

OPINION 8
ATMANIRBHARTA
IN DEFENCE**WORLD 11**
WILL GIVE CITIZENSHIP TO 11 MILLION
ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IF ELECTED: BIDEN**SPORT 14**
MI START FAVOURITES
AGAINST KKR

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3

the pioneer

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I MISSED
THE SET LIFE:
MANUSHI
12 VIVACITY**CAPSULE****RAIN CLAIMS 27 LIVES IN 3 MAHARASHTRA DISTRICTS****Pune:** At least 27 people have died in rain-related incidents in Solapur, Sangli and Pune districts of Maharashtra, officials said on Thursday. Over 20,000 people were evacuated to safer places in these three districts.**GST SHORTFALL: CENTRE TO BORROW ₹1.1 L CR****New Delhi:** The Central Government will borrow up to ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the States to bridge the shortfall in GST collections, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.**MSY 'STABLE'****New Delhi:** The condition of Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav who has contracted COVID-19 is stable, sources said on Thursday. The 80-year-old leader is undergoing treatment at the Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon.**NO MESSAGE TO PAK FOR TALKS, SAYS INDIA****New Delhi:** India has not sent any message to Pakistan for talks as claimed by its Prime Minister Imran Khan's special advisor on national security, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday, and asserted that Islamabad's support to terrorism and use of abusive language against New Delhi are not conducive to normal neighbourly relations.**INDIA'S FIRST OSCAR WINNER BHANU DIES****Mumbai:** Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, died at her home on Thursday after prolonged illness, her daughter said.

Mind your own business, India tells China

MEA asserts Beijing has no locus standi to comment on 44 strategic bridges, reiterates 'Ladakh, J&K will remain an integral part of India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when Chinese President Xi Jinping asked his troops to "prepare for war", India on Thursday categorically rejected Beijing's objection to opening of 44 bridges in border areas, including Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, saying China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters.

The strong assertion by the Ministry of External Affairs came here two days after Zhao Lijian, spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, in Beijing had called border infrastructure development "the root cause for tension between the two sides" and said neither country should take action that might escalate tensions.

India's rebuttal also came against the backdrop of continuing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Jinping asking his troops to "prepare for war" according to state news agency Xinhua. "Troops should 'maintain a state of high alert... Put all (your) minds and energy into preparing for war," China's State news agency Xinhua quoted Xi Jinping as saying.

Troops should be "absolutely loyal, absolutely pure, and absolutely reliable", the Chinese President said during his visit to Marine corps of PLA in Chaozhou City. Sources said the President's remarks



were "not specifically directed at India," even though it came amid the border dispute in Ladakh.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava also brushed aside China's remark saying it does not recognise the Ladakh Union Territory.

This claim by the Chinese spokesperson came a day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated 44 permanent bridges, including eight in Ladakh and the same number in Arunachal Pradesh. These bridges will significantly bolster the logistical supplies to the troops deployed on the LAC facing China and the LoC with Pakistan.

Countering Beijing's contention, Srivastava made it amply clear here on Thursday that "the Union Territories of Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir have been, and will remain an integral part of India".

Maintaining that China has no locus standi to comment

on internal matters of India, he also said, "Our position on Arunachal Pradesh has been made clear several times. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. This fact has also been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side on several occasions, including at the highest level."

Elaborating on India's stand, the spokesperson also said New Delhi hopes that "countries will not comment on India's internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others".

The Chinese spokesperson had questioned the status of Ladakh and said, "First I want to make it clear that China does not recognise the Ladakh Union Territory illegally set up by the Indian side and Arunachal Pradesh. We stand against the development of infrastructure facilities aimed at military contention along the border area," the Chinese spokesperson had said.

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□ The statements came against the backdrop of continuing tension at the LAC and Jinping asking his troops to "prepare for war"

□ Zhao Lijian in Beijing had called border infrastructure development "the root cause for tension between the two sides"

□ China has repeatedly raised objection over Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh after it was given the status of a Union Territory last year

India to give Myanmar sub to counter China's sinister outreach bids

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant move to bolster defence relations with countries in the neighbourhood to counter Chinese influence, India will lease out a submarine to Myanmar. The 3,000-ton INS Sindhuvir submarine powered by diesel engines is now undergoing final refit at a dockyard in India.

India had a few months ago exported Shyena advanced light torpedoes to Myanmar as part of defence co-operation. The torpedoes were manufactured by public sector company Bharat Dynamics Limited.

The submarine transfer in the next few months comes at a time when India and China are locked in a five-month long stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Moreover, China in the past few years has ramped up its bid to enhance its influence in the countries bordering India by offering to provide military and economic aid. This long-term move is part of Beijing's strategy of having a "string of pearls" around India. It means having strong military and economic ties with all the nations thereby posing a grave challenge to India's national interests.

Announcing India's decision about the submarine, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said here on Thursday, "This will be the first submarine of Myanmar Navy... Cooperation in the maritime domain is a part of our diverse and enhanced engagement with Myanmar."

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A Chinook helicopter of the IAF conducts survey for the construction of a tunnel on Manali-Leh road at Satingri in Lahaul-Spiti on Thursday PTI

'Watershed moment': Gadkari launches Zojila tunnel construction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming it a "watershed moment" in the road history of the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and of great importance to the defence of the country in view of the "massive military activities along our borders", Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday launched the construction work on Zojila tunnel. He exuded confidence that the strategic project, providing all-year connectivity between Srinagar and Leh, will be completed ahead of schedule. "One of the most difficult stretches to drive and build,

the geo-sensitive Zojila stretch is strategically important to the defence of our country in view of the fact that massive military activities along our borders in Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan regions are taking place. Zojila tunnel will not only provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Drass, Kargil and Leh but it will also further strengthen the economic and social-cultural integration of both the Union Territories," Gadkari said, addressing an event after the virtual launch of construction work of the 14.15-km tunnel project through the ceremonial first blast.

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Archrivals NC, PDP join hands to fight for Art 370

People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The mainstream politics in Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday witnessed a "tectonic" shift after top brass of the National Conference for the first time decided to forge an "alliance" with archrival Mehbooba Mufti, chief of Peoples Democratic Party, along with the leaders of four other regional parties under the banner of "People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration" to fight a "constitutional battle" demanding the Government of India to return to the people of the erstwhile State the rights they held before August 5, 2019.

The decision to float this new alliance was taken at a crucial meeting convened by Farooq Abdullah at his residence in Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by all the leaders who are signatories of "Gupkar Declaration", a resolution issued after an all-party meeting on



PDP president Mehbooba Mufti stands after a meeting with National Conference party leaders Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah in Srinagar on Thursday AP

August 4, 2019 at the Gupkar residence of Farooq Abdullah. JKPC chief GA Mir was not present during the meeting.

Addressing the media soon after the meeting, Abdullah, flanked by Mehbooba, Omar Abdullah, CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami, People's Conference chief Sajjad Lone, JKPM leader Javid Mustafa Mir and ANC leader Muzaffar Shah said that

the resolution passed on August 4 last year by the mainstream political parties in the valley has been named as "Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration".

He said, "Our motive is to fight for the restoration of last year's August 4 position. Our battle is a constitutional battle and we are ready to fight".

Continued on Page 11

Covid doubling rate improves by 3 fold to 70 days in 3 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

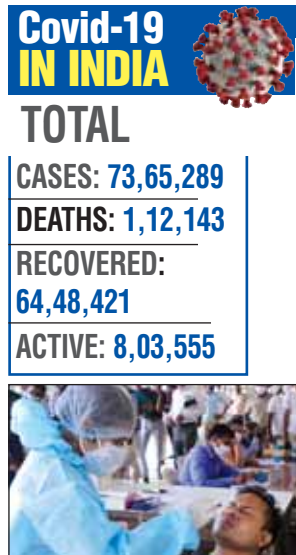
Indicating some slowdown in its spread, the doubling time of coronavirus in India has improved from 25.5 days in mid-August to nearly 70 days now. The doubling time for coronavirus is the number of days it takes for the cases count to double.

"India's doubling time has sharply increased to 70.4 days (it was 25.5 days in mid-August). This indicates a substantial fall in the daily new cases and the consequent increase in time taken to double the total cases," the Union Health Ministry said.

Crediting the Central Government's strategies and Covid-19 warriors with the improvement in India's case doubling time, the Ministry further tweeted, "This is the result of the Centre-led strategies and the selfless dedication of doctors, paramedics, frontline workers and all other Covid-19 warriors."

The country's current case-

load, the second-highest after that of the United States, stands at 7,239,389 as per data from the Health Ministry. However, 6,301,927 or 87.05 per cent of these are recovered cases, the highest number of recoveries globally.

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Scale up sero-surveys, tests, preparedness, exhorts Modi

PM calls for low cost Covid testing, continued vigilance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining that early detection is key to containing the spread of coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

on Thursday directed health authorities to scale up sero-surveys as well as testing. He said the facility to get tested regularly and speedily at a low cost must be available to all at the earliest.

In the last six months since the Covid-19 expanded its tentacles, the ICMR has conducted two sero-surveys nationwide. The first countrywide



sero survey (conducted between May 11 and June 4) showed overall infection prevalence to be 0.73 per cent while the second one showed that one in every 15 individuals, or 6.6 per cent, of people above the age of 10 years in India, have been exposed to Sars-Cov-2, the virus that causes coronavirus disease (Covid-19), till August.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the country's research and vaccine deployment ecosystem against the Covid-19 pandemic, including testing technologies, contact tracing, drugs and therapeutics, the PM also called for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the coronavirus pandemic, the PMO said in a statement.

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SC sets aside HC's interim bail to Gayatri Prajapati

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday set aside Allahabad High Court's order which granted interim bail for two months on medical grounds to former Uttar Pradesh minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati — accused in a gang rape case.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan allowed the appeal filed by the UP government and said that the September 3 order of high court is unsustainable.

Prajapati, who was a minister in the erstwhile Samajwadi Party government, is accused of raping, along with others, a woman and attempting to molest her minor daughter.

There was no satisfaction recorded by the high court that treatment offered to respon-

dent (Prajapati) was not adequate and he requires any further treatment by any particular medical institute for which it is necessary to release the respondent on interim bail on medical grounds, the bench, also comprising Justices RS Reddy and MR Shah, noted in its order.

The high court, without considering the entire materials on record, has passed the impugned order dated September 3, 2020 which is unsustainable. In result, we allow this appeal, set aside the order dated September 3, the bench said.

The bench also dealt with the arguments advanced by Prajapati's counsel who had said that every person, even if he or she is an accused in a serious offence, requires a humane

Continued on Page 11

Let Allahabad HC monitor Hathras probe, says SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said the Allahabad High Court be allowed to monitor the Hathras case in which a Dalit girl was allegedly brutally raped and died of injuries.

The top court, which was hearing a PIL and several intervention pleas of activists and lawyers, was told that no fair trial was possible in Uttar Pradesh as the investigation has been allegedly botched up.

Allying the apprehension, a bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, said "Let the high court deal with it. We are here if there is any problem."

Besides Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, the hearing saw battery of senior advocates like Harish Salve, Indira Jaising and Siddharth Luthra appearing for various parties.

There were other lawyers who wanted to argue but the SC said, "We don't need assistance of the whole world."

The hearing also witnessed deliberations that in no case the victim's identity be disclosed and her family members and witnesses be given full security and protection.

The lawyer, appearing for the victim's family, demanded that the proceedings of the case be shifted out of Uttar Pradesh to a court in the Delhi.

The apprehension of not having the fair trial in the State was also raised by activist-lawyer Indira Jaising.

At the outset, the Solicitor General referred to recent affidavit filed by the Uttar Pradesh Government which gave details about the security and protection provided to the victim's family and witnesses in the case.

All UP police stations to have women help desks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reiterating his resolve for Rensuring safety to women and girls in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced the setting up of women help desks at all police stations across the state.

"Women generally hesitate to visit police stations for any assistance and are also hesitant in sharing problems with male cops. Considering this, it has been decided to set up women's help desks at each police station of the state with immediate effect," the chief minister said on Thursday.

The coming Navratri festival has been dedicated to women's safety, dignity and empowerment and a special campaign, Mission Shakti, has been announced by the government from October 17.

Various programmes will be organised from gram panchayats to industrial units, school campuses to government offices, from Durga Puja pandals to Ramlilas to reaffirm the faith and resolve towards women power.

The government's commitment towards safety of women is also evident from the fact that pink booths have already been set up at various crossings of Lucknow.

Earlier, the government had made arrangements to drop working women at their homes at odd hours.

Besides, women cops have also been deployed compulsorily at all major crossings of major districts of the state, including Lucknow, and some of them can be seen with body-worn cameras to ensure women's safety.

Day 1: A few shows, fewer cinemagoers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Majority cinema halls in the National Capital remained closed on Thursday and a few that reopened after seven months of the coronavirus-induced shutdown attracted very few audience for the "first day, first show" in the time of pandemic.

Some of the theatres that reopened held special screenings for Covid-19 warriors or staff members and their families. Sushant Singh Rajput's last theatrical release *Chhichhore*, *Kedarnath*, *Tanhaji*, *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, *Malang*, *War* and *Thappad* are among films that have been released on the big screen since there are no new releases this week.

PVR Naraina's first show was a special screening of



Tapsee Pannu-starrer *Thappad* for 40 coronavirus warriors, including doctors and civil defence volunteers. The special screening was organised by the New Delhi District Magistrate's office.

Similarly, at PVR Cinema at 3C's Mall in Lajpat Nagar, a special screening of *Tanhaji* was organised for the staff members and their families.

Continued on Page 11

Don't drop the guard at this juncture: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Asking people to stay alert to the threat of novel coronavirus infection, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that people should not drop their guards as laxity at this juncture could prove detrimental.

"The Covid testing has been intensified and till date about 1.25 crore tests have been conducted in the state. The intensity of testing can be gauged from the fact that till September 30 around one crore tests were carried out but by October 15 an additional 25 lakh tests were carried out," the chief minister said while presiding over a high level Unlock review meeting at Lok Bhawan here on Thursday.

Yogi also ordered special vigilance on Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar and Varanasi districts.

The chief minister also said that the surveillance system be further strengthened. "The number of ICU beds in Covid hospitals should also be increased regularly and it should be ensured that the stocks of medicines and other items related to the treatment is available in adequate quantity," he said.

Referring to the Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana, the chief minister said that more and more people should benefit from it.

He issued directive to the Urban Development department to call a meeting of the State Level Banking Committee

Yogi to people: Inculcate habit to wash hands

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Launching a social media campaign with hashtag #HathDhonaRokeCorona to mark World Handwash Day on Thursday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath appealed to the citizens to implement handwashing to keep away the spread of infection.

Yogi himself washed hands before addressing a virtual conference in Lucknow on Thursday.

Public representatives, officials and employees of various departments also washed their hands in groups to spread awareness of its importance in the fight against COVID-19.

"Hand washing seems a small exercise but it protects a person from various diseases. During the pandemic, its importance has increased even as our culture always spoke about regular washing of hands. Till a vaccine is invented to cure COVID-19, we should take precautions and wash hands regularly," the chief minister said in the virtual meeting.

All offices of the Health department, hospitals, schools,



Anganwadi centres and employees of Panchayati Raj department participated in the campaign. The participants also took a pledge to follow the guidelines to successfully defeat coronavirus and its spread.

Special handwash programmes were also held at districts, blocks and gram panchayats to spread awareness about handwash in the ongoing fight against coronavirus.

Under the Dastak campaign, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, school teachers and members of self-help groups made groups of 10 houses

each and demonstrated the six stages of handwash.

The importance of washing hands before eating, after touching nose, mouth and eyes, after coughing and sneezing and after using toilets were also highlighted in the rural areas.

Directions have been given to install elbow-operated taps in washbasins of labour rooms, health centres and handwash stations. Besides proper handwash training, poster and essay contests, debate competitions were also held to spread awareness about handwash.

ly run between Shardiya Navratri and Basantik Navratri. This is a special campaign focusing on women and girl child safety and participation of

all the departments, including the police, is expected.

The chief minister said, "The state government is committed to the safety and dignity of women and girls. During Navratri, special attention be given on executing it effectively. During the campaign, women and girls should be made aware of the effective methods of self-defence."

Yogi also directed all the district magistrates to ensure that the Mission Shakti campaign was implemented effectively and to monitor it. He also asked the nodal officers to review it.

The chief minister said that the paddy purchase centres should operate effectively and equipment to measure moisture in paddy should be arranged in these centres so that the farmers did not face any problems.

Meanwhile, Additional Chief Secretary (Health), Amit Mohan Prasad said 2,636 fresh coronavirus positive cases were reported on Thursday while 3,239 COVID-19 patients recovered in the last 24 hours. With this, 4,47,383 confirmed coronavirus cases have been reported in the state out of which 4,04,545 have recovered.

Prasad said that UP created a record by becoming the first state in the country to conduct 1.25 crore Covid tests. On Tuesday, 1,54,163 samples were tested.

CM Yogi orders payment of employees dues before Diwali

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the festival season approaching, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked the Finance department officials to clear the dues of state employees at the earliest so that they may celebrate festivals with fervour.

"The Finance department should clear pending dues of state employees before Diwali," the chief minister said in a statement.

The chief minister's announcement came against the backdrop of UP government's decision to announce a leave travelling concession (LTC) voucher scheme for the state employees so that they could enjoy the coming festivals.

Recently, Yogi had said that in view of the festivals, the Central government had decided to make advance payment for LTA/LTC to its employees and the UP government should also follow it.

"The Finance department should prepare a similar plan for the state employees and look at its feasibility," the chief minister said.

On Monday, the Union government had announced an LTC cash voucher scheme and a special festival advance of Rs 10,000 to all its employees.

Dalit teen raped and killed in Barabanki

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A minor Dalit girl was raped and murdered in Barabanki while two others were raped in Auraiya and Jhansi.

In Barabanki, the semi-nude body of a minor girl, who had gone to harvest paddy, was recovered from another field. After seeing the body, her family members suspected sexual assault before the girl was done to death.

As per information, a 15-year-old girl from a village in Satrikh police station area went to the field to harvest paddy on Wednesday morning. Some hours later, her semi-nude body was found in an adjoining field. The teenager's arms and legs were found tied.

On being informed, cops from Satrikh police rushed to the spot and sent the body for autopsy. The police are awaiting autopsy reports to go ahead with the investigation.

In Auraiya, a woman was raped at gunpoint when she went out to relieve herself in Bidhuna area on Wednesday.

As per reports, a woman of Bidhuna area, submitted a written complaint at the police sta-

tion that she had gone to relieve herself in a millet field near her house on Monday night when her neighbour, Sintu, who was armed with a country-made pistol, cornered her.

She alleged that Sintu took her at gunpoint and raped her.

When the victim screamed, a passer-by, Amit, came to the spot. However, Sintu threatened them with dire consequences and escaped.

Based on her complaint, a case was registered and a police team was formed to track down the accused.

In Jhansi, a teacher and two others raped a student in Mauranipur area of the district on Wednesday.

The victim had gone to get a caste certificate from a private school when a teacher and two others called her inside a classroom, locked the room and gang-raped her.

The police registered a case and arrested the accused.

In Farrukhabad, a 10-year-old girl was abducted and killed when a ransom demand was not met by her family in Mohammadabad Kotwali area. Her body was recovered from a septic tank on Thursday.



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Ateek Khan To Ateek Beg in all future purpose, Ateek Beg S/o Shaheel Beg, R/o Trilokpur, Fatehpur .

NOTICE

I hereby declared that my wife's correct name is Namrata Bhasin while it has been wrongly recorded as her nick name as Sonia Bhasin in my daughter's ICSE year 2014 & ISC Year 2016 Statement of Marks & Pass Certificates. Sanjay Kumar Bhasin S/o Late Madan Lal Bhasin.

NOTICE

To inform that I have lost my original allotment letter of house no 5/36 Virm Khand Gomi Nagar Lucknow consisting Reg no. 00502525 dated 21/08/1991 Property ID No. 00371147. Its used will be illegal. Sanjay Agrwal S/o Late Anant Prasad Agrwal R/o 29 Chanakya Puri Minjula Khassara 246 Kharagpur Faridi Nagar, Ghazipur, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I, Army No. 4189350M Rank Hav. Gyan Singh S/o Rudrapal Singh, Unit 15, Kumao C/o 56, APO, hereby declared that in my service records inadvertently the date of birth of my son (Adarsh Singh) 06.10.2003. While his correct date of birth of my son 06.09.2003 may be recorded in my service records.

सूचना

सूचना

प्रणी सूत्र चर अखिल पुत्र रक्ष पना लाल अग्रवाल, निवासी-असोक निवासी, तीसरा फाटक, 12/81/34, सूची नगर, लखनऊ, के पिता रक्ष पना लाल अग्रवाल ने भवन संस्था असोक निवासी 12/81/34, तीसरा फाटक, सूची नगर, लखनऊ को पंजीकृत विद्युत विस्फोट द्वारा कब्र की थी एवं रक्ष पनालाल अग्रवाल ने अपने जीवनकाल में एक पंजीकृत वीलीय भी निष्पादित की थी। उक्त वीलीय मृत दत्तात्रेय अग्रवाल दिनांक 14.10.2020 को हमारे रक्षक द्वारा फोटोकॉपी करने वाले वक्त हुनुमान मौर में दर्शन के दौरान मृत हो गया है। उक्त दत्तात्रेय जिस किसी व्यक्ति को प्राप्त हो, उपरोक्त दत्तात्रेय का उपयोग अनुरोध, अमान्य एवं अन्य समझा जायेगा। यह सूचना करके नीचे दिखे गये नम्बर पर संपर्क करें। - 9415070010

आवश्यकता

आवश्यकता है

श्री के.एन.सिंह महिला पी.जी.कॉलेज नगर क्षेत्र जीयनपुर आजमगढ़ समुद्र वी.बी.सिंह प्रखण्ड विधायकालय जैनपुर

स्वविपणित योजना अन्तर्गत प्रायर्ष एवं स्नातक स्तर पर वाणिज्यसंकाय के 6 प्रस्तावों के रिकवर्ड हेतु शासन / (सूचीपरीक्षी) / विधायकालय परिपत्रमावली के अनुसार शैक्षिक अर्हता एवं वेतन मान चयनावारी अपने समस्त शैक्षिक प्रमाण-पत्रों की प्रमाणित फोटो प्रति सहित विज्ञापन प्रकाशित होने के 21 दिन के अन्दर आवेदन करें। (राजबहादुर सिंह) 9415655040, 9415582141

Shivpal rules out merger with SP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) president Shivpal Singh Yadav said that his party would have an alliance with the Samajwadi Party in the 2022 UP Assembly polls but refused any move of merger of his party with the SP. "We will only have a poll alliance with the SP and not more than that," he said while talking to media persons here on Thursday.

Shivpal Yadav also said that if the SP sought support from him, he would vote for the SP candidate Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav in the Rajya Sabha election. Shivpal Yadav is a SP MLA in the UP Assembly. The SP had recently withdrawn its petition to the Speaker, seeking disqualification of Shivpal Yadav from the membership of the Assembly.

The PSPL founder slammed the Yogi Adityanath government, saying that law and order in the state had deteriorated and the government had failed to control the criminals and crime.

He said the PSPL had started preparing itself for the 2022 Assembly polls and it would be a big force in the elections.

BJP leader shoots rival in front of SDM, CO

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational daylight shooting in Ballia, a Bharatiya Janata Party leader gunned down his opponent in front of senior officials before casually walking away from the spot.

After the firing incident, supporters of both sides came to a head and the clash between them left several seriously injured in Durjanpur hamlet of Rewati in Ballia.

Taking a serious note of the incident, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered immediate suspension of the officers who were present on the scene but did not react in time.

An order was also issued to initiate criminal proceedings against the officers if they were found to be part of a conspiracy. Besides, Yogi Adityanath also ordered stern action against the accused.

As per reports, a meeting was convened at the Panchayat Bhawan to settle the issue of allotment of quota for fair price shops in Durjanpur and Hanumanganj areas on Thursday morning. Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Bairia, Suresh Pal, along with Circle Officer Chandrakesh Singh, Block Development Officer Gajendra Pratap Singh and other officials were present at the meeting.

Four self-help groups had applied for the quota but a consensus could not be reached on allocating shops in Durjanpur area. It was then decided to

decide the issue through voting between Maa Sayar Jagdamba SHG and Shiv Shakti SHG. The officials also insisted that only those having identity proof would be allowed to vote.

