

WORLD 9
NZ PM ARDERN WINS
2ND TERM IN LANDSLIDE

SPECIAL 11
PROTECTORS
OF NATURE

SPORT 12
RCB BEAT
ROYALS IN IPL

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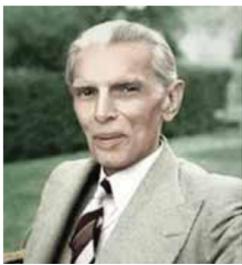
USUALSUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

No need to rewrite Jinnah's history

Every election generates a controversy that is at variance with the main issues concerning the electorate. Last week, during the campaigning for the Bihar Assembly election next month, there was a flutter of excitement over a charge levelled by Union Minister Giriraj Singh against a Congress candidate in Darbhanga district. The outspoken Minister who has courted controversy many times in the past, described the Congress candidate as a "sympathiser" of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. This, indeed, was the report in the Indian Express (Delhi edition) of October 17.

Since the charge levelled by the Minister was in translation, I can only guess that he meant 'Jinnah bhakt' or something more pointed than 'Jinnah admirer'. Whatever the actual usage, the charge invited a sharp response from Shahid Siddiqui, a Muslim editor who has travelled through both the Bahujan Samaj Party and Samajwadi Party. In a twitter intervention he wrote: "LK Advani is a Jinnah fan, not Indian Muslims. We regard him as a destroyer and divider of Indian Muslims. He was an egoistic leader who knew he had failed in his last days. Pakistan was his greatest blunder."

Siddiqui's attack on Jinnah was emphatic and clear. There is a body of Muslims who are insistent that Jinnah's separatism lowered the collective clout of the Indian Muslims and handed over India to Hindu supremacy. This, they feel, would never have happened had Pakistan and Bangladesh been part of a united India.



Siddiqui's point is interesting, but it belongs to the realms of counterfactual history and part of the what-if games all of us love to engage in occasionally. The reality was however different.

Last week, during the campaigning for the Bihar Assembly election next month, there was a flutter of excitement over a charge levelled by Union Minister Giriraj Singh against a Congress candidate in Darbhanga district. The outspoken Minister who has courted controversy many times in the past, described the Congress candidate as a "sympathiser" of Mohammed Ali Jinnah... It is not for me to say whether the Congress candidate in Darbhanga district is a Jinnah admirer or not. Frankly it is of no consequence. But that is no reason to rewrite history

United Provinces, Central Provinces and the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. In Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Bengal, the Muslim League had powerful challengers. This means that at least until the awkward reality of Partition confronted them, the Muslims of Bihar and UP at least were enthusiastic supporters of Jinnah. They constituted the core of the Pakistan movement, as has been documented by historians.

It is also a fact that a substantial body of Muslims from Bihar, UP and the erstwhile States of Bhopal and Hyderabad migrated to both wings of Pakistan, till 1965 at least. The Muhajirs may today be politically marginalised and alienated from the politics of contemporary Pakistan. But it is undeniable that they were the most enthusiastic supporters of Pakistan at the time of its creation. Moreover, till 1971 at least, they were a privileged community in the country that Jinnah created.

It is also undeniable that the creation of Bangladesh, following the War of Liberation, led to a fundamental reassessment of the past. The views proffered by Siddiqui may well be true today, but that view is essentially a post-1971 phenomenon.

Historical memory tends to play tricks on peoples and communities. There is a wealth of studies in Germany that indicated how a substantial body of Germans went into denial over the country's Nazi past after the defeat in 1945. Historians have recorded comments such as "we didn't know" and "no one in my family was a Nazi" that proliferated after 1945 and persisted till the 1970s. Today's Germany has abjured Hitler and his legacy. But that reassessment is in hindsight.

In India too there is historical amnesia over facets of British rule. The rule of a vast country could not have happened by a tiny minority of Britons. British rule depended on collaboration by locals and particularly local elites. Yet, after 1947, there is a veil of silence over the past.

A British historian once jokingly told me that hadn't met any Indian whose family was a Raj loyalist. Of course he hadn't. That is because, like in the case of the Indian Muslims, the past had been reformed to suit the exigencies of the present. Overnight, the Muslim Leaguers of yesterday became supporters of the Congress after 1947.

