus pandemic. Fresh concerns over international travel have been raised with another wave of infections in the USA and European countries.

Continued on Page 2

international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case to case basis, the circular added.

The scheduled international passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23 due to the pandemic. But special international flights have been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under the bilateral 'air bubble' with selected countries since July.

Continued on Page 2

HONG KONG BANS AI FLIGHTS TILL NOV 10 AS FLIERS TEST +VE

New Delhi: Hong Kong has banned Air India flights from Mumbai till November 10 after a few passengers on its flight earlier this week tested positive for Covid-19 post arrival, a senior Government official said on Wednesday. This is the fourth time that Air India flights from India have been banned by Hong Kong.

LAC stand-off bilateral matter, no space for third party: China

Reaction follows US' assurance to India to defend its sovereignty

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



June 15 in the Galwan valley where 20 Indian Army personnel, including commanding officer, were killed.

"Our leaders and our citizens see with increasing clarity that the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is no friend to democracy, the rule of law transparency... I am glad to say that the US and India are taking steps to strengthen our cooperation against all manner of threats and not just those posed by the Chinese communist party," Pompeo had said.

Beijing termed his statement as an attempt to impose American hegemony in the region. Reacting to the US push for closer defence ties with India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing

in Beijing "the border affairs between China and India are matters between the two countries."

"Now the situation across the border is generally stable and the two sides are in resolving relevant issues through consultations and negotiations," he said.

It was in an obvious reference to the military and diplomatic level talks between India and China to resolve the standoff.

Wang criticised the US' Indo-Pacific concept, saying "the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is preaching outdated Cold War mentality and preaching confrontation and geopolitical game. It is aimed to uphold the hegemony of the US."

Continued on Page 2

All schools in Capital to remain closed till further orders: Sisodia

Parents of students welcome decision

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



All schools in Delhi will continue to be closed till further orders in view of the Covid situation, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia announced on Wednesday. The number of cases in the national Capital is on the rise.

Parents are not in favour of reopening schools either, Sisodia said at an online Press conference.

Parents of children have welcomed the Government's decision to keep schools closed till further notice.

While online learning has been challenging and does not match the social environment of a school, nothing is more important than the safety of our children," said parents.

The Delhi Government had earlier announced that schools will remain closed till October 31.

"We keep getting feedback

CAPSULE

U'KHAND CM CHALLENGES HC's CBI PROBE ORDER

New Delhi: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday against the Uttarakhand High Court order for CBI probe into the charge of corruption levelled against him by a journalist. The high court verdict came on two separate petitions filed by two journalists — Unmesh Sharma and Shiv Prasad Semwal — seeking quashing of FIR lodged against them in July this year under various provisions of the IPC.

OVER 70 COWS DIE IN SHELTER IN PANCHKULA

Chandigarh: Over 70 cows died due to suspected food poisoning in a shelter attached to a temple in Haryana's Panchkula on Wednesday, officials said. Thirty other cows, who were also taken ill at the Mata Mansa Devi Gaudham, are responding to treatment, an official of Haryana's Animal Husbandry and Dairying Department told reporters in Panchkula.

RHEA'S ACCUSATIONS 'SPECULATIVE': CBI

Mumbai: The CBI on Wednesday told the Bombay High Court that Rhea Chakraborty's accusation that late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sisters obtained a fake medical prescription for him was "mostly speculative".

Covid tally hits 80L, active cases taper off

Deaths per million population in India at 87, substantially lower than world's average of 148

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as India has been showing signs of flattening the curve lately, the number of coronavirus infections crossed eight million marks on Wednesday.

While the overall number of new cases remained subdued, Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Karnataka continued to buck the trend.

The third-most-affected country by active cases and fatality, and second by total cases, India has added 10 lakh

cases in the last 18 days while in the last seven days, it added 341,541 cases. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has claimed that India has managed to sustain its global position of recording one of the lowest Covid cases as well as deaths per million population.

Continued on Page 2

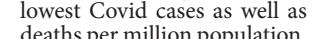
Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 80,20,566

DEATHS: 1,20,312

RECOVERED: 72,92,187

ACTIVE: 6,06,696



DELHI'S DAILY COUNT SURGES TO 5,000

New Delhi: Delhi's daily coronavirus cases crossed the 5,000-mark for the first time on Wednesday after a spike in cases in the past few days.

SMRITI IRANI TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID

New Delhi: Union Minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday said she has tested Covid positive and asked those who came in contact to get themselves tested.

Marrying off minor girls in dire straits

Lockdown-induced poverty pushes parents to go for mass child marriage

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

For Champa, 13, marriage meant wearing new clothes, eating good food and dancing with her friends. On June 20 this year she was to get married along with two other minor girls of 14 and 15 years of age. Belonging to the lower caste family in Firozpur village in impoverished Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh, the parents of these girls wanted to get rid of the burden of their daughters. A mass marriage was planned secretly to save money. The plans were leaked out and officials averted the marriage.

"I never thought in my wildest of dreams that parents will go for child marriage in lockdown and Covid pandemic when strict guidelines are issued and police are on high alert. But actually child marriages have taken place secretly. Some marriages were averted after they came to know-

edge but the actual number of marriages is much more than what is being reported," Sangeeta Sharma, member, Child Welfare Committee in Lucknow, State capital of Uttar Pradesh said.

Following the spread of the Covid pandemic and introduction of lockdown and social distancing, many people lost jobs and other income streams became uncertain, especially for people among the poorer strata. As the pressure on household finances mount, marrying girls off, even at a young age, is being seen as an option for parents for reducing future household expenditure and meeting parental responsibilities.

The comparative data shows that the number of child marriages has actually gone up in some provinces of India during the Covid pandemic. In the central Indian State of Madhya Pradesh the number of child marriages between November 2019 and March 2020 was 46



but it jumped to 117 in just three months of lockdown from April to June 2020. Similarly in Chhattisgarh only 18 cases were reported in five months prior to the spread of Covid but during the first three months of lockdown the number shot up to 58. In Uttar Pradesh, 36 marriages took place between November and March while 27 cases of child marriage were reported between April and June.

The ChildLine India claims that 5,214 marriages were reported in just four months of

lockdown between March to June across India.

"From our experiences and data reported with the district helplines shows that the majority of the cases have not been reported. If demographic survey data on district/State level prevalence of child marriage is taken into consideration, the reported cases are just tip of the iceberg," Priyanka Sreenath, Deputy Director MAMTA, an NGO that works with girl child, said.

Poverty and social norms are considered the primary factor which forces parents to marry off their minor daughters at a tender age.

"The poor people were worst affected. The lower strata in India still believe daughters as a burden on them. They want to get rid of them at the earliest because they believe by marrying off their daughter they will be able to save some expenses," Surojit Chatterjee of Save The Children said.

Continued on Page 2

41-YR OLD SDMC DOC DIES OF COVID

New Delhi: A 41-year-old doctor working with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation died of Covid-19 on Tuesday, officials said. The doctor posted at Maternity and Child Welfare Centre Rangpuri, Mahipal Pur had joined Covid-19 duty in April.

U'khand CM moves SC against HC order for CBI probe into graft allegations

New Delhi: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday against the

Nainital High Court order for CBI probe into the allegations of corruption levelled against him by a journalist. The High Court verdict came

on two separate petitions filed by two journalists— Umesh Sharma and Shiv Prasad Semwal — seeking quashing of FIR lodged against them in

July this year under various provisions of the IPC.

While quashing the FIR, the high court ordered CBI probe into the allegations lev-

elled against the Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

Sharma accused Rawat, who was then Jharkhand in-

charge of the BJP, of alleged money transfers to accounts of his relatives in 2016 to support an appointment of a person in

that State to head the Gau Seva Ayog.

Rawat moved the top court by filing an appeal against the high court judge-

ment through lawyer Divyam Agarwal, who has not yet divulgued the grounds of the challenge.

PTI

Covid tally hits...

From Page 1

The Ministry claimed that against the global figure for infections per million is 5,552, India is reporting 5,790 cases per million population. The USA, Brazil, France, UK, Russia and South Africa are witnessing much higher numbers.

"The Covid-19 deaths per million population in India is 87, substantially lower than the world average of 148. The country's case fatality rate at present is 1.50 per cent. India continues to report a trend of steadily decreasing active cases," the Ministry claimed.

After a brief lull, Kerala has reported 8,790 new cases, includ-

ing 94 health workers, taking the total count to 3.98 lakh, while the toll climbed to 1,403 with 27 more fatalities.

The State had

reported 5,457 cases on Tuesday and 4,287 on Monday. Three districts accounted for over 1000 cases today— Ernakulam 1,250, the highest, followed by Kozhikode (1149) and Thrissur (1018).

The number of coronavirus positive patients in Maharashtra rose to 16,60,766 with the addition of 6,738 cases in the last 24 hours. The fatality count in the State reached 43,554 after 91 persons died due to the infection. A total of 8,430 patients were discharged during the infection. The total of recovered persons to 14,86,926.

Mumbai has reported 1,354 positive cases during the day, which pushed its overall case count to 2,54,240, while its death toll

rose to 10,153 with the addition of 31 latest fatalities.

The Covid-19 tally in Mumbai's slum colony of Dharavi increased to 3,522 with 14 more persons testing positive for the infection. The civic body has stopped sharing death figures from the densely populated locality. Considering the decline in the number of coronavirus

cases and rise in recoveries, the local administration in Maharashtra's Latur district has temporarily shut 11 Covid-19 care centres.

Delhi's daily coronavirus infection tally crossed the 5,000-mark for the first time on Wednesday as the national Capital witnessed a sudden spike in cases in the past few days. The national Capital recorded 5,673 fresh Covid-19 cases, the highest single-day spike till date, taking the total caseload to over 3,70,014 lakh. The previous highest single-day spike of 4,853 cases was recorded on Tuesday.

As per the health bulletin released by the Delhi Government, 40 new fatalities were recorded, pushing the death toll in the national Capital to 6,396, adding that the fresh figure included one death which had occurred in August. The number of fresh cases recorded on Monday stood at 2,832, and 4,136 on Sunday, while the figures were 4,116 on Saturday and 4,086 on Friday.

West Bengal has recorded the highest single-day recovery of 3,925 Covid-19 patients, taking the total number of those cured to 3,17,928.

Meanwhile, the death toll mounted to 6,664 with 60 more people succumbing to the virus. The coronavirus tally, too, rose to 3,61,703 as 3,924 people tested positive since Tuesday.

Karnataka has reported 3,146 fresh cases and 55 deaths in the last 24 hours. The total number of positive cases in the State now stands at 8,12,784 including 68,161 active cases, 73,558 recoveries and 11,046 deaths so far.

Continuing to register a dip in new infections, Tamil Nadu on Wednesday recorded 2,516 fresh Covid-19 cases pushing the tally to 7,16,751, while the death toll mounted to 11,018 with 35 more deaths. There are 26,356 active cases in the State.

UP to bear expenses of NEET topper

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government will bear all expenses of NEET topper Akanksha Singh, who created history by scoring 100 per cent marks in the National Eligibility Entrance Examination.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met Akanksha and her family at his residence on Wednesday and said his government would be sponsoring her MBBS education (including expenses of mess and hostel).

Congratulating Akanksha for her success, the chief minister said that by scoring 720 out of 720 marks, Akanksha had made her town, Kushinagar, as well as Uttar Pradesh, proud. "Akanksha is a role model for every girl," he said.

The chief minister also inspired Akanksha to pursue her dreams and work hard to achieve her goals. The CM will also be writing a letter to the NEET Board asking it to rank her as first topper.

Marrying off...

From Page 1

In Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh an alcoholic daily wage labourer took Rs 50,000 for the marriage of his 13-year-old daughter from the boy's family.

LAC stand-off...

From Page 1

The Chinese embassy in a statement here also said "boundary question is a bilateral matter" and there is "no space" for a third party to intervene.

It said the development of ties between two countries should not "infringe upon legitimate rights and interests of a third party" and should be conducive to regional peace, stability and development.

"The boundary question is a bilateral matter between China and India. The two sides have been discussing disengagement and deescalation in the border areas through diplomatic and military channels. China and India have the wisdom and ability to handle their differences properly. There's no space for a third party to intervene," it said. China also charged the US with pitching an Indo-Pacific strategy to maintain its dominance. "The Indo-Pacific strategy" proposed by the US is to stir up confrontation among different groups and blocs and to stoke geopolitical competition, in a bid to maintain the dominance of the US, organise closed and exclusive ideological cliques," the statement said.

recall I had said on September 25 (when Bihar poll schedule was announced) that for EC, this poll is a leap of faith and not leap in the dark," Sunil Arora said.

Another senior poll panel official later said the "projected" turnout was expected to be more than that in the 2015 Assembly polls and the Lok Sabha elections. He said of the 16 districts which went to polls in this phase, 12 were Left-wing extremism (LWE) affected. "Out of the 12, four are considered as extreme Left-wing affected," he said, while expressing happiness at the smooth conduct of the polling exercise. Based on the terrain and inputs provided by the district authorities, poll timings were shorter in the LWE districts.

In the 2015 Assembly polls, the voter turnout in phase one was 54.94 per cent, while in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the corresponding figure was 53.54 per cent, the CEC said.

SC rejects Delhi Govt plea against bail granted to Pinjra Tod activist

RIOTS CASE

Court's decision granting bail to Kalita.

On September 1, the high court had granted bail to Kalita, saying the police failed to show she instigated women of a particular community or gave hate speech as she was seen in a peaceful agitation which is her fundamental right.

It said the agitation, held against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, had been going on for long with print and electronic media present throughout, in addition to the cameras of the police department, but there is no evidence which establishes that the alleged offence took place on Kalita's action.

The bench also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, questioned Raju as to whether being an "influential person" be a ground for denying bail as also how she can tamper with the witness.

The bench said it would not interfere with the Delhi High

The father was unemployed. The marriage was averted by members of civil society. The girl informed the team that she was against the marriage and her father was forcibly getting her married.

There are cases too where girl agree for marriage despite knowing that child marriage is illegal. Neetu, in Shivpuri Madhya Pradesh, was to get married on April 20. Her family is a marginalised landless poor family and lives in thatched house. Mother and younger brother of Neetu work as daily wage labourers while Neetu stays at home and takes care of household responsibilities. Neetu and her brother are school dropouts. Neetu left studies to take care of disabled sister who died 2 years ago. Her marriage was stopped after administration came to know that she was minor. Neetu told officials that she was aware that marriage was illegal but she did not oppose it as she was frightened by some of the incidence of the molestations in the neighbour hood. She said as her mother and brother go to work, she has to remain all alone at home which causes threat to her safety.