While one of the groups had IDs, the other group was without them, which resulted in a dispute. The officials claimed that they then cancelled the meeting and left the venue.

However, eyewitnesses said that the two parties, one led by BJP leader Dharendra Pratap Singh and other by Jai Prakash Pal, came to a head after the dispute arose at the meeting venue. The situation took an ugly turn when Dharendra whipped out his licensed rifle and opened fire, killing Jai Prakash on the spot.

The eyewitness said that all the officers silently watched the killing and did not react when the assailant casually walked out from the scene of crime.

Later, a clash between the supporters of both sides ensued that left several injured and they were admitted to a community health centre in Sonbarsa.

Upon learning of the incident, senior officers rushed to the spot and camped there to avert any untoward incident. After the chief minister acted tough, several police teams were formed and efforts were underway to arrest the assailant.

On the complaint of Jai Prakash's brother, a case was registered against Dharendra Pratap Singh and his aides

Narendra Pratap Singh, Prayag Singh, Prabhat Pratap Singh, Yashwant Pratap Singh, Devendra Pratap Singh, Amarjeet Yadav, Santosh Yadav at Rewati police station and efforts were on to arrest them.

The incident provided ammunition to the opposition to hit out at the state government over the deteriorating law and order situation.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said that those in power were challenging law and order openly.

"A horrific incident that defied law and order in Ballia has come to light where a BJP leader shot and killed a young man, Jai Prakash Pal, in front of SDM and CO. The assailant also escaped after shooting," the SP posted on its official Twitter account.

Party spokesperson and MLC Sunil Singh Sajjan said that the government was being run by criminals and Thursday's incident was proof of it.

Former BJP ally and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief Om Prakash Rajbhar said that there was no fear of law among criminals in the state.

"The chief minister should see that the leaders of opposition are not firing. This is a leader of the BJP who shot and killed a youth in public view. In Ballia, BJP leader Dharendra Singh shot and killed a young man in front of a SDM and CO. There is no fear of law in Uttar Pradesh," he posted on Twitter.

Lovesick man stabs girl, ends his life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lovesick man injured the girl he loved and committed suicide in Hardoi while in a shocking incident reported from Meerut, a man thrashed his mother to death and seriously injured his sister after his mother refused to give him money to buy alcohol.

Reports from Hardoi said that Rajeev, a resident of Behati hamlet in Kotwali police area, was trying to lure a local girl. Rajeev was already married and also had a son.

After failing to get any response from the girl, who warned him and threatened to report against him to the local police, Rajeev on Thursday intercepted the girl when she was going to

graze her cattle in the morning.

He first brutally stabbed the girl and when the villagers rushed for her rescue, he stabbed himself.

Both were taken to hospital where the doctors pronounced Rajeev dead while the girl was referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre. A case was registered in this regard by the police.

In Meerut, a man who thrashed his mother to death and seriously injured his sister after he was refused money to buy alcohol was said to be released recently after being arrested in a loot case.

On Wednesday, Vineet reached home in an inebriated state and demanded money from his mother to buy liquor. When she refused to give money and scolded him for his drink-

ing habit, a heated argument ensued between the two leading to a fight.

Vineet picked up a flat iron piece used to clean cow dung and hit his mother on the head. When his sister intervened during the scuffle, he hit her also, injuring her.

When the neighbours heard the screams, they rushed to the house but by that time Vineet had escaped.

The woman and her daughter were rushed to a hospital in Meerut.

The accused's mother Reeta died during the treatment while his sister, Anjali, is undergoing treatment.

The police said that Vineet had a criminal record and was sent to jail in a loot case around five months back.

The incident took place in Bali village of Meerut. Police have registered

a case against Vineet on the basis of his sister's statement.

Meanwhile, at least eight people were killed in three road accidents in the state on Thursday.

In Shamli district, three youths, including two brothers, were crushed to death when they were running on the side of the road under Babri police station on Shamli-Muzaffarnagar highway early Thursday morning.

Police said four youths were running on the side of the road when some unidentified vehicle crushed them. While three died on the spot, one was critically injured and was admitted to the hospital. The deceased were identified as Subham (13) his brother Sanjeev (26) and Pravesh (16) and the injured as Sumeet.

157 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 157 new COVID-19 positive patients have been detected in the district here on Thursday, increasing the total number of cases to 15,515. The day saw one more death, increasing the toll to 250. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 167 patients and all of them were recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 11,365 as none of the patients has been discharged from any of the hospitals and the number of cured patients has remained at 2,769. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 14,134, leaving 1,131 active patients. The recovery rate has slightly improved to 91.09 per cent and mortality rate to 1.61

per cent.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has appealed to all corona patients living in home isolation to keep pulse oximeters in view to check their oxygen levels regularly. 'If the oxygen level is more than 95, then there is no need of worry but if it comes down between 90 and 94, then one should contact Covid Command Control Centre or a doctor immediately,' he said, adding that decline in oxygen level can increase discomfort and may also lead to hospitalisation. He further said 'if there is constant pain and heaviness in chest, mental confusion, troubles in speaking, weakness in face or any part of the body and blueness on lips and face, one should contact a doctor.' According to him, the

most common effect of corona is on the lungs. In COVID-19 cases, patients may have to breathe frequently and feel tired. For this, it is important to pay special attention to one's food and exercise daily in the morning.

In the first report of the day, 103 positive patients were found out of 3,739 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 2,67,388 and the results of 1,570 are awaited. Out of them, 2,51,927 were negative, while 15,461 positive. The total number of samples collected was 2,83,376. Earlier, a male aged 63 from Nati Imli succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital (SSH), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) while a male (62) from Kadipur (Shivpur) died at Pandit Deendayal

Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital. With the addition of eight new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,199 including 266 red zones. Two green zones have been converted into red zones again. There are 1,933 green zones with 18 new ones.

Under ongoing mass/group antigen tests, 11 persons out of 460 tests were detected positive at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura while four out of 430 at adjacent Government Women's Hospital, three out of 107 at CHC Shivpur and three out of 439 at SSH BHU. However, all the 125 tests at Swami Vivekanand Hospital, Bhelupur and 175 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar were found negative.

162 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Nearly five days later, there has been some increase in the number of corona infections, but the situation seems to be under control. On Wednesday night, 162 new Covid patients along with railway engineers, a doctor from SRN, tested positive.. At the same time, 175 infected patients defeated Corona. Two days later a patient died during treatment in the district.

According to CMO Dr GS Bajpai, 21,784 people have become infected with corona infection along with 162 new infected people in the district. At the same time 175 patients were also free from Covid infection. The percentage of people recovering in the district is increasing every day. So far 5,058 people have been discharged from hospitals. At the same time 14,699 people have completed home isolation.

According to the CMO, 1,747 patients are active in the district. At the same time a total of 246 patients are admitted in various Covid hospitals and Covid care centres. Most of them 80 patients are admitted to L3 SRN Hospital and are being treated for corona infection.

According to Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, the list of infected on Wednesday included a junior doctor of SRN, four other employees including a railway section engineer, two nurses of a pri-



Anand Bhawan being sanitised after its opening In Prayagraj

Pioneer

vate Covid hospital, an assistant loco pilot, Lalatara Meja SBI branch personnel. At the same time, the manager in PNB, an inspector of CISE, technician of a private hospital, clerk of Roadways Rajapur, an engineer of PWD, VDO of Dhanupur etc have also been infected.

Meanwhile, preparations are now underway to start OPD at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. Here the OPDs of all departments will be operated as before and those who do not have corona will also be treated. The general OPD of this hospital was closed ever since the coronavirus infection

spread. The reason is that this hospital has been made a Level-3 Covid Hospital.

The number of corona patients is now coming down significantly. This represents the success of the efforts of the Health department and the administrative team. So now most of the arrangements are being operated as before. After the control of the corona, preparations have been started to activate the hospitals too. After getting permission from the government, now the administration is preparing to start general OPD in SRN Hospital.

Dr SP Singh, Principal of

Motilal Nehru Medical College said that, all the state-of-the-art facilities are available in the new 220-bed Covid Hospital built in the hospital premises. It has been launched online by the Chief Minister recently. Corona patients coming to SRN will now be admitted to this new hospital. Corona patients who are already admitted will be shifted to the new hospital. With the introduction of OPD, not only Prayagraj but also patients coming from other districts including Pratapggarh, Kaushambi, Fatehpur, Chitrakoot, Banda, Jaunpur will get relief, added Dr SP Singh.

Lacklustre reopening of multiplexes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

It was a lacklustre reopening of multiplexes, cineflexes and cinema halls as only a few cine lovers turned out there to watch the movies on big screens. Many of the lovers are waiting anxiously since long but even after the reopening of theatres, they were not seen in hurry. There were many reasons for this thin attendance and the biggest one was the absence of any new releases of Bollywood/ Hollywood movies. Though many multiplexes are hopeful that the number of cine fans would increase from Friday as in India, majority of Bollywood movies are released on the day but yet they are not very enthusiastic because the impacts of worldwide coronavirus pandemic was also seen on the production of movies and even some films which are ready for their releases, their producers and distributors are doubtful of getting favourable conditions and the same may financially hit them badly.



A cine fan being thermal scanned before entry to PVR multiplex in Varanasi on Thursday

Pioneer

However, they feel that if the situation continues improving, the condition will be changed after a couple of days when the festive season starts with the beginning of Shardiya Navratra.

Many are hopeful that by the festival of Deepawali, the cinema halls would start seeing similar enthusiasm among the fans as it was seen prior to March 22 last. Though the

nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25, like some cities of UP, the lockdown in Varanasi began since March 22, the day which was observed as 'Janata Curfew'.

Many are doubtful because they feel that in absence of good new movies and COVID-19 restrictions, it will take some more months in revival of the condition. After getting the information from the state

government regarding reopening of the halls from October 15, most of multiplexes and others has started their preparations by making changes in seating arrangements in view to maintain social distancing. As per the guidelines, these multiplexes and others can only be opened with maximum 50 per cent tickets sale.

In connection with the reopening, most of the halls have started their preparations of making seating arrangements as per the guidelines and sanitising the entire premises but in absence of new movies, they just reopened by screening some old movies.

In absence of fans, many have decided to curtail the number of shows as it will take time when the fans would understand all the guidelines including only online ticket booking, compulsory wearing of masks, thermal scanning, sale of only packed food, installation of sanitiser tunnels and recording of names, addresses and mobile numbers of all fans in view to contact tracing etc.

BHU prof invents ultra-violet fluorescent ink

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a good news particularly for the field of chemical education, Dr Vishal Mishra, Assistant Professor, School of Bio-Chemical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has made an invention of the 'Ultra-violet (UV) fluorescent ink' from waste bacterial culture media. This work has been filed for the Indian patent as it is beneficial for the education system and fighting against the counterfeiting market.

Every waste has some potential but it gets spoiled uselessly all around the world due to the lack of knowledge and awareness about its potential benefits. The bacterial culture

media are very common low-cost reagents but are widely used in biochemistry, molecular and microbiology labs to support the growth of microorganisms, Dr Mishra informed.

Using the 'Green chemistry' approach we have succeeded in inventing ultra-violet (UV) fluorescent ink from waste bacterial culture media, he informed and adds, 'By using very easy three steps of the laboratory procedures, we have recycled the waste bacterial culture media for making UV fluorescent ink'.

'When this ink is used on paper, it is not visible in daylight but becomes clearly visible when exposed to a certain wavelength of the UV light due to the blue fluorescence of the ink. Even low-cost, handheld,

battery operated UV lamps of low power (4 watt) can be used to see this hidden ink on the paper. This UV fluorescent ink can be used in high school science practical and science exhibitions for various classroom demonstrations in the field of chemical education,' Dr Mishra informed further.

This demonstrations based work has got accepted in the Journal of Chemical Educations, ACS and soon it will be available online after publication. In our lab, further research is going on where we are working on another application as security ink in the tags of various valuable items, on the bank cheques, and certificates, etc to authenticate the originality of the product, he says.

Recycling the huge amount of waste bacterial media generated from the various laboratories and industries will produce the most inexpensive UV fluorescent material in the bulk. Through such waste recycling at a broader-scale, we can save the environment from chemical pollution. From teaching material to market products (anti-counterfeiting technology) this ink has various applications and advantages like inexpensive, easily available and non-toxic material, he informed.

This work has been filed for Indian patent. This work will have a positive impact on humanity due to its benefits to the education system and fighting against the counterfeiting market, Dr Mishra claimed.

Seed production training inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Eminent scientist and Chairman of Foundation for Advancement of Agriculture and Rural Development (FAARD) Prof Panjab Singh inaugurated three-day training in advanced seed production at Seminar Hall, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IAS-BHU) here on Thursday under the Biotech Farmer Project sponsored by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. The programme is being conducted under the joint auspices of the Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR-Varanasi), a non-government organisation FAARD and Indian Agricultural Research Council (ICAR-New Delhi).

Prof Singh, who is also Chancellor of Rani Laxmi Bai Central Agricultural University, Jhansi and former BHU Vice-Chancellor, said that trained farmers should also train others in advanced seed production. According to him, in four districts of Purvanchal (eastern UP) including Chandauli, Sonbhadra, Varanasi and Ghazipur, some villages would be identified and developed as model villages. A roadmap for agricultural development will soon be made for Purvanchal, so that these backward areas

can become self-reliant. He said that training programmes like fishery, goat rearing etc. will also be organised in future. In this training programme, five farmers each from selected districts of Sonbhadra and Chandauli by NITI Aayog and an equal number from non-aspirational districts of Varanasi and Ghazipur have been selected for this training programme.

The coordinator of the programme is Prof PK Singh of Genetics and Plant Breeding Department, IAS-BHU. The detailed description of the purpose and participants of the training programme was given by the former Dean of the IAS-BHU Prof Rishi Muni Singh. In the programme, former IAS-BHU Director Prof Shivraj Singh said that farmers would gain technical knowledge through training which would help them to connect themselves with their farming work as well as employment. Quality seed is a major problem facing farmers today and if the farmers produce advanced seed in their own fields, then other farmers can get inspiration to overcome the problem. IAS-BHU Director Prof Ramesh Chandra welcomed the participants while it was conducted by Prof PK Singh, who also proposed the vote of thanks at last. Dean of the Agriculture

Faculty, IAS-BHU, Prof AP Singh, FAARD Trustee Dr Umesh Singh and others were also present.

WEAVERS AGAIN GO ON STRIKE: Blaming the state government for disobeying its promise, the weavers once again went on an indefinite strike on Thursday reiterating their demand of the restoration of the monthly flat rate or fixed rate electricity bill.

When the weavers had gone on strike by suspending all sorts of weaving in the month of August, the state government had assured that the electricity tariff by the month of July would be charged from them at the old flat rate system. And after the assurance by the government, the weavers had called off the strike but more than two months have passed, the government did not take any initiative to materialise its promise, the agitated weavers said adding, so, they would have to go on an indefinite strike once again as they have no option except it. The weavers also staged a protest in Badi Bazar and other areas by suspending all sorts of weaving.

As per new arrangement, the state government is realising the electricity tariff from the powerloom weavers as per electricity meters withdrawing the old flat rate subsidy. As

per the old flat rate subsidy system, the weavers were to pay ₹ 145 for each powerloom but under the new arrangement, they will have to pay per unit electricity every month.

If the government realises that ₹ 145 monthly bill for each powerloom was very little, it could increase it and they are ready to pay as per but the subsidized rate should continue to survive the weaving, they said and reiterated their demand of the restoration of the old flat rate system. Akhtar and many others joined the protest in Badi Bazar.

INSPECTION: In view of continuation of traffic jam situation, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLC Ashok Dhawan, along with senior Varanasi Nagar Nigam (VNN) officers including Municipal Commissioner Gaurang Rathi apart from presidents of Khadya Vyapar Mandal and Kashi Kagaj Vyavasayi Samiti Navratna Rathi and Gauri Shankar Nevar respectively inspected all the possible sites for parking between Maidagin and Godowlia here on Wednesday. During their inspection, they found that there was traffic jams like situation in the wholesale markets of silk, sarees and jewellery where the traders were facing a lot of inconveniences in absence of parking sites

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A webinar on COVID-19 management year 2020 'A journey into Covid Era' – was organised by medical department of North Central Railway. This was chaired by General Manager NCR & NR Rajiv Chaudhry and Director General Railway Health Services Railway Board Dr BP Nanda.

Besides capacity augmentation for COVID-19 management many steps have been taken towards confidence building among Covid patients and Railway employees

North Central Railway has taken concrete steps for uninterrupted supply of oxygen and other essential items in Railway Hospitals

At the outset PCMD NCR Dr Anand Tandon welcomed DG RHS, GM NCR & NR and all the participants from Railway Board and Zonal Railways in this webinar. Speaking on this occasion GM Rajiv Chaudhry shared steps taken on NCR in COVID-19 management. In his brief address Chaudhry covered initiatives on NCR like planning and preparatory steps,

infrastructure augmentation, in house arrangements for essentials like face cover sanitiser, PPE overall, conversion of isolation coaches, upgradation of hospitals, supply chain management and quality control for Covid essential items, telemedicine facility during lockdown, confidence building measures among patients and railway employees.

In this session initial presentation was made by Dr Vinit Agrawal MD Central Hospital Prayagraj giving an overview of awareness programmes, training, capacity building, co-ordination, services and learnings in COVID-19 management over North Central Railway. Besides treatment of COVID-19 patients' presentation also covered services like Diet supply, laundry, biomedical waste management, security, and ambulance being rendered in Covid level II Railway hospitals. Followed by this a detailed presentation in Combating COVID-19 was made by Dr SK Handoo ACHD Central Hospital NCR. He informed steps taken to convert Central Hospital in 100 beds covid level II ward and 75 beds Non covid hospital

tal and a triage ward and fever clinic for screening of patients. Besides existing resources 22 additional doctors, over 50 paramedical and other staff, 6 ventilators, 10 HFNO, 11 beds in ICU, Separate x-ray machines for COVID-19 ward, COVID-19 testing facilities etc. are added in Central Hospital Prayagraj and similar augmentation is done at Jhansi and other Railway hospitals to handle Covid as well as Non Covid patients.

Besides augmentation of Infrastructure and capacity for handling COVID-19 cases many steps have been taken towards confidence building measure among patients and their family members. In one such initiative WhatsApp group is made where all new patients are added along with their family members and treating doctor so as real time information on treatment, patient condition and further concerns are available with patients and their family members. Patients are also using this group for sharing their creativity, hobby etc. from hospital with their family members. North Central Railway in association with state government

is also conducting door to door survey in Railway colonies and other areas to contain spread of COVID-19. Later in the session, presentations were made by Sr DMO Radiology Dr Gautam Sen and Sr DMO Microbiology Dr Usha Yadav on steps taken in field of radiology and lab testing in COVID-19 management over NCR.

Medical team of North Central Railway also informed Railway Board and Zonal Railways on steps taken over supply chain management of essential items including oxygen. Of total 200 beds in Prayagraj and Jhansi Covid level -II wards 47 beds are equipped with central piped multifold oxygen supply arrangement and balance 153 beds are provided with individual oxygen cylinder. Order for more than 10,000 Oxygen cylinders has been placed by NCR.

Speaking on this occasion DG RHS Dr BP Nanda congratulated NCR for comprehensive COVID-19 management and complemented doctors for informative presentations made during the webinar.

STF arrests five bookies

ALLAHABAD (PNS): A joint team of Lucknow and Prayagraj units of STF raided a house in Naini's Jail Road Chakdondi on Wednesday night and arrested five people from the spot. All items including 13 mobiles have been recovered from them. All the five arrested were interrogated at Naini police station. After interrogating them, the police raided many other places.

The Lucknow unit of STF had come to know that large-

scale IPL betting was being done in a house at Naini's Jail Road Chakdondi. The team arrived here on Wednesday night. A team from Prayagraj unit was engaged for this purpose. Both the team and ASP Somendra Meena raided the house on the Jail Road and Ranveer Singh alias Lallu, Purushottam alias Kallu, Anand Patel resident Lipton Colony, Sunny Kashyap alias Sagar and Sonu Yadav residents of Jail Road were arrested from

the spot. Apart from them, three android mobiles, 10 keypad mobiles, TV sets, five registers in which transactions of speculative money were mentioned, besides an Ertiga car were also recovered from their possession. The STF team arrested the accused and took them to Naini police station, where they were interrogated till late night. After interrogating them, the police raided many other places.

CINEMA HOUSES: The

city cinema house resumed screening after the government's guideline on Thursday which were closed due to the Coronavirus since April.. Operators were already engaged in its preparation.

The entire campus was cleaned and fogged on Wednesday. Arrangements have been made to sanitise the audience as soon as they enter the cinema house. All will be given entry into the cinema hall only after thermal examination.



District Magistrate, City, Alok Tiwari washing hand with soap to observe World Hand Washing Day at Collectorate on Thursday

Pioneer

GLOBAL HANDWASH DAY

DM: Hand hygiene most effective in containing spread of pathogens

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Alok Tiwari while inaugurating the Global Handwash Day at the Collectorate here on Thursday, first washed his hands with soap and water and later distributed soap and sanitiser to those who participated in the event.

Addressing the gathering, he said hand hygiene was one of the most effective actions one could take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including of the novel coronavirus.

He said washing hands thoroughly with soap was highly essential mainly because surfactants in soap trapped

and removed germs and in addition reduced the surface tension which made the hand perfectly free of dirt and infection.

He said coronaviruses were a group of contagious, flu-like viruses and they caused symptoms that could be as mild as a common cold but in some cases the infection could be fatal.

He said COVID-19 was the disease caused by a new type of coronavirus — Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) — which had spread across the world.

He said in the absence of any vaccine, social distancing was the social vaccine against the virus and hand-

washing with soap and water was one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and the first line of defence against COVID-19.

The district magistrate said along with other important behaviours like physical distancing, thoroughly washing hands often and at key moments was essential to controlling the pandemic.

He said when one touched a surface such as doorknob, handrail, one picked up germs and if one touched face, mouth, nose and eyes one passed on these germ into the body.

He said the science behind washing hand with soap was that some germs had an outer protective covering made up of

two layers of fatty molecules and soap could help to break apart the outer protective layer, trapping and removing the germs along with any other oils and debris that were present on our hands.

Tiwari said germs from unwashed hands could get into foods and drinks while people prepared or consume them. He said the germs could also multiply in some types of foods and drinks under certain conditions and make people ill.

He said teaching people about handwashing helped them and their communities stay healthy. Others present included ADM (City), ACM and the entire staff of the Collectorate.

Shekhar for giving top priority to outer ring road project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar, while addressing the Overall Development Committee at his camp office here, said that keeping in mind the traffic density which was considered to be affected by the traffic volume and the traffic velocity in Kanpur Nagar, it had become highly essential that the Outer Ring Road project be given top priority to give respite to the citizens from traffic

snarls.

He said the major hurdles need to be sorted out immediately and the first and foremost was acquisition of land by the government.

He said for this the proposal for the project had to be sent to the Union Surface Transport and Highway Ministry. He said the proposal was to come from the state government itself.

He mooted that the Mandhana-Bhaunti bypass could be included as part of the

big project and advised the earlier set up committee to carry out a survey at the earliest and present the report in 72 hours and also forward it to the ministry as well.

The divisional commissioner said there was also the need to set up an additional inter-state bus station and suggested that the multilevel parking at Phool Bagh and Parade be linked to the Metro rail project.

He said there was also need for widening the road

between Ganga Barrage and Polytechnic and its beautification as well.

He asked the officials concerned to prepare the project of River Front development so that it could be brought to the notice of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, but emphasis should be on NGT rules.

He said boats for Boat Club at Ganga Barrage be purchased and all the prominent crossings be developed on public-private participation (PPP) model.

87 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 87 more coronavirus positive cases on Thursday evening.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 87 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Wednesday evening and Thursday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 27,072 cases. He said no COVID-19 death in the city was reported till Thursday evening keeping the death toll to 708.

The CMO said with 33 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals the cured figure in the city was 6976 and at present 2520 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 4971 samples were sent for testing in the city.s

Churches to open with curbs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A delegation of Catholic leaders and clergy met Chief Secretary RK Tiwari at Lucknow and apprised him of the confusion over the reopening of churches on account of the different directives from Health Ministry and then by the Home Ministry.