It is not for me to say whether the Congress candidate in Darbhanga district is a Jinnah admirer or not. Frankly it is of no consequence. But that is no reason to rewrite history.

Covid cases, daily count drop sharply

India's daily cases down to 70K; PM cautions against complacency; virus is genetically stable

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time in the last one-and-a-half months, the number of active coronavirus cases in India has dropped below the 8-lakh mark. However, reviewing the pandemic situation in the country on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned against any complacency even as experts have warned that the onset of winters and the forthcoming festivals could lead to a spurt in the cases as has happened in Kerala after Onam.

With 70,816 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, India's tally of active cases dropped to 7.95 lakh. Though India continues to report the highest number of new cases in the world, the daily surge has come down from over 90,000 fresh daily cases in mid-September to about 70,000 since the past week.

Decline in cases in Maharashtra has contributed to the overall decrease, even as the sharp surge in daily Covid-19 cases in Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal has worried the Central Government, which has rushed high-level teams of experts to help control the pandemic there.

Chairing the meeting to review the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the preparedness of vaccine delivery, distribution, and administration, the Prime Minister noted a

steady decline in the daily cases and the growth rate but he insisted on continued social distancing and Covid-appropriate behaviour such as wearing the mask, regularly washing hands and sanitation, especially in the wake of the upcoming festival season.

"The Prime Minister directed that we should make use of experience of successful conduct of elections and disaster management in the country. In a similar manner, vaccine delivery and administration systems should be put in place. This should involve the participation of States/UTs/district-level functionaries, civil society organisations, volunteers, citizens, and experts from

all necessary domains. The entire process should have a strong IT backbone and the system should be designed in such a manner so as to have a lasting value to our healthcare system," a PMO statement said.

The meeting was attended by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Principal Secretary to PM, Member (Health) NITI Aayog, Principal Scientific Adviser, senior scientists, officers of PMO, and officials from various other departments.

The PMO said two pan-India studies on the Genome of SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19 virus) in India conducted by ICMR and Department of BioTechnology (DBT) suggest



A health worker collects a nasal swab sample to test for Covid-19 at a Government hospital in Jammu on Saturday. PTI

that the virus is genetically stable and there is no major mutation in the virus.

The PMO said three vac-

scientists and research teams are collaborating and strengthening the research capacities in neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

There are further requests from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Qatar and Bhutan for clinical trials in their countries. To help the global community, the PM directed the health authorities that India should not limit its efforts to its immediate neighbourhood but also reach out to the entire world in providing vaccines, medicines and IT platforms for vaccine delivery system.

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Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 74,91,974

DEATHS: 1,13,844

RECOVERED: 65,93,809

ACTIVE: 7,83,127

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	15,86,321	41,752	13,58,606
Andhra Pradesh	7,79,146	6,406	7,35,638
Karnataka	7,58,574	10,427	6,37,481
Tamil Nadu	6,83,486	10,586	6,32,708
Uttar Pradesh	4,52,660	6,629	4,11,611
Kerala	3,34,229	1,140	2,36,989
Delhi	3,27,718	5,981	2,98,853
West Bengal	3,17,053	5,992	2,77,940
Odisha	2,66,345	1,174	2,44,227
Telangana	2,20,675	1,265	1,96,636
Bihar	2,03,060	990	1,91,515
Assam	2,00,391	865	1,71,081
Rajasthan	1,71,281	1,735	1,48,291
Madhya Pradesh	1,59,158	2,753	1,42,707
Gujarat	1,58,635	3,629	1,40,519
Chhattisgarh	1,55,987	1,425	1,26,869



Global Hunger Index: India at 94th among 107 nations

Fares poorer than all its immediate neighbours; put in 'serious' category

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has been ranked 94th among 107 nations worldwide in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020, faring poorer than all its immediate neighbours and being put in the "serious" hunger category.

Neighbouring Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan too are in the "serious" category but ranked higher than India in the latest GHI. While Bangladesh ranked 75, Myanmar and Pakistan are at the 78th and 88th position. Nepal at 73rd and Sri Lanka at 64th position are in "moderate" hunger cat-



egory. In the region of south, east and south-eastern Asia, the only countries which fare worse than India are Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and North Korea.