"So when the mother asked for marriage, I gave her consent," she told the officials.

Ramesh Jatav, father of 12 children including six girls in Bahraich district was reprimanded after he tried to get his 17-year-old daughter to get married forcibly. The girl was against marriage and she called up the Women Helpline for help.

"In our society it is normal for a girl to get married once she is 15 or 16 years of age. It is difficult to resist the social pressures. I have six daughters and I need to get them married at the earliest," Jatav said.

To prevent child marriage the Government enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 which came into effect from November 1, 2007. (Name of girls have been changed to conceal their identity)

inordinate delays in appointments of Registrar, Vikas Gupta, whose interview had been completed and appointment cleared by the executive council on Wednesday.

However, the same day, Tyagi had approved and notified the appointment of PC Jha as Acting Registrar and director of the South Campus.

The Ministry then intervened in the power tussle between the Vice Chancellor and the pro-Vice Chancellor, saying appointments made by Tyagi were not "valid" as he is on leave.

The power tussle intensified with Jha writing to the Ministry citing himself as "acting Registrar" and saying all decisions taken by Tyagi are in accordance with university norms. The Ministry took objection to the letter and directed the varsity to take strict action against him.

Joshi had, meanwhile, noticed records of the university so as to ensure fair enquiry," and MoE official said.

A controversy erupted last week when Tyagi removed Joshi as pro-VC on Thursday and appointed Geeta Bhatt, the director of the Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board of the university, in his place.

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the appointment of a new Registrar, Vikas Gupta, whose interview had been completed and appointment cleared by the executive council on Wednesday.

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Govt OK's manufacture, sale of only green firecrackers in city

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Wednesday said that only green firecrackers can be manufactured, sold and used in the National Capital.

The Government's decision came a day after the Air Quality (AQI) plunged to plus 350 micrograms per cubic causing double threats to human lungs amid corona pandemic.

While the Government running different campaigns parallel — Red light on, Gaddi Off, the large scale campaign anti - firecracker would be launched on November 3 and will continue even after the Festival of Lights - Dipawali.

"I appeal Delhiites to start

a 'no cracker' campaign considering the seriousness of the situation due to COVID-19 pandemic," Environment Minister Gopal Rai said.

Delhi has two main reasons behind the spike in pollution Diwali and Parali (stubble burning), strict enforcement of green cracker will take place and violators will be punished and for this, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) will form 11 special teams which will keep a strict vigil on the enforcement of this decision.

Rai said, "The Delhi government has launched various campaigns to combat air pollution. The government is sprinkling bio-decomposition to stop stubble burning inside the

Capital. We have also launched the Red Light On, Gaadi Off campaign, anti-dust pollution campaign and have also come up with the EV policy. We have also successfully done the tree plantation drive across Delhi. The Delhi government is also closely monitoring the pollution situation of all the 13 hotspots."

He said, "Now Diwali is coming and we all know that the key reasons behind Delhi's spike in air pollution is Diwali and Parali (stubble burning). In the time of Diwali people burn crackers which cause massive air pollution. Keeping in mind the air pollution situation of Delhi we have decided that this year only manufacturing and use of green crackers will be

allowed. This decision is as per the Supreme Court order of October 23, 2018."

Rai said, "To make green crackers pyrotechnic is being used by which the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide does not happen. This is why using green crackers can control or curb the spike in pollution level. For all these reasons the Supreme Court had decided to ban all the traditional cracker manufacturing in Delhi and allowed only green cracker."

Shri Rai said, "I want to request every citizen to follow this order. This is our responsibility to bring down the pollution from our side. I want to request all the traders not to use any remaining stock of traditional firecrackers. If the DPCC teams find out any such firecrackers then strict action will be taken against the violators under the Environmental Protection Act and Air Act."

"I appeal to all the citizens



not to burn any cracker and to run No-Cracker Campaign because during the COVID pandemic spike in pollution could be more dangerous. If anyone really wants to burn

firecracker then please use only green crackers. The citizens of Delhi is taking part in the Red Light campaign and I am hopeful that by following this order the citizens will cooperate to

An EDMC vehicle sprays water to curb air pollution during a smoggy weather at Anand Vihar in New Delhi on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

combat air pollution," Rai added.

Let each motivate 5 to back anti-pollution drive: Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Motivating Delhiites to participate in the 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign of the Delhi Government, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that the people of Delhi must prompt five of

their peers, friends or acquaintances to play their part in reducing the pollution in Delhi by switching their vehicles off while waiting at the traffic signals.

Imran Hussain said that the people of Delhi are constantly joining this campaign and are switching off their vehicles at red lights to curb the pollution in the city.

Rai also said that starting November 2, the campaign will be launched in all the 272 wards in Delhi.

The Cabinet Minister Imran Hussain joined Gopal Rai at Delhi Gate near Daryaganj on Wednesday to sensitise people towards ensuring that

This campaign is running in all 70 constituencies in Delhi. Today the team of women marshals have taken the lead in spreading awareness about the campaign," said.

Rai said, "This campaign can reduce around 15-20 per cent pollution in Delhi. The people of Delhi have done some commendable work previously, and I am certain that they will defeat pollution this time as well."

NMC issues 218 challan for violation of pollution norms

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) took stern action against polluters and issued challan to 218 individual, offices and company.

A senior NMC official said that 91 challans for Rs 4.10 lakh for garbage and plastic waste illegal dumping and burning were issued after inspecting 1178 sites while 30 challans amounting to Rs 1.3 lakh were issued for construction and demolition activities (illegal dumping) after inspecting 142 sites and 97 challans were issued for Rs. 12.78 lakh for



dust control violations at construction sites after inspecting 379 sites in last one week.

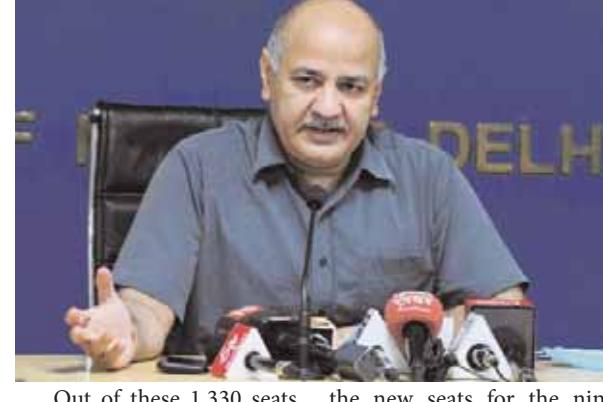
The civic body has deployed 48 teams to patrol day and night to check violations in respect of biomass burning, construction and demolition waste dumping etc, he said.

1,330 new seats added to 9 courses at IP University

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to provide relief to students who have graduated from school this year and want to pursue higher education, the Delhi Government has added 1,330 new seats for nine existing courses at Guru Gobind Indraprastha (IP) University for the academic session 2020-21.

Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia announced that the move at a virtual Press conference at Delhi Secretariat on Wednesday. These seats will be added to IP University affiliated colleges to nine existing courses at undergraduate as well as graduate level, he said.



Out of these 1,330 seats, maximum seats have been allotted to B.Tech with a total of 630 seats. The breakdown for

Details of programme intake with proposed increased seats in university for 2020-21

- B.TECH - 7110 (including additional 630 seats)
- MBA - 2470 (including additional 60 seats)
- B.VOC - 770 (including additional 20 seats)
- BBA - 7845 (including additional 120 seats)
- B.COM (Hons.) - 2145 (including additional 220 seats)
- B.A (Economics) - 420 (including additional 120 seats)
- BCA - 2625 (including additional 90 seats)
- M.Sc (Yoga) - 30 (including additional 15 seats)
- M.VOC - 100 (including additional 55 seats)

seats), BCA (90 seats), MBA (60 seats), MSc. Yoga (15 seats), and M.Voc (55 seats).

The decision is an effort by

the Delhi Government to offer new opportunities to students during an extremely difficult year, he said.

"This is good news for students looking to pursue higher education this year as 1,330 additional seats will be available to them now," said Sisodia. Sisodia further said that these seats are as good as opening 5-6 new colleges considering the significant number of seats that have been additionally allocated this year.

"When a new college opens up in this country, barely 200-odd seats are made available for students. If you look at these new seats, the Delhi Government is providing the equivalent of at least 5-6 new colleges for students. It is a good opportunity for our children," he added.

2 held, 2 juveniles apprehended for damaging vehicles in Mangolpuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two men while two juveniles have been apprehended after a video of a group with sticks in hand were seen damaging vehicles in outer Delhi's Mangolpuri area surfaced on social media. The incident took place on Monday.

In a video of the incident which surfaced online, a group of people (all men) could be seen walking on the streets of Mangolpuri with sticks in their hands and damaging vehicles including bikes and cars

on not finding him anywhere, they became angry and while returning from there, they started damaging vehicles that were parked on the street," he said.

"There were around 14 people including seven juveniles in the group. They damaged around four-five motorcycles and smashed glasses of six-seven cars. But no one was injured," he added.

According to Sudhanush Dhami, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, after receiving a complaint from the woman, police had registered a case and arrested two men and apprehended two juveniles in connection with the incident.

"Later, the man decided to take revenge from the woman's brother. So he along with his group of friends went to her house the same evening to look for her brother. But no one opened the door. They searched for him in the area but

passed comment at her. When the brother's woman who accompanied her to the shop noticed it, he strongly objected to the man and a heated argument broke out between them," said the senior police official.

"Efforts are being taken to nab others who were involved in the incident and further investigation is going on," he added.

"Initially, the man was just starting at her but later he

G'gram hosp successfully deals with complicated pregnancy

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Paras hospital in Gurugram has successfully managed a complicated pregnancy of a 35-year-old woman, who was suffering from a rare placenta Accreta/Percreta condition.

The case of this patient was complicated as well as fatal as she had her placenta grown too deeply into the uterine wall and bladder.

Placenta percreta is a rare condition which is seen in 3 in 1,000 pregnancies and is at an increasing trend with rising rates of c-sections.

Since the risk with placenta accreta is life threatening, it can only be handled by a skilled gynaecologist.

A team of doctors led by Dr Alka Kripalani from Paras Hospital, Gurugram has saved the life of this 35-year-old pregnant woman and her baby.

The case of this patient was complicated as well as fatal as she had her placenta grown too deeply into the uterine wall and bladder

According to the doctor, the patient, Kanchan Bhatia, was brought to the Hospital with complaints of vaginal bleeding during the third trimester. Upon investigation, it was found that she had a rare condition called placenta accreta with invasion into the bladder and lateral pelvic wall.

She was suffering from the last few months and visited many hospitals but they refused to admit her due to severe complications that could have

arisen in the case.

"The team of gynaecologists at the Hospital took the challenge to manage this rare case. In such cases, the placenta detaches from the uterine wall after childbirth. With a placenta accrete part or the entire placenta remains attached. This can cause severe blood loss after delivery and even the mother can die just after the delivery. Placenta accreta is considered a high-risk pregnancy complication," Dr Kripalani said.

She said the patient was kept in the ICU for a day for observation after the delivery and she did very well in the postoperative period.

"This was an extremely challenging case as such cases need advanced medical care. Since we also have the necessary high-end equipment, we performed this surgery successfully," Dr Kripalani added.

Tattoo artist kills self

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man allegedly hanged himself at his home in south Delhi's KM Pur area.

Police said that they have registered a case of abetment to suicide and investigation has been initiated.

The deceased has been identified as Naresh Kumar. Police said that he ran a Tattoo shop at South Extension-I on rent and his landlord was one Anil Baisla. In a suicide note recovered, Kumar alleged his landlord Anil Baisla to be the reason behind his death.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, the incident took place on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

"On Wednesday, we received information at K.M Pur police station from AIIMS Trauma Center that a patient named Naresh had hanged himself at home. He was admitted by his younger brother

Gopal Krishan, Karan and Mohit but was declared dead during treatment," said the DCP.

"During enquiry, statements of deceased's brother Gopal Krishan, Mohit and Karan were recorded. During preliminary probe, it has emerged that Kumar and his landlord had some money dispute allegedly over payment of rent. Baisla had even filed a court case against Kumar over their money dispute and the hearing for the case was scheduled on Wednesday and these facts are being investigated," said the DCP.

"A case under section 306 (Abetment of suicide) of Indian Penal Code has been registered at KM Pur police station and investigation has commenced. The spot was inspected from crime team and the body has been preserved for post-mortem," said the DCP.

Further enquiries are being conducted, police said, adding Kumar is married but his family lives separately.

Chadha hits out at Uttarakhand CM over corruption allegations

Demands his immediate resignation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and National Spokesperson Raghav Chadha on Wednesday hit out at Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat amid corruption allegations and demanded his immediate resignation.

Chadha said, "This is the first time in the history of



he is said to have allegedly accepted bribe money in return of appointing someone to head the Jharkhand Gau Seva Aayog.

Rawat's family members. The High Court has taken serious cognizance of this and directed the CBI to investigate the matter," he said.

Targeting the silence of the BJP on such a serious allegation, Chadha said, "The BJP made an extremely popular slogan that they ran across the Country-- Bahut Hua Bhrashtachar, Abki Baar Modi Sarkaar. However, now in Devbhoomi Uttarakhand, it is this very BJP that is creating a 'Corruption-Yukt Devbhoomi,' instead of a 'Corruption-Mukt Devbhoomi.'

Uttarakhand's double engine of zero tolerance is being run by a corruption-yukt government, he said, adding

that this is not a matter regarding a small officer of the government but the senior-most member of the government of Uttarakhand, that is the Chief Minister himself.

The National Spokesperson also said that the High Court's judgment is proof of the fact how corruption has seeped into the very realm of Uttarakhand.

Reading out portion of the judgement, he said, "In the instant case, the petitioner has levelled allegations of corruption against Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. He has given WhatsApp messages, recorded conversations, bank deposit receipts but these issues were never examined.

Chadha challenged the Uttarakhand CM to make pub-

lic his and his family's bank statements and prove wrong the allegations levelled against him. He also said that if the CM does not tender his resignation, it would appear that the BJP at the Centre is patronising the corrupt government of Uttarakhand.

The AAP leader further said, "The Prime Minister Modi spoke about a corruption-free India yesterday."

"The Uttarakhand High Court ordered a probe into corruption allegations of a BJP-government in Uttarakhand yesterday. Today, I would like to ask the PM whether he will take any action against Uttarakhand's Chief Minister," he said.

Parl panel to Twitter: Distorted map act of treason

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary committee on Wednesday came down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and an explanation must be tendered by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit, sources in the panel said.

Appearing before the joint committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill, chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India "begged apology," but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its marketing arm

Twitter India, sources added.