The chief secretary told the delegation that the new guidelines for reopening of religious places, including churches, had been worked out. He said as per the present guidelines, 100 people could assemble at the place of worship while strictly following the Covid protocol. He said social distancing, face masks, hand washing and use of sanitisers were also mandatory.

The chief secretary said however in churches, the Holy books should not be touched by multiple persons. He said water sprinkling and use of water continued to be prohibited.

The delegation was led by Bishop Raphy Manjaly of Allahabad Diocese, who had recently been appointed by Pope Francis to the Pontifical Council of Inter-Religious Dialogue.

National Convenor of Indian Catholic Forum, Chhotobhai said the two divergent instructions issued by the Health Ministry on June 4, 2020 and then the subsequent orders issued by the Home Ministry and UP government on October 1, 2020 had made the religious heads step back from reopening of places of worship.

He said due the stringent conditions had affected the Christian community the most because of their tradition of congregational worship at a fixed time and place.

Vicar General of Lucknow Diocese Naresh Lobo was also part of the delegation.

Police work out theft

KANPUR (PNS): The Anwarganj police have worked out a theft with the arrest of three persons, including the employee who mastermind it, on Wednesday. The arrested persons confessed their involvement in stealing ₹.14 lakh from a cloth trading firm nine days ago.

Addressing media persons, Superintendent of Police (East) Raj Kumar Agarwal said cloth trading firm Durga Traders of Cooperganj was burgled on October 5 and the miscreants had stolen ₹14 lakh cash from there.

The SP (East) had deputed Circle Officer of Anwarganj, Mohd Akmal, and Station House Officer Gangadhar Singh Chauhan to work out the case. As the preliminary investigation hinted at the involvement of somebody familiar to the firm, police scanned the CCTV footages of the locality.

The investigations revealed the involvement of the firm's employee Aman Yadav of Coolie Bazaar who was employed in the shop for the past six years. He was arrested and on being grilled, confessed his crime. During interrogation, he said the plan to commit the theft was made about 15 days ago and it could be materialised on October 5 when there was power cut in the shop due to strike of KESCo employees.

Puja spl trains to run from Oct 20

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers during the forthcoming festivals will run the following puja special trains between October 20 and November 30. All coaches in these trains will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow Covid-19 norms, CPRO PK Singh said. The 02587 Gorakhpur-Jammu Tawi weekly Puja special will from October 26 to November 29 on every Monday leave Gorakhpur at 14:20 hrs, Khalilabad at 15:01 hrs, Basti at 15:28 hrs, Gonda 16:55 hrs, Lucknow at 19:45 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 22:24 hrs, Bareilly at 23.23 hrs, on second day Moradabad at 01:05 hrs, Laksar at 03:04 hrs, Roorkee at 03:25 hrs, Saharanpur at 04:25 hrs, Yamunanagar Jagadhri at 04:53 hrs, Ambala Cantt at 05:49 hrs, Ludhiana at 07:40 hrs, Jalandhar Cantt at 08:45 hrs, Pathankot Cantt at 10:40 hrs, Kathua at 11:15 hrs and reach Jammu Tawi at 13:10 hrs. During the return journey the 05098 Jammu-Bhagalpur weekly puja special will on every Tuesday from November 3 to December 1 leave Jammu Tawi at 22:45 hrs, Kathua at 23:52 hrs, on the second day Pathankot Cantt at 00:30 hrs, Jalandhar Cantt at 02:20 hrs, Ludhiana at 03:20 hrs, Ambala Cantt at 05:25 hrs, Yamunanagar Jagadhri at 06:09 hrs, Saharanpur at 07:00 hrs, Roorkee at 07:32 hrs, Laksar at 07:57 hrs, Moradabad at 10:18 hrs, Bareilly at 11:40 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 12:47 hrs, Lucknow at 15:30 hrs, Gonda at 17:40 hrs, Basti at 19:10 hrs, Gorakhpur at 20:55 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 21:40 hrs, Bhatni at 22:10 hrs, Siwan at 23:10 hrs, the third day Chhapra at 00:55 hrs, Sonpur at 01:55 hrs, Hajipur at 02:10 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 03:10 hrs. Samastipur at 04:10 hrs, Barauni at 05:40 hrs, Kiul at 07:20 hrs, Abhaipur at 07:44 hrs, Jamalpur at 08:25 hrs, Sultanganj at 08:54 hrs and reach Bhagalpur at 10:15 hrs. A total of 21 coaches will be attached in the train. The 05021 Shalimar-Gorakhpur weekly puja special train will from October 27 to December 1 on every Tuesday leave Shalimar at 20.20 hrs, Kharagpur at 22.15 hrs, the second day Tatanagar at 00.10 hrs, Purulia at 01.47 hrs, Bhojudih at 02.45 hrs, Mahuda at 03.14 hrs, Gomoh at 04.15 hrs, Koderma at 05.18 hrs, Gaya at 07.05 hrs, Sasaram at 08.09 hrs, Deendayal Upadhyaya Jn at

07:00 hrs, Hajipur at 08:00 hrs, Sonpur at 08:10 hrs, Chhapra at 09:50 hrs, Siwan at 10:40 hrs, Bhatni at 11:30 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 11:50 hrs, Gorakhpur at 14:00 hrs, Basti at 15:10 hrs, Gonda at 16:55 hrs, Lucknow at 19:45 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 22:22 hrs, Bareilly at 23:23 hrs, on the second day Moradabad at 01:03 hrs, Laksar at 03:04 hrs, Roorkee at 03:25 hrs, Saharanpur at 04:25 hrs, Yamunanagar Jagadhri at 04:53 hrs, Ambala Cantt at 05:49 hrs, Ludhiana at 07:40 hrs, Jalandhar Cantt at 08:45 hrs, Pathankot Cantt at 10:40 hrs, Kathua at 11:15 hrs and reach Jammu Tawi at 13:10 hrs. During the return journey the 05098 Jammu-Bhagalpur weekly puja special will on every Tuesday from November 3 to December 1 leave Jammu Tawi at 22:45 hrs, Kathua at 23:52 hrs, on the second day Pathankot Cantt at 00:30 hrs, Jalandhar Cantt at 02:20 hrs, Ludhiana at 03:20 hrs, Ambala Cantt at 05:25 hrs, Yamunanagar Jagadhri at 06:09 hrs, Saharanpur at 07:00 hrs, Roorkee at 07:32 hrs, Laksar at 07:57 hrs, Moradabad at 10:18 hrs, Bareilly at 11:40 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 12:47 hrs, Lucknow at 15:30 hrs, Gonda at 17:40 hrs, Basti at 19:10 hrs, Gorakhpur at 20:55 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 21:40 hrs, Bhatni at 22:10 hrs, Siwan at 23:10 hrs, the third day Chhapra at 00:55 hrs, Sonpur at 01:55 hrs, Hajipur at 02:10 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 03:10 hrs. Samastipur at 04:10 hrs, Barauni at 05:40 hrs, Kiul at 07:20 hrs, Abhaipur at 07:44 hrs, Jamalpur at 08:25 hrs, Sultanganj at 08:54 hrs and reach Bhagalpur at 10:15 hrs. A total of 21 coaches will be attached in the train. The 05021 Shalimar-Gorakhpur weekly puja special train will from October 27 to December 1 on every Tuesday leave Shalimar at 20.20 hrs, Kharagpur at 22.15 hrs, the second day Tatanagar at 00.10 hrs, Purulia at 01.47 hrs, Bhojudih at 02.45 hrs, Mahuda at 03.14 hrs, Gomoh at 04.15 hrs, Koderma at 05.18 hrs, Gaya at 07.05 hrs, Sasaram at 08.09 hrs, Deendayal Upadhyaya Jn at

10.25 hrs, Varanasi at 11.45 hrs, Aunrihar at 12.23 hrs, Mau at 13.25 hrs, Bhatni at 14.40 hrs and Deoria Sadar at 14.57 hrs and reach Gorakhpur at 16.25 hrs. During the return journey the 05022 Gorakhpur-Shalimar weekly puja special will from October 26 to November 30 on every Monday leave Gorakhpur at 13.40 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 14.25 hrs, Bhatni at 14.55 hrs, Mau at 16.25 hrs, Aunrihar at 17.16 hrs, Varanasi at 18.40 hrs, Deendayal Upadhyay Jn at 19.43 hrs, Sasaram at 20.51 hrs, Gaya at 22.10 hrs, Koderma to 23.32 hrs, the second day Gomoh at 02.00 hrs, Mahuda to 02.23 hrs, Bhojudih at 02.47 hrs, Purulia at 03.52 hrs, Tatanagar at 05.50 hrs, Kharagpur at 07.55 hr and arrive at Shalimar at 10.05 hrs. A total of 22 coaches will be attached in the train. The 05029 Gorakhpur-Pune weekly puja special will from October 22 to November 26 every Thursday leave Gorakhpur at 17.25 hrs, Khalilabad at 18.07 hrs, Basti at 18.34 hrs, Mankapur at 19.23 hrs, Gonda at 20.00 hrs, Lucknow at 22.55 hrs, Unnao at 23.55 hrs, on second day Kanpur Central at 00.40 hrs, Orai at 02.11 hrs, Jhansi at 04.35 hrs, Bina at 07.10 hrs, Bhopal at 09.30 hrs, Habibganj at 09.44 hrs, Itarsi at 11.50 hrs, Khandwa at 14.45 hrs, Bhusaval at 17:00 hrs, Marnmad at 19:50 hrs, Kopergaon at 20.55 hrs, Ahmednagar at 23.00 hrs reach Pune at 03.30 hrs on the third day. During the return journey 05030 Pune-Gorakhpur weekly puja special will from October 24 to November 28 every Saturday will leave Pune at 11.15 hrs, Ahmednagar at 14.00 hrs, Kopergaon at 16.00 hrs, Marnmad at 17:25 hrs, Bhusaval at 19.55 hrs, Khandwa at 23.45 hrs, on second day Itarsi at 02.15 hrs, Habibganj at 04.00 hrs, Bhopal at 04.30 hrs, Bina at 06.45 hrs, Jhansi at 08.55 hrs, Orai at 10.20 hrs, Kanpur Central at 13.30 hrs, Unnao at 13.53 hrs, Lucknow at 15.05 hrs, Gonda at 17.05 hrs, Mankapur at 17.31 hrs, Basti at 18.23 hrs, Khalilabad at 18.47 hrs and reach Gorakhpur at 20.00 hrs. A total of 22 coaches will be attached in the train.

Four killed in road accidents

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Four persons lost their lives in separate road mishaps in the district on Wednesday. As per reports received here, Sunil (19), a resident of Rajayi village, was going for his coaching class on a motorcycle when he was suddenly hit by a Magic vehicle in Tilaanv village under the Lalganj police station. As a result he died on the spot but the Magic driver managed to escape from the spot. In the second incident, Rahul Singh (20), a resident of Dumduma village under Chunar police station, was going on a motorcycle along with his mother when it collided with a tempo near a hotel in Barevaan village under Chunar police station and they fell on the road. In the meantime they were crushed by a truck which was passing that way due to which they were injured. They were rushed to the CHC situated in Chunar where the woman was declared as brought dead by the doctor on duty there. The truck driver had been taken into custody by the police. In yet another incident Vidyasagar Pal, a resident of Kotwaan village under Madihan police station, was run over by a truck while he was crossing the road near the forest office in Madihan market under the Madihan police station. As a result the victim

died on the spot while the truck driver managed to flee from the spot. In the fourth incident, Ramnath, son of Kalloo, a resident of Bansagar Colony under City Kotwali police station, was going somewhere on his motorcycle when it collided with a tractor near the post office situated in Fatahaan under City Kotwali police station. Consequently he died on the spot. The police took the body of the deceased into custody and informed his kin about it. However the tractor driver managed to flee leaving the vehicle on road. The police was busy in completing the legal formalities, last reports received here said.

TEAM VISITS DIST: A central team comprising GI Bansal, Dr Rajshekhar and Dr B Ganeshan visited the district to assess the loss due to hail-storm. The team held a meet-



ing at Ashtabhujia guest house and interacted with the farmers and officials concerned. The team appealed to farmers to get crop insurance facility. The team told the DM to ensure that cent per cent vic-

tims were covered and provided relief amount after the the fund was released. DM Sushil Kumar Patel apprised the team that in year 2019-20 the district had got a sum of ₹23 crore as relief fund which was distributed among the eligible persons. Gopal, a farmer belonging to Haipura village in Sadar tehsil told the team that he had got ₹13,500 as relief. Girdhari, a resident of Pandeypur village in Lalganj tehsil said that he too had got ₹13,500 as relief. The team interacted with other farmers too who had come from different parts of the district.

THIEF CAUGHT: A thief was caught red-handed by the villagers along with a stolen submersible pump here. As per the reports, Bhagirathi Pal, a resident of Mawayikala village under Halia police station, had informed the police that his submersible pump had been stolen on Monday. He said stated that early on Tuesday morning when he heard some noise in the neighbourhood, he went there and saw a submersible pump loaded on the bicycle of an unknown person. With the help of villagers the suspect was handed to the police. After registering a case the police recovered the pump and sent the accused Mobin Hasan, a resident of Mahugarhi Chhataria village, to jail.

Cultural complex inaugurated

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

CMD Prabhat Kumar Sinha inaugurated a Newly-built Alankar annexe and cultural complex in Dudhichua area, Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) through the web recently. On the occasion NCL Director (Personnel) Bimlendu Kumar, Director (Technical/Operations) Dr Anindya Sinha, Director (Technical/Planning & Project) SS Sinha, NCL JCC member Munni Lal Yadav and office-bearers of Officers' Association Sarvesh Singh also remained connected. In the programme CMD PK Sinha said that the NCL was committed to ensuring the welfare of its personnel. Sinha congratulated the team Dudhichua and Kalyan team of NCL headquarters for completing the work on time despite the Covid-generated circumstances and expressed confidence that this year other underconstruction welfare works would also be completed on time. On the occasion Sinha called upon the personnel to maintain social distancing and use masks while discharging their responsibilities. NCL Director (Personnel) Bimalendu Kumar congratulated the Dudhichua team for dedicating the Alankar annexe and cultural complex equipped with modern facilities despite the global calamity and directed all NCL projects to accelerate activities of welfare and social responsibility. NCL Director (Technical/Operations) Dr Anindya Sinha congratulated the



team of Dudhichua for the construction of Alankar annexe and cultural complex and also described NCL as a leading company in production and despatch as well as employee welfare. During this period NCL Director (Project and Planning) SS Sinha extended his congratulations on the expansion of Alankar Bhawan and construction of cultural complex in Dudhichha region and thanked the labour organisations for their cooperation in the Corona period. A member of the JCC, Munni Lal Yadav, said that the cultural complex and the expansion of Alankar Bhawan was a much-awaited work and due to its completion the employee welfare has gained new dimensions in Dudhichua region. Representative of Officers' Association Sarvesh Singh said in NCL besides setting the record of production and productivity full attention is also being given to employee welfare activities. The entire NCL team deserves congratulations for it. It may be pointed out here that in Alankar annexe four additional air-conditioned rooms have been built which will facilitate the programmes held there. Besides beautification of the Dudhichua cultural complex, its boundary wall, a grand gate and toilets have also been constructed. During the programme GM of Dudhichua region, Bipin Kumar and all heads of departments, representatives of labour organisations and GMs of all other projects of NCL and their teams were connected through the web.

Experts discuss potential of maize in ethanol production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Secretary (Food and Public Distribution) Sudhanshu Pandey stressed the need for reducing dependence on imported crude oil.

Addressing a webinar on Thursday on the topic 'A Step Ahead Toward a Future Fuel' held in association with National Sugar Institute and Indian Sugar Mills Association, Pandey said the Government of India had chalked out the ethanol blended petrol (EBP) programme in a phased manner and for 2022 the blending target was 10 percent and by 2030 it was to be raised to 20 percent.

He said in order to achieve the goal of EBP, there was need for adding ethanol capacities and developing alternate feed stocks.

He said the potential of maize, which was abundantly availability, could be harnessed for ethanol production at it would help the farmers in getting good rates for their produce.

Joint Secretary (Sugar), Government of India, Subodh Kumar Singh, in his address said that in order to boost ethanol availability during the last one year or so, 362 proposals for a loan amount of over Rs 18,000 crore had been approved which may result in addition of 600 crore litre ethanol capacity per annum.

NSI Director Prof Narendra Mohan suggested that without inviting 'Food Vs Fuel' debate, surplus grains viz. rice and maize, could be used for production of ethanol.

He said with rice and maize, it was possible to attain

average ethanol yields of 450 litre/ton and 380 litres/ton with a valuable by-product, distillers dried grain with solubles (DDGS) to be used as cattle feed.

He said since only a limited quantity of ethanol could be produced using molasses from sugar industry, development of alternate feed stocks like surplus grain, sweet potato, sugar beet, sweet sorghum and cassava was important.

Earlier, Sudhanshu Pandey mooted that avenues towards export of sugar to sugar deficit Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka be taken up.

He said the country was continuing with surplus sugar production for the last couple of years and during the next sugar season (2020-21) also the country may see sugar pro-

duction to the extent of +30 MMT which was much higher than the domestic requirement.

He said thus sugar export and production of ethanol by sacrificing sugar was important for the economic sustainability of the Indian sugar industry.

He also stressed on the need for safe supply chain management from farm to consumer keeping in view the COVID-19 outbreak. He emphasised upon adoption of good manufacturing practices and hazard analysis & critical control points in sugar factories to ensure quality control.

He said the sugar consumption faced challenges due to COVID-10 pandemic, growing consumer preference for sugar substitutes and sugar tax imposed by various countries to curb sugar consumption.

Mobile app for devotees of Mata Vaishno Devi launched

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, who is also Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board on Thursday launched a Mobile App for the devotees of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar .

This new initiative has been taken by the Shrine Board with a view to maximise the use of available technology and digitization for the larger facilitation of the devotees of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

The mobile app would provide the opportunity to the worshippers across the globe to have an individual experience of godliness and bliss.

During the upcoming Navratras, live streaming of Shat Chandi Maha Yagya being performed at the Holy Cave Shrine will also be available on this App.

In the first instance, the

Mobile App has been launched on Google Play Store only which will later also be available on IOS platform.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said that the Mobile App will be of immense help to the devotees worldwide to have the live darshan of Maa Vaishno Devi, besides availing various other facilities made available by the Shrine Board through this medium.

Referring to the recently launched home delivery of Pooja Prasad by the Board, he said that it has been widely appreciated by the devotees. He also stressed that during the current situation due to COVID-19, the adoption of online services need to be promoted in a big way to maintain social distancing and other preventive measures to control the spread of pandemic. **PNS**

10 killed as rain plays havoc in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

At least 10 persons were killed, heavy inundation was reported from many towns and villages and road and rail transport was affected in parts of Maharashtra on Thursday, as heavy rain battered several parts of the state ahead of the passage of cyclonic storm over the state on Friday.

While six persons were killed when a wall crashed in the pilgrim town of Pandharpur in Solapur district in western Maharashtra, three persons drowned in floods in Pune. In another incident, one person was killed after a car carrying three persons washed away in swollen waters of Solapur.

Following the release of excess water from the Ujani and Veer dams, Pandharpur faced a

major flood situation. The released dam water inundated many villages around Pandharpur, crippling normal life and paralysing traffic in the area.

Reports reaching the state headquarters said that as many as 8,400 living in the areas in and around Pandharpur were shifted to safe areas by the police.

Among the districts that were affected by heavy rains and the consequent floods were Solapur, Kolhapur, Sangli, Pune and Satara in western Maharashtra and Latur, Osmanabad and Beed districts in Marathwada region.

Talking to media persons after reviewing the flood situation in the state, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the Army, Navy and Air Force had been

kept on high alert to deal with the flood-affected areas in the state. "The teams of National Disaster Response Force are currently engaged in rescue and relief operations in Osmanabad, Solapur, Pandharpur and Baramati," he said.

The chief minister said that he had directed the revenue authorities in the flood affected areas to do panchama of the destroyed crops and damaged property.

Many big and small rivers like Chandrabhaga (Solapur), Panchganga (Kolhapur), Terna (Latur & Osmanabad) and a few rivers in Pune have been in spate since Thursday morning.

Following heavy overnight night rains and release of excess water from Ujani and Veer dams, vast tracts of agricultur-

al land lay under thick sheets of water leading to extensive damage to standing crops.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has sounded a 'red alert' for the next 48 hours in the coastal Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg districts which are likely to witness heavy rain and thunderstorms, and fishermen on the entire coastal stretch have been advised against venturing into the Arabian Sea.

"Depression weakened into a well Marked Low Pressure Area over south central Maharashtra Wednesday evening. To emerge into Arabian Sea and intensify further," the IMD said in its forecast.

In a related development, heavy rains lashed Mumbai and surrounding districts of Thane, Palghar and Raigad.

Reconsider stay order, CBI's plea to HC in LIFE Mission case

KOCHI: The CBI on Thursday approached the Kerala High Court with a plea to reconsider the stay ordered by the court into the allegations of corruption and money laundering in the LIFE Mission project of the Kerala Government.

The Court has stayed the CBI probe into the allegations against LIFE Mission Chief Executive Officer U V Jose even as it allowed the agency to go ahead with the probe against Unitac, the project implementing concern.

The CBI in its petition told the Court that the stay on the probe against Jose was affecting the entire investigation process including the violation of Foreign Currency Regulation Act (FCRA). The High Court is expected to take up the case on Monday.

Meanwhile another bench of the court on Thursday issued an order against the arrest of M Sivsankar, the former Principal Secretary of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan by the Enforcement Directorate till October 23 in connection with the gold smuggling case. Sivsankar was questioned by the ED in its Kochi office on Thursday. **PNS**

Calcutta HC questions Didi doles to Durga Puja clubs

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday delivered a rap on the Trinamool Congress Government's knuckles asking why the State doled out ₹50,000 each to the various committees organizing Durga Puja and why in the first place the Government allowed the organisation of community Pujas when the schools and colleges remained shut in a pandemic situation. The Division Bench of Justices Sanjib Banerjee and Arijit Banerjee was hearing a petition challenging the grant of doles by the State Government to various Puja committees. Wondering the Government doled out similar grants for the other festivals such as Eid, the Court asked whether there were any guidelines for making such expenditure, that too amid various austerity measures taken

the weekly ratings for up to 12 weeks, an official statement said.

At least five people have been arrested by the city police which busted the scam earlier this month.

Those arrested include news channel employees, while the police is also questioning executives of Arnab Goswami-led Republic TV with regard to the case. Republic TV has denied any wrongdoing. **PTI**

J&K ropes in Flipkart to promote local arts

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with one of the county's prominent online retailers, Flipkart to provide an online platform for showcasing and facilitating the local artisans /craftsmen / weavers to reach customers across the globe.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor, UT of J&K between Hashmat Ali, Managing Director, J&K Handloom and Handicrafts Corporation and Rajnesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group.

According to a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir government, "The special webportal 'Samarth' of e-commerce giant Flipkart will now cater to hitherto uncovered products of Handicrafts and Handloom of J&K". The spokesman said, the

endeavour is seen as a game changer for on-boarding, sale and cataloguing of Handicrafts and Handloom products of J&K". The step by the Government at the time when the entire Country is reeling under the pressures of COVID-19 Pandemic shall provide much-needed succour to the artisans, craftsperson and weavers in J&K.

The move by the Government shall expose artisans, craftspersons and weavers to millions of customers shopping online thereby ensuring efficient marketing that too when virtual marketing has overtaken the physical marketing of goods and services across the globe, the spokesman added.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor appreciated the art of artisans and weavers of J&K. He emphasized that the initiative by the Government is more beneficial to the Flipkart than to the artists of J&K given the kind of unmatched, unique, world-class and nowhere-else to be seen artistry and dexterity of the artisans of J&K.

"Partnership with the e-commerce marketplace like Flipkart will enable the local artisans, craftsmen and weavers to reach the global market. It will also provide an appropriate opportunity for the momentous growth and development of the respective sectors", he added.