Last year, India's rank was 102nd among 117 countries. China, Belarus, Ukraine, Turkey, Cuba and Kuwait, figure among the top 20 with GHI

scores of less than five. The Global Hunger Index is a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.

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9.9 lakh lt liquor seized in dry Bihar ahead of election

1,139 illegal guns, drugs recovered in election-related raids and searches

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Despite prohibition imposed in the State, over 9.89 lakh litres of liquor have been seized in Bihar so far ahead of the first phase of polls for 71 Assembly seats. And not just booze, authorities have also seized 1,139 illegal guns from across the State, known for its illegal gun factories.

While more than 2.54 lakh people having criminal background have been put on notice, there has been a seizure of ₹16.81 crore of unaccounted money, including about 90 lakh Nepalese currency. Raids and checks have also yielded a huge quantity of contraband drugs including 956.625 kg poppy,

106.825 kg hashish, 10.5 kg poppy rolls, 40 packet smacks, 150 gram brown sugar.

The revelation was made in a seizure report of the Election Commission (EC). Over 200 "expenditure sensitive pockets" have also been identified by the EC in the State, which shares its borders with Nepal.

The flying squads, static surveillance team and other agencies have seized 9,89,973 litres of liquors including "mahua" (Madhuca indica) made liquor from different locations, mostly rural areas.

This is the first assembly polls in dry Bihar. "The liquor mafia in the dry State has suddenly become more active in smuggling

politicians to lure voters", officials added.

"The drug consumption has significantly increased after a statewide ban has been imposed on alcohol. As a result, an increase in the secretive supply and sale of narcotics like brown sugar has been observed," officials said.

The income tax flying squad has recovered ₹16,81,29,023 unaccounted money, of which about 90 lakh are Nepalese currency notes.

The special surveillance team and field surveillance unit has recovered about ₹11.72 crore during checking of vehicles from different locations.

"More than 2,100 gun licences have been cancelled," said an EC official. About 2,56,447 having criminal backgrounds or bad characters have been put on notice across the State. This means if anything happens, they would be behind bars.

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Mission Shakti: CM Yogi vows 'zero tolerance' to crime against women

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reiterating his government's commitment towards dignity, safety and empowerment of women and girls of the state, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday launched the ambitious statewide Mission Shakti programme with a stern warning to those who perpetrate crimes against the fairer sex.

Launching Mission Shakti in Balrampur where it would continue for the next six months till Basant Navratri, the chief minister said his government had zero tolerance towards crimes against women and girls.

"Those who cast an evil eye on the dignity and self-respect of women will find no place in the state. The perpetrators of such crimes are a blot on society and the government will deal with them with a heavy hand," Yogi thundered during his im-

passioned address on women safety, security and dignity.

The chief minister, who launched Mission Shakti from Balrampur, the work place of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, described women as a symbol of Shakti. "Women are venerable in our eternal tradition and Navratri signifies this. In the changing times, the new generation should become the carrier of our eternal tradition which always professes the cause of women as the prime duty of mankind," he pointed out.

The chief minister said that Mission Shakti was a reminder of our duty towards women and girls. Asserting to bring home the issue of gender equality and terming female foeticide as a curse, Yogi said that girl protection and respect to them should start from home itself and everyone should realise that there was nothing like gender discrimination. The chief minister

also expressed his strong views against child marriage and said these rituals should be publicly condemned. Yogi also emphasised on the facilities provided by the government to protect women and girls and asked them to approach those when in distress. "In case of violence against women, 1090, 1070 and 112 and 189 numbers are always at their service," he said.

Terming the recent Balrampur incident against a girl as unfortunate, the chief minister said that Mission Shakti was a tribute to her. "The first phase of Mission Shakti will focus on spreading awareness towards ensuring safety and dignity to women and girls. In the second phase, Operation Shakti will target eve-teasers and put them to punishment or reforms. If such elements do not mend their ways, they will have to face social boycott and their pictures will be displayed publicly," he said.