They were questioned for more than two hours by the panel members, mainly on Ladakh being shown as part of China on the Twitter app. "The committee was of the unanimous opinion that Twitter's explanation on showing Ladakh as part of China was inadequate," Lekhi informed media after the meeting.

The Twitter representatives told the panel that the social media company respects the sensitivities of India, she said. "But, it is not only a question of the sensitivity of India or Indians. It is a question about national integrity and sovereignty of the country, and not respecting that is a criminal offence. And dis-

playing Indian map improperly and incorrectly is an offence of treason and attracts imprisonment of seven years," she said.

Lekhi said Twitter was also asked about its banning policy. "Shadow banning, banning policy... there is no clarity about it. Such actions are very subjective... Twitter is becoming a law unto themselves and under these circumstances, they are violating Article 19 of the Constitution about the freedom of expression," she said.

Sources said some members also raised questions about Twitter's transparency policy and its actions during elections, especially vis-a-vis their policies in other countries. Asked for their comments, a Twitter spokesperson

said in an emailed statement, "The recent geotagging issue was swiftly resolved by our teams. We are committed to openness, transparency around our work and will remain in regular touch with the Government to share timely updates."

Multiple sources in the panel said Twitter officials "begged apology" for Ladakh being shown as part of China on its app, but they were told by members that whatever they wanted to say on the issue should be given in writing in form of an affidavit by Twitter Inc, the parent company of the social media platform.

They said Twitter India is "just a marketing arm" of US-based parent Twitter Inc, and therefore a written reply should

come from them. Twitter Asia, based in Singapore, mainly deals with advertisement revenues and takes all major decisions related to the region, some members opined.

Officials who deposed before the panel on behalf of Twitter India included Shagufta Kamran, senior manager, public policy; Ayushi Kapoor, legal counsel; Pallavi Walia, policy communications; and Manvinder Bali, corporate security. Officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and Technology, and the Ministry of Law and Justice also deposed before the panel.

The Indian Government on October 22 had warned Twitter about its location setting that showed Leh in China, the ministry said. Twitter also came under heavy criticism and faced a backlash from social media users after its geotagging feature displayed "Jammu & Kashmir, the People's Republic of China" in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh. At that time, Twitter had called it a technical issue that had been swiftly resolved.

NIA searches Trust, NGOs in Srinagar, Bangalore in terror funding case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

in Jammu and Kashmir, the NIA said in a statement.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at 10 locations in Srinagar and Bandipora (Jammu and Kashmir) and one in Bangalore in connection with a case pertaining to certain NGOs and Trusts raising funds in India and abroad in the name of charitable activities and then using those funds for carrying out secessionist and separatist activities in the Valley.

The case was registered by federal anti-terror investigation agency on October 8 this year under Indian Penal Code (IPC). Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and sedition besides relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act on receipt of credible information that certain NGOs and Trusts are collecting funds domestically and abroad through so-called donations and business contributions and are then utilising these funds for secessionist and terrorist activities.

Several incriminating documents and electronic devices have been seized and are being analysed for further action. Further investigation in the case is continuing, it added.

Officials said a number of other such entities are under the scanner of the agency and action against them is being contemplated.

The move is expected to further check terror financing through legitimate channels, they added.

Gadkari distributes electric potter wheels to 100 Maha families



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as one hundred potters families in Nanded and Parbhani districts of Maharashtra took a leap towards empowerment when Minister for MSME Nitin Gadkari distributed electric potter wheels and other modern equipment to them after they completed 10-day training given by the KVIC.

The potters belong to 15 villages - 10 villages in Nanded and 5 villages in Parbhani districts. The distribution of equipment will benefit at least 400 members of the community by increasing their productivity and their income..

Gadkari lauded the Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana of the KVIC saying this was the first-of-its-kind initiative taken since independence to strengthen and improve the living of potters in the country.

"Empowering the marginalized potters' community and reviving the dying art of pottery is the dream of the Prime Minister. With proper training

and distribution of advanced equipment under Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana, the productivity and income of potters has increased manifold. The scheme will further be implemented in other remote areas of Maharashtra and other states," Gadkari said.

KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena, who joined the Minister through video-conference, said that more than 18,000 electric chaaks have so far been distributed across the country benefiting nearly 80,000 people of the community.

He said the average income of potters under Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana has gone up from nearly ₹3,000 per month to nearly ₹10,000 per month.

"Empowering the marginalized potters' community and reviving the dying art of pottery is the sole objective of the program and KVIC will spare no effort in achieving this goal," he said.

H'Kong bans Air India flights from Mumbai till Nov 10 after 5 fliers test Covid positive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hong Kong has banned Air India flights from Mumbai till November 10 after five passengers from Mumbai tested positive for the coronavirus infection on arrival there.

This is the fourth time that Air India flights from India have been banned by the Hong Kong Government for bringing passengers who tested positive for the infection after arrival. The previous bans were on the airline's Delhi-Hong Kong flights during September 20-October 3 and August 18-August 31 and October 17-October 30. This time the ban is reportedly on flights from Mumbai alone.

According to officials, a passenger from India was among five who boarded an Air India flight from Mumbai on Monday. The other four were confirmed to be Covid-19 patients on Tuesday. "Subsequently, the Mumbai-Hong Kong flights have been barred from October 28 to November 10 by the Hong Kong government," officials added.

Air India Express has advised passengers in a tweet

H'Kong Govt bans flights from India for fourth time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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that "passengers travelling on (its) flights to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) must ensure that their final destination should be Kuala Lumpur itself. Passengers who intend to travel onward via KUL should not book with us due to Covid-related travel restrictions.

Passengers from India can arrive in Hong Kong only if they have a COVID-19 negative certificate from a test done within 72 hours prior to the journey, according to rules issued by the Hong Kong government's rules.

Government for bringing passengers who tested positive for the infection after arrival.

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Moreover, all international passengers are required to undergo a post-flight COVID-19 test at the Hong Kong airport.

Besides India, a pre-flight COVID-19 negative certificate is mandatory for all passengers from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, the UK and the US, according to the Hong Kong government's rules.

Talks on for peaceful resolution of LAC crisis: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the midst of prevailing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said talks were on for peaceful resolution of the crisis.

The troops were standing

firm at the border and the government will ensure they get all the required equipment, he said.

Making these remarks during his address at the four-day Army Commanders' Conference here, Rajnath expressed confidence while troops are standing firm, the

ongoing talks for peaceful resolution of crisis will continue. The conference ends on Thursday.

Expressing his gratitude to the soldiers, he remarked "It is our national responsibility to ensure availability of best weapons, equipment and clothing to our troops braving extreme weather and hostile forces to defend our territorial integrity."

Endangered vultures soon to have dedicated rescue centres

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Critically endangered vultures threatened by an array of human activities, such as direct and indirect poisoning, habitat loss, degradation, electrocution and collision with power turbines and trains, will soon have dedicated rescue centres in four regions of the country where they can be treated and then released in the wild.

These centres are proposed at Pinjore in North India, Bhopal in Central India, Guwahati in North-east India and Hyderabad in South India. Currently, there are no dedicated rescue centres for treatment of the scavenging raptors.

Besides rescue centres, additional vulture conservation breeding units will be set up each in Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Presently, there are four conservation and breeding centres at Pinjore, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

The measures are part of the Government's revised "Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2020-2025" which has identified priority actions and additional action points for the conservation of vultures, aiming to prevent the poisoning of principal food of vultures i.e., the cattle carcasses, with veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) and carry out safety-testing of new medicine on vultures, prior to commercial release.

This was decided at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) of the Union Environment Ministry aiming to protect



vultures which are often overlooked and perceived as lowly scavengers even as they play a crucial role in the environment in which they live.

The Government had formulated first "National Action Plan (2006)" on vulture conservation spanning three years till 2009, providing strategies, actions for containing the decline of vulture population, especially the three Gyps species i.e. Oriental White-backed Vulture (Gyps bengalensis), Slender-billed Vulture (Gyps tenuirostris), Long-billed Vulture (Gyps indicus) through ex-situ, in-situ vulture conservation.

The Government will also work on establishing the system which automatically removes a drug from veterinary use if it is found to be toxic to vultures with the help of the Drug Controller General of India.

Also, conservation breeding programme of Red-headed Vulture and Egyptian Vulture will be initiated wherein at least one Vulture Safe Zone will be established in each State for the conservation of the remnant populations in that State, as per the revised national action plan as cleared by the NBWL.

The Government will also work on establishing the system which automatically removes a drug from veterinary use if it is found to be toxic to vultures with the help of the Drug Controller General of India.

Moreover, all international passengers are required to undergo a post-flight COVID-19 test at the Hong Kong airport.

Besides India, a pre-flight COVID-19 negative certificate is mandatory for all passengers from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, the UK and the US, according to the Hong Kong government's rules.

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PM calls Tejashwi yuvraj of jungle raj

Launches 2nd leg of Bihar campaign

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched the second leg of his campaign for Bihar Assembly elections and attacked the main Opposition's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) for presiding over a "jungle Raj" during its 15-year-long rule. The PM referred to RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav as the "yuvraj of the jungle" raj and warned people not to elect a party whose very name would drive away investors.

The Prime Minister claimed that development has speeded up in the state under the Nitish Kumar government's rule and also mentioned central government direct sending of about one lakh crore to farmer's bank account under Direct to Bank scheme.

Modi, who addressed public rallies at Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur and Patna also pointed to the voters that his government fulfilled the

promise of the construction of a Ram temple at Ayodhya by laying its foundation. He was joined in the public meetings by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Promising that the NDA rule would make Bihar a "self-reliant" and "developed state", Modi urged the people to defeat the opposition which, he said had launched the state in "jungle raj" and embezzled funds meant for development schemes. In a jibe at the "Mahagadbandhan" leader Tejaswi Yadav who is the son of former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad, Modi said those who witnessed the old times know well that nothing much can be expected from "jungle raj ke yuvraj" and there is a need to defeat such forces along with coronavirus pandemic in the state.

He alleged that the RJD has a "copyright over kidnappings" in the state and the voters to view the assembly elections as

"an opportunity to re-elect those who pulled Bihar out of darkness".

"It is a party which patronised criminals and ensured the riches of one family grew," he remarked, making a reference to the corruption scandals involving Prasad and his family members. Invoking the imagery of Goddess Sita and her father Janaka, the king of Mithila of which this north Bihar town became the capital later on, Modi said those who used to taunt the BJP over the delay in construction of Ram temple were now forced to applaud.

"I am happy to be here, in the birth place of Mother Sita. Construction of temple at Ayodhya has also begun. Those siyasi log (political opponents) who used to taunt us with the question what is the date (for commencement of construction), have now been forced to clap in applause," Modi said.

The prime minister, who shared the stage with the Chief

Minister, heaped praise on the latter, calling him the "bhaavi mukhyamantri" (prospective CM) and credited him with Bihar's economic turnaround.

"The people of Bihar have made up their mind to inflict yet another defeat on those responsible for the 'jungle raj' where crime graph had soared to an extent that living a normal life became difficult for the common people, our mothers and sisters," Modi said in an obvious attack on the RJD-Congress combine, without mentioning either by name.

"They committed financial irregularities in the name of waiving farm loans. They took bribes to give jobs. The NDA stands for development. Beware of those who are greedily eyeing the funds earmarked for progress," said Modi. He said those who were in power before the NDA government was formed were so obsessed with their "commission" that they never cared about connectivity for regions like Mithila. PNS

"Youths and farmers of Punjab and Bihar and youths of

Uttar Pradesh are angry that our PM keeps making speeches with Bihar Chief Minister and talks about other countries, but not the problems confronting our country such as unemployment," he said. He said the prime minister and the Bihar chief minister used to raise the issue of unemployment earlier but no longer now.

Gandhi, who arrived in West Champaran district for his second round of campaigning in the ongoing state elections, also attacked Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over unemployment and the issue of migration. Addressing his rally at Valmiki Nagar, the former Congress president said he was pained to see that Prime Minister Modis effigy was burnt in Punjab on the occasion of Dusshera, and added that it reflected the "anger" of youths and farmers.

"Now, the PM does not say in his speeches that he would give two crore jobs. Because the people of Bihar have realised that he had lied. "I can guarantee that if the PM comes today and promises two crore jobs to youths, perhaps the crowd would shoo him off, telling him that he had lied," Gandhi said. The Congress knows how to run a country, how to stand with farmers and give employment, but "we don't know how to lie", he said.

Protest against J&K land laws, Hurriyat calls bandh

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Slamming the decision of the Union Government which paved the way for people from outside Jammu & Kashmir to buy land in the Union Territory the common man on the streets of Jammu on Wednesday erupted in anger while questioning the rationale behind not protecting the land rights despite receiving assurances at the highest level.

Along with the workers of the political parties, opposing the new land laws, several local residents, students, businessmen and others reacted strongly.

Maha mounts pressure on Railways to restart locals in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

ence to following all COVID 19 protocols".

In an effort to ensure that this is done in a staggered manner, the state government recommended the following time slots—from the day's first local to 7.30 am for any person with valid ticket or pass, from 8 am to 10.30 am for essential services with valid QR Code, I card along with valid ticket or pass, from 11 am to 4.30 pm for any person with valid ticket or pass, from 5 pm to 7.30 pm for essential services with valid QR Code, I card along with valid ticket or pass and from 8 pm till local for any person with ticket or pass.

In its letter, the state government also recommended the operation of ladies special trains – one local each in every hour.

More than a week after women commuters were allowed to travel by suburban trains for a specified number of hours during a day in Mumbai and surrounding areas, the Maharashtra Government on Wednesday mounted pressure on the Central and Western Railways to restart local trains to cater to the people living in Mumbai and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

In a letter shot off to the Central and Western Railways, Maharashtra's secretary for Disaster Management, Relief and Rehabilitation Kishor Raje Nimbalkar stated: "The State is looking to open up the local train services to the general public while ensuring adhe-

rence to following all COVID 19 protocols".

INDIAN RAILWAYS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)
E-TENDER NO. 2020RS1743TC
CORRIGENDUM NO. 4

1.0 Tender No. 2020RS1743TC will be closed at 15:00 hours on 17.11.2020 instead of 29.10.2020

2.0 All other terms and conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

Director, Railway Stores (W), Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India.

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पर्सनल नंबर: 687

e-Tender Notice तिथि: 28.10.2020

Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C) Ganga Bhawan, Dehradun invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No.04/EE(P&C)/2020-21.

Name of Work - Procurement of different Tyres & Tubes for various Power House/Sites vehicles of UJVN Ltd.

Estimated cost : Rs.741691.00 (Excluding Tax)

Date of availability of bid document on website: 28.10.2020 from 16:00 hrs.