The Lt Governor also underscored the various steps that the Government of J&K has taken in the recent past for improving the financial conditions of artisans and weavers associated with Handicrafts and Handloom sector like enhancement in loan to Rs 2 lacs under Artisans Credit card scheme.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
On behalf of the President of India, acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con., North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-Works Tenders:-
S.No.-1, E-Tender No.: DYCE I-BSB-2020-02 Dated 13-10-2020, Name of work: Linking of BG Track, Carriage of P.Way material, Spreading of ballast & other miscellaneous track works between Km. 25/0 to Jaunpur (excl.) in Aunrihar-Jaunpur section of Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway in connection with Aunrihar-Jaunpur doubling project. Approximate Value (Rs.): ₹ 7,17,65,981.33, Earnest Money: (Rs.): ₹ 5,08,800/-. Maintenance Period: 12 (Twelve Months), Completion Period: 06 (Six) Months.
• Bidding Start date-26-10-2020.
• Last date of submission of above E-Tender on 09-11-2020 upto 14:30 hrs.
• Date of opening of above E-Tender on 09-11-2020 from 14:30 hrs.
• Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria, terms & conditions is available on website <https://trends.gov.in> • In case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of Tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed.
Shri Rakesh Ranjan, Dy.CE/Con/ I/BSB, Mob.: 9794845247
Dy. Chief Engineer/Con/CPRO-W-114 Varanasi
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 0979484595
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

मध्यमल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि., हरदोई ई-निविदा सूचना अधो-हस्ताक्षरी द्वारा अनुमोदी एवं कार्य में दक्ष ठेकेदारों से ई-निविदाएं दो मागों में उ०प्र० सरकार की पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा सूचना www.mvnl.in पर भी अवलोकित जा सकती है। सभी निविदाओं को अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 02.11.2020 समय 14.00 बजे तक तथा प्रथम भाग खुलने की तिथि 02.11.2020 समय 16.00 बजे नियत है। निविदा में संशोधन, तिथि विस्तारण, पुनर्प्रकाशन आदि की सूचना भी उक्त पोर्टल पर एवं वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध करायी जायेगी।
1. अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा संख्या 129/विदिमई/2020-21- विद्युत वितरण खण्ड - द्वितीय, हरदोई में कार्यरत उपखण्ड अधिकारी, विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-द्वितीय, बायन, हरदोई हेतु एक नम जीपनुमा डीजल चालित चार पहिया वाहन मय ब्राइवर एक वर्ष के लिये किराये पर आपूर्ति। निविदा मूल्य रु० 1180.00 जीएसटी सहित एवं घरोहर धनराशि रु० 2700.00। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, हरदोई। पत्रांक - 2495, दिनांक - 15.10.2020, "संक्षिप्त में बिजली बचाय"

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०
CIN:U31200UP2003SGC027480
अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सूचना
अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित वितरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुमोदी व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है, निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना एवं ई-निविदा में यदि कोई संशोधन अथवा निविदा खुलने की तिथि में विस्तार होता है तो इसकी सूचना ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है। 1. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 94/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-तृतीय, घाटमपुर के अन्तर्गत डबल सर्किट 33 कं०वी० स्वतंत्र पोषक चनेली डिमनवाइट में दो रेली डिमिन को सही करने हेतु लाइन में पड़ने वाले पेड़ों की टहनियों की कटाई एवं छटाई का कार्य। (लगभग 10000 नम टहनियों) 2. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 95/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड -प्रथम, कानपुर के अन्तर्गत विन्मलिखित वितरण के अन्तर्गत विन्मलिखित क्षेत्र के अधीन निवेश मित्र पोर्टल पर आवेदन उपमोकाओं के संयोजन को सम्मम ऊर्जाकृत करने का कार्य पूर्ण जमा मद में विन्मि विद्युत लाइनों की शिफ्टिंग का कार्य। 3. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 96/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड -प्रथम, कानपुर के अन्तर्गत नवल क्षेत्र के अधीन निवेश मित्र पोर्टल पर आवेदित उपमोकाओं के संयोजनों को सम्मम ऊर्जाकृत करने का कार्य पूर्ण जमा मद में विन्मि विद्युत लाइनों की शिफ्टिंग का कार्य। 4. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 97/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-तृतीय, घाटमपुर के अन्तर्गत आर०ए०पी०डी०आर०पी० टाउन घाटमपुर के अधीन पुराने बलिवरस एस्०टी०पी० पोलीं पर नीचे 50x50x6 MM का एगिल वेल्डिंग करते हुये रिपरा का पुनर्निर्माण करके बलिवरस पोलीं की मरम्मत का कार्य। 5. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 98/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल -कानपुर के अन्तर्गत नवल क्षेत्र के अधीन निवेश मित्र पोर्टल पर आवेदित उपमोकाओं के संयोजनों को सम्मम ऊर्जाकृत करने का कार्य पूर्ण जमा मद में विन्मि विद्युत लाइनों की शिफ्टिंग का कार्य। 6. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 99/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल -कानपुर के अन्तर्गत सोशल मीडिया प्रकोष्ठ एवं नवलजित विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-सरसील एवं शिवराजपुर एवं प्रवर्तन दल हेतु 07 नम कम्प्यूटर, प्रिन्टर, पीसीएस० एवं 04 नम स्कैनर की आपूर्ति का कार्य। 7. **अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सं०:** 100/वि०नि०मंका/2020-21 **वितरण:** विद्युत वितरण खण्ड -प्रथम, कानपुर के अधीन सरसील क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत पूर्ण जमा मद में मेसरी व्यूथिम फुड्स लिमिटेड के परिसर से गुजर रही 33 कं०वी० विद्युत लाइन की शिफ्टिंग का कार्य।
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता वि०वि०मं०, गोविन्द नगर, कानपुर
1413 / वि०वि०मंका दिनांक 12-10-2020
संक्षिप्त में बिजली बचाय

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways on Thursday refuted reports that it was going to discontinue the sleeper class on mail and express trains and said that the aim behind introducing three-tier coaches was to make journey of passengers more affordable and comfortable.

Addressing a virtual press conference, Railway Board Chairman and CEO V.K. Yadav said: "We will continue with sleeper class coaches. There's absolutely no ambiguity related to it."

Noting that the railways plans to increase the speed of trains on its network and soon, trains on the New Delhi-Mumbai and New Delhi-Kolkata routes will run at 130 kmph, while work to upgrade tracks to enable trains run at 160 kmph has also started, he, however, said that with the increased speeds, passengers in sleeper class coaches will face difficulties and discomfort.

"So, we have decided to make a new AC-3 tier coach which will be introduced next year. Our aim is to make AC travel more affordable for the

passengers and fare will be between that of AC-3 and sleeper class," he said.

The Indian Railways on Sunday said that it plans to introduce AC-3 tier coaches in mail and express trains, giving rise to speculations that it has planned to do away with the sleeper class coaches.

The announcement led to widespread criticism.

The CEO also said that the freight revenue up to October 13 this year has witnessed a jump of 11 per cent as compared to the same period last year.

He also said that the

automobile loading has gained momentum and witnessed a jump of over 68 per cent as the railways has loaded 126 automobile rakes.

He also said that the national transporter is currently operating 682 special trains and 20 clone trains.

"Apart from this, 416 festival special trains will also be run from October 20 to November 30," he said.

He also said that a new timetable will be implemented when regular train services resume but it is difficult to tell a time period when it will come into effect.k

Govt buys 62.42 lakh tonne kharif paddy at MSP in last 19 days

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

About 62.42 lakh tonne of Akharif paddy worth ₹11,785 crore was purchased at the minimum support price (MSP) from 5.33 lakh farmers in the last 19 days, the food ministry said on Thursday.

Paddy procurement commenced in Punjab and Haryana from September 26 due to early arrival of the crop, while in other states it began from October 1. More than 80 per cent of the country's paddy crop is grown in

the kharif season. The government through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state agencies undertakes procurement of paddy at MSP. Paddy procurement in the 2020-21 kharif marketing season is going on smoothly in the procuring states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Chandigarh and J&K," the food ministry said in a statement. Till October 14, about 62.42 lakh tonne of paddy was procured at MSP value of ₹11,785 crore, it said.

For the current year, the

Centre has fixed the MSP of paddy (common grade) at ₹1,868 per quintal, while that of A grade variety has been fixed at ₹1,888 per quintal. In case of cotton, state-owned Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has procured 89,592 bales at MSP value of ₹25,399 lakh from 18,618 farmers till October 14. Besides, the government through nodal agencies is buying pulses and oilseeds at MSP under the Price Support Scheme (PSS), which gets operationalised when market rates fall below the support price. Till

October 14, about 686.74.74 tonne of moong and urad at MSP value of Rs 4.94 crore was procured from 639 farmers in Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Similarly, 5,089 tonne of copra at MSP value of Rs 52.40 crore was procured from 3,961 farmers in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in the said period. In respect of copra and urad, rates are ruling at or above MSP. Respective state governments are making arrangements for commencement of procurement in respect of moong.

Akkitham, Jnanpith winner, passes away

KOCHI: Akkitham Achuthan Namboodiri, the Maha Kavi (Great Poet) of Malayalam, breathed his last on Thursday morning. He was 94 and was admitted to a corporate hospital in Thrissur on Monday following urinary infection.

More than a poet, Akkitham, as he was known, was a social reformer who fought against social evils like untouchability, gender discrimination, and religious fundamentalism.

He was awarded the Jnanpith Prize, India's greatest literary honour, in the year 2019. It may be a strange coincidence that the poet was presented the award in the last week of September 2020.

For more than six decades, Akkitham remained as a beacon of hope for Malayalam literature which lost its way because of the invasion by ultra-modern literature. "He was the eternal rebel. He revolted against the age-old

dogmas and traditional chauvinism. All his poems were creative conflicts and he was the Prophet of Love," said Prof P G Haridas, long-time associate of the late poet. According to the veteran professor, Akkitham was the manifestation of Buddhist teachings. "While Budha tried to revolutionise the society through stories and speeches, Akkitham represented it through poetry," he said. Akkitham, born in a conservative community, fought against traditionalists and led many agitations against untouchability and discrimination of Harijans. He was the leader of Paliam agitation against untouchability.

What earned him the name of "the Sun of Revolution" was his fight for the Dalits who were denied the rights to learn Vedas. It is because of the unrelenting fight by Akkitham that led to admission of Dalits in Veda Pathasalas across Kerala. **PNS**

Parliamentary panel calls top MHA officials over crime against women

New Delhi: In the wake of the alleged case of gangrape in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, a parliamentary panel has called top Union Home Ministry officials to appear before it next week and brief the members on 'Atrocities and Crime Against Women', sources said on Thursday.

They said the home secretary has been called to appear before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs and is expected to brief it on the issue of crimes against women. Besides this, the reconstituted panel will also discuss issues related to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs chaired by senior Congress leader Anand Sharma will be briefed by the officials of the Home Ministry on October 22 on the subject of 'Atrocities and Crime Against Women', according to a notice issued by Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

India recorded on an average 87 rape cases daily in 2019 and overall 4,05,861 cases of crime against women during the year, a rise of over 7 per cent from 2018, according to the latest government data.

The country recorded 3,78,236 cases of crimes against women in 2018, the data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed.

Kerala gold smuggling scam: NIA finds D-link

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the Kerala gold smuggling case has told a special court in Kochi that it suspected the link of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim's gang in the sensational racket.

Arguing that the detention of all the accused in judicial custody up to 180 days was absolutely necessary to carry forward the investigation in the case, the agency on Wednesday said there were intelligence inputs regarding probable use of proceeds from the gold smuggling for anti-national and terrorism activities.

Through the additional counter of the nexus between the gold smuggling case accused and Dawood at the Special NIA Court, Kochi the

agency strongly opposed the bail pleas of all the accused arrested in connection with the case. The case relates to smuggling of gold through diplomatic channel.

Ramees, fifth accused in the case, during custodial interrogation, has revealed that he had attempted to start a diamond business in Tanzania and that later he had attempted to obtain a gold mining licence in Tanzania, the NIA said.

He had also stated about having brought gold from Tanzania and sold the same in UAE, it said and quoting UN Security Council Sanctions Committee's narrative summary on Dawood and fact sheet published by the US Department of Treasury specifically mentioned about his gang's activities in Africa. "Recent news reports have



also specifically mentioned the diamond business of Dawood Ibrahim in Tanzania, managed by his associate "Feroz", considered a south Indian by intelligence agen-

cies", the agency said in the report, indicating the suspected link needed to be probed.

NIA further said the Central Economic Intelligence

Bureau (CEIB), the apex intelligence body for economic agencies in India, had sent a report to the Director General of NIA during October, 2019 regarding the probable use of

proceeds from gold smuggling in Kerala, for terrorism and other anti-national activities.

The agency submitted the intelligence report to the Court in a sealed envelope. "It is submitted that the facts now emerging during investigation, regarding the charges under Sections 17 and /or 18 of the UAPA Act against accused with otherwise apparently minor roles, indicate that the intelligence input received from CEIB, leading to NIA investigation in this crime, is gaining credence."

In the report, the NIA also said the 12th accused Mohammed Ali was a member of "fundamentalist organisation Popular Front of India" and was charge-sheeted by police in the Kerala professor hand chopping case in 2010 but acquitted as more than 90

prosecution witnesses had turned hostile during trial. It said the scrutiny of data retrieved by C-DAC from the seized mobile phone of Ali has revealed that he had formatted his phone on July 19 after his role in the smuggling case surfaced. However, from the limited data retrieved by C-DAC, pictures of paper slips depicting details of huge cash transactions amounting to several lakhs of rupees, including one transaction of ₹15 lakhs specifically attributed to one "Jalal", have been retrieved, NIA said. His suspicious cash transactions need to be ascertained further through custodial interrogation after advanced forensic analysis and extraction of more data from his formatted mobile phone, the agency added.

Leaders of the Opposition parties in Kerala on Thursday

slammed Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan after the NIA's revelation of the Dawood connection in the gold smuggling case.

Kerala's BJP chief K Surendran accused the government of shielding the smugglers and demanded that the Chief Minister resign as he has "lost moral rights to continue." "The relationship of the accused in the Gold Smuggling Case with D-company and ISIS has been established," he said.

Reacting to the revelation, Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala said, "It is very shocking that the main culprit in the gold smuggling case has connections with Dawood Ibrahim. It is one of the biggest crimes that happened in Kerala. Unfortunately, the state government was supporting the culprits."

BJP MP accuses Cong leaders of looting 29K-acre Waqf land

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Thursday dished out an eight-year-old report of the Karnataka Minority Commission to allege a 29,000-acre Waqf land fraud in Karnataka allegedly involving political leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge and CM Ibrahim.

Addressing a press conference here, the MP who is also a national spokesperson of the BJP, said the land donated to Waqf Board is only to be used for poor Muslims and according to a Supreme Court ruling, the land can "never be sold, converted or used for other purposes"

Chandrasekhar alleged that 29,000 acres in the State were put to commercial use and not for building hospitals, educational institutions or for other charitable works for the poor of the minority community.

Taking a dig at former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, whom he quoted as saying that 'minorities have the first right on the country resources', the BJP MP wondered why Singh could not look at the exploitation of Waqf land and the "long process of exploitation of poor Muslims for vote bank politics."

It is also an economic and financial exploitation of poor Muslims, he said.

The BJP spokesman said several political leaders including those from Congress like Kharge and Ibrahim were named in the report which alleges "massive Waqf land fraud."

The BJP leader demanded investigations into all waqf Boards including those of Karnataka, Maharashtra and

Chandrasekhar alleged that 29,000 acre in Karnataka were put to commercial use and not for building hospitals, educational institutions

Uttar Pradesh.

The BJP Government in Karnataka had on September 23 this year tabled the 2012 report in the Assembly on encroachment of Waqf properties across the state.

This was at a time when the ruling BJP government had come under attack from Congress members in the state Assembly over alleged corruption charges in the procurement of COVID-19 related medical equipment and in management of the pandemic.

The state government apparently sought to turn the tables on the opposition by tabling the eight-year-old report that incriminated several senior Congress leaders over the misuse of Waqf properties.

The 7,500-page report, which was prepared by BJP spokesperson Anwar Maniappad from Mangaluru when he was chairman of the minorities commission during the party's previous regime, highlighted gross encroachment of Waqf properties.

The report also named MLA NA Haris, former ministers Tanveer Sait and Roshan Baig and former Rajya Sabha member Rehman Khan.

Late Chief Minister Dharam Singh and late former Union minister C K Jaffer Sharief were also said to have been named in the report.

Managing Covid-19 through 'herd immunity' dangerous fallacy: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Managing Covid-19 by allowing herd immunity to develop in low-risk populations while protecting the most vulnerable is "a dangerous fallacy unsupported by the scientific evidence," an international group of 80 researchers have warned.

In an open letter, published in The Lancet journal, the authors noted that any pandemic management strategy relying upon the population to develop immunity from natural infections for Covid-19 is flawed and currently there is no evidence for lasting protective immunity to SARS-CoV-2 after natural infection.

The statement from the researchers from various fields comes days after the World Health Organisation (WHO) also advised against any attempts to achieve herd immunity or to hope that it will eventually save us. "Herd immunity or natural population immunity is not an option. Let's put our energy, focus, workforce, actions into what works." Maria Van Kerkhove, Covid19 Technical Lead, WHO had said.

They pointed out that natural infection-based herd immunity approaches risk impacting the workforce as a whole and overwhelming the ability of healthcare systems to provide acute and routine care.

In the face of a second wave of infection in several parts of the world, the scientists including Devi Sridhar from the University of Edinburgh in the UK, said there is currently renewed interest in herd immunity approaches allowing a large uncontrolled outbreak in low-risk populations while protecting the vulnerable.

2.4 lakh tuberculosis patients went unreported in India in 2019: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In India, only 2.40 million out of an estimated 2.64 million cases of tuberculosis were reported to the Government, that is, 2,40,000 TB patients went unreported in 2019, according to the recently released WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2020.

Following the imposition of national lockdown amid the Corona triggered lockdown, the weekly and monthly number of TB case notifications in India fell by more than 50 per cent between the end of March and late April, said the report. Compared with the first six months of 2019, monthly notifications in the first six months of 2020 were approximately 25-30 per cent lower in India, Indonesia and the Philippines

The reporting of TB cases, however, has significantly increased over the years in India: from 1.74 million in 2015 to 2.40 million in 2019. Notifications of people newly diagnosed with TB rose from 1.2 million to 2.2 million between 2013 and 2019 (+74%) while in 2018, the country had an estimated 2.69 million TB patients.

The number of laboratory-confirmed multi-drug resistant TB cases has increased from

58,347 in 2018 to 66,255 in 2019, said the report.

"As a result, universal drug susceptibility testing, the number of bacteriologically confirmed TB cases tested for rifampicin resistance has increased from 46% in 2018 to 77% in 2019, This is a critical improvement that helps detect drug resistance at the very outset and before initiation of treatment," said the report.

The incidence per 100,000 population has decreased from 199 in 2018 to 193 in 2019. The total TB incidence rate in India has decreased by almost 50,000 patients over the past one year, it added.

On TB funding in India, the report says findings say that the national TB budget in 2019 was \$497 million of which 85% came from domestic sources and 15% from external and donor agencies. About 77% of the total budget of \$583 million came from domestic resources. "This is a significant increase as compared to 2016 numbers when the national TB budget was US\$ 280 million and only 38% of it coming from domestic resources." The Global TB report has collated data from over 200 countries that has shown significant reductions in TB case notifications.

While some have argued this approach could lead to the development of infection-acquired immunity in the low-risk population, which will

CBI rubbishes media claim that it reached SSR case conclusion



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday yet again clarified that it continues to investigate the death of film star Sushant Singh Rajput and rubbished media reports claiming the agency has reached a conclusion in its probe in the case.

"There are certain speculative reports in media that the CBI has reached a conclusion. It may be reiterated that these reports are speculative and erroneous," it said in a statement on Thursday. This is the third clarification given by the CBI in nearly one and a half months.

The clarification comes after media reports on Thursday claimed the agency's probe has veered around the suicide theory as pointed out by the AIIMS medical board and the CBI will accordingly submit the report before the concerned court soon. The "speculative" reports also claimed there was no foul play. The media report comes days after the AIIMS medical board ruled out murder theories and concluded that Sushant Singh Rajput's death was a result of suicide.

In its report submitted on September 29, the Dr Sudhir Gupta-led AIIMS panel re-examined Rajput's post-mortem and viscera reports and concluded that it was a case of suicide. The report ruled out the possibility of any foul play or murder angle in the case.

"The Central Bureau of Investigation is conducting



In its report submitted on September 29, the Dr Sudhir Gupta-led AIIMS panel re-examined Rajput's post-mortem and viscera reports and concluded that it was a case of suicide

professional investigation related to death of Shri Sushant Singh Rajput in which all aspects are being looked at and no aspect has been ruled out as of date. Investigation is continuing," the CBI had said in a statement on September 28 following similar media reports.

On September 3, the CBI had said, "The CBI is conducting investigation related to death of Sh. Sushant Singh Rajput in a systematic and professional way. Certain media reports attributed to CBI investigation are speculative and not based on facts. It is reiterated that as a matter of Policy, CBI does not share details of ongoing investigation. CBI spokesperson or any team member has not shared any details of investigation with media. The details being reported and attributed to CBI are not credible."

Kashmiri woman in Delhi accuses landlady of calling her 'terrorist'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Kashmiri woman on Thursday alleged that her landlady targeted her for being a 'Kashmiri' and called her a 'terrorist'. She also alleged that in her absence the landlady had removed her furniture from the house. Police said they have registered a case and investigation has been initiated.

The Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) has issued a notice to the police in this connection and has sought an action taken report, copy of the FIR and whether any arrests have been made in the case. The incident took place on Wednesday.

In her complaint, the woman, who hails from Srinagar, has alleged that her landlady had entered the house along with a man and called her 'terrorist' as she is from Kashmir. When the victim returned home, she found her house lock broken and valuables stolen. Her landlady was also at the spot. Soon a heated argument broke out between both the parties, police said.

According to a senior police official, a police control room (PCR) call was received regarding a theft in a woman's house following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

"On reaching the spot, it was revealed that the house was rented to two sisters. Both are natives of Srinagar. The PCR call was made by their landlady. The tenant alleged that her landlady had broken the locks of house and removed furniture and also stolen clothes and Rs 20,000," he said.

"During enquiry, it was found that a quarrel had taken place earlier between them over paying house rent

and electricity bills. The electricity connection was also disconnected by the BSES. Based on a written complaint given by the tenant, a case has been registered under section 448 (punishment for house trespass), 380 (Theft dwelling house), 457 (lurking house-trespass), 323 (Punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of Indian Penal Code at Amar Colony police station and the matter is being investigated," said R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district.

A written complaint has also been given by the landlady in this regard and it is also being examined," said the DCP.

"So my landlady enters my house along with a man , that i have never seen in my whole life and starts to call me and my friends 'TERRORISTS' just because we are from KASHMIR that too, in front of a police official. They trespassed, broke in and our money, furniture," she alleged in her tweet.

She claimed her landlady also abused them. "Then she framed us for stealing the furniture, which she herself took from here in our absence. She is calling us names, abusing us and provoking us. The man literally pushed me and the landlady as well tried to attack me, all in front of DELHI POLICE," she alleged in her tweet.

However, police, said they are probing about the man who was allegedly accompanying the landlady.

Responding to her tweet, Delhi Commission for Women Chief Swati Maliwal said "This is shocking & shameful. DCW team is in touch. We'll ensure action!"

711 incidents of stubble burning reported from 3 States on October 14 alone

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The burning of paddy crop residue continued in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh as satellite images detected 711 incidents, the highest in a single day this year, on October 14.

The images showed 616 in Punjab, 87 in Haryana and 08 in Uttar Pradesh. This year, 4015 incidents were detected in three states between October 1 and 15 as compared to the 2119 incidents in 2019 and 2151 in 2018. The highest incidents have been reported in Punjab (3029), followed by Haryana (737) and UP (249). As per data, Haryana and UP have recorded less incidents of farm fires as compared to the last year.

Flagging off 50 inspection teams of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for field visits to keep a watch on pollution hot spots, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Thursday said that only 4 per cent pollution is due to stubble burning and 96 percent of it is due to local factors like biomass burning, garbage dumping, unpaved roads, dust, construction and demolition activities.

"I appeal to the Punjab government to swing into action and curb stubble burning. I went to attend a programme in Ludhiana last year. On my way back, my throat choked due to the smoke from stubble burning even when I was in an air-conditioned car," the minister said.