French teacher beheaded for class on Prophet caricatures

18-year old suspect shot dead by police is Chechen refugee

AP ■ PARIS

A suspect shot dead by police after the gruesome beheading of a history teacher — who discussed caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad with his class, leading to death threats — in an attack near Paris was an 18-year-old Moscow-born Chechen refugee, officials said on Saturday.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office said authorities investigating the killing of Samuel Paty in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine on Friday also arrested nine suspects, including the teen's grandfather, parents and 17-year-old brother.

Paty had discussed caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad with his class, leading to threats and a complaint from a parent, police



A man lays a flower outside the school where a slain history teacher was working, in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, Paris, on Saturday. AP

officials said. Islam prohibits images of the prophet. The officials could not be named because they were not authorised to discuss ongoing investigations.

The French anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said an investigation for murder with a suspected ter-

rorist motive had been opened. Ricard told reporters that the suspect, who had been granted a 10-year residency in France as a refugee in March and was not known to intelligence services, had been armed with a knife and an airsoft gun, which fires plastic pellets.

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Another BJP MLA brings embarrassment to party

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Baira in Ballia, Surendra Singh, already bringing embarrassment to the party by openly siding with the accused in the sensational killing in front of administrative officials, another party MLA in Lakhimpur Kheri has also created trouble for the ruling party.

The leader and his henchmen allegedly created ruckus inside a police station and forcibly got an eve-teaser released from police custody.

Surprisingly, the Bharatiya Janata Party leader was involved in the attack when just a few hours later the chief minister launched Mission Shakti, promising toughest action against those who dared to play with the dignity of women or tried to help the accused.

Sources said that a video clip of the ruckus created by the BJP MLA and his son and supporters was being widely circulated on social media platforms.

BJP MLA Lokendra Pratap Singh and his son reportedly reached Mohammedi police station in Lakhimpur post mid-night along with scores of supporters and created a ruckus over the arrest of a party worker in an eve-teasing case on Friday.

In the video that has since gone viral, the ruling party workers can be heard asking for the lock-up keys to release the accused.

The policemen could not muster the courage to oppose the agitated Bharatiya Janata Party workers and the MLA and the legislator's supporters walked away with the accused.

While the local police officials were tight-lipped about the incident, BJP MLA Lokendra Pratap Singh said over the phone that there was no ruckus at the police station and it was being wrongly propagated to malign his image.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

My name is Naushad Shah S/o Chaman Shah not Mohd Naushad. Naushad Shah S/o Chaman Shah Village and Post Lalauli Mahammadpur, Fatehpur.

NOTICE

I, Mridulesh Pandey S/o R.S. Pandey R/o Civil Lines, Bahraich, have lost my original marksheet of B.Tech (I, II, III Year) at munshi Puliya Chauraha, Lucknow, if find please inform on mobile 9415110292.

NOTICE

I Army No 5343528 Y NK Bin Bahadur Gurung S/o Late Bir Bahadur Gurung, R/o 154 DSC Platoon Centre Command Lucknow Cantt., declare that in my son (NIRMAL GURUNG) School record my name is wrongly mention B.B. Gurung my correct name is Bin Bahadur Gurung for all future purpose.

NOTICE

In my ICSE board 10th and 12th board certificate the name of my father is accidentally mentioned as INDER KISHOR AND mother's name as PUSHPA KUSHWAHA while the correct name of my father is INDRAN KISHOR KUSHWAHA and mother's name is PUSHPA DEVI, HIMANSHU KUSHWAHA S/o INDRAN KISHOR KUSHWAHA, Tikauli, Distt.-Unnao.

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Ballia accused 'threatens' policemen

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In yet another embarrassment for the state government, an audio clip has surfaced on the social media in which Ballia murder accused Dharendra Pratap Singh is purportedly heard issuing threats to a UP Police inspector for failing to adhere to his demands.

Meanwhile, Singh also released a video message, pleading his innocence in the murder case and claiming that he did not fire any shot during the stampede.

In the audio clip that has gone viral on the internet, Dharendra Pratap Singh asks the police inspector about the status report in his case. After the police officer tells him to talk to the SDM (sub-divisional magistrate) about the report, Singh threatens him with dire consequences, saying the inspector does not know who he is dealing with.