Last date for submission of bids on website: 20.11.2020 upto 17.00 hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer (P&C)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead in front of H.No. 1439, Gali Qasim Jaan, Ballimaran, Delhi-06 on dated 25.10.2020 In this regard a DD No. 16A Dated 25.10.2020 has been Registered at P.S. Hauz Qazi, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown R/o: Unknown Age: About 65 Years, Height: 5'10" Feet, Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium,

Wearing: Blue colour Shirt and Brown Colour Pant.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

The Deputy Chief Engineer/Const. Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under One- Packet System for the following work:

1. Name of work and location

"Design and drawing of test piles, foundation (open/piles), substructure & super structure (PSC/Steel) in connection with construction of 07 nos. Road over Bridges on Jind-Panipat, Jind-Sonepat, Rohtak-Panipat and Delhi-Ambala section of Northern Railway".

2. Completion period of works: 12 (Twelve) Months

3. Approx. Cost of work: Rs. 33.21 lakh

4. Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 6,66,00/- only

5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tenders: Tender may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs. on 19.11.2020 on IREPS web site i.e. www.reps.gov.in. The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 19.11.2020

6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document: The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in and tender document is available on www.reps.gov.in from 29.10.2020 to 19.11.2020.

Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. www.reps.gov.in from 05.11.2020 to 19.11.2020.

All other terms and conditions in respect of above tender are given in tender document.

The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 476-Acs-Design & Drawing-ROBs/RUBs-CSB Dated: 28.10.2020 2363/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Youth shot dead in IPL betting dispute

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

This fact needs no testimony that the Sasni Gate area of the city is the stronghold of IPL betting. A youth from Valmiki-Koli society was killed over a betting dispute in the mixed-populated Sarai Misr of Sasnit area. Valmiki society created a ruckus after his death and tried to set fire to the houses of the accused brothers followed by stone-pelting. They took out bikes and scooters from the factory and tried to burn them as

well. The atmosphere became normal after police forces including SSP, SP City reached there. On the other hand, the crowd gathered in the district hospital. Another police team was there to convince them. Meanwhile, the police have arrested one accused.

There is a mixed population of Valmiki and Koli society in Sarai Misr, Gobar Khunda. Tuesday night, at around 10 pm, the youth of Valmiki society and Koli society got into a dispute over the betting.

Bengal Guv to meet Shah before shifting home to Darjeeling

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will shift to Darjeeling Raj Bhavan on November 1, and he will stay there for a month, a communiqué from the Governor's House in Kolkata said on Tuesday. Dhankhar's Darjeeling trip will end on November 30 during which he will take part in a number of undisclosed programmes, sources.

But before he moves to Darjeeling the Governor will meet Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Wednesday where he is likely to apprise him about the law and order situation in Bengal, sources said. A Raj Bhavan communiqué said on Wednesday, "West Bengal Governor Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar would be on an official visit to Delhi from Oct 28-30. Governor Dhankhar leaves for Delhi on the evening of Oct 28 and returns to Kolkata on Oct 30.

An Opportunity to Develop Fuel Cell Powered Train for Indian Railways



INDIAN RAILWAYS ORGANIZATION FOR ALTERNATE FUELS (IROAF) INVITES EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FUEL CELL/BATTERY BASED HYBRID POWER TRAIN

In order to develop Technical specifications for development of fuel cell/battery based hybrid power train along with associated control and suitably designed Energy Management Strategy (EMS) and storage module for retrofitment on 700 HP Narrow Gauge ZDM3 Diesel-Hydraulic Locomotives running on Kalka-Shimla section EOI (IROAF/CME/BD/FUEL CELL POWERED LOCO) is invited.

OCTOBER 2020

Indian Railways Organization for Alternate Fuels (IROAF), Government of India, Ministry of Railways, New Delhi invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for development of fuel cell/battery based hybrid power train along with associated control and suitably designed Energy Management Strategy (EMS) and storage module for retrofitment on 700 HP Narrow Gauge ZDM3 Diesel-Hydraulic Locomotives running on Kalka-Shimla section.

The Functional Requirement Specifications No. FRS/ED/2020/90 of October 2020 issued by Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO) of the desired product and Format for Letter of Response have been uploaded on the website of IROAF <https://iroaf.indianrailways.gov.in/> —> IROAF Tenders —> Expression of Interest. Alternatively EOI form can be collected in person from the office of IROAF, New Delhi. Interested Firms/Organizations who have experience and capability to meet with such requirements are requested to submit technical and other details in the prescribed Format attached herewith on or before 31.12.2020 to the address mentioned below.

Firms willing to participate in EOI shall be required to make a presentation/video conferencing on 03.12.2020 before sending their response.

Chief Mechanical Engineer/BD, Indian Railways Organization for Alternate Fuels (IROAF), Government of India, Ministry of Railways 4th Floor, Railway Office Complex, Tilak Bridge, New Delhi-110002 Telephone no.: 011-23379107, Fax no.: 011-23379083 Email: cmbebrofa@gmail.com

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Modi doesn't talk about unemployment in his speeches, alleges Rahul

PTI ■ BETTIAH (BIHAR)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Wednesday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he talks about other countries, but not the problems confronting our country such as unemployment," he said. He said the prime minister and the Bihar chief minister used to raise the issue of unemployment earlier but no longer now.

"Now, the PM does not say in his speeches that he would give two crore jobs. Because the people of Bihar have realised that he had lied. "I can guarantee that if the PM comes today and promises two crore jobs to youths, perhaps the crowd would shoo him off, telling him that he had lied," Gandhi said. The Congress knows how to run a country, how to stand with farmers and give employment, but "we don't know how to lie", he said.

Uttar Pradesh are angry that our PM keeps making speeches with Bihar Chief Minister

Slamming the decision of the Union Government which paved the way for people from outside Jammu & Kashmir to buy land in the Union Territory the common man on the streets of Jammu on Wednesday erupted in anger while questioning the rationale behind not protecting the land rights despite receiving assurances at the highest level.

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It's in the air

Research has confirmed our worst fears, polluted air not only exacerbates COVID symptoms, it traps the virus around us



The time for knee-jerk reactions is over and we better commit ourselves to cleaning up the air around us for good — through combined political will, implementable policies, lifestyle adjustments and sustainable practices — or else risk death. So latest scientific studies have confirmed what common sense has been telling us for some time, the higher the concentration of solid particles suspended in the air that lies heavy and low around us, the greater the chances of the COVID-19 virus getting trapped in them, making us more vulnerable to contracting it. And given that high air pollution levels damage the lungs, inducing or aggravating health conditions such as asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, the disease burden could turn COVID-19 fatal. Imagine the fallout on Delhiites, whose disease resistance has already been compromised battling winter haze every year. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has warned that Delhi could report around 15,000 cases daily this winter due to the prevalence of respiratory illnesses that can worsen the symptoms of the disease. A Harvard University study has proved that an increase of only one microgram per cubic metre in a particulate matter or PM 2.5 is associated with an eight per cent increase in the COVID death rate. So, the surge of PM 2.5 levels in Delhi could result in a spike in caseload besides exacerbating the severity of symptoms of those infected. Yet another study by the University of Cambridge in April established a link between patients living in a highly polluted area of England and the severity of COVID-19. Many parts of north India, especially Delhi, are already wrapped in a blanket of hazardous smoke. According to the 2019 World Air Quality Report, India has 21 of the 30 most polluted cities in the world, where air quality can be as much as 10 times over the safe limits recommended by WHO. Over the past few weeks, PM 2.5 levels in Delhi have averaged around 180–340 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and on an extended basis, such saturation weakens the lungs and the body's ability to fend off infections. Additionally, they can even act as a medium for the transmission of the virus as studies from Italy have recorded traces of SARS-CoV-2 RNA on pollutants. Stubble burning, festive fireworks and low wind speed conditions along with vehicular and industrial pollution have already worsened matters.

Hence we need to permanently solve the problem of pollution and that means going beyond tokenism. For starters, we need to stop stubble burning on an emergency basis across States, in mission mode to be precise. We must use the green cess collected so far to subsidise shredding equipment and maximise alternative uses of crop waste. We need a three-level combat strategy at the level of policy-making, economy and community. Both the Centre and State Governments have already rolled out various policies to address air pollution, one of the most recent ones being the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). It calls on 122 cities across India to develop city-level clean-up plans to implement mitigation strategies for ambient PM concentrations. However, it has failed to enforce its targets and has remained ineffective. That's because in the absence of a legal mandate, the NCAP is toothless. Besides, ensuring compliance means appropriate monitoring and inspection and it lacks trained personnel for these tasks. Also, its budgetary allocation is just not enough. Delhi has 38 real-time air quality monitoring stations while Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have 25 and 22 each, and Tamil Nadu has only five. This in turn causes data-related implementation hurdles, including poor data captured due to standard monitoring stations and lack of appropriate methodology to leverage real-time data for reporting trends. In terms of policy, the Government needs to put a blanket ban on firecrackers. We must realise that life needs to be celebrated more than festivals at the moment. We also need to create a financial architecture where the private sector can help with cutting-edge innovations and unique technology solutions along with financing them. Having an investment fund with a dedicated green focus could catalyse the growth of such green industries along with addressing the problems of air pollution and climate change. Businesses should now disclose the air pollution footprint of their products and implement a cap on emissions. This can help the consumers make an eco-friendly choice. The number of premature deaths due to outdoor air pollution is predicted to increase from three million people in 2010 to six to nine million people globally in 2060. A study shows that approximately 2.2 million schoolchildren in Delhi are growing up with irreversible lung damage. There are various community-based solutions that can help the vulnerable sections. Researchers from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) have determined which trees are capable of putting up with the assault of particulate matter gaseous pollutants (nitrous oxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone) in the city's urban pockets. Such information can be used by urban planners in managing urban forests. Thus, the academic community can help find innovative solutions while communities in rural areas are made aware of the harmful effects of using traditional cooking stove. People need to follow small initiatives like "Red Light On, Gaadi Off" at signals, a message that has caught on a bit. In the end, this pandemic is just the immediate threat and irreversible climate change may bring about far more infectious diseases that we can barely fathom now. The brown haze has just made us sick. Unattended, it may soon choke us to death.

March for democracy

Thailand's continuous cycle of protests over the past decades shows no signs of ending



The overall impression that many outsiders have of Thailand as an idyllic, sunshine-filled tourist destination, complete with beautiful beaches, pristine reefs and a vibrant nightlife, is far from the truth. Visitors over the past decades have often noticed protesters, usually identified by the colour of their shirts, who have championed various political goals, sometimes opposing the Government, sometimes supporting it and at other times standing up for the Thai monarchy and what not. Some protests became so volatile and violent that normal life and tourism, the lifeblood of Thailand, was impacted. However, the current movement for democracy has taken on a completely new hue because the protesters, who have no overall leader, are not only asking for the removal of the current military oligarchy that runs the country but are also demanding monarchical reforms. Thailand is famous for its *lese majeste* laws, yet there appears to be significant anger against the actions of the new king, Maha Vajiralongkorn, who succeeded his father late King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2017.

Although the past 15 years have been defined by political protests, events took an unusual turn in August, when a few students at a rally aired unprecedented criticism of the monarchy. The speakers boldly criticised the wealth accumulated by King Vajiralongkorn, his influence and also the fact that he spends much of his time in Germany. Among their calls were a greater oversight of royal budgets and an end to the practice of endorsing military coups by Thai monarchs. Shorn of the significant tourist income, thanks to the Coronavirus — although Thailand and the rest of South-East Asia are exemplars in managing the pandemic — the protesters have gained a lot of support from the youth, many of whom are jobless. The willingness by the military to suspend any "threat" from political parties it feels will strip it of its importance is further fuelling the anger. Will the protesters succeed? That depends on how much change the old Siamese Kingdom is willing to accept. Some of the demands are rather strong but it is important that proper democracy is restored in Thailand and that the monarch deals with some of the issues raised by his subjects, many of which stem from the high levels of secrecy that surround the palace and stories about the colourful past life of the king.

opinion

What makes Bengal unique?

It is politically very different from the Hindi heartland States as the people are Bengali first and everything else, including religion, comes later



PRAFULL GORADIA

The clash between BJP party workers and the police on the west side of the Hooghly river on October 8 was not unusual for West Bengal politics. But such clashes should not be taken as a measure of the State's political ethos. The BJP is seeking to capture this bastion of the east but its leaders rue that since the unfortunate passing away of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1953, Bengal has not produced a single leader who particularly cared for the Hindus. That's because the State has always prided its cultural identity over the religious one.

Also, there was nothing concrete done for the Hindu refugees of East Bengal post-Partition and it was pretty much left to the State to handle the fallout. Instead of helping them out, the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, wrote several times to Chief Minister Bidhan Roy in this vein. To quote from the PM's letter, dated August 16, 1948, "There is no reasonable solution of the problem if there is a large influx from East Bengal. That is why I have been terribly anxious throughout to prevent this, whatever might happen... I think that it was a very wrong thing for some of the Hindu leaders of East Bengal to come to West Bengal." On August 22, Nehru wrote another letter and I am quoting only a highlight: "If that (crossover) happened on a mass scale it would be a disaster of the first magnitude. I shudder at the prospect." When Nehru tried similar arm-twisting in Punjab, it was reported that his life was threatened.

Ironically, in the years before the Partition and for a while thereafter, the Congress was known as a Hindu party. All this goodwill drowned in the rivers of Bengal. The beneficiaries of the refugee voters in the following decades were the communist parties, who had actively supported the Partition. The Jana Sangh, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha tried hard to be of help to the refugees but in Bengal of that time, they had very few workers and fewer resources. They were completely overshadowed by the communists. What a paradox! One-third of the refugee voters became the eventual votebank of the Left Front. The sun virtually set on the Bengal Congress in 1977 over four decades ago.

For a couple of general elections,



the Hindu Mahasabha won four MLA seats but only in Bankura district. The Jana Sangh and its allies could win little electoral support. Nor could they field a single popular leader since the death of Dr SP Mookerjee. It is true that Professor Haripada Bharati was a respected person but he was not a vote puller. For this, the substantial reason lies in his Bengali genius as well as the kindness of his heart. And this is something that the BJP needs to understand.

Whether Christian, Muslim or Hindu, the people in this State are Bengali first and everything else, including religion, comes later.

For example, to illustrate this contention, the national anthem of Bangladesh is a song written by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Reportedly, the finest singer of Rabindra sangeet today is the Dhaka-based Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, who wears a sari and a tika. Religion does not inhibit her, like many other Muslim women in Bangladesh.