The data showed that 247 incidents were detected on October 13; 362 on



October 12; 333 on October 11; 238 on October 10; 310 on October 9 and 126 on October 9. , The incidents of farm fires were recorded 856 in 2019; 774 in 2018; 2731 in 2017 and 4339 in 2016 during the same period (between October 1 and 14) in the State. Majority of farm fires cases are reported in Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Patiala, Gurdaspur and Ferozepur districts.

With 779 farm fire incidents, Amritsar district ranks on the top, closely followed by Tarn Taran (743 incidents), Patiala (322 incidents) and Gurdaspur (208 incidents), (Ferozpur 195) districts, as of October 12, 2020.

The satellite images showed 737 incidents in Haryana and majority of them from Kurukshetra, Karnal, Fatehabad, Yamunanagar, Sirsa, Sonipat, Hisar and Ambala regions. The farm fire incidents are less this year as compared to the last year of 992 in 2019; 965 in 2018; 1647 in 2017 and 2074 in 2016. With 164, Kurukshetra is top in the list, followed by Karnal (154 incidents), Ambala (110 incidents), Kaithal (99), Jind (43 incidents) and Fatehabad (58 incidents) so far.

Just like human beings, cows prefer face-to-face chat also: Research

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Just like many human beings, cows also prefer a face-to-face chat, a team of researchers said after they found that the four-legged cattle were actually more relaxed when spoken to directly by a live human, rather than when listening to a recorded voice via a loud-speaker.

How did they find that the bovine animals were happy? The study published in journal Frontiers in Psychology said, "Heart rate variability was higher when cattle were spoken to directly, indicating they were enjoying themselves.

"After this treatment, heart rates were lower than after listening to a recorded voice, showing that the animals were more relaxed following the live chat."

"Cattle like stroking in combination with gentle talking," said Annika Lange of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria. "In scientific contexts, a recording of a human voice speaking gently could be used to relax the animals, because it can be difficult to repeat the same phrases in the same way during experiments."

Using a recorded voice means conditions are as similar as possible in each trial, following a concept known as



"standardization" -- an important principle of scientific experimentation.

The team worked with a herd of 28 cattle, comparing the benefits of either stroking the animals while playing a recording of an experimenter's voice, or stroking while speaking to the animals directly. After monitoring the animals' responses during the experiments, they found live talking was the best mood enhancer for their bovine friends.

How does a chilled cow behave? "When relaxed and enjoying the interaction, the animals will often stretch out their necks as they do when they groom each other," says Lange. "Additionally, it is thought that ear positions may indicate mood: hanging ears and low ear positions appear to be linked to relaxation."

Lange calls for further research to see if results are also valid for different herds and situations, such as with cows that are more fearful of humans.

Rahul asks Twitterati question, launches veiled attack on Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday morning asked twitterati about what is common between countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Vietnam, Iraq, Korea and Syria. Later in the day answering his own question, Rahul Gandhi said that leaders of these countries divided them internally, which made these countries battleground between dominant powers. During the day it was taken as a veiled attack on the Narendra Modi Government by drawing parallel with the leaders of the above-mentioned countries.

The Gandhi scion on Thursday morning tweeted, "Can anyone guess what's common between these countries: Pakistan, Iraq, Korea, Vietnam, Syria and Afghanistan". Answering his own tweet later in the evening, he said, "Their leaders divided them internally and let their countries become battlegrounds between the dominant powers of their time. Their people paid for the leaders' actions with blood and tears."

On Wednesday also, Rahul Gandhi took a dig at Narendra Modi over the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) comparison of the country's per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with that of neighbouring Bangladesh.

Mehbooba returns

The PDP leader intends to pivot the larger alliance of all Kashmiri parties for a resolution of the Kashmir issue in totality



If the intention behind incarcerating former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti for over 14 months was to break her spirit, then the Government has clearly failed to do so. For hours after her release, she went beyond what the National Conference leaders, Farooq and Omar Abdullah, pledged to do as part of what they call a united Gupkar Declaration, namely restoring the special status of the erstwhile State. She wanted a political resolution of the Kashmir issue in its entirety and though she had joined hands with the Abdullahs for a larger cause, she seems determined enough to carry on her movement and reclaim her space in conversations. It remains to be seen whether her grand-standing is meant to blunt Farooq Abdullah's recent belligerence against the Centre and his wild missive that China could help in restoring Kashmir's special status or whether she is genuinely trying to reclaim lost political space and emerge as a power player. Is she negotiating her own role as a pivot in the changed apparatus? At some level, all the leaders know that a retraction of the status would be almost impossible, considering that even major world powers have endorsed India's position of acting within its constitutional space. Besides, they would have to challenge Kashmir's changed status in the Supreme Court. Interestingly, there is less mention of Article 370 per se as such but an emphasis on the Centre's "onslaught" on Kashmir's "identity." The message clearly is to get as many parties as possible on common ground and set an agenda acceptable to all. This way all can stand up to the Centre and challenge it head-on rather than being scattered and directionless. Mehbooba, incidentally, is the last of the Valley's mainstream political leaders to have been set free after they were charged under the Public Safety Act (PSA) ostensibly because of their track record of incendiary speeches that, the Government thought, would provoke people against the abrogation of Article 370. The fact is, the Government miscalculated their appeal greatly and disregarded that they were politically elected leaders who had been in alliance with New Delhi, acted as a buffer between the Centre and the militant movement and still had enough ground support, one that has prevented the Government from propping up alternate structures and leaders. Besides, for all the filters, curfews and lockdowns in Kashmir, militancy hasn't abated and remains a draw for disenchanting youth. And for all its promises of bridging the trust deficit by accelerating development, economic revival or civil engagement, without the participation by locals and their endorsement, Kashmir's integration with the mainstream is increasingly looking like an exercise in political egoism, a tool that is more disempowering than engaging, a punishment for history than an incentive for moving on. Politically, too, the BJP has been at the receiving end of non-cooperation, what with a spike in hitback killings of BJP leaders and sarpanches, the latter seen as extensions of Central authority. Only 7,528 of the 19,582 *panch* and *sarpanch* seats in Kashmir went to polls in 2018. Yet a majority of the elected are hiding out in hotels in Srinagar for fear of being attacked for participating in an electoral process that the Centre initiated. The BJP had hoped to build an alternative political pyramid with friendly leaders at the local level and devolving power to them. But that was not to be. Over 12,000 seats are still empty affecting local administration and despite the changed status, nobody is ready to engage till all known elected representatives are freed from detention. With credible leaders redefined as public enemies, as bad as militants, and basic rights and connectivity denied to locals, there is confusion, disenchantment and fatigue everywhere, one that can congeal to become a violent force if left to fester. Perhaps, that's the reason why the Government has changed its tactics and is returning the people's representatives to them as it were. It is even expected to hold elections in the remaining *panchayat* seats by the end of the year, risk any outcome and build connect strategies from there. For the political vacuum is costing it heavy and only lionising the likes of the Abdullahs and the Muftis. It is with this larger agenda that a seasoned politician like Manoj Sinha was made the new Lt Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. A low-key politician, his mission is to work out ways of connecting with people without disturbing the BJP's overall schematics in the Valley and even negotiate with all the political parties. The Government has realised that it cannot make any claim of transformative intent till it gets some kind of mediatory presence of local parties. The BJP's attempts to raise the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP), drawing rejects from the PDP and NC, lacks credibility. The Government could meet the old leaders half way, involving them in a reconciliation process on the condition that they wouldn't play a dual strategy with Pakistan. Some could be amenable to working the middle ground over time. But first, it should restore normalcy and mainstream internet connectivity. The youth are already feeling punished for being left out of the digital education revolution and we cannot let them be radicalised. E-commerce and online filing of tax and other financial transactions have been badly hit. The economy is in shambles with disruptive clampdowns affecting the supply chain and the services sector. Even the traditional performing sectors like the apple trade, tourism and handicrafts have wilted and there is nothing that seems worthy of big ticket investment. There must be an enabling climate or Kashmir could slip into a deeper trough, worse than ever imagined.

Yet another silly idea

The ban on generators is yet another one in the long list of silly ideas to control pollution that skirt the central issue



The ban on using generators in the National Capital Region when air quality levels hit hazardous highs must have been thought up by someone who lives in a ground floor apartment. Or that must have been the line by someone living in a penthouse on the 13th floor of a high-rise apartment block and would have cost the equivalent of half a million US dollars. While the overall electricity situation has improved in Delhi dramatically over the past decade, there are still power-cuts in Gurugram and Noida, both cities are home to millions who have spent their life savings on fancy apartments. To be then told that they will have to climb 12, 13 or 14 stories because the lights are out because there is an illogical ban on gensets and even if they manage the climb up, then to have no internet or possibly even run their kitchens, thanks to almost everything running on electricity. This is not to argue against the continuing incompetence of electricity providers in being unable to assure guaranteed 24-hour electricity in India, although that situation is improving but the impracticality of this decision has to be made clear to the powers that be.

This also highlights how authorities are charging at windmills while ignoring the elephant in the room as farmers in Punjab and Haryana continue to burn fields, many with political patronage. There are several causes for why the farmers burn their fields from a lack of cheap labour to changing crop patterns, but it is contingent upon the Government to at least give them subsidised equipment to remove the stubble. Hundreds of crores of rupees have been collected as a green cess over the past few years and that money should be deployed to resolve this problem instead of sitting in the bank. This could give impetus to agricultural equipment manufacturers as well as improve the electricity situation in multi-storey buildings. Yes, poor air quality is a serious problem in the capital but we must not end up cutting off our nose to spite the face. Not allowing gensets in the current time is a stupid idea that will inconvenience more people than it will help in solving the pollution crisis. Setting strict pollution norms for generators will help more.

opinion08

Aatmanirbharta in defence

Despite the minor setback with the indigenous ATAGS programme, India must forge ahead in the nation's interest and of course for the Army's sake



J P SINGH

The Advanced Towed Artillery Guns System (ATAGS) programme began in 2012 spear-headed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), with two strategic partners — the Bharat Forge Limited (BFL) and Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division (SED). The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) had ratified procurement of 150 ATAGS in August 2018, however, the process of developing them started way back in 2013 and concluded by 2017. The howitzer gun system was developed in a record time of 30 months and has gone through extensive trials over the last four years and performed admirably with remarkable consistency.

The ATAGS is one of the most advanced and perhaps the world's first gun which is capable of delivering Bi-Modular Charge System (BMCS) zone-seven propellants. With a firing range of 48 km — a record of sorts in the 155 millimeter/52 calibre family — the ATAGS is an appendage to the indigenously developed 155 millimeter/45 calibre artillery gun *Dhanush*.

Dhanush is a derivative of the FH-77B 155mm/39 calibre towed howitzer, previously built by the Swedish defence contractor Bofors. The Indian Army procured a total of 414 Swedish howitzers between 1987 and 1991. *Dhanush* howitzers have a maximum effective range of 38 km in salvo mode as compared to the 48 km of the ATAGS.

The India made ATAGS consists of a duel power system where hydraulics is used for mobility and gun in/out action whereas electrical power is used for the Gun Laying and Ammunition Handling System (AHS). The system is configured with an all-electric drive that ensures maintenance-free and reliable and secure operations over a long period of time. The gun system has automatic setting up, laying with a high-end Inertial Navigation System (INS) and automated AHS which loads shell, charge and primer simultaneously with a manual back up for the laying system. The gun system's hydraulic drive provides effective manoeuvrability in different terrains — on roads, cross



country, in the desert and in high altitude areas. The high power Auxiliary Power Unit (made in India) also renders effective self-propelled speed, rapid deployment and short response time.

The ATAGS has greater than 95 per cent indigenous components. The complete supply chain, from raw materials to end product, lies within the country, making it a true embodiment of 'Make in India' in defence system. The ATAGS gun system comprises of 7,463 components of which 4,977 are manufactured parts involving about 30,000 manufacturing processes and more than 2,00,000 inspection parameters.

The project is now in the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) stage 10 (as per the DRDO TRL stages), after being put through mandatory trials over the last five years. Earlier this month, it entered into its last stages of trial — viz the Preliminary Staff Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) trial, which is done prior to its induction into the arsenal system. The gun has already been through a rigorous pre-PSQR trial with the users and DRDO teams. In these trials, the BFL developed gun system fired a total of 130 plus rounds, mostly in zone seven, and the feedback was that the system has lived up to the parameters.

The gun fielded by Tata Aerospace and Defence Limited succeeded in firing 99

“THE PROJECT IS NOW IN THE TRL STAGE 10 AND HAS ALREADY BEEN THROUGH A RIGOROUS PRE-PSQR TRIAL WITH THE USERS AND DRDO TEAMS. IN THESE TRIALS, THE BFL DEVELOPED GUNS FIRED A TOTAL OF 130 PLUS ROUNDS, MOSTLY IN ZONE SEVEN, AND THE FEEDBACK WAS THAT THE SYSTEM HAS LIVED UP TO THE PARAMETERS”



SOUND BITE

(Robert) Destro will lead US efforts to promote dialogue between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives; protect the unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity of Tibetans.

US Secretary of State
—Mike Pompeo



Delhi is trying to combat pollution. For this, we have launched a new campaign called, Red light On, *Gaadi* off. I request everyone to join the campaign.

Delhi CM
—Arvind Kejriwal



We cannot afford to let our guard down, especially considering the fact that the paddy harvesting is on, as also the Government procurement.

Punjab CM
—Amarinder Singh



Sourav Ganguly and I talk about it most days and we are already planning when we can catch up once he and the team get over here (Australia).

Australian cricket chief
—Earl Eddings

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Defying protocols

Sir — Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray are in an open war of words about the re-opening of temples in the State. Koshiyari, mockingly asked Thackeray if he had turned "secular", provoking the latter to remind Koshiyari that the word "secular" is in the Constitution he had sworn to protect when he took oath of the office in Raj Bhavan. Additionally, the CM said that he did not need his Hindutva credentials certified by a puppet. However, this isn't the first time when a Governor appointed by the Centre has been at odds with the State Government. But what was shocking in this case was the intemperate language used by the Governor, who in an attempt to do his bit for the BJP defied protocols. The Governor is behaving like the agent of the Central Government to harass the State CM by playing dirty politics.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Single exam system

Sir — It is surprising to see students scoring 100 per cent in sub-

Structural reforms are urgently needed

In yet another shocking incident of sexual assault reported from Uttar Pradesh, a 17-year-old girl was allegedly thrashed and raped inside a Government college hostel in Jhansi. The incident took place on October 11 during the UP Provincial Civil Services (PCS) preliminary exam 2020 at the Jhansi College. The victim, a class 10 student, alleged in her complaint that around a dozen students of the college forcibly took her inside the campus where one of them raped her while others filmed the gruesome act and even robbed her of ₹2,000.

On the same day, in yet another incident, a woman was gang-raped and her five-year-old child murdered in Ojha Baraon village in Bihar's Buxar district. The woman and her child were on their way to a bank when they were abducted by a few men. The woman was then gang-raped. She was later tied up with her son and thrown into a river. Locals came to their rescue when she shouted for help, but the child had died by then.

These two cases are among the ones that were

jects like Hindi as some State Boards have literally made a mockery of the whole scoring system. A similar exam following the pattern of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET), Joint Entrance Examinations (JEE) and Common Aptitude Test (CAT) will be a good solution to select the right candidate rather than just banking on the senior sec-



reported but many such crimes go unreported as either victims or their family fear social backlash. Rape is the fourth most common crime against women in India. In such terrifying times, structural reforms are urgently needed. The Government should not let the situation continue to worsen.

MN Musaeed
Mumbai

year after year with students from certain Boards getting the benefit of entering top colleges in Delhi University.

Bal Govind
Noida

Next on the hot seat

Sir — Preparations for Bihar Assembly elections are at a peak and it will be taking place in

unprecedented circumstances over three phases, starting from the last week of October till the first week of November. It will be the first State to conduct polls after the outbreak of the pandemic. For Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar, it is a chance to convince his people that he is still good enough to deliver after having failed to handle the Corona outbreak and the returnee migrants' crisis. For the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad, this is a chance to prove that his son has it in him to continue his political movement and more importantly, that he is still a leader who matters in reshaping the political discourse. It will be interesting to see how Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Chirag Paswan performs in the elections, now when his mentor and father Ram Vilas Paswan has passed away. Will Chirag uphold his father's legacy or will he end up squirming for seats with JD(U) and BJP? Overall, Bihar elections pose a serious challenge for all political parties and only time will tell which one wins.

Mohd Najib
Patna

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Lockdowns and terminal decline

The pandemic will accelerate the fall of the West unless we abandon our irrational approach to the virus



ALLISTER HEATH

Please, please, Prime Minister, do not lock the UK down again. Do not listen to the unidimensional, anti-economic, risk-averse groupthink from Sage. Ignore Sir Keir Starmer and Sadiq Khan's shameless politicking. A "circuit-breaker" is doublespeak for another lockdown, and cannot be a sustainable answer: The virus would only be temporarily suppressed, with transmission bouncing back as soon as the restrictions were lifted again. A vicious circle of stop-go lockdowns would be a catastrophic indictment of Government policy, an admission of total defeat, a victory of fear and emotion over reason. We would no longer be a free society tolerating an exceptional, temporary shutdown to allow our scandalously unprepared establishment to learn to manage a terrible situation. Instead, we would have transitioned to a world of permanent emergency, a wartime society whereby individual rights and lives were permanently suppressed for an ill-defined, ever-shifting "national interest." A new principle would have become established: That the Government has the right and even the obligation to lock us down at the first sign of any new epidemic, even one that doesn't truly threaten the survival of our society. The main rationale for a "circuit-breaker" — that it would buy yet more time for "one last push" on testing, the app, tracing and a vaccine — is tragically delusional. Even the French and Germans have failed to introduce effective testing and tracing, suggesting that the endeavour may be an elusive El Dorado, at least for now.

Yes, a few deaths might be avoided by spreading out ICU admissions to our hopelessly ineffectual National Health Service. Yes, a few others — maybe even up to 20,000 in a best-case scenario — might be saved as a result of multiple lockdowns if an effective vaccine suddenly, miraculously materialises by April 2021. But, in reality, most deaths would not be avoided, merely delayed, and there will be plenty of additional fatalities caused by the lockdown itself — including out of despair — to set against that. Unemployment would have surged, tens of thousands more businesses ruined, family and community life laid to waste, and immense misery created. What kind of society is ready to destroy so much to save so little?

If he agrees to the lockdown fanatics' every demand, Boris Johnson's legacy would have been to sweep away the Eurocrats, and cut back on the juristocrats, just to replace them with a new medicocracy. A gang of well-meaning scientists and doctors would be empowered to impose their narrow vision of the good on the rest of us, the first therapeutic, zero-risk State in world history.

But public health experts don't have the full perspective. We can't go on like this for much longer. The first lockdown probably increased our debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio by 20 percentage points; adding yet another 20 per cent over the winter would weaken us severely. We could survive that, of course, but what firepower would we have left when the next calamity hits us? What about another virus? And the one after that? Or what about the next bad flu season? We would be all but bankrupt by 2030, with a Dollar, Sterling and Euro crisis on our hands.

Lawrence Summers, the economist, estimates the cost of COVID will reach 90 per cent of the GDP for America alone — a mind-boggling \$16 trillion or \$2,00,000 per family. This is "four times larger than the output loss of the Great Recession, twice the cost of all wars since 9/11, and roughly the cost of climate change in the next 50 years." We need to find ways of minimising this cost for future pandemics, or we will be condemned to impoverishment, social decay and geopolitical decline.

This latter point is ably demonstrated by the International Monetary Fund's latest forecasts. It expects the UK to suffer a 9.8 per cent fall in GDP this year, identical to France, better than Italy or Spain. Germany and America will shrink but by less. Astonishingly, however, China's economy will actually grow this year. This pandemic has accelerated many trends, not least the transfer of power from the West to the East. South East Asian countries are among the few to have kept the costs of the virus to manageable levels, and China is laughing.

Britain and the West have two choices. We could relearn to live with death, as we did in the post-World War years when big flu epidemics killed tens of thousands. The alternative is to embrace the South Korean approach. We will need to invest a fortune in pandemic preparedness and technology, and pounce on the next virus as soon as it emerges. Ruthless, brutal quarantining, isolation and hugely superior tracking and tracing will be necessary.

Can we do it? Would we have to give up too much privacy and liberty? Are we nearing the twilight of the West, defeated by its fragility, its inability to cope with the kind of virus that our forebears shrugged off? If we don't get our act together, this will not just be Asia's century but also the West's last as any kind of beacon to the rest of the world. Boris Johnson needs to show that Britain, for one, hasn't yet given up.

(Courtesy: The Telegraph)

SAMVAD SAMMELANS ARE OUR POLITICAL PROGRAMMES AND WE HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO EXPLAIN TO FARMERS THAT THE FARM LAWS HAVE GREAT BENEFITS.

—SPOKESPERSON OF PUNJAB BJP

ANIL SAREEN

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



NO MINISTER HAD THE TIME TO MEET FARMERS EARLIER WHILE AN ARMY OF (BJP) MINISTERS IS CONDUCTING VIRTUAL RALLIES IN PUNJAB.

—FORMER UNION MINISTER

HARSIMRAT BADAL

Win some, lose some

This surrender of outbound LTC travel would negatively impact the tourism sector, which is already floundering. It is a demand swap; the present with the future, FMCG with tourism



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently announced two special offers for Central Government employees, which she hopes can also be suitably modified and extended for State Government staff and availed even by private sector workers employed in the organised sector. In short, the Centre announced a fresh stimulus for the ailing economy, focussing on demand. This includes optional use of the Leave Travel Concession (LTC) facility for spending on consumer items, one-time restoration of festival advance and additional capital expenditure by the Centre and States. However, the alternative for LTC could be a damp squib as the condition of higher spend may not find many takers.

As per the announcements, Central Government employees can choose to get some ready cash if they forego their LTC entitlement for the block year of 2018-2021. In addition, every Central Government employee, irrespective of rank, will get a prepaid Rupay card loaded with ₹10,000. Swipe it for any expenditure by March 31, 2021 (no cash draw) and repay the advance in 10 monthly instalments. No interest, no tax on deemed benefit. Under the LTC scheme, Central Government employees get reimbursement of the cost of some personal travel undertaken by them and their family members. For civilian staff, it is a trip to their hometown once in two years and to anywhere within the country in the next block of two years. For defence personnel, it is the annual hometown visit and in the alternative year to anywhere in India in lieu of hometown travel. There are similar provisions of LTC benefits for the judicial and legislative branch of the State with a different set of entitlements and rules.

The current LTC block year is 2018-2021. During this four calendar years' period, a civilian Central Government employee can avail reimbursement of fare for two trips from his place of duty, one in 2018-19 and another in 2020-21. Both trips can be to his hometown or one to the hometown and the other to anywhere else in India.

The concession admissible for a particular block of two years, which is not availed during that time period, can be availed in the first year of the next block. So, if someone hasn't availed LTC during January 2018-December 2019, he can do so by December 2020. Likewise, the LTC due for 2020-21 can be availed by December 2022, subject to certain conditions.

To promote tourism to remote areas, the Government has been allowing its staff to use their hometown LTC to visit specified remote areas. It has been allowing air travel to these areas to even those employees who are not normally permitted to travel by air at Government cost. This has been a hugely popular move. This special scheme has now been extended up to September 25, 2022. The conversion of hometown LTC is allowed for travel to the North-Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Air travel to these destinations is permitted for all workers. Also, such trips in lieu of hometown LTC are permitted even by private airlines as an exception because the rule is that a trip at Government cost must be by Air India only. (Those Government servants whose hometown and place of posting are the same are not allowed this conversion.)

Whenever a LTC journey is undertaken, the Government allows 10 days' earned leave to be encashed. A total of 60 days' earned leave encashment with LTC is allowed during the whole service. Employees get earned leave of 30 days every year and if not availed cannot be accumulated

LTC IS NOT
AVAILABLE
BY EVERYONE.
THERE ARE
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EXPENSES
DURING
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GOVERNMENT
DECIDES TO GIVE
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LTC, IT WOULD
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EVERYONE,
EVEN TO THOSE
WHO WOULD NOT
HAVE AVAILED
OF LTC ON
THEIR OWN.
FOR THEM,
THE CASH
EQUIVALENT
IS A BONANZA



beyond 300 days.

The Finance Minister has announced that an employee can choose not to travel on the LTC for block year 2018-21 and instead get some tax-free cash in lieu. Category I/II/III employees entitled for business class air travel/economy class air travel/rail travel will get up to ₹36,000, ₹20,000 and ₹6,000, respectively for each family member who forgoes one LTC, subject to the following conditions.