Hours after the audio clip went viral, Dharendra Pratap Singh released a video message pleading innocent in the murder case and claiming that he did not fire any shot or

attacked anyone during the recent incident in Ballia.

It should be noted that the police have arrested five accused in the case so far but the main accused — Dharendra Pratap Singh — is still on the run.

Interestingly, on Friday, a Bharatiya Janata Party MLA in Ballia had openly defended the prime accused and even accused the police of conducting a biased probe.

"Dharendra Pratap Singh opened fire in self-defence or else dozens of his family and associates would have been killed," Baira MLA Surendra Singh had said, adding, "He (Singh) had no other option. It was a do-or-die situation for him."

Earlier, two people including the brother of Dharendra Pratap Singh were arrested when a fracas broke out at a meeting attended by administration and police officials in Ballia district.

Five others were detained till Saturday evening, the main accused was yet to be arrested.

Some close lieutenants of Singh, however, claimed that

he was already in police custody but the cops had not shown his arrest.

Meanwhile in Gonda, seven people, including a Mahant, were arrested on Saturday in connection with the attempt on the life of a priest of the Ram Janaki temple in the Itiyathok Kotwali area.

Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said that with the intention of taking benefit in the panchayat elections and for trying to implicate opposition in a property dispute, the priest at the Ram Janaki temple had been shot at.

He said that Mahant Sitaram Das had got the rounds fired on the temple's priest, Samrat Das, to defame the former gram pradhan of the village, in cahoots with pradhan Vinay Das on the night of October 10.

The SP said that accused Mahant Sitaram Das had got a report filed against four people, including former pradhan Amar, Mukesh and Bhay Karan Singh.

He said during probe into the case and after questioning

Hours after the audio clip went viral, Dharendra Pratap Singh released a video message pleading innocent in the murder case and claiming that he did not fire any shot or attacked anyone during the recent incident in Ballia

the locals, the police team arrested seven people, including the mahant, Neeraj Munna, Sonu, Vidit, Shivshankar Singh and Vinay Singh.

Three country-made pistols and a mobile phone were recovered from the possession of the accused. Search is on for another accused, Sooraj.

Pandey said that the injured priest was undergoing treatment at Lucknow's KGMU Trauma Centre under police supervision.

BJP faces rebel in Deoria

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): The Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh is facing rebellion in Deoria Assembly bypolls with the son of former party MLA, whose death caused the by-election, filing his nomination paper as a rebel independent candidate.

Deceased BJP MLA Janmejay Singh's son, Ajay Pratap Singh, filed his nomination as an independent candidate on Friday, the last day of filing of the nominations.

At the last moment, the BJP decided not to give ticket to Ajay Pratap, a Thakur, after the other three political parties fielded Brahmins. Hence, it also gave ticket to a Brahmin party worker, a senior BJP leader said here on Saturday.

After the death of Janmejay Singh in August, his son Ajay Pratap Singh, also known as Pinto Singh, was the front runner as BJP candidate for the bypolls. However, the BJP fielded Satya Prakash Mani Tripathi from the seat. "Some senior BJP leaders who had come to express their condolences after my father's death had asked me to prepare for the bypoll. But all of a sudden my ticket was cancelled at the last moment," Ajay Pratap Singh said.

The bypolls for seven Assembly seats will be held on November 3 while the count-

ing will be taken up on November 10, 2020. The change of candidate by the BJP is likely to create problems for the ruling party and is likely to dent the Thakur vote bank of the party. The deceased BJP MLA, Janmejay Singh, was elected from Deoria seat for the second

consecutive term since 2012. Interestingly, all the four parties have fielded Brahmin candidates on the Deoria seat. While Satya Prakash Mani Tripathi has been fielded by the BJP, the Samajwadi Party has given its ticket to Brahmarshankar Tripathi.

State Election Commission Notice No. 14.09.2006 regarding the bye-election for the Deoria constituency. The notice details the date of the election (November 3, 2020) and the date of the counting (November 10, 2020). It also mentions the names of the candidates and the results of the previous election.

Guv flags off 110 'pink' vehicles

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel flagged off 100 'pink' two-wheeler and 10 four-wheeler police vehicles of Pink Patrol, under the Safe City Project on Saturday.