The root of the Bangladesh liberation movement was language more than anything else. In February 1948, Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Dhaka for the first time and happened to address university students. He asserted that Pakistan would have one national language and that was Urdu. When the audience asked, "what about

Bengali? We are the majority in Pakistan," Jinnah was provoked to counter them. He asked them if Bengalis of East Pakistan had any notable exploits or achievements to their credit. The response to this was the first agitation on the streets of Dhaka. Before long, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of Bangladesh's current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, resigned from the Muslim League, inaugurated the Awami League and led the movement for the assertion of East Bengal and its eventual secession from what was the initial Aligarh dream of not only a Muslim homeland but also a new Medina.

The abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kamal Pasha, the great moderniser of Turkey, was a big blow to the momins of Sunni Islam. The scholars at Aligarh University wanted Pakistan to throw up a new Caliph. But the East Bengalis were not a party to these dreams. In fact, in 1946–47, Fazlur Rahman, who was the Chief Minister of the eastern wing for a few years and a popular peasant leader, and Abdul Rahim, were negotiating with Sarat Chandra Bose, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's elder brother, for a united Bengal as the third dominion after Independence. The other two dominions would have been Hindustan and

Pakistan. Most of the Muslims in Bangladesh were converted by maulvis, who in turn had settled in Chittagong for generations. These Muslim clergymen had accompanied Arab traders since the 11th century. Except for being formally Muslims, the inhabitants of the then east Pakistan remained culturally Bengali. Many of them wore dhotis and the women mostly dressed in saris. Incidentally, even in Kolkata, Hindu gentlemen wore lungis at home.

When referring to their fellow Muslims, the Bengali bhadralok often called them "bechara Musalmans." The explanation was that the richer Hindus had exploited and socially discriminated against the Muslims, especially in the villages. To the extent, when they were invited for dinner to a Hindu wedding, they had to clear their own thalis and often clean them as well. The servants served only the Hindu guests. In any case, most Muslims in East Bengal were treated like serfs by the Hindu zamindars. They never dared to describe Hindus as kafirs even when talking among themselves. Most of the offenders who abducted Hindu girls and created trouble to chase out Hindu property owners during Partition were those who had come from outside and settled in Bengal.

Even today, it isn't difficult to

recognise the difference between the locals and the once outsiders. For instance, Khwaja Nazimuddin, the second Prime Minister of Pakistan, belonged to a family of settlers whereas Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a local ethnic Bengali, as is his daughter. But Khaleda Zia, the previous Prime Minister, clearly appears to be from a settler family.

One cannot deny an undercurrent of Hindu-Muslim differences regardless of what I have described above. The word Hindutva was believed to have been first used in a writing in 1863 by Raj Narayan Bose, the maternal grandfather of Sri Aurobindo. The Anushilan Samiti was founded in Bengal as was Hindu Mela. Similarly, whenever a Muslim thinks of a Bengali Hindu and his socio-economic superiority, he resents him. He expresses his resentment by being more Muslim than normally so. Otherwise, he looks upon the Hindu as a fellow Bengali. He does swing between using akash paatal and asmaan zameen (heaven and earth), as has been noticed in Bangladeshi media. Given this backdrop, it is clear that West Bengal is politically very different from say, the Hindi heartland States.

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

SOUND BITE

I expect that the South, the North and the international community will leap over obstacles through dialogue and trust and broaden peace from the Korean Peninsula to Northeast Asia.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in

The Kerala Government and the CPI-M have been trying their best to thwart the present probe by various national agencies but nothing can prevent it from going forward.

Union Minister —V Muraleedharan

The Indian Army has been successful in addressing several challenges to the security and sovereignty of this country since Independence.

Defence Minister —Rajnath Singh

I have seen the current U-16 team and I believe that they are better than us and if they keep performing the way they have been, then they can qualify for the (U-17) World Cup.

Footballer —Vikram Partap Singh

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cold-blooded murder

Sir — Amid the nationwide uproar over the rape-murder of a 19-year-old Dalit girl from Hathras, we were shocked by the news of a 21-year-old student, who was shot dead in broad daylight in Haryana's Ballabgarh by her stalkers. This led to a massive outrage in Faridabad with people demanding speedy justice. The woman, a BCom final year student, was seen coming out of Aggarwal College after appearing for an exam when the incident took place on October 26. After launching a manhunt, the police was successful in arresting both the culprits.

The victim's family members have alleged that one among them had been harassing their daughter and that they had withdrawn the complaint filed against him in 2018 to protect his name. A CCTV footage of the murder has surfaced with the visuals showing the perpetrator getting out of the car and pulling out his revolver. After firing, an aide of the assailant is seen pulling him back in the car. They then fled the scene. The State Government should look into the case and ensure swift

justice is delivered to the victim's family. This is a clear case of stalking which ended with murder. It is important that such cases are given due importance by the police, keeping the safety of the victim as the priority. Police officials should be properly trained and taught how to deal with such sensitive cases.

Phagwan Thadani Mumbai



7.3 crore voters, the Bihar election is not only the first major electoral exercise in India since the COVID outbreak but also the largest in the world so far. For the Election Commission, its successful conduct would itself count as a remarkable achievement.

N Sadhasiva Reddy Bangalore

The publication of the data collated from the large-scale third phase trial for review has to precede the approval for large-scale manufacture and roll-out of the vaccine for use among the general population. Developing a vaccine is indeed a time-consuming process. A vaccine that works for people of all ages across the globe is needed to win the battle against the pandemic and return to some measure of normality. It seems that the Oxford vaccine is nearing the finishing line.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Importance of BECA

Sir — India and the US have signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for geospatial cooperation, which will strengthen the military partnership between the two countries. Washington can now share advanced satellite and topographical data for long-range navigation and missile-targeting with New Delhi.

M Pradyum Kannur

Young voters to seal Nitish Kumar's fate

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is facing a strong anti-incumbency. That's why the ongoing Assembly elections are being billed as a referendum on his performance, especially since his third stint has been a pale shadow of the first two. His image took a severe beating with the lockdown and the hardships faced by the returnee migrants. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which Nitish ditched to realign with the BJP in 2017, has been quick to cash in on the palpable anger on the streets. The main Opposition party has propelled the development deficit and unemployment as key election issues, but translating the momentum into votes is what counts. The Lok Janashakti Party (LJP) has further muddied waters by fielding candidates against Nitish's party, making things even harder for the latter.

The caste arithmetic and shifting alliance configurations are a hallmark of Bihar elections, a robust political battlefield, but with historically a low voter turnout. The turnout would be of particular concern for every party this time, given the pandemic threat. With

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Phagwan Thadani Mumbai

vaccine against the Coronavirus. The Oxford vaccine or AZD1222 vaccine is made from a common cold virus found in chimpanzees with spike glycoprotein, a genetic material from SARS-CoV-2 added to it. The vaccine uses a modified version of the virus to deliver genetic instructions to the cells to induce an immune response against the causative agent of COVID-19.

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Armenia in for major trouble

Now the Azeri refugees will go home and 1,50,000 Armenians will have to seek new homes in Armenia proper



Gwynne Dyer

The month-old war between Azerbaijan and Armenia is so low on everybody else's list of concerns that when Azerbaijan won the war, hardly anybody in the media elsewhere even noticed. Shortly after 8 am local time on October 26, Azeri troops gained control of the road through the Lachin Pass. That is the sole land route between Armenia proper and Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian enclave inside the borders of Azerbaijan that the whole war is about. A new road further to the north, offering a quicker link between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, was opened in 2017, but it has been closed since October 1, shortly after the war started, "for the safety of civilians (i.e. because of shelling from Azerbaijani territory). Until October 26, the Lachin road was crowded with Armenian refugees fleeing west to safety and Armenian troops and military supplies heading east to the war.

Apart from one or two big strikes by Israeli-made LORA quasi ballistic missiles (hypersonic, 400-km. range, GPS and television terminal guidance), the road was fairly safe. But now there are Azerbaijani armoured vehicles across the Lachin road, and all of Nagorno-Karabakh is cut off. No more reinforcements, and more than half the Armenian civilian population of 1,46,000 people still there, trapped under constant shellfire and drone attacks. At least 2,000 people, most of them Armenians, have been killed in the fighting. The outcome of the war was inevitable once it became clear that Russia was not going to intervene militarily to help Armenia, despite the fact that both countries are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). Azerbaijan is clearly the aggressor in this round of fighting, but it is a CSTO member too, so Russia had to make a choice. Azerbaijan has three times Armenia's population and a great deal of oil, and Armenia is of no great strategic value, so Russia restricted itself to mediating futile ceasefires. The Azeris signed each time, but they knew they were winning and they never stopped their advance.

The most recent (third) ceasefire was actually negotiated with the help of the US and was supposed to come into effect at 8 am on October 26, but the Azeris broke that one too. As usual, they blamed the Armenians for having broken it within five minutes of its coming into effect (that is, at 8.05 am) — but they tweeted their protest at 5 am, which rather undermined its plausibility. The Azeris did not commit to an all-out offensive until about 10 days ago, confining themselves to probing attacks and random shelling until they were certain that the Russians would stay out. Then they sent an armoured column west along the Iranian border through territory that had been emptied of its Azeri inhabitants in the 1994 war. The Armenians, outnumbered, overstretched and outgunned, did what they could, but by October 22, the Azeris had reached the Hakari River valley. There they turned right and headed north up the valley — and on the 26th they took Lachin. End of game.

It was a move that they would never have risked against a more mobile and better equipped enemy. The Hakari runs through the narrow strip of territory that separates Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia proper, so they had Armenian-held territory on both sides of them, and a 100-km supply line behind them that was overlooked by Armenian troops on the right-hand side all the way. Fortune favours the bold but it's easier to be bold when you have total air superiority. Armenia has nothing to match Azerbaijan's Turkish-built drones and Israeli-supplied missiles and massive firepower on the ground. So now Azerbaijan holds the Lachin Pass, and all that remains is for Armenia to negotiate the return of Nagorno-Karabakh to its legal Azeri rulers (probably minus its Armenian residents). That will be very painful for Armenians after a quarter-century of holding the territory but they have no way of taking it back. They were bound to lose it in the end unless they could more or less match Azerbaijan's military spending, and they couldn't; the Azeri military budget was at least five times bigger, maybe more.

Like the Balkan wars of the early 20th century, nobody is in the right in the various wars that have been waged in the Caucasus since the old Soviet Union collapsed. The ethnic groups were already numerous and hopelessly intertwined, and Soviet policy deliberately made the situation even more complex.

The Armenians drove over half a million Azeris out of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and large adjacent entirely Azeri provinces in the 1992-94 war. Now the Azeri refugees will go home and 1,50,000 Armenians will have to seek new homes in Armenia proper. With supply lines severed, civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh could be cut off from food, running water and heat during the forthcoming Caucasus winter. Furthermore, they may be denied a route by which to flee to Armenia. The result could be a humanitarian disaster in which casualties of trapped civilians spike due to lack of food and medical supplies, exposure to cold, and non-stop artillery bombardment. None of it is fair but that's how it still works in much of the world.

(*Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.'*)

I WILL NOT CONTEST ELECTIONS OR HOIST THE TRICOLOUR UNTIL THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ENFORCED ON AUGUST 5 ARE ROLLED BACK.

—PDP CHIEF
MEHBOoba MUFTI

POINT COUNTER POINT



THE NATION AND THE NATIONAL FLAG COME FIRST, AFTER THAT COME STATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES. THE NATIONAL FLAG IS OUR IDENTITY.

—PDP REBEL
HUSSAIN A WAFFA

analysis

07

Dragon unscathed

Despite the severe fall in world trade and a strong anti-China sentiment, thus far it is business as usual, at least in the short run, for Beijing



DIPALI YADAV SHUBHAM KUMAR

The world economy has witnessed a turbulent time ever since the pandemic began in December 2019. Leading economies like the US, Australia and the UK had directed a lot of anger and censure against China for the economic and humanitarian crises it had triggered. The global rumblings made it clear that the trade from China would come under wider sanctions and the world would seek alternatives in other export powerhouses. Plus, the present global order would lean towards a multi-polar world.

The estimates published by the *Trade Map* reveal that despite such assertions and a seemingly sturdy worldwide dissent, exports from China showed remarkable resilience. Comparing the monthly Chinese exports data from December 2019 (the pre-pandemic level) to that of July this year, *Trade Map* shows that overall exports seamlessly resumed the pre-pandemic level. The data nevertheless uncovers how variegated were the retorts of economies to the Chinese export basket during the global crisis.

Figure 1 shows that out of the 20 largest importers, that comprise just about three-quarters of total Chinese exports, nine importers have already surpassed the pre-pandemic level. That includes the US, Australia and the UK. The three economies which are far from the pre-pandemic level are India, Indonesia and Singapore. The remaining are struggling but within a 10 per cent range of their pre-pandemic level. Figure 2 relooks at these numbers on the basis of year-over-year change in Chinese exports. Most of the importing countries, including all the nine importers who surpassed the pre-pandemic level, and Vietnam, Malaysia, Russia and Singapore perform better than the global average. In this case as well, India and Indonesia perform way below average. These numbers should be put in the present context of slowing down of the world economy and wavering of international trade. Except for China, no other major economy has shown a positive Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in the second quarter (Q2 April-June) of this year as per data published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Of all these, the two worst-hit economies are the UK and India. From the available data in *Trade Map*, we found that the UK, the US, Germany and France have nearly hit their pre-pandemic level in total imports. However, for India, as the figures from the Ministry of Commerce suggest, the total imports of July are still lower than that of December 2019. A strict nationwide lockdown (causing demand distress and sluggish supply), and a raging contagion are the main reasons for such results. Interestingly, the relative rise of Chinese imports is steeper than the overall imports for India. The maximum buoyancy for imports, including Chinese imports, is shown by the UK, despite a severe contraction in the quarter-on-quarter GDP growth.

So, are there "green shoots" all over for Chinese exports? Two economies — South Korea and Indonesia — tend to suggest differently. In terms of their GDP growth rate, they are among the least-affected major economies in the pandemic-induced contraction. For Indonesia, whether in terms of attaining the pre-pandemic level or year-over-year growth, imports from China fall short significantly. For South Korea, Chinese imports remain short of the pre-pandemic level but exceed the year-over-year imports. Again, these results should not be a big concern for China as similar to India, Chinese imports for these two economies are also increasing faster than overall imports.

How did China manage to resume its exports

POINT COUNTER POINT



THE NATION AND THE NATIONAL FLAG COME FIRST, AFTER THAT COME STATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES. THE NATIONAL FLAG IS OUR IDENTITY.