The employee must produce proof of having spent ₹1,08,000/₹60,000/₹18,000 by March 31, 2021 through digital means on buying Goods and Services Tax (GST)-invoiced goods/services with a minimum GST of 12 per cent.

The employee must also produce proof of having spent the entire amount of 10 days' earned leave by March 31, 2021 through digital means on buying GST-invoiced goods/services with a minimum GST of 12 per cent. Spending less means pro rata cut in the actual cash benefit to be disbursed.

Most processed, packaged food items, healthcare, medicinal items, toiletries, cosmetics and so on attract 12 per cent GST. Telecom services bills, insurance premia, both life and general insurance, ULIPs and so on attract 18 per cent GST. Then, of course, there are the "sin goods" in the high GST bracket. So even without buying any expensive white goods/gadgets/car, it should be possible — except for some very frugal souls — to produce eligible GST invoices for monthly average spending of less than ₹21,600/₹12,000/₹3,600 for Category I/II/III employees from now till March 2021. The few who might struggle to get sufficient invoices may buy goods for others. Petty invoices don't even carry the buyer's name and there are limits to how many checks can be there to stop misuse.

There have been intermittent sugges-

tions in the past that the Government should give some lump sum cash in lieu of LTC benefit and save itself the hassle of processing the LTC claims. Moreover, not all of them are genuine. Long ago, many employees in an office were found to have submitted fake LTC claims for long distance travel by road. The trip was actually not undertaken as there was no entry of the quoted private bus having crossed various toll booths. Dozens were dismissed from service in a severe disciplinary action. After that, the Government made a rule that road travel by private bus would not be eligible for LTC reimbursement.

Cases of LTC claims based on fake air travel — even by some high public functionaries — forced some offices to introduce the provision for submission of proof of the actual trip in case of air travel, like some photographs and so on, all of which can also be manipulated in this age of technology. Some private airlines used to misuse the LTC to include even hotel stay and so on in the packaged fare because only the fare is reimbursed. All other costs of boarding and lodging at the destination are expected to be borne by employees. To overcome this fraud, the Government introduced standard LTC fares and restricted travel to Air India only (except for the North-East and so on). Frauds by a few dishonest end up making life miserable for everyone, with the Government being forced to come out with stricter regulations. Checking LTC fraud is an administrative hassle and some argue that it is better to unconditionally give cash in lieu of LTC. So far, this argument has not carried weight for two reasons.

First, the Government wants employees to rejuvenate themselves through travel and promote domestic tourism. Second, LTC is not availed by everyone.

There are many who don't find time and many others who find that they cannot afford non-fare expenses during travel. If the Government decides to give cash in lieu of LTC, it would give it to everyone, even to those who would not have availed of LTC on their own. For them, the cash equivalent is a bonanza.

The Central Government hopes that the State Governments and the private sector will take a cue and offer similar schemes, with the Centre promising not to tax the cash equivalent of the LTC. Many States limit their LTC scheme to travel within the State and so the financial impact would also be limited. For private sector employees, tax concession on LTA can be a big incentive. All they have to do is produce GST invoices for three times the LTA. Spending three times the LTA by March 2021 may not be burdensome for most. Typically, the LTA is equal to one month's salary and so one is being asked to spend three months' salary by March to save income tax on LTA. Of course, there is the option of buying for others. In a country like ours, governments put riders and creative minds invent workarounds.

Giving cash in lieu of LTC or giving tax concession on LTA subject to certain minimum spending of a certain type will certainly boost short-term consumption demand. Some of it would be mere displacement of expenditure that would have happened with or without the concession. This surrender of outbound LTC travel till December 2022 would negatively impact the travel and tourism industry which is already floundering. It is a demand swap; the present with the future, FMCG with travel and tourism. It is like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

(The writer is a retired IAAS officer, and former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry)

Assam must fix its high MMR burden soon

A hub and spoke model and a 100 per cent non-remunerative blood donation structure will help India and Assam reduce deaths



SAYANTANI CHATTERJEE

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 seeks to ensure health and well-being for all as a social capital. SDG 3, more specifically SDG 3.1, aims to reduce the global Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) to less than 70 per 1,00,000 live births by 2030. As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), maternal death is the demise of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management. As per the goal laid down in the

National Health Policy 2017, the target for MMR per 1,00,000 live births by 2020 is 100.

Figures from a special bulletin released by the Office of the Registrar General's Sample Registration System (SRS) in July this year show that MMR in India stood at 113 in 2016-18. Although it has seen a reduction from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016, the number is way behind the SDG target. The most disturbing figure comes from Assam where MMR is at 215. However, if one compares it to the 2012-13 data of the State, it has been significantly brought down from 301. Nevertheless, given India's SDG commitment, immediate intervention is needed to bring down the ratio further.

As recently as July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address virtually at the high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session, wherein he highlighted that India's developmental motto of "Sabka saath, sabka vikaas, sabka vishwas" (Together,



for everyone's growth, with everyone's trust") resonates with the core SDG principle of leaving no one behind. He also emphasised that India's success in improving the socio-economic indicators of its vast population has a significant impact on global SDG targets. Hence, addressing individual health indicators like MMR is certainly critical in improving the country's public health and meeting targets set by the SDG.

The role of individual States is also critical. For example, it is important for a State like Assam with a high MMR to tackle the problem on a priority basis. According to an *Epidemiological study of maternal death in Assam*, data show that 21.3 per cent of the deaths were due to haemorrhage, 17.3 per cent due to pregnancy-induced hypertension and 10 per cent due to sepsis. Blood loss of 500 ml or more within 24 hours after birth is known as postpartum haemorrhage. Such deaths can be brought down significantly by developing a robust blood transfusion system, which provides universal access to safe and adequate blood. The annual blood collection in Assam in 2018-19 was 2,34,488 units whereas the State needed 2,42,000 units against the total number of hospital beds in 2019. As per a State-wise ranking, which maps the annual requirement to actual collections of blood units, Assam comes at the bottom five. With 82 blood banks in the State, it is regrettable that shortage of blood remains an area of concern.

Another crucial aspect is the quality of the blood available. The National AIDS Control Organisation revealed that around 1,342 people contracted HIV infection due to blood transfusion in 2018-19 pan India. This information raised several questions on the existing blood transfusion system in the country. An effective solution to ensure availability of safe blood involves shifting to 100 per cent voluntary help and doing away with replacement donation. Recruitment of donors becomes one of the most crucial features of blood transfusion services and a system supported by healthy, responsive and motivated voluntary blood donors can significantly reduce the associated quality issues. The percentage of voluntary donation in Assam is 47.9 per cent, which is way below the national average of 71.9.

Another problem that exists in a developing country like India is a fragmented blood transfusion system. For effective operation of the 3,321 blood banks in the country, it is imper-

ative that there is transparency and guaranteed quality systems. But ensuring surveillance of 3,321 blood banks for effective operation is not practically feasible. However, empirical data from developing countries show that adopting a centralised hub and spoke model can help in accessing safe blood to a great extent.

Sadly, such a centralised blood transfusion system is currently non-existent in India, even though it prevents wastage of extra blood collected, particularly now that bulk transfers between banks have been permitted by the National Blood Transfusion Council. It enhances access, too, as blood can be redirected from the hubs to wherever there is a shortage. In case of emergencies, the collection of blood becomes simpler, too. A hub and spoke model and a 100 per cent non-remunerative blood donation structure will help India and States like Assam to reduce the MMR burden.

(The writer is a public policy consultant, Chase India)



FOREIGN EYE



HONOUR THY FARMER

The Nepal Government has done nothing to change its anti-farmer policies. The way it favours businessmen over sugarcane farmers is one instance of crony capitalism. The Government must ensure that the economic equality and social justice enshrined in the Constitution also reflect in practice. (The Kathmandu Post editorial)

GST compensation: Govt to borrow ₹1.1 L crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central government will borrow up to ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the states to bridge the shortfall in GST collections, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

A slowdown in the economy since last fiscal has resulted in a drop in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, upsetting the budgets of states which had given up their right to levy local taxes such as sales tax or VAT when GST was introduced in July 2017.

To make up for the shortfall, borrowing from the market was proposed. In a statement, the Union Finance Ministry said states were offered a special window to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore over and above their existing limits, to bridge the shortfall.

“Under the Special Window, the estimated shortfall of Rs 1.1 lakh crore (assuming all States join) will be borrowed by Government of India in appropriate tranches,” the

statement said. “The amount so borrowed will be passed on to the States as a back-to-back loan in lieu of GST Compensation Cess releases.”

The release, however, did not say who will service the interest and principal payments. The Centre borrowing on behalf of states is likely to ensure that a single rate of borrowing is charged and this would also be easy to administer. The borrowing, the statement said, “will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the Government of India.”

“The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the State Governments and as part of the financing of its respective fiscal deficits,” it said. Borrowing of the shortfall by the Centre will avoid differential rates of interest that individual states may be charged and will be an administratively easier arrangement, it added.

“It may also be clarified that the General Government (States+Centre) borrowings

will not increase by this step,” it said. “The States that get the benefit from the Special Window are likely to borrow a considerably lesser amount from the additional borrowing facility of 2 per cent of GSDP (from 3 per cent to 5 per cent) under the Aatma Nirbhar Package.”

When the GST was introduced in July 2017, states were promised a 14 per cent incremental revenue over their last tax receipts in the first five years of the GST rollout.

This was to be done through a levy of a cess or surcharge on luxury and sin goods, but the collections on this count have fallen short with the slowdown in the economy since last fiscal.

To make up for this, the Centre suggested that the states can borrow against future compensation receipts.

The Finance Ministry had earlier this week stated that 21 states have accepted one of the two borrowing options suggested by the Centre.

World facing new Bretton Woods moment: IMF MD

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Facing the twin task of fighting the coronavirus pandemic today and building a better tomorrow, the world is experiencing a new Bretton Woods moment, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Thursday.

Addressing the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund’s Board of Governors, she said that what was true at Bretton Woods, when allies at the end of World War II gathered for a conference to create the institutions that would use economic cooperation to prevent future conflicts, remains true today.

“Today we face a new Bretton Woods moment. A pandemic that has already cost more than a million lives. An economic calamity that will make the world economy 4.4 per cent smaller this year and strip an estimated USD 11 trillion of output by next year. And untold human desperation in the face of huge disruption and

rising poverty for the first time in decades,” she said.

“Once again, we face two massive tasks: to fight the crisis today and build a better tomorrow,” she said.

Prudent macroeconomic policies and strong institutions are critical for growth, jobs and improved living standards, she said.

Strong medium-term frameworks for monetary, fiscal and financial policies, as well as reforms to boost trade, competitiveness and productivity can help create confidence for policy action now while building much-needed resilience for the future, she added. “We know what action must be taken right now. A durable economic recovery is only possible if we beat the pandemic. Health measures must remain a priority. I urge you to support production and distribution of effective therapies and vaccines to ensure that all countries have access,” Georgieva said.

She urged countries to con-

tinue support for workers and businesses until a durable exit from the health crisis.

“We have seen global fiscal actions of USD 12 trillion. Major central banks have expanded balance sheets by USD 7.5 trillion. These synchronised measures have prevented the destructive macro financial feedback we saw in previous crises,” she said.

“But almost all countries are still hurting, especially emerging market and developing economies. And while the global banking system entered the crisis with high capital and liquidity buffers, there is a weak tail of banks in many in emerging markets. We must take measures to prevent the build-up of financial risks over the medium term,” she said. The IMF expects 2021 debt levels to go up significantly – to around 125 per cent of GDP in advanced economies, 65 per cent of GDP in emerging markets; and 50 per cent of GDP in low-income countries, Georgieva further said.

Need to have more disease-specific health insurance products: Irdai

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Irdai Chairman Subhash Khuntia has urged health insurance providers to develop disease-specific products which could help policy holders in preventing different ailments.

“I would urge insurers to develop more disease-specific products like for diabetics or for heart or kidney related issues,” Khuntia said at a health insurance summit organised by CII.

Under such focussed products, insurance companies can bring together medical experts to make aware policy holders on steps to be taken to prevent various diseases, he said.

The chairman said the insurance sector, for too long, has concentrated on tertiary care or hospitalisation and now there was a need to focus more on primary and secondary care, the outpatient care and more on to have preventive care.

‘India needs to firm up quality control, improve R&D to become global hub for PPE kits’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to strengthen quality control and step up R&D efforts to realise its potential of becoming a global manufacturing hub for PPE kits, said a report released on Thursday.

“It will bring more consistency into the quality of the PPEs manufactured, reduce the testing and rejection overheads post-delivery and allow local manufacturers to scale up their production to reach not only domestic markets but also global markets,” said the report by the Institute for Competitiveness.

It points out that even though India achieved self-sufficiency in terms of localised manufacturers and production of PPE body coveralls, PPE fabric and seam tapes, the country still relied on imports for procuring a critical component like seam sealing equipment.

India needs to indigenize the production of critical equipment and machineries.

Sensex snaps 10-session rally, crashes 1,066 pts amid global selloff

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping its 10-session winning run, equity benchmark Sensex plunged 1,066.33 points

on Thursday as investors pressed the exit button amid a massive selloff in global markets.

The 30-share BSE index plummeted 1,066.33 points or

2.61 per cent to end at 39,728.41.

The broader NSE Nifty crashed 290.70 points or 2.43 per cent to 11,680.35. Global equities cratered as hopes faded of a pre-

election stimulus deal in the US, while multiple countries in Europe braced for a second round of lockdowns to curb rising COVID-19 cases, jeopardis-

ing the already shaky economic recovery. Back home, market participants were also eager to book profits after the recent rally amid already stretched valua-

tions, traders said.

Barring Asian Paints, which inched up 0.32 per cent, all Sensex constituents closed in the red. Bajaj Finance was the top

loser, tumbling 4.68 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel and HCL Tech.

Investors lost Rs 3.25 lakh crore in Thursday’s session as the total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell to Rs 157.31 lakh crore.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY50	12023.45	12025.45	11661.30	11680.35	-290.70	
ASIANPAINT	20700.00	21240.00	20665.00	20799.00	8.55	
JSWSTEEL	291.80	297.70	289.20	291.15	0.50	
COALINDIA	110.85	112.70	109.55	110.60	0.05	
GAIL	82.40	83.95	82.00	82.40	-0.25	
HEROMOTOCO	331.20	337.55	329.00	329.00	-11.80	
SHILIFE	810.60	821.80	801.75	806.75	-3.85	
IOC	74.65	75.80	74.00	74.25	-0.40	
DIVISLAB	314.00	315.00	304.50	311.20	-18.25	
HINDUNILVR	2600.00	2179.70	2141.05	2145.00	-13.15	
NSTEIND	15170.00	15780.00	15561.80	15570.05	-101.00	
NTPC	79.10	80.50	78.50	78.50	-0.60	
TATASTEEL	381.00	388.60	371.50	372.60	-2.95	
HINDALCO	174.90	178.25	171.70	172.80	-1.40	
EICHERMOT	2252.05	2203.00	2226.05	2235.55	-18.35	
TIITAN	1222.90	1237.55	1210.00	1213.00	-10.45	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3059.95	3130.00	3019.45	3024.00	-30.15	
DREDDY	5148.65	5165.00	5020.10	5070.00	-53.00	
UPL	51.00	52.00	50.50	50.50	-0.50	
POWERGRID	156.60	157.05	154.60	154.90	-2.15	
M&M	620.95	633.00	614.10	615.20	-8.65	
BRITANNIA	3790.00	3835.95	3715.00	3734.75	-55.05	
ONGC	68.00	68.50	65.70	66.00	-1.00	
CPIA	780.65	788.00	762.90	769.80	-11.70	
ULTRACEMCO	459.00	4473.00	4366.30	4374.20	-68.65	
HDFC	1983.00	2020.00	1938.25	1947.05	-32.80	
GRASIM	760.35	767.95	745.20	750.25	-13.35	
HDCLIFE	573.00	574.00	560.50	562.20	-10.15	
ITC	167.10	167.80	164.55	164.75	-3.05	
MARUTI	7029.00	7049.90	6857.70	6874.80	-127.55	
ADANIPORTS	330.60	333.85	341.25	342.55	-6.40	
BPCL	334.00	338.70	325.00	326.60	-6.90	
INFY	1180.00	1186.00	1092.50	1113.25	-23.75	
AXISBANK	473.40	481.90	460.00	460.20	-11.10	
SUNPHARMA	504.70	504.70	489.00	490.00	-12.20	
WIPRO	351.00	354.25	338.95	341.50	-8.95	
TCS	2811.00	2827.75	2727.00	2734.00	-75.60	
LT	91.90	91.90	88.40	89.05	-25.15	
SHREECEM	21260.00	21260.00	20505.20	20549.65	-586.25	
HCLTECH	889.95	903.70	863.45	863.45	-27.00	
TATAMOTORS	61.50	134.35	126.50	126.55	-4.15	
BAJAJFINSV	1315.00	6168.00	5880.10	5895.00	-205.05	
KOTAKBANK	1353.35	1365.95	1301.25	1307.00	-46.35	
BHARTIARTL	413.40	415.90	395.00	398.90	-14.35	
HDFCBANK	1214.20	1217.00	1164.00	1168.60	-42.90	
SBIN	201.00	202.50	192.00	192.80	-7.25	
RELIANCE	2290.00	2290.00	2195.00	2203.25	-84.25	
INDUSINDBK	622.65	632.50	593.35	598.15	-24.50	
ICICIBANK	406.60	409.90	389.15	390.25	-16.55	
TECHM	853.00	858.35	806.70	811.25	-37.60	
BAJFINANCE	3368.20	3370.00	3201.00	3204.00	-168.05	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	27465.00	27499.40	26854.70	26922.05	-461.40	
PETRONET	211.55	220.40	214.10	218.35	8.15	
NMDC	80.00	82.50	79.90	80.60	0.65	
OFSS	3220.00	331.00	315.00	316.50	19.05	
SIEMENS	1235.10	1247.70	1225.75	1241.00	6.20	
DMAT	1987.10	1998.50	1970.05	1982.00	7.45	
ICIGI	375.00	380.50	372.00	374.10	1.00	
ICL	1248.00	1255.20	1228.05	1248.90	1.65	
DABUR	518.20	525.65	515.25	517.00	0.05	
MARICO	363.00	369.10	360.00	362.00	-0.40	
SBCARD	892.25	918.75	887.35	890.70	-1.45	
UBL	974.00	979.80	961.75	969.25	-1.85	
ABHBINDIA	16065.00	16230.05	15901.00	15970.00	-34.20	
PGHH	10135.00	10135.00	9973.35	10070.00	-28.05	
ALKEM	2695.20	2700.00	2651.00	2664.75	-11.20	
MUTHOOTFIN	1156.05	1189.00	1144.00	1150.55	-5.50	
ITI	3306.20	3389.00	3195.00	3307.00	-23.55	
GICRE	122.60	123.60	118.70	120.00	-1.65	
TORNTPHARM	2770.00	2790.10	2710.00	2720.00	-38.45	
BERGEPAINT	605.50	618.50	593.00	595.40	-10.45	
HDFCLDNG	2324.00	2325.50	2270.10	2282.00	-42.10	
BAJAJHLNG	2416.95	2420.00	2341.40	2360.00	-45.00	
AMBUJALNG	248.00	250.00	240.80	241.85	-4.75	
ICICIPRULI	424.75	429.00	414.05	416.95	-8.20	
PNB	28.35	28.55	27.50	27.60	-0.55	
PEC	85.50	87.00	84.25	84.50	-1.70	
ACC	1551.00	1562.40	1512.50	1518.50	-31.00	
ANADTRANS	293.15	297.60	286.90	288.35	-6.25	
COALPAL	1445.00	1461.85	1415.30	1416.00	-30.85	
CONCOR	366.00	368.50	356.00	357.00	-7.85	
BSCHLTD	12125.00	12232.00	11800.00	11805.00	-270.45	
HAVELLS	701.90	701.90	681.15	681.60	-15.85	
AUROPHARMA	811.00	819.00	786.95	791.95	-18.45	
GODREJCP	703.95	704.00	679.70	681.60	-18.20	
DLF	160.15	160.80	154.35	154.40	-4.70	
BIOCON	448.05	451.00	431.40	433.45	-13.25	
ADANIGREEN	730.70	735.80	698.05	703.70	-21.75	
HINDZINC	217.00	218.40	206.20	206.70	-6.40	
LUPIN	1036.20	1042.00	996.15	1005.00	-31.20	
INDIGO	1342.70	1365.00	1298.00	1301.30	-41.30	
HINDPETRO	168.40	172.20	162.90	163.35	-5.25	
CANTACONSUM	493.00	494.20	471.00	474.45	-15.35	
CADILAHG	430.60	433.00	414.80	415.45	-15.05	
MCDOWELL-N	527.00	527.00	502.90	504.00	-20.05	
PEL	1304.95	1313.00	1245.00	1247.50	-50.95	
MOTHERSUNI	111.30	112.00	104.45	105.90	-4.65	
NAUKRI	3767.00	3767.00	3569.00	3575.00	-165.55	
BANKBARODA	41.90	42.75	40.50	40.15	-1.90	
INFRATEL	189.50	195.00	177.50	180.50	-9.05	
BANDHANBNK	320.75	327.20	301.20	302.90	-17.85	