—PDP REBEL
HUSSAIN A WAFFA

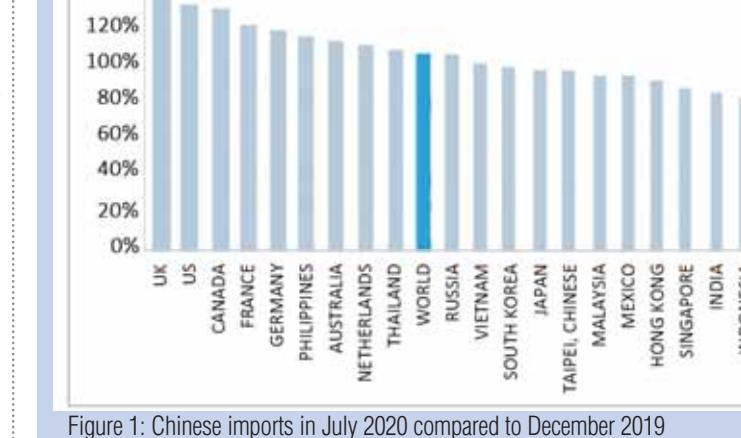


Figure 1: Chinese imports in July 2020 compared to December 2019
Source: *Trade Map, International Trade Centre*

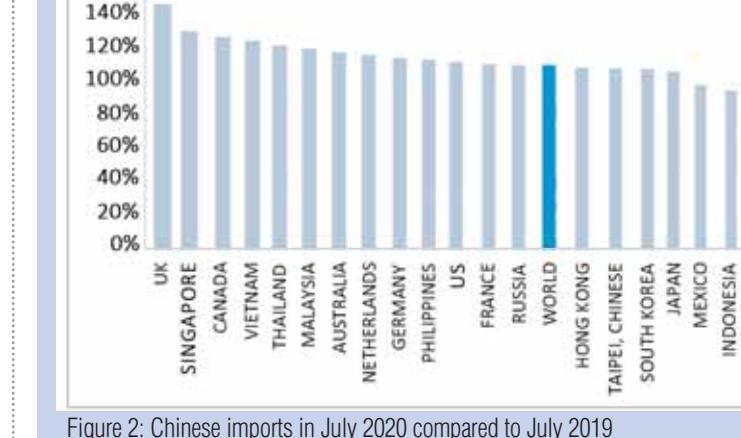


Figure 2: Chinese imports in July 2020 compared to July 2019
Source: *Trade Map, International Trade Centre*

and what are those products? To answer these questions, we explored the trends in the export basket over a one-year period. At the outset, let us see the usual suspects that are driven by the upsurge in global demand and are mostly relating to consumer durables and essentials in the pandemic times. Mechanical appliances like air conditioners and refrigerators, electronic goods like televisions and medical equipment like ventilators and surgical instruments sustained decent overall growth. Their share in total exports increased from 45 per cent to 47 per cent during the year. Nevertheless, the biggest winners were apparel, toys, chemicals and pharmaceutical products.

In particular, exports of textile articles like rugs, curtains and kitchen linen more than tripled this year. Similarly, toys, right from dolls, figurines and pedal cars to video game consoles, too, registered a big boost. Exports of miscellaneous chemical products, including laboratory-based and industry-based chemicals, showed a consistent and significant growth. Meanwhile, the decline in world trade marks a nearly one-fourth drop overall by the end of Q2 this year. Thus, there are some "brown shoots" visible in the Chinese exports, too, as the nation is facing the brunt of the global downturn in some of its key sectors. The worst-hit sectors are agri-food products, footwear,

leather, metals, minerals and the transportation industry. While there is somewhat stable world trade in agri-food products, it has not been the case for China. Whether it is fruits, nuts, meat, seafood or foodgrains, exports have slowed down significantly with the exceptions of dairy produce, tea, coffee and spices.

This decline in food exports is the result of increased trade barriers, the Corona outbreak and supply chain disruptions, along with shifting consumer preferences. The sluggishness in the metals and minerals industry comes from weakened industrial activities worldwide. The headwinds in all the sub-sectors of the transportation industry, including automotive, railways, shipping and aircraft, are due to the restricted community mobility because of the lockdown, and the slowing down of economic activities in many countries that led to limited spending on capital-intensive goods.

So, is this fall in export of agri-food products and other goods pandemic-induced? The answer is that the contagion is just part of the reason. A glimpse at the year-over-year trend of these products indicates that the exports for many of these products were already slowing down due to the trade wars and a mounting protectionist regime globally. The outbreak just further accelerated this decline.

Despite the severe fall in world trade and a strong anti-China sentiment, thus far it is business as usual, at least in the short run. Factors such as "first in, first out" from the pandemic, which exclusively enabled China to ramp up production for COVID-19 essentials, along with various comparative advantages such as scale production, technology and higher global exposure, impeded immediate changes. The costs and gestation period of bringing systemic changes were huge and the ability to make those adjustments was weakened by the Corona-induced woes.

However, the increasing costs of the pandemic and more focus on equity, environment and global health may lead to further implications in the dynamics between China and the world in the long run. Amid all these dramatic changes, particularly in the context of India's socio-economic difficulties since March, we can't but help think of the "Ides of March." In our case they have come ... but not gone. (*Yadav and Kumar are Research Scholars at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi and Indian Institute of Management, Shillong, respectively.*)

Innovative farming needed to combat climate change

Food production is critical to keep the wheels of the economy turning. We must not allow climate change to hijack our food security



KOTA SRI RAJ

The rapidly worsening condition of the environment is increasingly creating harsh terms for agriculture in India. The sudden floods, such as those experienced by Telangana last week, and unexpected droughts in many areas coupled with a sheer drop in yield per acre are creating financial havoc for the farming community. Moreover, the recently-passed farm Acts have added to the woes of the already burdened growers. Farmers have become unsure of the future, especially regarding the produce and how

through hurdles. The challenges thrown up by the environment in the form of rising temperatures and erratic rainfall, too, need to be met and responded to by the growers effectively and innovatively. The Government must enable farmers to deal with this instead of giving the impression of being callous about their welfare.

As politics rages over the Acts, worrisome developments are escaping the attention of policy-makers and the authorities concerned. A decade-wise observation of rainfall patterns shows that from October to December, rainfall has been at a record low of 100.06 mm for the 2010-2019 period as compared to 106.29 mm during the similar period in 2000-2010. The average post-monsoon rainfall has fallen below 110 mm. Coupled with this, droughts are getting more frequent and prolonged each year. Mid-2018 saw heat-waves fanning across India followed by scanty rainfall in the same year and in 2019 as well. These circumstances exacerbated the already daunting challenges



for farmers, who had to bend over backwards to take the yield out of the parched land.

The adverse impact of the worsening environment on agriculture cannot be reversed overnight but the lot of the farmers cannot be allowed to deteriorate further as well. Therefore,

there is an urgent need to innovate and evolve agricultural methods and initiatives that are capable of rescuing them from the grip of climate change. There is also a need to provide a sustainable solution that can be amplified across the sector on a large scale. An example of how this turnaround can be affected is available in a study published in the journal *Earth System Science*.

The research focussed on rice crops, which are the mainstay of South India's agriculture. Rice also happens to be a major part of the diet of the southern population. The study concentrated on how the rise in temperatures, followed by scanty rainfall, was impacting the rice yield in Kerala, which was the chosen field of observation. The participants, who included experts from Japan, recommended altering the varieties of rice to a more heat-resistant strain that could withstand the fluctuating temperatures and yet be resilient enough to deliver an adequate crop yield. The experts also opined that the traditional sowing time

needs to be shifted in consonance with the changing weather patterns so that the crop is in tandem with the weather trends. They recommended sowing at the end of July or the beginning of August in order to improve the quality of crop and provide ideal crop maturity time.

The study is an essential tool that provides baseline observations for ensuring future crop planning and maximising yield that accounts for climate variables, maximum and minimum temperatures, rainfall and solar radiation. The fact that the study was able to assess future crop yield projection amid constant carbon dioxide and meteorological values is crucial.

Furthermore, the tool of Growing

Days (GDD) incorporated into the study helped provide robust outcomes and observations. For the uninitiated, GDD is a measure to estimate the growth and development of plants in the growing season. The study was conducted using the CERES-Rice Cropping System Model.

Food production is critical to keep the wheels of the economy turning. We mustn't allow climate change to hijack our food security. This is only possible by being a step ahead of climate change complications.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

GOP hunts for new voters in Donald Trump territory



Slippery Rock: President Donald Trump's campaign has a bold theory for how he will win reelection: It can tap a universe of millions of supporters who did not vote for him in 2016 but will do so this time.

Supposedly, these voters are overlooked by polls that show Trump consistently trailing Democrat Joe Biden. They are mostly the white working class from factory towns, farms and mining communities that Trump has elevated to near-mythic status as the "forgotten Americans."

They are disaffected and disconnected from conventional politics. Yet they flock to the president's rallies, plaster their yards with signs and have been filling up voter registration rolls, the campaign insists.

In few places will this strategy be tested as in Pennsylvania, a critical state that Trump carried by only 44,292 votes out of 6.1 million cast in 2016. A Democratic surge of votes in

cities and suburbs could quickly erase that narrow lead. To hold on Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes, the president needs to prove that a hidden groundswell of supporters exists — and will vote.

But the math behind the theory is tight. Trump's plan requires blowout victories and historic turnout in conservative strongholds across the state, places where he outperformed traditional Republicans four years ago and he knows must do even better.

His mission is made clear by his campaign stops in Pennsylvania this week — a tour through GOP areas like Latrobe, Littitz and Martinsburg. "Trump has to drive turnout," said Terry Madonna, a professor at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster who has conducted polls in the state for almost three decades. "I don't see any evidence that he's expanded his base."

The strategy is more difficult to execute given the stunning disruption wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, both in terms of a public health crisis and nationwide economic dislocation. **AP**

posted to Trump's website - donaldjtrump.com - the hackers claimed to have compromised "multiple devices" that gave them access to the president and his relatives "most internal and secret conversations," including classified information.

The hackers also accused the Trump administration of having a hand in the origins of the coronavirus and cooperating with "foreign actors manipulating the 2020 elections."

The NYT added that the hackers appeared to be looking to generate cryptocurrency and invited visitors to donate cryptocurrency to one of two funds — 'Yes, share the data' and the other labeled 'No, Do not share the data.'

PTI

Trump's campaign website briefly hacked, defaced

New York: US President Donald Trump's campaign website was briefly hacked on Tuesday, just a week before the presidential elections.

The spokesman for the Trump campaign, Tim Murtough, said in a statement that the website was "defaced."

"We are working with law enforcement authorities to investigate the source of the attack. There was no exposure to sensitive data because none of it is actually stored on the site. The website has been restored," Murtough said.

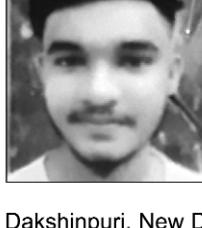
A report in The New York Times said Trump's campaign website was briefly taken over by hackers and the hack lasted less than 30 minutes.

The paper said in a screen

that the website had been hacked, with the word "DEFACED" written across the top of the homepage. The website has since been restored.

PTI

SEARCH FOR MISSING



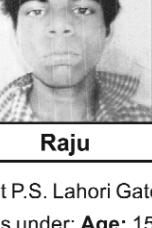
General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Nitin, S/o Monu Chouhan, R/o H.No. B/1321, Phase-2, Holambi Kalan Metro, Delhi, Age: Approx 19 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Face: Round, wearing White Shirt and White Pant,** has been missing from his maternal grandparent place i.e. F-Block, Dakshinpur, New Delhi since 20.09.2020. In this regard a **FIR No. 615/20, Dated 20.09.2020, has been registered at P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, New Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/244/SD/2020

SHO
P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, New Delhi
Ph: 011-29052304, 29051917

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

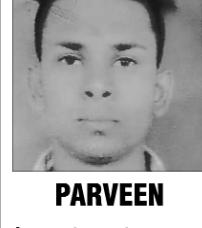


General Public is hereby informed that one boy **Named: Raju, S/o Jaggi Prasad, R/o: Ghee Mandi, Tank Road, Agra, U.P.,** has been kidnapped since **08.04.2014** from the area of P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 120/14 U/s 363 IPC dated 08.04.2014** has been registered at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. The description of the kidnapped boy is as under: **Age: 15 years, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Normal, Wearing: White & blue colour shirt and pink colour lower.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
SHO
P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
DP/639/N/2020
Ph.: 011-23953776, 8750870122

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON



General public is hereby informed that this person namely **Parveen S/o Kishan Singh R/o H.No. 12, Bhagat Singh Park, Siraspur, Delhi** **Age : 27 years, Height : 5'5", Face : Round, Complexion : Fair, Build : Normal, wearing pink colour T-shirt, blue colour pajama and red colour Relaxo chappie in feet,** has been missing since 16.10.2020 from his house. In this regard DD No. 67-A dated 17.10.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel: 24368638/24368641

SHO
P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi
Ph. : 011-27854757, 27854799
DP/560/ON/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one child namely **Jeeshan S/o Rifkat R/o H.No. 193 Gali No. 8, B-Block Vijay Colony, Bawana, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since **13.10.2020** from the area of PS: Bawana, Delhi. In this regard, a case **FIR No. 642/2020 U/s 363 IPC dated 16.10.2020** has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi. The description of the missing child as under:

Age: 11 Years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 3' 5", Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Mehroon colour T-shirt, Blue colour pant and Black colour sleepers in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the Kanjhawa police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped child then please inform P.S. Bawana, Delhi at following Tel. No./e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
SHO
P.S. Bawana, Delhi
Ph: 011-27751949, 27756090, 7065036521
DP/553/ON/2020

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JEESHAN

Poles join nationwide strike in revolt over abortion ruling

Warsaw: People across Poland are vowing to stay off their jobs on Wednesday as part of a nationwide strike to protest a top court ruling that bans abortions to women even in cases where a child is sure to die upon birth, said officials.

The nationwide strike comes amid a deepening stand-off between angry crowds who have been taking to the streets over the ruling and Poland's deeply conservative government, which has vowed not to back down.

The constitutional court ruling last Thursday has triggered daily mass protests across this central European nation of 38 million that are exposing deep divisions in a country long a bastion of conservative

Catholicism that is now undergoing rapid social transformation. Rage over the ruling, which would deny legal abortions to women even in cases where a child is sure to die upon birth, has been directed at the Roman Catholic church and Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the ruling party leader and most powerful politician in the country.

In actions unthinkable before, women entered churches on Sunday to disrupt Masses, confronted priests with obscenities and spray-painted church buildings.

Kaczynski accused protesters of seeking "to destroy Poland" late Tuesday and called on his party's supporters to defend churches "at any cost." **AP**

Around the Globe

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

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AMID MASSIVE SELL-OFF Investors' wealth tumbles by ₹1.56L crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Investors' wealth plunged by ₹1.56 lakh crore on Wednesday as markets witnessed a massive sell-off amid muted global sentiments.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 599.64 points or 1.48 per cent lower to end the day at 39,224.46 points.