BSE 500						
Script	Open	High	Low	LTP		
Security Name	Open	High	Low	LTP		
RELIANCE	2291.00	2291.70	2195.10	2205.55	LAURUSLABS	326.95
INFY	1184.00	1185.00	1093.00	1108.00	CANFINHOME	331.00
TCS	2810.10	2827.00	2727.00	2738.70	BLISSGVS	470.00
HDFC	1987.45	2020.00	1938.90	1947.10	BHBL	474.90
KOTAKBANK	1356.90	1365.20	1301.25	1309.00	GODREJCP	173.75
HINDUNILVR	2162.00	2179.00	2141.05	2150.15	HDFCAMP	175.00
BHARTIARTL	413.35	415.40	395.10	399.15	BALKRISND	233.00
BAJFINANCE	3370.00	3375.00	3200.00	3213.70	GAMMIND	2336.00
HCLTECH	901.90	903.55	834.00	859.45	INFBREAM	1378.00
AXISBANK	472.90	481.00	460.00	462.05	MCX	3562.00
ICICIBANK	407.00	409.85	389.20	390.90	TORNTHPHARM	3598.05
SBN	200.95	202.50	192.00	192.95	BERGEPATE	89.00
TATASTEEL	380.45	388.50	371.60	373.75	CHOLAHFN	1777.80
ITC	167.90	168.00	164.50	165.05	CADILAC	1778.75
TATAMOTORS	131.90	134.35	126.50	127.00	AMBUJACEM	2786.25
MARUTI	7035.00	7048.00	6855.80	6885.20	PNB	618.10
WIPRO	350.60	354.10	339.20	341.50	JCHAC	59.75
INDUSINDBK	622.75	632.00	593.50	598.20	GRASIM	2157.75
HDFCBANK	1217.60	1216.45	1164.10	1169.15	TATAMTRDVR	759.00
ASIANPAINT	2024.00	2122.80	2069.45	2078.00	NMDCT	55.10
IDEA	8.27	8.33	7.93	7.99	COLPAL	57.40
DREDDY	5188.00	5188.00	5024.85	5055.10	SHANKARA	1997.95
TECHM	851.00	857.10	807.00	812.20	JSWENERGY	1995.95
MINDTREE	1560.00	1584.00	1404.30	1427.55	LRTH	1971.00
SUNPHARMA	503.00	504.50	489.25	490.40	KADIENT	54.00
ULTRACEMCO	4460.00	4472.20	4368.80	4371.45	TDIT	82.40
SBCARD	893.00	916.80	887.60	899.15	LTTS	1460.35
ECHERMOT	2242.00	2202.60	2224.85	2249.70	MPHASIS	343.25
ASHOKLEY	74.00	77.30	72.05	72.35	SHREECEM	325.00
NTPC	79.00	80.50	78.05	78.95	AMARAJABAT	60.10
FEDERALBNK	53.30	53.95	51.45	51.75	STAR	65.60
IBULHSGFIN	154.20	157.70	150.05	151.50	APOLLOTYRE	7.90
M&M	623.25	632.95	614.15	617.05	ISCFMUTL	8.15
APOLLOHOSP	2231.00	2289.30	2175.70	2183.00	TYCSMOTOR	60.50
IOC	74.90	75.80	74.00	74.65	MAANPURAM	72.66
JUSTDIAL	409.70	488.00	409.70	74.65	PANGEND	1800.20
NESTLEIND	15820.00	15820.00	15563.65	15592.80	20683.00	20830.00
BANKINDIA	1574.00	1378.50	1331.25	1352.70	DIXON	32.95
JSWSTEEL	291.00	297.60	289.25	291.40	ADANACS	33.85
TATAELXSI	1498.00	1533.55	1441.00	1463.85	PHILICARB	32.65
HEROMOTOCO	3315.00	3280.00	3290.00	3290.00	GODFREYPHLP	885.00
VEDL	98.70	100.25	94.40	95.00	MARICO	897.10
GAIL	82.10	83.95	82.00	83.30	BERL	861.20
BAJFINANS	6130.00	6165.00	5886.00	5900.45	IPCALAB	368.65
B&QRTS	1236.00	1249.25	1166.35	1167.10	INOXLEISUR	93.70
RBLCRANK	173.00	175.90	166.25	167.15	RECILD	2113.00
BANKARAODA	41.60	42.75	40.00	40.40	GNFC	284.40
LUNAR	918.00	919.85	887.00	888.95	NOCIL	96.70
ADANIGREEN	730.00	735.00	698.10	704.80	BANKINDIA	139.40
TEAMLEASE	2351.20	2365.50	2287.00	2289.05	AVANTIK	144.25
KALPATPOWR	2324.00	2377.00	2322.35	2323.00	THYROCARE	40.95
TATACONSUM	494.00	494.40	471.00	473.05	ADANPORTS	752.00
BANDHANBNK	321.00	327.10	301.40	303.70	INTELLECT	1052.70
CPIPLA	776.00	787.80	762.95	768.45	MRF	353.65
HINDALCO	174.40	178.15	171.80	173.60	SIEMENS	24.35
ONGC	67.70	68.45	65.75	66.00	SONATSOFTW	58769.30
ZEE	186.48	188.45	178.85	179.90	PRESTIGE	59224.85
DLF	160.25	160.75	154.25	155.45	HAVELLS	58166.65
COALINDIA	111.00	112.70	109.00	110.60	POWERGRID	336.55
UPL	58.00	519.95	503.00	506.45	SYNGENE	245.60
NAUKRI	3755.00	3761.75	3570.10	3602.55	CEATLTD	154.65
PERSISTENT	1380.00	1385.00	1260.00	1286.55	HINDZINC	502.00
BRITANNIA	3947.00	3835.05	3714.90	3731.80	RAYMOND	1012.50
MGL	792.65	827.60	792.65	815.20		218.00
LTI	3310.00	3388.30	3197.00	3303.40		206.35
TITAN	1220.50	1237.00	1210.75	1213.35		270.60
STRANSFIN	67.00	67.05	62.80	63.25		272.05
BPCIL	33.55	34.50	32.40	32.65		
JINDALSTEEL	190.50	192.25	181.50	183.05		
LICHSGFIN	285.15	291.45	276.00	277.65		
MOTHERSUMI	112.00	112.05	104.50	105.30		
BHARATFORG	444.00	458.25	442.00	445.00		
LUPIN	1044.00	1044.00	997.80	1003.25		
MUTHOOTFN	1155.20	1188.65	1144.10	1149.00		
ADANANTH	318.75	325.05	305.30	307.30		
INDIGO	1347.70	1365.00	1300.00	1305.60		
GRANULES	388.90	395.00	375.35	380.05		
HINDPETRO	168.75	172.05	163.30	163.95		
PVR	1261.00	1269.55	1190.00	1206.10		
PEL	1305.00	1313.05	1245.55	1252.95		
PIIND	2045.00	2045.00	2010.85	2023.80		
INFRATEL	189.90	195.00	177.55	180.70		
AUROPHARMA	817.20	818.60	787.15	790.60		
BOSCHLTD	12200.00	12223.65	11800.00	11859.25		
TATAPOWER	53.60	54.75	52.70	53.10		
DEEPAK	760.70	767.70	724.00	726.20		
DIVISLAB	3157.00	3157.00	3046.00	3107.55		
M&MFIN	130.70	130.70	124.70	125.25		
BAJAJ AUTO	3074.00	3130.60	3020.00	3020.25		
GODREJPROP	889.00	911.00	840.05	848.25		
COFORGE	2632.00	2648.95	2485.00	2507.20		
TATACHEM	318.30	323.40	312.55	316.00		
BIOCON	449.00	451.05	431.40	433.35		
SBIILE	811.05	822.00	802.70	804.60		
DLCLIFE	574.95	579.95	560.00	562.50		
DABUR	524.00	525.50	515.25	517.35		
GENMARK	495.80	495.80	472.55	474.45		
CANBK	88.60	90.10	87.35	87.70		
IRCTC	1342.65	1342.65	1325.65	1329.05		
SRF	4380.00	4463.15	4334.25	4349.85		
ACC	154.90	156.15	151.50	151.70		
OFSS	3225.00	3299.00	3151.00	3199.95		
LIFEFOOD	2326.00	2356.60	2289.80	2295.95		
IFRETAIL	76.00	77.40	73.15	74.60		
EDFCEHSTB	31.25	31.60	29.90	30.05		
INDIAMART	5007.00	5151.55	4890.10	4990.40		
PETRONET	211.00	220.40	211.00	218.05		
</						

Will give citizenship to 11 mn illegal immigrants if elected: Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has vowed to provide citizenship to 11 million illegal immigrants if voted to power in the November 3 presidential election. Biden identified this as one of his priorities in addition to beating the coronavirus pandemic, rebuilding the economy and figuring out how to restore American leadership around the world.

Responding to a question at a virtual fundraiser on Wednesday, Biden said there is a need to deal with what's going on at the border. "We're going to have to deal with the immigration crisis we have. I'm going to send the House and Senate an immigration bill that's going to provide access to citizenship to 11 million people," he said.

President Donald Trump has been repeatedly calling for the quick deportation of illegal immigrants who "invade" the US and lamented that the current immigration system is "unfair" to those who came legally to America.

Trump has been asserting that building a wall along the Mexico border is the only way to check illegal immigration, and on various occasions said that every day the US border



patrol encounters roughly 2,000 illegal immigrants trying to enter the country.

According to Biden's campaign, there were 37 attendees and the event was hosted by Jane Hartley, former US Ambassador to France and Monaco and current Chairman, Sesame Workshop; Blair Effron, Founder & Partner, Centerview Partners; Indian American Deven Parekh, Managing Director, Insight Partners and Roger Altman, Founder & Senior Chairman, Evercore.

When asked how he would envision his first 30 days in office in terms of both domestic and foreign policy, Biden said: "A lot more can go wrong between now and January 21, and I'm not being facetious. Four more years, we're not going to have the country we have now."

"If the American people elect me, we're going to have an enormous task in repairing the damage he's done," Biden said, referring to the policies of Trump, a Republican.

"We have to be beating the virus, rebuilding the economy and figuring out how to restore American leadership around the world," Biden said. Biden said he would move to quickly implement his plan to deal with the pandemic and reopen safely. The Democratic presidential candidate also made a note of the challenges facing "the so-called Z Generation, the very young." "They've really gotten screwed since they got out of school," Biden said. "The jobs aren't there," he said. "But guess what? They're the most open, progressive and the brightest generation we've ever had," he added.

"And we have to embrace them. They know the change we need to make and how we need to be much more, much more integrated in everything we do," he said. Biden was critical of the policies of President Donald Trump.

"The rest of the world is wondering, what in the Lord's name is happening? What we're living through today is not normal," he said. He reiterated his attacks on Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic,

nothing more than 215,000 Americans have died, and criticised the president for backing away from stimulus talks.

"He didn't walk away. He never was part of 'em," Biden said. "Three days later, after he said he was walking away, he said he's coming back ... One day, he's tweeting that the relief package is too big ... next day it's too small. The longer he's president, the more reckless he gets," he added.

The US is the worst-hit nation by the deadly coronavirus, with the total number of infections standing at 7,916,100 and deaths at 216,872, according to Johns Hopkins University. While talking more broadly about the stakes of the election, Biden noted he just got off the phone with top US investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett. "We have to refuse to postpone what America has to do, the work we have to do. There's nothing beyond our capacity for God's sake," Biden said.

"Just got off the phone with Warren Buffett and talked about how ... we're in a position, unlike we were 50, 70, 80 years ago, to lead the whole damn world in a way that no one else can. There's no limit to America's future. The only thing that's going to tear America apart is America itself," he said.

Trump admin 'greatest failure' in US history: Harris

Washington: Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris has said that the Trump administration has been the "greatest failure" of any presidential administration in the US history as she condemned President Donald Trump for "failing" to handle the coronavirus crisis.

Harris said millions and millions of people are suffering due to Trump's failure and the US needs a new president "who

will embrace science, who will be guided by fact and truth and speak truth to the American people and have a plan." Harris, in an interview to MSNBC on Wednesday, said that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has a national plan for testing and for treatment and for vaccines, which will be free.

"The president and this administration have been the greatest failure of any presi-

dential administration in the history of our country. You just go back to what they knew and when they knew it, and let's start with January 28 when the president, the vice president were informed that this thing was deadly, that it could hurt children, that it was five times more deadly than the flu, that it was airborne, and they covered up that information. They didn't share it with the American people," Harris alleged.

Over 7.9 million people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the US and 2,17,000 people have died so far. "And you put that in the context of the president's failure to tell the American people what was going on so they could protect themselves and their families, much less so that we could have a president and leadership in our country who had a plan to deal with it," she said. **PTI**

'A little bit concerned': Trump looks to boost Iowa support

AP ■ DES MOINES, IOWA

President Donald Trump on Wednesday sought to shore up support from constituencies that not so long ago he thought he had in the bag: big business and voters in the red state of Iowa.

In a morning address to business leaders, he expressed puzzlement that they would even consider supporting his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, arguing that his own leadership was a better bet for a strong economy. Later, the president held his third cam-

paign rally in three nights, this time in Iowa, a state he won handily in 2016 but where Biden is making a late push.

Trump claimed to be leading in the most recent poll he saw. "For me to only be up six, I'm a little bit concerned," he asserted. Multiple polls have shown a much closer race.

Biden, for his part, held a virtual fundraiser from Wilmington, Delaware, and delivered pretaped remarks to American Muslims.

He did not have any public campaign events, unusual for just 20 days out from

Election Day.

The Democratic nominee used his appearance at the fundraiser to say that Trump was trying to rush through Amy Coney Barrett, his nominee for the Supreme Court, to help his efforts to repeal the Obama health care law, calling that "an abuse of power."

Biden was expected to spend much of the day preparing for a town-hall-style TV appearance in battleground Pennsylvania on Thursday, which was to have been the night of the second presidential debate.



Over 5,600 Afghan families displaced by fighting in south

AP ■ LASHKAR GAH, AFGHANISTAN

Renewed fighting between the Taliban and Afghan government forces in southern Helmand province has forced more than 5,600 families to flee their homes, officials said Thursday, the latest flareup that could undermine US efforts to broker peace in the war-torn country.

The fighting comes as Afghan government representatives and the Taliban are holding peace talks in Qatar, where the Taliban have for years maintained a political office. The negotiations, envisaged under a US deal signed with the insurgents in February, are meant to end Afghanistan's grueling 19-year war and are seen as the country's best chance at peace. The Trump administra-

tion has pledged to pull out American forces from Afghanistan but US officials have stressed that the Taliban have still not met requirements to reduce violence against the Afghans, a key element of the US withdrawal plan.

In Helmand, Omar Zwak, the provincial governor's spokesman, said Afghan security forces were trying to regain areas lost to the Taliban over the weekend, while local officials were scrambling to provide food and shelter to the growing number of civilians fleeing from nearby districts to the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah. Ajah Gul, 25, and his family have been in the city for four days. "The Taliban have taken over our village and both sides in the battle are using light and heavy weapons," he said. "We stay there?" he said.

Thailand declares emergency after unprecedented protest

AP ■ BANGKOK

Thailand's Government declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital on Thursday, a day after a student-led protest against the country's traditional establishment saw an extraordinary moment in which demonstrators heckled a royal motorcade.

After the pre-dawn declaration, riot police moved in to clear out demonstrators who after a day of rallies and confrontation had gathered outside Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's office to push their demands, which include the former general's stepping down, constitutional changes and reform of the monarchy.

Several top leaders of the protest movement were taken into custody, with one later declaring on his Facebook page that he had been denied access to a lawyer and was being



forced onto a helicopter and taken to a city in the country's north. Police said they had made 22 arrests.

Despite a new ban against large public gatherings, several thousand people answered calls to rally again in another area of the city later Thursday.

The text of the emergency declaration said it was needed because "certain groups of per-

petrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade."

The protest Wednesday in Bangkok's historic district, not far from glittering temples and royal palaces, was the third major gathering by student-led

activists who have been pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable — and legal — language by publicly questioning the role of Thailand's monarchy in the nation's power structure.

Thailand's royal family has long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and other key member of the royal family are protected by a lese majeste law that has regularly been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution.

The protest — held on the anniversary of a 1973 student-led uprising against a military dictatorship — was complicated by the presence of royalist counter protesters who had gathered both to show support for the government and to greet the royal family as they traveled to and from a religious ceremony in the area.

CPC in consistent violation of most basic, fundamental human rights of own people: Pompeo

Washington: The Communist Party of China (CPC) is in consistent violation of the most basic and fundamental human rights for its own people, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday.

The violation of human rights and curbing the freedom of its people are the core challenges that the US has identified from the CPC, he said.

"They are in consistent violation of the most basic and fundamental human rights for their own people," Pompeo told reporters at a news conference here.

"This is what Communist parties have a history of doing. It's what President (Donald) Trump has directed us all to work to try and preserve; as much freedom, as much dignity, for every citizen of China

as we possibly can when they are confronted with these massive human rights violations that are being conducted by the Chinese Communist Party," he said.

That is true, whether it is Xinjiang, what is taking place there, whether it is Tibet; and the inner Mongolians' simple desire to live in freedom and exercise their own understandings of what freedom and human dignity look like, he said.

"In each of those places, and I'd add Hong Kong, in each of those places, we simply are demanding from the Chinese Communist Party what we ask of every nation, is to preserve basic freedom, human dignity, religious freedom for every one of their citizens. **AP**

FROM PAGE 1

MIND YOUR OWN...

"Based on consensus, neither should take actions along the border that might escalate the situation that is to avoid undermining the efforts by the two sides to ease the situation. We urge the Indian side to earnestly implement our consensus and refrain from actions that might escalate the situation and take concrete measures to safeguard peace and tranquility along the border," said Zhao.

China has repeatedly raised objection over Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh after it was given the status of a Union Territory last year. It came about after the abrogation of Article 370 giving special status to Jammu & Kashmir.

Incidentally, in the backdrop of the continuing stand-off at the LAC and successive rounds of military and diplomatic level talks failing to break the five-month long logjam, this is the second time in the past few weeks when China has raised questions about Ladakh Union Territory.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India and China are engaged in talks to resolve the border standoff and what is going on is "something confidential" between the two sides. He said there has been a troop build-up along the LAC and in many ways it has no precedence in the recent past.

INDIA TO GIVE...

He said, "This is in accordance with our vision of SAGAR - Security and Growth for All in the Region, and also in line with our commitment to build capacities and self reliance in all our neighbouring countries."

The important move comes after the recent visit of Army Chief General MM Naravane and Foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla to Myanmar earlier this month.

India had agreed to supply artillery guns, tanks, bullet-proof jackets and other such equipment to Myanmar. New Delhi was already in the process of transferring the conventional submarine, refurbished by state-owned Hindustan Shipyards Limited, Visakhapatnam.

Moreover, the decision to lease the submarine came even as China was having talks with Myanmar for supplying submarines. India reacted quickly to counter this step, sources said. Incidentally, China has already supplied two of its submarines to Bangladesh two years back.

The Indian deal with Myanmar also includes training its navy for the next four to five years on operating the Kilo class submarine INS Sindhuvir, sources said. This sub-

marine built by Russia was inducted into the Indian Navy in the 1980s. The submarine has speed of more than 20 knots.

Meanwhile, the top echelon of the Indian Army will review the current volatile situation at the LAC in eastern Ladakh during the three-day commanders' conference here starting October 26.

The commanders will take stock of the developments after the seventh round of talks between the Corps Commanders of India and China on October 12 to speed up the process of disengagement and eventual de-escalation, sources said.

The forthcoming Army commanders' meet will also review the operational readiness of the force to meet any challenge from China all along the 4,000 km long LAC.

Though favouring a dialogue to end the tension at the LAC in Ladakh, the Army is geared for long haul and preparing for deployment in forward areas even during the winter months. Sufficient stocks of winter clothing and prefabricated huts to withstand temperatures dipping to below minus 20 are already in place at crucial points all along the border. The commanders will have a look at these preparations also, sources said.

ARCHRIVALS...

Abdullah also stated that the signatories will also fight for the rights that were snatched last year from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. "We also want that the steps be taken for the resolution of Kashmir issue and all the stakeholders should be taken on board in this regard," he added.

Farooq further informed media that the next meeting of the signatories will be held in the coming days and the decision taken for the future course of action will be made public on the particular day.

Elaborating further he said, "We met today to congratulate and greet Mehbooba who has been released from detention after 14 long months". "It was a totally 'illegal', 'unjustified' and 'unconstitutional' decision". He said we have also demanded the immediate release of all those people who are still under detention across different jails in India.

"We will also visit people from the other regions of the State so that we can have broader discussion on the issues we are putting before the people of the state and the Government of India", Dr Abdullah concluded.

SCALE UP...

The Prime Minister reiterated the need for continuous and rigorous scientific test-

ing and validation of traditional medicine treatments. He appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of AYUSH for conducting evidence based research and providing reliable solutions in this difficult time. The meeting was attended by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, Principal Scientific Advisor and senior scientists. "The PM appreciated the efforts made by Indian vaccine developers and manufacturers to rise to the Covid-19 challenge, and committed to continue Govt facilitation and support for all such efforts. The PM stated that regulatory reform was a dynamic process, and experts in every current and emerging domain should be used by the regulator proactively, as many new approaches have emerged," said the PMO. The PM took stock of the Health Ministry's comprehensive distribution and delivery mechanism for vaccines, mechanisms for adequate procurement, and technologies for bulk-stocking, filling vials for distribution and ensuring delivery.

"The PM reiterated the country's resolve to provide cost effective, easily available and scalable solutions for testing, vaccine and medication, not only for India but for the entire world. The PM called for continued vigilance," the PMO maintained.

'WATERSHED...

"It is a moment of pride for India. I am confident that it will be completed in four years and the Prime Minister will inaugurate it before the code of conduct for the next Lok Sabha elections (in 2024)," the Road Transport, Highways Minister said. The project has a completion schedule of six years.

The project holds strategic significance as Zojila Pass is situated at an altitude of 11,578 feet on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh National Highway and remains closed during winters due to heavy snowfall.

Once completed, the tunnel, projected as Asia's longest, would reduce the travel time from 3 hours to 15 minutes with avalanche-free travel on the Srinagar-Leh section of NH1. He said the re-modelling of the project has resulted in savings to the tune of over Rs 4,000 crore to the public exchequer without any compromise on safety, security and quality.

The travel tourism sector will get a maximum boost and generate employment for the locals, the Minister said and added: "We are ensuring robust safety measures in case of any emergency for the travellers crossing the Zojila tunnel."

He assured formation of committees under LG Leh and LG J&K with respec-

tive Chief Secretaries and officers of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) to oversee tunnel work and to sort out local issues.

Gadkari informed that seven tunnel roads are under construction in the Jammu & Kashmir region and the construction of the 8,450-metre-long twin-tube tunnel between Qazigund and Banihal will be completed by March 2021.

The work on 2,968-metre-long 6-single tunnels road between Ramban and Banihal is due for completion in December 2021. Further, the 450-metre-long tunnel between Khilani and Kishtwar will be ready by June 2022. The Minister further informed that DPRs (detailed project reports) have been completed for the 4.5-km-long Chenani-Anantnag tunnel, the 10.2-km-long tunnel at Sinthan Pass at a cost of Rs 4,600 crore, the Rs 350-crore Khakhiani Bypass tunnel, and the 10-km-long tunnel between Chhatru and Anantnag at a cost of Rs 5,400 crore and tenders for these will be out shortly.

Gadkari also referred to the construction of Delhi-Katra Green Expressway at a cost of Rs 21,000 crore, which will reduce the distance between the two important places to only 650 kms.

He informed that land acquisition is underway for the same, and the work will begin on this stretch by the coming December. He said it is being developed as a modern highway in line with London design of transportation with weather information available to drivers. The Minister said Udhampur to Ramban highway will be completed by December.

He also announced that the Government is all set to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for 16 NHs projects with a total length of 1411 km worth Rs 15,592 crores in Andhra Pradesh to boost the State's economy.

DAY 1: A FEW...

The theatre will remain open for public from Friday onwards.

"We have total three shows tomorrow onwards. Our first show will start at 12 pm for Dream Girl, followed by Tanhaji at 3.15 pm and at 6.30 pm we have a Punjabi movie (Sardarji). We are maintaining social distancing at every point here. We have demarcations at the ticket counters, inside the cinema halls, at entry as well as exit points," said Sandeep Singh, Cinema Manager of PVR Cinemas at 3C'S.

"We are using the latest anti-microbial

treatment to sanitise the halls. It was also used in sanitising all the touch points like door handles. Sanitiser dispensers have been placed at all major points inside and at the entry points of the cinema halls. We are also encouraging contact-less digital payments," he added.

At Cinepolis cinema in Greater Kailash, only five tickets were sold for the 11.30 am show. Cinepolis Fun cinema at V3S mall in Nirman Vihar, PVR Cinema at EDM Mall in Kaushambi, Eros cinema in Jangpura, and Cinepolis Karkadooma were among the theatres that remained closed.

Owner of Milan Cinema Ravinder Gupta said that it was very difficult to reopen the hall. "My single screen hall has accumulated lakhs of rupees in dues due to pending fixed charges of electricity in past eight months. Also, due to COVID-19 no new releases are there to attract the audience," he said.

Ushering in a new era of movie watching, the Union government allowed multiplexes, cinema halls and theatres to reopen from Thursday within the framework of a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) left it to states to take a final call on the matter. The SOPs mandated by the Union government include one seat distance in halls, 50 per cent capacity, masks at all time, proper ventilation and air conditioner temperature settings at above 23 degrees Celsius.

Many cinema halls shut down even before the nationwide lockdown came into effect from March 25 and managements are hoping desperately to get back to work.

In Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called a meeting of theatre owners on Wednesday to discuss arrangements before they reopen their doors to the public.

COVID...

In the last 24 hours, 81,514 new recoveries were added, taking the total number of recoveries to nearly 64 Lakh (63,83,441). It said that ten States/UTs account for 79 per cent of the new recovered cases. Maharashtra has contributed more than 19,000 to the single day recoveries followed by Karnataka with more than 8,000 recoveries.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 73,07,097 and the death toll climbed to 1,11,266 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 680 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country.

The Covid-19 case fatality rate has fur-

Trend Slazer

Every day is a new challenge: Rasika

Actor **RASIKA DUGAL** feels the careers of no two actors can be the same and no actor can have the same experience as others in the profession.

She says that she doubts herself almost everyday. "I just think that because I have had many years of experience I know how to possibly manage my self doubt around certain things a little better than others, but as the years go by your career changes. There are new challenges every-day," said she.

Rasika made her Bollywood debut in 2008 with *Tahaan*. She was then seen in projects like *Tu Hai Mera Sunday* and *Hamid*.



'I am thrilled to be back on the sets of Prithviraj as I awfully missed the set life. I look forward to be on shoot every day because I'm absorbing a lot and I'm loving it. I was excited to be on sets with Akshay sir as I've learnt so much from him and there is so much more to learn. I am fortunate to be working with the team, every one has been wonderful.'

—**Manushi Chillar**

Actor **VAANI KAPOOR** is excited to start shooting her next, a progressive love story starring **Ayushmann Khurrana**.

The actress is thrilled to collaborate with Abhishek Kapoor and reveals that the director is a 'master of human emotions.'