During the day, the index plunged 747.5 points to 39,774.60.

Following the sell-off in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped by ₹1,56,739.58 crore to ₹1,58,22,119.75 crore.

"Markets traded under pressure and lost over a per cent. After the flat start, the benchmark gradually inched lower amid muted global sentiments due to rising cases in US and Europe," Ajit Mishra,

VP (Research) at Religare Broking Ltd, said.

IndusInd Bank was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, declining 3.45 per cent, followed by HDFC, ICICI Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and HDFC Bank.

BSE bankex, finance and metal indices fell up to 2.28 per cent while telecom and capital goods indices climbed as much as 2.90 per cent.

In the broader market, the BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices dipped up to 0.93 per cent.

New National Retail Trade Policy in final stages: Minister

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is in the final stages of preparing a new National Retail Trade Policy, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said on Wednesday.

"We are in the final stage of drafting a National Logistics Policy, a New Industrial Policy, a e-commerce Policy and a National Retail Trade policy," he said at the inaugural virtual session of 'FICCI MASS-MERIZE 2020'.

The national retail trade policy is being formulated to support the development of the sector that will benefit 65 million small traders, besides contributing a significant chunk to India's GDP, he added.

Parkash said that the government will extend all support to the e-commerce and retail industry through various policies.

The minister also urged the industry to come forward and contribute towards

making India Atmanirbhar in every possible way and to elevate the country's image globally.

Parkash said that Covid-19 has had an impact on the people, economy and the businesses, but the industry has worked along with the government to contain the spread of the virus.

He also said that the government has already launched a series of programmes to transform India into a global economic hub.

"In the last few years, we have seen significant improvements in ease of doing business ranking, which has been possible due to transformative measures taken by the government," he said.

"Wholesale prices at Posta market have come down to Rs

Imported onion likely to ease prices in city wholesale market

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The 15th Finance Commission is on course to finalise its report by October 30, an official statement said on Wednesday.

The Commission's Chairman NK Singh along with its members on Wednesday held a virtual meeting with the Chairmen of two previous Finance Commissions -- C Rangarajan and Vijay Kelkar - respectively.

Rangarajan and Kelkar chaired the 12th and 13th Finance Commissions, respectively. "The Chairmen of the previous Finance Commissions appreciated the tough challenge faced by the 15th Finance Commission, given the background of the Covid-19 pandemic, the resultant loss of economic activity and its impact on fiscal parameters of the general government," the statement said.

National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (Nafed) has also offloaded a large portion of its buffer stock of onion, which too helped in containing the price rise, they said.

Since the last few weeks, onion prices have remained northbound after crop loss in south India due to incessant rain. The retail price of the bulb had crossed Rs 90 a kg in Kolkata.

"Wholesale prices at Posta market have come down to Rs

55-60 a kg from a high of Rs 67.50 a few days ago. Some parcels of onion from Afghanistan and Egypt have arrived in the wholesale market which helped ease the price," agri analyst Siby Malakar said.

Officials said that Nafed had created a buffer stock of 1 lakh tonne this year to manage onion prices. It is almost double that of the previous year.

According to reports, Nafed had already released 43,000 tonne from the buffer stock and another 22,000 tonne will be offloaded in the first week of November.

Rabindranath Kole, a member of the West Bengal government's task force on agriculture, said that the price of onion would remain firm till December.

15th Finance Comm on course to finalise report by end of this month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private sector lender RBL Bank on Wednesday reported over two-fold jump in its standalone net profit to ₹144 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The bank had posted a net profit of ₹54 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal.

Its total revenue grew by 6 per cent during July-September period of 2020-21 to ₹1,388 crore as against ₹1,310 crore a year ago, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing.

The net interest income grew by 7 per cent to ₹932 crore. The net interest margin was flat at 4.34 per cent, the bank said.

The bank's gross non-performing assets jumped to 3.34 per cent of the gross advances at the September-end FY21, compared to 2.60 per cent a year ago.

However, net NPAs improved to 1.38 per cent as against 1.56 per cent. In value terms, the gross NPAs stood at ₹1,911.72 crore at the end of Q2FY21 compared to ₹1,539.10 crore. Net NPAs were down at ₹755.77 crore from ₹912.30 crore.

Paddy procurement up 26% this kharif season

GOVT PROCURES 170.53 LAKH TONNE AT ₹32,196 CR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Food Corporation of India and State procurement agencies have bought 26 per cent more paddy so far in this year's kharif marketing

season at 170.53 lakh tonne for ₹32,196 crore.

Paddy procurement for kharif 2020-21 is continuing at a good pace in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala and Gujarat with purchase of over 170.53 lakh tonne of paddy till Tuesday against 134.85 lakh tonne in the same period last

year.

Out of the total purchase, Punjab alone has contributed 114.97 lakh tonne, which is around 67 per cent of the total procurement.

"About 14.37 lakh farmers have already been benefitted from the ongoing KMS procurement Operations with MSP value of Rs 32,195.69 crore," an official statement said.

Crypto platform's foray into banking in India through co-op credit society

New Delhi: Cashaa, a London-based online cryptocurrency platform, has inked ties with the United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society to provide savings accounts and loans to its customers and crypto investors in India. Now members of the United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society can now buy cryptocurrencies. "This will allow us to build, scale and offer customised financial and crypto products for the local Indian markets," said Dinesh Kukreja, CEO of United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society.

J&K Lt Guv denies reports on agri land, launches MIS for apples

IANS ■ SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday assured that no agricultural land would be alienated to any non-resident person and launched the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)-2020 for the apple crop in the Valley.

Denying media reports to the contrary, he however said that for industrial investment and employment opportunities, non-agricultural land would be optimally utilised.

He said that horticulture is one of the priority sectors of J&K due to its unique agro-climatic diversity, which makes it ideal for varied cultivation.

"The horticulture sector, in particular, has an immense growth potential and the J&K government is making all-out efforts to tap the potential to give a fillip to the socio-economic condition of stakeholders in the sector and contribute to the betterment of apple growers," he said.

The Lt Governor observed that the objective of the newly launched MIS is to facilitate the stakeholders by providing optimum prices to the growers in the region during COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Neeraj Malik, Savita, H No 22 Main Palla Chowk, Sehatpur/Faridabad, A/c:- LBFD00001983283 & LBFD00002441237	409 C, Sector- 91, Surya Nagar, Phase- I, Faridabad	18-Sep-2020, Rs.10,43,767/- Rs.7,02,144/-	30/11/2019
2.	Santhosh A, Gopika Murali, 35-d Pkt A-1, LIG Flats, Mayur Vihar- 3, Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00001980505	Flat No-193, 3rd Floor Dda LIG Flats Pkt-d, Loknayak Puram, Delhi	18-Sep-2020, Rs.7,07,018.2/- Rs.8,56,849.4/-	30/11/2019
3.	Veer Pal Singh, Geeta Rani, C- 135, Prem Nagar Lain Par, Putlighar, Moradabad, A/c:-LBN0002360035 & LBN00001973695	B- 401 4th Floor Tower T3, Shubhkamna Epic Plot No Gh 02a Sector 12, Greater Noida	18-Sep-2020, Rs.1,90,196/- Rs.2,57,344/-	28/02/2019
4.	Rakesh Srivastava, Vertika Srivastava, Flat No 09154 Ats Advantage, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, A/c:- LBN0002254844 & LBND00002243908	Flat No 302 3rd Floor, Tower- 8, NRI Residency, Plot No Gh- 04A, Sector- 45 Noida, Noida 201301	18-Sep-2020, Rs.1,81,278.29/- Rs.62,33,966/-	31/12/2019
5.	Neeraj Malik, Savita, H No 22 Main Palla Chowk, Sehatpur, Faridabad, A/c:- LBFD00002441237 & LBFD00001983283	409 C, Sector- 91, Surya Nagar, Phase- I, Faridabad	19-Sep-2020, Rs.7,02,144/- Rs.10,45,366/-	30/11/2019
6.	Rakesh Pilwan, Jagbir Singh, H. No.100, 31c Sector, Fatehpur, Faridabad, A/c:-LBDEL00001978433 & LBDEL00001745500	House No- 1002 21c Faridabad Board Colony, Type- 1, Faridabad	19-Sep-2020, Rs.82,978/- Rs.15,79,833/-	30/06/2019
7.	Sonia Gulati, Plot No- 374, 1st Floor, Shakti Khand- 3, Ghaziabad, Indrapuram, A/c:-LBND00002432756	Flat No H/ CA404, 4th Floor, City Apartment, Aditya World City, Plot No Gh 06, Ghaziabad	11-Sep-2020, Rs.67,882/-	31/07/2019
8.	Vivek Srivastava, Mithileshwar Prasad, 653, Mall Road, Sector- 29, Near DPS Noida, Noida, A/c:-LBND00001144843	Flat No. D- 201, Parsvnath Majestic Floors, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad	11-Sep-2020, Rs.1,36,201/-	29/02/2020
9.	Anant Srivastava, Suman Devi, Suman, 34, B, IIrr Floor, Prateek Market, Near Dda Flat, Delhi, Munirka, A/c:-LBN00002094753	Flat No- SFS-183, SFS Flat, Second Floor, Pocket- 1, Sector- 1, Dwarka, Delhi	11-Sep-2020, Rs.42,831.15/-	30/11/2019
10.	Anant Srivastava, Suman, 34- B, IIrr Floor Prateek Market, Near Dda Flat, Munirka Delhi, A/c No- LBND00000948737	Flat No- SFS -183, SFS Flat, Second Floor, Pocket-1, Sector-1, Dwarka, Delhi	11-Sep-2020, Rs.2,05,557/-	30/11/2019
11.	Anant Srivastava, 34- B, IIrr Floor Prateek Market Near Dda Flat, Munirka Delhi, A/c No- LBND00000948733	Flat No- SFS -183, SFS Flat, Second Floor, Pocket- 1, Sector- 1, Dwarka, Delhi	11-Sep-2020, Rs.5,15,154/-	30/11/2019
12.	Shaboni Chakraborty, Dipankar Das, 24A, Vijay Mandal Enclave, New Delhi, Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00000487179	Plot No 2308, Sector- A, Green Field Colony, Faridabad	11-Sep-2020, Rs.12,87,272/-	30/09/2018
13.	Ravi Sharma, Yashoda, F- 2/50 Pocket- A, Near Ksk Academy, Sangam Vihar, Delhi, South Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00000487179	NO III/175-A EWS First Floor, Nyay Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad	11-Sep-2020, Rs.10,05,687/-	31/12/2019
14.	Arpit Jain, 2529 Dhamra Pura, Dariba Kalan, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, North Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00003225617	Flat No- E- 0902, 9th Floor, Tower- E, Misty Heights, Sector- Adjoining Tech Zone IV, Sports City, Gr Noida, District Gautam Budh Nagar	11-Sep-2020, Rs.94,354/-	31/03/2019
15.	Bhawna Sood, Sneha Sood, A 29, Parwana Appt, Mayur Vihar Phase 1, Delhi, New Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00003005510	Flat No T9/402, 2nd Floor, Sunworld Arista, Gh 01/C, Sector- 168, Noida	11-Sep-2020, Rs.3,07,703/-	31/12/2019
16.	RGF Holiday & Resorts (i) Pvt Ltd, Girijesh Kumar Jha, Gulvendra Singh, F- 8CS, First Floor, 3rd Floor Corporate Suits, Ghaziabad, Ansal Plaza Vaishali, A/c:-LBDEL00002211383	D-11 4th Floor, Sushant Aquapolis Group Housing, Phase- 1, Village Dhundhera, Ghaziabad	11-Sep-2020, Rs.12,56,854/-	31/12/2019
17.	Harendra Singh Rana, Richa Rana, Flat No-11/1, Emilia 4 Vatika City, Sohna Road, Gurgaon, A/c:-LBDEL00002067655	EFP-25-0401, Emerald Floors, Premier Emerald Estate, Sector 55, Gurgaon	11-Sep-2020, Rs.44,85,535/-	31/03/2020
18.	Sanjay Pratap, Usha, 635 Housing Board Colony, Saraswati Vihar, Chakarpur, Gurgaon, A/c:-LBDEL00002055213	Tower- C 1/1207, 12th Floor, T S 05, Sector- 22D, Golf Village, Golf Country, Yamuna Expressway, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida	11-Sep-2020, Rs.9,91,744.83/-	31/01/2020
19.	Pankaj Maneck, Neeta Maneck, 14/10, 1st Floor, Shakti Nagar, Malla Ganj, Delhi, New Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00001170617	Part Of Property Number 14/ 10, First Floor, Shakti Nagar, Delhi, New Delhi	11-Sep-2020, Rs.8,49,723.73/-	29/02/2020
20.	Manoj Kumar, Sadhna **, A-1650 2nd Floor Green Field Near NSBC, Faridabad, Haryana, A/c:-LBND000000476022	Flat No A-1650, 2nd Floor, Green Field Colony, Faridabad, Haryana	30-Sep-2020, Rs.5,68,415/- Rs.2,31,551/-	31-01-2020
21.	Taranjeet Singh, Inder Jeet Kaur, House No			

Trend Blazer

Realised my height next to Big B: SRK

SHAH RUKH KHAN conducted an interactive session with fans on Twitter, answering a lot of fan queries with trademark wit.

When a user asked him to share some behind the scene moments of the film

Mohabbatein, SRK recalled filming his first scene with Amitabh Bachchan. "I remember doing the first scene with @SrBachchan and realised how short and small I am," he quipped.

SRK also spoke about how he keeps himself busy lately. "Children, work-out, watch IPL (feel bad/ good)," SRK wrote.

The actor is currently in the UAE to support his cricket team, KKR.

'Ever since I can remember, I would dance on Khaike paan Banaras wala! I would dance on all the Amitabh Bachchan dance numbers and entertain everyone. My mother was a doctor. Whenever she brought over friends home, I would go to them and say 'I want to show you a dance', and become the centre of attraction. The aunties would clap, laugh and give me gulab jamun! I wanted to be like Mr Bachchan!'

—Divya Dutta



Rapper Yo Yo HONEY SINGH does not consider himself as number one in anything as he says the position is only for his fans.

He says people often do not like his music initially but his tracks grow on listeners gradually.

"People don't like it in the beginning but slowly my music and songs grow, and I keep believing in that. I always try to do something different even though people understand it late. Finally people like and love it. I don't like to call myself a rapper. I am just an entertainer," he said.

My kids love to wrestle: Anne

Hollywood star ANNE HATHAWAY says her two sons Jonathan and Jack have a cute relationship. She added that the siblings love to wrestle with each other.

Talking about how Jonathan is "coping" with having a younger brother, Hathaway said, "No coping, just love. Now Jack's big enough to wrestle with, and that's brought a new element to their relationship that's really cute."

Hathaway shared that she was pregnant with Jack while filming her forthcoming film, *The Witches*, adding that she had to deny wearing "tight" clothes on the film's set.



An old school soul

Actor FATIMA SANA SHAIKH tells AYUSHI SHARMA that she doesn't understand the concept of virtual dating and modern relationships. She believes more in the idea of in-person meetings and retro romance, similar to that of her forthcoming film, *Suraj Pe Mangal Bhaari*

One could easily recall the character of Geeta Phogat from *Dangal*. The credit goes to actor Fatima Sana Shaikh, who played it with utmost sincerity, honest emotions and sheer hard work, making people believe that she is a great talent for the future. However, things turned out to be different for her than how she expected them to be. Even though she received a lot of appreciation for her role, not only from the audience but from many actors and filmmakers too, she couldn't bag many roles post that. Fatima understood, unlike many other young artistes, that one big banner film could not always turn out to be your big break in Bollywood. And just like her reel self, she never gave up in her real life too. She stayed patient in her approach towards getting roles and only took the ones she wanted to play on the big screen. One such character is that of Tulsi aka Tina in *Suraj Pe Mangal Bhaari* alongside actors Manoj Bajpayee and Diljit Dosanjh. The film, directed by Abhishek Sharma, is a slice-of-life story of a young man Suraj (played by Diljit) trying to find a life partner. As luck would have it, Suraj's plans are interrupted by Mangal (played by Manoj) and the two find themselves caught in a chase. Here are the excerpts of the interview:

□ How does your character enrich your journey as an actor?

I am playing a Maharashtrian middle class girl. She's as simple as a "gharelu ladki". There's a boy who has come in to her life, a secret that she is hiding from her family. Her brother is a wedding detective, who does a background check of grooms. He is basically being very difficult. The story revolves around these three people,

Even if Diljit (Dosanjh) is reserved around girls, he has this special trait to make you feel comfortable. And I think that is all you need... This quality of his actually helped both of us to create that chemistry



Priyanka in Hollywood rom-com

Priyanka Chopra Jonas stars with Grammy-winner Celine Dion and actor Sam Heughan in an forthcoming romantic drama, tentatively titled *Text For You*.

"So excited to kick start this amazing film with such incredible people! Jim Strouse, Sam Heughan, Celine Dion. It's my honour. Let's gooooo," Priyanka tweeted while sharing the screenshot of the announcement.

Written and directed by Jim Strouse, the film is an English remake of the German-language film *SMS Fur Dich*, based on Sofie Cramer's novel. According to the storyline, Priyanka's character is a heartbroken woman who has just lost her fiance. In her attempt to send constant messages to her fiance's old number, she will connect with a man across town suffering from a similar heartbreak. Celine Dion's music aims at

connecting the two and give them the courage to take a second shot at love.

Heughan is best known for his role as an actor and producer in the hit series *Outlander*. He was recently seen in the Vin Diesel-starrer comic-book flick *Bloodshot* and in the action comedy *The Spy Who Dumped Me*, co-starring Mila Kunis, Kate McKinnon, Justin Theroux and Gillian Anderson. "So excited to be joining this incredible cast," wrote Heughan on Instagram.

Priyanka will next be seen in the film adaptation of *The White Tiger*, which she has also executive produced, and *We Can Be Heroes*, directed by Robert Rodriguez. She is currently developing an untitled comedy with Mindy Kaling and Dan Goor, and also working on Russo Brothers' *Citadel* and *The Matrix 4*.

—IANS

Not an accidental actor: Bhumi

My life has been a journey of survival, says actor Bhumi Pednekar. In her five year cinematic journey, Bhumi has entertained us with some great performances in films like *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*, *Saand Ki Aankh*, *Sonchiriyaa*, *Pati, Patni Aur Woh*, *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitaare*. She reveals why she decided to pursue a career in acting and her journey thereafter!

Bhumi says, "It's been five years and it still feels like a dream! I am not an accidental actor and I say this time and again. This is something that I really wanted to do and I have worked really hard to be here. I am born and brought up in Mumbai so that definitely helped because just having some sort of a support system in the city, it makes your journey slightly easy. However, because I am not from a traditional film



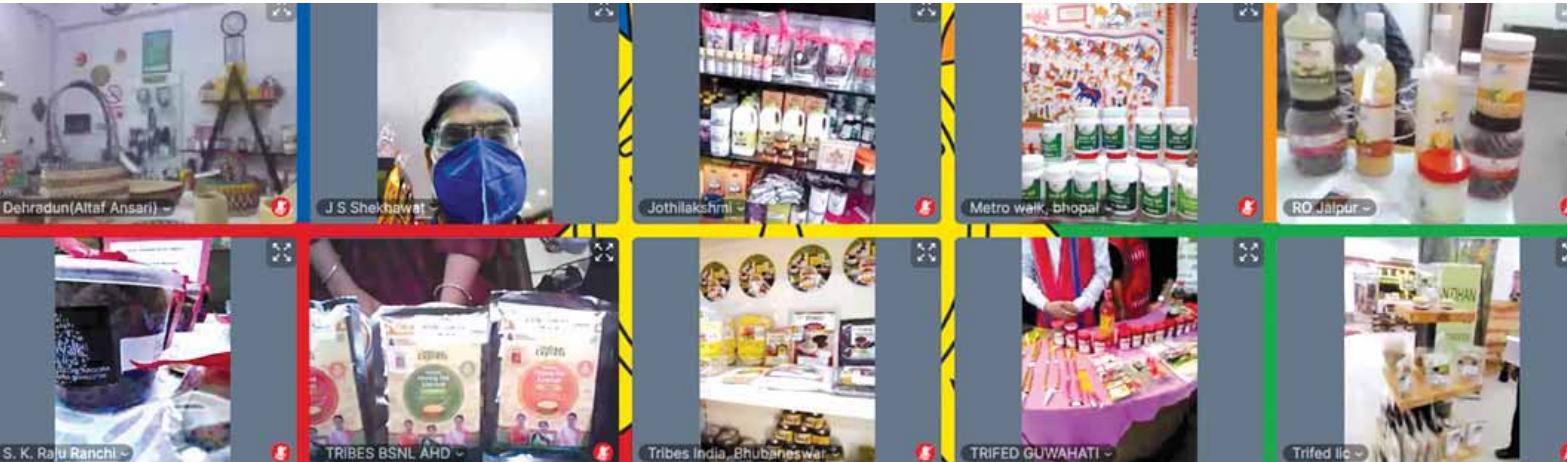
family or I really didn't have any contacts, I was very confused at first about how to go about it."

She adds, "First, I was figuring how do I convince my parents that I want to be an actor. I mustered courage to speak to my parents about it. They weren't very happy and I think they were being protective of me. So I decided to join film school and the fee was expensive so I took a loan."

She narrates how she failed in the film school, which really shook her. She shares, "I failed in film school not because I wasn't a good actor but because I wasn't disciplined enough and that was the biggest jhatka. I was like I have screwed up and I had this 13 lakh loan on my head. It was a huge amount. I started looking for a job for sur-

vival and to protect my dream to act. Again, my parents were completely against it because they wanted me to go back to studying but I told them that I'll get a degree from an open school."

She then joined YRF as a casting assistant. She adds, "When I was doing casting, my intent wasn't to gain information about if I want to be an actor. I was just observing as a film making student. I was like I want to be a part of this world and whatever door opens, I go in. In fact, that is how my life has been — a journey of survival. I have only tried to survive through the years till *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*. I was lucky that I kept getting these opportunities. Things kept happening one after the other and primarily from YRF."



VOCAL FOR LOCAL

Tribes India unveiled a new range of tribal produce, Forest Fresh Naturals & Organics, with an aim to support the livelihood of the community

Forest Fresh Naturals and Organics, a new range of tribal produce, was unveiled by Tribes India on Monday.

On a weekly basis, 100 new products will be launched and included in the Tribes India catalogue. The first set of 100 products have been launched online. These and the subsequently included products will be available in 125 outlets, mobile vans and on online platforms such as the Tribes India e-commerce (tribesindia.com) and e-tailers.



TODAY

VS

Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS 1
IPL
2020

KL Rahul

595 runs

Kagiso Rabada | 23 wickets



It was a strange phase of batting out there (in the last five overs), everything we hit went to the fielders and right into the hands as well, these things happen on the field



Time and time again, no matter the situation, Surya continues to show the class of a player he is. He must be very disappointed not to don the blue as yet for India but I think he is very close



We play MI next and RCB in the last match and if we keep playing the way we are, we will find it hard to win those games. So we have to change things and change them quickly



I asked David how should I approach and he told me that you should just bat freely. We needed to take chances in the first six overs and since it clicked, we got the momentum our way

DUGOUT**MOTION PICTURE**

Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer and opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan pose for photo after gym session

@DelhiCapitals



Delhi Capitals' Australian fast bowler Daniel Sams cuts cake to celebrate his 28th birthday with teammates Prithvi Shaw, Rishabh Pant and Shimon Hetmyer

@DelhiCapitals

ROHIT NEEDS 2-3 WEEKS REST TO BE FIT
 Indian cricket team physio Nitin Patel had informed the BCCI that opening batsman Rohit Sharma would require 2-3 weeks of rest to be fully fit and take part in India's tour of Australia before the selection committee picked the squads. Patel also sent a detailed medical report on Rohit Sharma to the board after consulting two other specialist doctors who also advised three more weeks of rest for the 33-year-old. "Patel had submitted a detailed fitness report of every player. It's a normal procedure where the Indian team physio informs the board and selection committee about which player is fit and which player is not. The selectors were informed that Rohit will not be available for selection due to injury. He even submitted two expert doctors' advice who both said Rohit needs rest for two to three weeks," a BCCI official said.

WE'VE TO RESET RIGHT NOW: PONTING
 Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting conceded that chasing is an area of concern for his team and it needs to hit the "reset" button to seal an IPL play-off spot in the remaining two league games after enduring a third straight loss. After a flying start, the Capitals suffered a hat-trick of losses — two of them while chasing — to slip to the third spot in IPL standings. "It's been a concern. When we decide to bowl first, we've given away big totals. We have to get better at that, we need to be better at bowling first and at chasing totals because so far, it hasn't worked for us," said Ponting during the post-match press conference. "We had a rough idea from the start of the game on how many points one might need to qualify. We got to seven wins quite quickly, and now lost three in a row. We have to reset right now," Ponting said.

GANGULY OVER THE MOON WITH RATINGS
 BCCI President Sourav Ganguly has been overwhelmed with the response which the ongoing edition of the IPL is getting in terms of viewership and ratings. "Unbelievable and I am not surprised at all. When we were discussing with Star and all the people concerned — if we have to do it this year and one-month prior to the tournament, we were contemplating, whether this can happen or not, what will be the ultimate result of the bio-bubble and will it be successful," Ganguly said while speaking on Star Sports Cricket Live show. "We decided to move ahead with our plan, because we wanted to bring normalcy in everyone's lives and wanted to bring the game back. I am not surprised with the feedback. This is the best tournament in the world," he added.

POINTS TABLE

		P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1	MI	12	8	4	+1.186	16
2	RCB	12	7	5	+0.048	14
3	DC	12	7	5	+0.030	14
4	KXIP	12	6	6	-0.049	12
5	KKR	12	6	6	-0.479	12
6	SRH	12	5	7	+0.396	10
7	RR	12	5	7	-0.505	10
8	CSK	12	4	8	-0.602	8

**SRH to 'wait & watch' on Saha's groin niggle**

DUBAI: Wriddhiman Saha's groin injury is "not serious" but his IPL franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad is expected to adopt a cautious approach after consultation with the BCCI's medical team as the senior wicket-keeper batsman is Australia-bound after the T20 event.

Saha had picked up the niggle during his match-winning innings of 87 off 45 balls against Delhi Capitals on Tuesday and didn't keep wickets with substitute Shreevats Goswami replacing him.

"Unfortunately, he's got a little groin niggle but hopefully it isn't too bad," SRH skipper Warner said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Saha is part of India's Test team which will play four games starting mid-December during the tour, which begins next month.

A senior BCCI source said that all the franchises have been told to be a bit cautious with regards to fitness of national team players.

"It doesn't look very serious at the moment but there is a three-day gap



before Sunrisers' next game (vs RCB on October 31). Let's keep our fingers crossed," the official said.

There is a possibility that Saha may be advised to skip the next two games and in case Sunrisers make it to play-offs, he would be fully fit.

During an IPL20.com interview with star spinner Rashid Khan, Saha said that he would "hopefully" soon recover from injury.

PTI

India to play D/N warm-up game ahead of 1st Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

The Indian cricket team will get an additional Day/Night warm-up game in Sydney as a tune-up to the series-opening Pink Ball Test against Australia in Adelaide from December 17, the host board announced on Wednesday unveiling the full schedule of the 69-day engagement.

The tour will include a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period in Sydney starting November 12 for the Indians who will fly in after the IPL final on November 10.

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy will begin with a Day-Night encounter at the Adelaide Oval on December 17, followed by Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (December 26), the Sydney Cricket Ground (January 7) and the Gabba (January 15).

As per BCCI's demands, there is a week's gap between the Boxing Day Test at the MCG and the New Year's Test at the SCG.

"India's squad will arrive in Sydney on November 12 subject to Australian Border Force travel authorisation and the appropriate departure approvals. The team will quarantine in Sydney prior to the first match of the series on November 27," Cricket Australia stated.



According to the release, the three-match ODI Series will have matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground (November 27, 29) and Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 2).

That will be followed by the three-match T20 International Series at Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 4) and the Sydney Cricket Ground (December 6, 8).

The Adelaide fixture will be the first Day-night Test played between the two teams.

Neither side has lost a day-night Test previously, with the Australians winning all four twilight Tests in Adelaide against New Zealand, South Africa, England and Pakistan, and India winning its only encounter at Eden Gardens versus Bangladesh in 2019.

Nick Hockley, CA's Interim CEO, said that the Boxing Day Test might feature spectators at the MCG as the board is coordinating with the Victorian State Government on the issue.

"...We are working with the Victorian Government and the Melbourne Cricket Club on plans to safely host spectators at the iconic event with details to be confirmed in due course," Hockley said.

CA's Interim CEO, Nick Hockley, said that the Boxing Day Test might feature spectators at the MCG as the board is coordinating with the Victorian State Government on the issue.

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