Says she, "Abhishek is a master when it comes to capturing human emotions. He has done it brilliantly in films like *Rock On*, *Kai Po Che*, *Kedarnath* among others. The way he dissects the nuances in relationships is what fascinated me about his filmmaking. I was awed by the way he depicted the story of three friends in *Kai Po Che*."

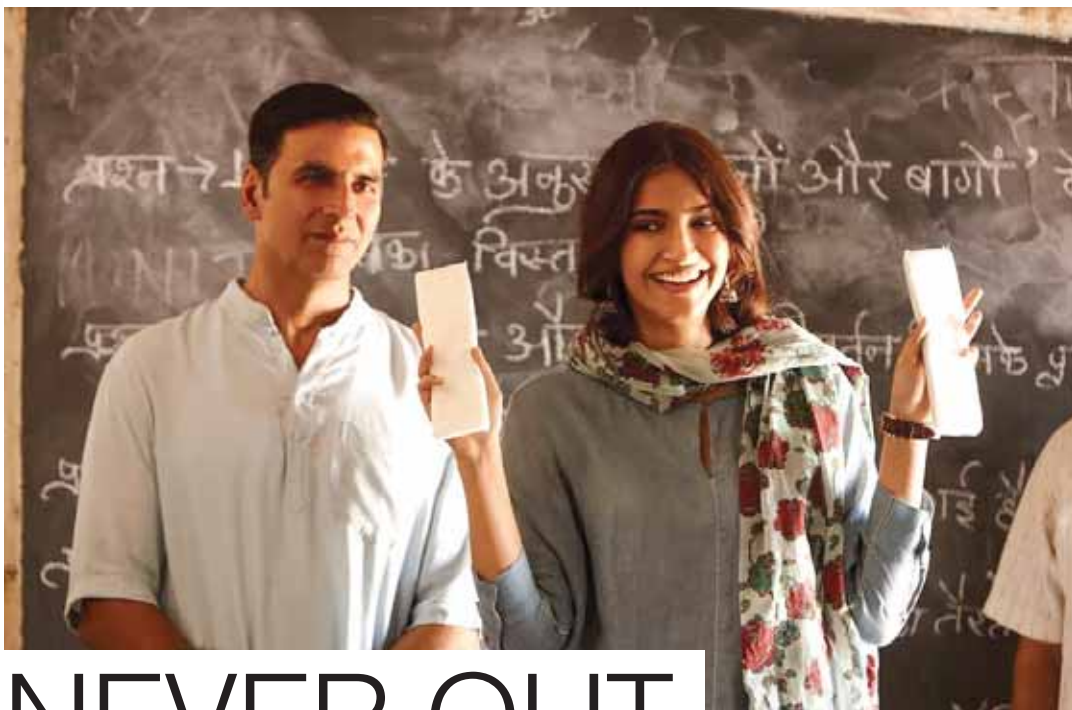
Jones awares people on breast cancer

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and actor **JANUARY JONES** has been urging women to keep a check for the malady regularly.

Taking to Instagram, Jones posted a picture of herself posing in pink bra, vowing to stand with those in her family fighting the disease.

"October is Breast Cancer awareness month. Please don't procrastinate getting your mammograms/ultra-sounds ladies," she wrote.

Jones added, "Sending love to all who have fought and are currently fighting... I love you and am standing with you!"



NEVER OUT OF TREND

HARSH NARAYAN, founder and creative director of the Indus Valley International Film Festival, says that he will continue with a digital version of the festival even in the post-COVID era because online is the standalone robust future. By **TEAM VIVA**

It is that time of the year when most of us had expected the film festivals to be buzzing with stars flaunting designer's outfits and latest trends. But we were quick to adapt to the digital versions of the festivals as an alternative to the physical ones, given the novel Coronavirus and the restrictions that followed.

There were various film festivals that took a fresh approach and launched themselves online for people to enjoy their couch-side versions. Along with numerous such festivals like Oxford Film Festival, Hip Hop Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival and many more, one such was the Indus Valley International Film Festival.

After successfully executing its first edition during the lockdown, the organisers were soon ready with the next. The second edition of the digital festival hosted nine days of films, interaction with celebrities, workshops on filmmaking, masterclasses, scriptwriting, theatre acting and direction. It presented films from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh,

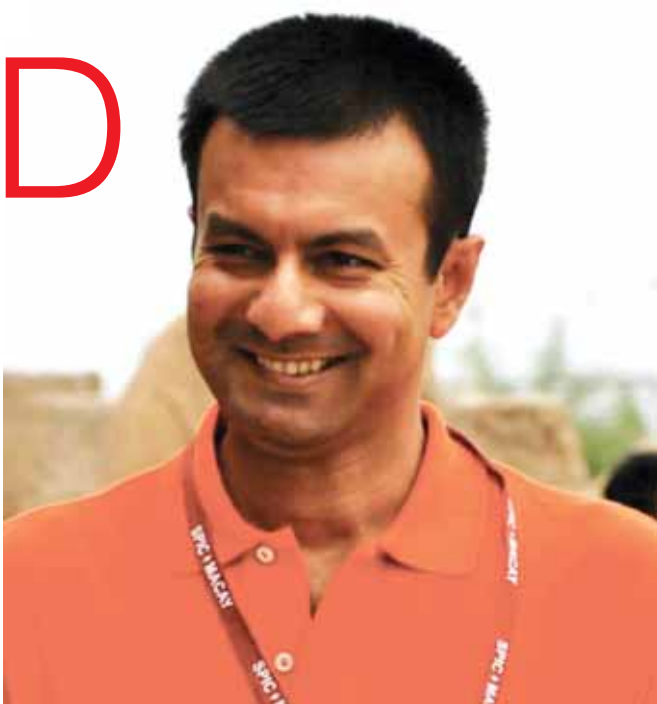
Pakistan and India. There were also films in International Panorama segment, comprising films from Italy, Spain etc.

It opened with R Balki's film *PadMan* and closed with Vishal Bhardwaj film *Rangoon*. Actor Himanshu Malik was the 'Master of Ceremony', who also announced the list of 25 awards in various categories, selected by jury. The jury comprised of Supriti – a diversity & inclusion consultant, Vineet Chopra – a theatre director and Harsh Narayan, a filmmaker. Organised by SAFACH (South Asia Forum for Art & Creative Heritage), the screening at the festival brought forward the rich diversity and legacy of South Asian films.

Founder and Creative Director of the festival, Harsh Narayan, shared about the new offerings this time, the challenges of holding a grand festival online and the way forward. Excerpts:

◆What would you say about the second digital edition of the festival?

This edition gave us much



higher visibility and reach. When we do a physical film festival, its reach is limited to the city its being held. But this time we had active participants from various countries and registrations from USA, Africa, Europe and all South Asian countries. People attended our sessions and watched films online through our digital film portal. Until the last day we received online registrations, including from USA. The participants were enthusiastic as they were able to watch recorded sessions and films through VoD after the festival officially ended.

This gives us confidence that digital festival is not just a stop-gap during Corona times but it has a standalone robust future. We now seek to continue with a digital version of the festival, even in post-COVID era, with a simultaneous physical film festival.

◆What new and different did the festival offered this time?

We organised workshops and masterclasses on filmmaking, scriptwriting and documentary filmmaking online through the festival portal. We received registrations from students and cinema enthusiasts who attended them from their respective universities or homes. Apart from this we also organised panel discussions on *Filmmaking & Creative Collaborations in South Asia* and *Music Collaborations in South Asia*. There were leading filmmakers and musicians from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, attending the respective sessions. These were engaging discussions where people agreed and emphasised on the need for a digital body which can facilitate collaborations,

co-productions and joint ventures in the industry.

◆What were the underlying challenges while holding a grand festival like this online?

The main challenge, initially, was to convince filmmakers, producers and studios to give their films for this digital version. Rightly so, all the digital rights of the films are sold, or preserved to be sold. Therefore, producers are usually apprehensive about giving their films for the digital film festival fearing piracy; although they hold festival screening rights with themselves.

To mitigate their concern, we established a secure and private IVIFF digital festival portal, to be accessed only by the registered participants. Also, with our past credibility, we were able to convince filmmakers and producers with our plan. And finally some of top production houses and studios came on board.

◆Was there any aspect where online mode served better comparatively?

Yes. Since we had participants from various countries, it would have been a gruesome task to bring all of them together at one platform physically. The process of procuring visas and getting clearances is another hectic task which can be avoided online. Another thing was that the filmmakers and actors had the liberty to appear for the festival from their homes or workplaces only for the duration of their talks or sessions, giving them a lot of time in hand to continue their other stuffs. In a physical festival, usually they have to travel to the city, spend atleast a day/night, taking away a lot of their time.

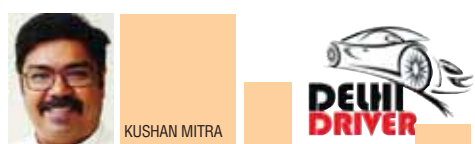
◆How do such festivals foster art and creativity amid the pandemic?

People have been distressed, sad and depressed for a while now with all the negative news around, be it related to the pandemic, war, suicides, depression, drugs, social unrest or political frictions. We wanted to give public a creative solace and a ray of hope to look at the brighter sides of life, despite the challenging times around. We must remember that at the darkest of times, creativity kindles our hearts with light. Art and creativity heals the wounds of the hearts and helps repair our souls. It also strengthens our faith in the power of love and compassion, rejuvenating the societal conscience.

◆"On a regular basis, film screenings, talks, workshop or panel discussions should be organised under Indus Valley.." What more can be done on the same lines to retain the momentum?

We have planned to create Indus Valley as a permanent digital platform to connect artists, musicians and filmmakers from across South Asia and later expand it to South-East Asia as well. It will help them connect, collaborate and plan co-productions. They will also be able to showcase their creative works and charge an amount for it. The platform will also give them access to a wider market and connect with best talent and tech resources available around our neighbouring countries.

We have also decided to bring leading and forthcoming talented musicians from across South Asia to produce and promote collaborative music productions. A suggestion also came that we create a South Asian Cinema fund to facilitate development of promising film scripts selected from all South Asian countries, and take them to a level where they could be produced as a successful screen con-



2 T O T A N G O

The new reflects the old

In the wake of LeBron James winning his fourth NBA title with the Los Angeles Lakers the inevitable comparisons between him and Michael Jordan began again. After all, Jordan's Chicago Bulls won six titles in the 1990's and earlier this year when sports was shut, Jordan reminded us of his and his team's greatness with the Netflix documentary 'The Last Dance'. It is often disingenuous to compare people from two different generations because over the years the rules and standards have changed. Yet, they are easy pegs for a story. Personally, as much as I love Jordan and the Bulls, LeBron has achieved his success on different teams with different coaches and supporting players and in today's hyper-competitive age where he has won against the dynasty of the Golden State Warriors.

Basketball players and other other athletes are one thing, but what about cars? Is it fair to compare cars from even the 1990's to cars in 2020? Keep in mind we had completely different notions of safety, technology and even luxury back then compared to today. But because cars from that era were so much lighter, electric seats for example didn't exist and nor did the heavy-duty and weighty motors to run them, they were so much more enjoyable to drive, light and sharp around corners. Sure, advanced variable geometry turbochargers didn't exist either and if you told someone in 1995 that a two-litre



diesel motor would produce close to two hundred horsepower, you'd be sent to the funny house.

Cars, like athletes are products of their eras. As much fun as I have driving old cars, I like having digital displays, ventilated seats and music on demand. After all, the average commute takes longer today despite more roads around and I want to be comfortable. I don't mind having a bit of fun on weekends, but honestly for most buyers they'd be quite happy to sacrifice fun for convenience and comfort. But then, I recently drove the BMW 220d Gran Coupe, and you realise that you do not always have to make that sacrifice. Yes, this is the first front-wheel drive BMW sedan to go sale globally (the F52 1-series sedan was a China-only product) but the driving dynamics and

engine performance of this car is spectacular, I wanted to take this car out more and the 24-hours I had with it were painfully short.

I'm not saying that other BMW's are not comfortable as well as sporty, but this 220d had a great combination of performance and comfort and much like LeBron's domination of today reminds people of Jordan, the F44, the model code for the 2-series Gran Coupe reminded me of the 1990's E36, the model code for the 3-series of that era. That was a brilliant car to drive, but this one conforms to all the safety features and creature comforts of our age. Heck, the digital instrument cluster on this car is a revelation, with BMW's integration with Apple CarPlay being the best of any car.

Yes, at 39.3 lakhs if there

is any problem with this car other than the fact that there is no petrol engine variant at launch, it is the price. In fact, the M Sport line variant I drove, with adaptive suspension cost Rs 41.4 lakh, far too close to entry-level variants of the 3-series (in fact, BMW India has a fantastic offer on the 3-series GT right now). Personally, the 2-series Gran Coupe is more fun than the 3-series even with the same engine and BMW India is offering some attractive finance and buy-back offers for those who buy this car. Also, BMW is smartly loading even the 'Sport' line variant with a lot of creature comforts and even smartphone integration (the base 'Sport' line variants on many BMW's do not have full smartphone integration). But my honest bottom-line is that I loved this car.

Nice but all about the badge

Over at Audi, things have been a bit challenging over the past few months. The company has refreshed their range of performance cars, the RS7 and RSQ8 have made it onto Indian shores but pickings are slim for the time being. The A3, A4, A5, Q3, Q5 and Q7 are currently not on sale as BS6 versions of all those cars are pending. With Audi's corporate parent Skoda Auto Volkswagen India Private Limited deciding to withdraw from diesels altogether, Audi has been unable to access a large proportion of the luxury car market that continues to swear by diesels, albeit a number that is decreasing.

So it was a pleasant surprise when I discovered that Audi is bringing the Q2 into the Indian market. No Q3 meant that Audi was missing the critical entry-point product, this might help the carmaker. Now, there are some top-of-mind issues with the Q2. First and foremost, the car being launched in India is not a new model, it has been in the market for four years globally and as such is similar in size and overall kit to the recently launched Skoda Karoq and Volkswagen T-Roc. Unlike those cars which have a 1.5 litre 150PS turbocharged petrol engine, the Q2 has the 190PS 2-litre petrol engine.

And that shows when you take the Q2 on the road, it is fast and how!



While it is ostensibly an SUV, even with Audi's Quattro all-wheel drive system, it handles very well indeed. So it ticks the boxes for lightness and agility, and it also has a decent amount of kit with the 'Virtual Cockpit' display, which on the Q2 is a lot better than the T-Roc for example, (I'm yet to drive the Karoq), this is a fun car to drive. Of course, the question — whether it will be worth the extra dosh you will payout for the additional 40PS of power — is the pertinent one. Of course, there is the power of the Audi badge, which touchingly is colloquially known as *Char Choori* in North India. The baby Q2 has

badge value that its siblings do not have. With Audi throwing in free service and maintenance for five years, if you pre-book the car, it becomes a better value.

What is interesting though is Audi's strategy in India. So far in 2020, they've addressed the top of the market and now, the Q2 addressing the entry into the luxury market. Of course, this has been made easier with the decision to allow limited volume imports into India without the need for homologation. At the time of writing I didn't know the price of the Q2, but it ought to be an attractive entry-point to brand Audi.

A GATEWAY TO CULTURE

On World Food Day, chef KIRAN CHAUHAN talks about how even though the modern age is full of fusion foods owing to people's convenience, it's the different eating practices originated at various locations that continue to help shape one's cultural identity

Cuisines act as an expression of cultural identity as they are passed on to other generations as tradition. With every geographical shift, we come across new people and with them, their countries' or native places' food. In fact, cooking their traditional cuisine at a different place becomes a way for them to keep their culture alive as they migrate to newer locations. Every platter has different methods of preparation and flavour preferences, which can be an intimation of the specific region or from the people who make it. This knowledge can be used by the chef to tap into the subconscious associations that guests have about their own cultures, such as comfort flavours.

For a very long time, the promotion of traditional food is one of the main components of the relationship between food, culture and tourism. Even though food and culture are two separate worlds but they go well together. The world treats culture as an embodiment of people's traditions and ways of life as it is always illustrated in their food, rituals, dances, festivals, sculptures, building designs, religion, clothing and other practices.

However, if we notice, the fusion of cultures is more common now than ever. Due to migration being a popular trend, there is also a rise in fusion foods, which, though it might look like, do not take away the origin of the society which they were originally born in. According to the area and different cultures, the types of food eaten by millions of people around the world vary. This diversity did not start like this but it gradually evolved to balance our society and the resources available. Therefore, we study how culture influences food choices and vice versa, to understand or have a deeper understanding of various food cultures.

European & Indian influences

There have been several changes post the Renaissance in food in both India and Europe. With the origin of the innovative cooks in Italy, it brought the use of wheat, barley,

sesamum and brassica in India.

By that time, humans had also learnt to tame buffaloes, goats and sheep as they started becoming useful for agriculture. Slowly and steadily, the time marked the overall development and led us towards a civilised world, with a more scientifically managed lifestyle. Food in ancient India ultimately depicted the cultural development from ancient history as earlier Indians ate food from readily available nature. The principal food items of the nomadic dwellers were fruits, wild berries, meat, fish, etc.

People settled down with the advent of civilization and began to farm, which led to food crops, pulses, etc, being discovered. Now, the food was grown around the fertile river valleys in India. Rice, lentils, vegetables and meat were consumed as staples. Thus, the Indian civilisation period and the Renaissance in Europe are powerful examples of how culture influences food preferences.

Modern culture's influence

Popular food rituals are eroding and patterns of meal preparation are shifting. People are mostly eating alone and we don't eat three square meals a day anymore. Snacks are now almost equal to the number of meal opportunities, 49 per cent versus 51 per cent. Today's signs of food quality have to be fresh, real and less-refined because consumers want to know and understand what all ingredients are incorporated in their food and the story behind the particular dish being served. Consumers are seeking simplicity, hence, they want minimally processed food. Nowadays, transparency is a new trend driving change in the food industry. Digitalisation is also readdressing our relationship with food because people are now using their smartphone to order food or to book or review restaurants online from anywhere in the world and rely on good food pictures as well. The rise in the millennial generation and their behaviour pattern has shown us that they are more concerned about



their health, community, social issues and humane treatment of animals more than their older counterparts. Also, there is another opportunity we see as in the face of dining out, such as breakfast, small bites, the absence of additives/preservatives, organic casualisation (and its expansion into all stages of food service) as well as all-day snacking.

In this modern age, traditions are taking a back seat and convenience is becoming the focus. With this mantra being the driving force, food is itself changing to keep up with the fast-moving lifestyle. Asian cuisines have always encouraged family meals and thus, have different ways of consumption. For example, China uses chopsticks since having a family meal means a wide-spread on the table and chopsticks help to slow down your eating pace and tricks you into feeling full. Since families now hardly have time for each other. Hence, the meaning behind these small cultural aspects



are getting lost.

Languages and food

The culture and customs revolve around food and language because among other slightly less important factors, early humans were more likely to develop their societies to keep themselves fed. Language is also riddled with phrases and idioms linked to food since the invention of communication was a survival strategy in large regions. Today, as we see food and language continue to be an important aspect of our lives and culture, there are tonnes of food idioms in many languages that reflect local cuisine because why wouldn't they? In many restaurants, while catering to international visitors, the role of including local language in the menus has been adopted by the local linguists from region-specific dishes to keep up with the branding and make them distinctive in terms of their menu offering.

For example, a famous idiom in Hindi — Thotha Chana Baaje Ghana — is an indication towards how a learned man is always humble. There are many phrases that show us how food has been observed and incorporated into our lives in a way that we don't even notice.

Thus, aromas and visual signals can jog people's memories from their childhood relating to their favourite food, without even tasting it. This depicts how food can remind you of your traditions even if you're overseas. It's a way of coming home and feeling at peace. Most of the time chefs use this tactic to make their patrons feel more welcomed and homely. The best way to sell a house is by baking a fresh batch of cookies because the sweet and warm smell gives the house a home-like vibe.

The differences among cultures' significance are very much the differences we can see in food, which also affects the personality of the people who live there. Now it's easier to access cuisines from distinct cultures as the world becomes more globalised. We all should accept our heritage through the food of our country but also try and explore other regions' food and become more educated about other cultures and traditions as well. It is important to note that in the culture, to which it belongs, each dish has a special place and is even more special for those who prepare it. Food is, and it should be viewed as such, a gateway to culture.

(The author is the head chef of Krua Thai.)

R E C I P E S



SOM TOM (RAW PAPAYA SALAD)

WHAT YOU NEED

- Raw papaya: 100 gm
- Red chilli: 1
- Garlic: 4 cloves
- Peanuts (optional): 20 gm
- Carrot (optional): 50 gm
- Fish sauce/light soya sauce: 15 ml
- Lemon juice: 30 ml
- Brown/ palm/ date sugar: 30 gm

METHOD

- Cut raw papaya and carrot in julienne fashion.
- Pound chilli and garlic together.
- Cut vegetables of your choice into one-inch size.
- Crush the peanut (optional).
- Mix it all together.
- Add lemon juice, fish sauce or light soya and sugar.
- Mix everything together again and serve.

Courtesy: Kiran Chauhan, Head Chef, Krua Thai.

GERMAN STOLLEN BREAD

WHAT YOU NEED

- Flour: 500 gm
- Lukewarm water
- Yeast: 10 gm
- Raisins, cranberries, chopped citrus peel, nuts: 100 gm
- Rum: 30 ml
- Sugar: 50 gm
- Salt: 10 gm
- Cinnamon: 5 gm
- Egg: 2
- Marzipan: 150 gm
- Melted & cooled butter: 150 gm
- Powder sugar for dusting

METHOD

- Soak the dry fruits in rum and cinnamon for few days, preferably one month.
- In a bowl, beat sugar and butter. Add eggs and beat again.
- Mix the yeast in lukewarm water and add flour and salt and make a dough.
- Mix the rum-soaked nuts and dry fruits in the dough. Also add the sugar butter mixture.



- Keep the dough aside for 15 minutes.
- Roll the dough into small portions and fill marzipan and wrap it.
- Keep the rolled bread

- again at the room temperature for 30 minutes.
- Bake the bread in OTG at 170 degrees for approximately 25 minutes.
- Take out the bread. Let it

- cool.
- Brush it with butter and sprinkle powder sugar for dusting. Enjoy!

Courtesy: Honey & Dough.

RAW BANANA, COCONUT & SAGO KEBAB

WHAT YOU NEED

- Raw banana: 600 gm
- Fresh coconut (grated): 250 gm
- Soaked sago pearls: 300 gm
- Almonds (crushed): 40 gm
- Black peppercorn: 1 tbsp
- Salt to taste
- Green chillies (chopped): 5
- Ghee: 20 gm

METHOD

- Wash, boil and cool banana. Grate it.

- Grate the fresh coconut.
- Heat ghee in a pan and when hot, add grated coconut and cook till golden brown in colour.
- In a mixture grinder, grind half of the roasted coconut. Keep aside.
- Fine chop green chillies.
- Mash half of the sago pearls. Keep the rest for coating kebabs from both sides.
- Assemble all the above ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
- Divide the mixture in small

- balls.
- Make round and flattened kebabs.
- Spread soaked sago pearls on a plate. Place flattened kebabs on sago and firmly press so that the sago can coat the kebabs. Do this for both sides.
- Heat ghee in a non-stick pan.
- When hot, put kebabs and cook them from both sides till golden brown in colour.
- Serve hot.

Courtesy: Michelin Plate Winner, Chef Dayashankar Sharma.



ABSOLUT LIME MOJITO


WHAT YOU NEED

- Part Absolut lime: 1½
- Part lime juice: ½
- Part simple syrup
- Soda water
- Mint: 1 leaf
- Lemon: 1 wedge
- Crushed ice

METHOD

- Fill a highball glass with crushed ice. Muddle. Add Absolut Lime, lime juice and simple syrup.
- Top up with soda water.
- Garnish with a mint leaf and a lime wedge.

Courtesy: Pernod Ricard India.



When I used to play, many players carried drinks for me now when deserved players are in the field it's my duty to return favours. It isn't about me playing or not, it is about my team winning

Rajasthan Royals co-owner and brand ambassador Shane Warne spends time with budding cricketers at Royals camp in Rajasthan Royals UAE Academy **@rajasthanroyals**

The Dutch came from behind to draw 1-1 with Italy in Bergamo, with Donny van de Beek netting for Frank de Boer's side after Lorenzo Pellegrini put Italy ahead.