Taking a bold step towards safety and security of women and girls in the state, a Pink Patrol, the first of its kind all-women patrolling command, was launched by the chief minister on Saturday to ensure the safety of the fairer sex under his Mission Shakti campaign.

The Pink Patrol is designed to take immediate action in cases of molestation and crime against women in Lucknow. Approximately 250 woman police personnel have been deployed in the Pink Patrol after giving them rigorous training.

Under the Safe City plan, the Pink Patrol will operate in the state at places that have been hotspots of crime against women as identified by the Lucknow police. These will be initially stationed at places, including girls' colleges and women's gatherings where there have been incidents of molestation in the past or the locality is on alert regarding such occurrences. Patrolling will also be done on the basis of complaints and suggestions from women. According to Lucknow police officials, Pink Patrol can also be deployed at night as per the need. Pink Patrol will also be directly connected to the nearest police station with 1090, 112 and integrated control room so that additional police force can be dispatched immediately, if needed.

After the successful implementation in Lucknow, the Yogi Adityanath government plans to launch the Pink Patrol scheme in other districts of Uttar Pradesh, namely Kanpur Nagar, Agra,



Governor Anandiben Patel flagging off 100 'pink' two-wheeler and 10 four-wheeler police vehicles of Pink Patrol in Lucknow on Saturday

Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Meerut and Noida

Speaking on the occasion, Patel said the Pink Patrol campaign of the Central and state governments was going to run for 180 days.

"We all have a responsibility towards the safety of women, it is not the responsibility of any one department or an officer. The proceedings of every case of atrocities against women should be solved on time. We should take a pledge that there would not be a single incident of crime against women," she said.

She also said that vehicles provided by the government under the campaign should only be used for official work and not for personal purpose. The governor extended her wishes to the nation on the occasion of Navratri. "Today is the first day of Navratri. I wish everyone a very happy Navratri," she said.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had approved the Safe City Project for Lucknow at a total cost of Rs 194.44 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme in November 2018.

The project is implemented as a centrally-sponsored scheme with the Centre and state government sharing the funding in 60:40 ratio.

This approval was a part of MHAs plans to implement Safe City projects in eight selected cities, namely, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow under Nirbhaya Fund, with the purpose of strengthening safety and security of women in public places.

The major components of the Safe City Project in Lucknow include setting up an Integrated Smart Control Room, setting up Pink Outposts (exclusively administered by women police) for facilitating ease of filing complaint by women, Pink Patrols of women police, setting up of women help desks in all police stations with counsellors, augmentation of existing Asha Jyoti Kendras, implementing safety measures in buses, including cameras, improving street lighting in identified hotspot areas, setting up of pink toilets and the integration of women power-help line with single emergency number '112'.

The Safe City Project for Lucknow also envisages gender sensitisation awareness campaigns and capacity building in collaboration with community and civil society organisations.

Nine killed in mishap

Lucknow (PNS): At least nine people were killed and 30 injured when an ill-fated Uttar Pradesh Roadways bus collided with a SUV in Seramau area of Pilibhit district early Saturday morning. The deceased included a child and two women.

Soon after learning about the accident, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his deepest condolences.

A state government statement said, "Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ji has expressed grief on the tragic death of people in a road accident in Pilibhit district. He has expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the dead, praying to God for the peace of the departed soul."

The chief minister directed the district officials to provide proper treatment to those injured in the accident. He also announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 5 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

AIMPLB to challenge Spl CBI court verdict in Babri Masjid

Lucknow (PNS): All India Muslim Personal Law Board has decided to challenge the acquittal of all the accused in the Babri mosque demolition case by the special CBI court on September 30. The decision to challenge the trial court's ruling was taken during a two-day working committee meeting of the AIMPLB that ended here on Friday night.

During the meeting, held virtually, the members also discussed the threat of the uniform civil code (UCC) and it was decided that the political parties and religious organisations would be informed about their apprehensions. The AIMPLB also approved a proposal to set up a committee on the UCC issue. It also decided to set up an intellectual committee to suggest ways for preventing misuse of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). The meeting was chaired by AIMPLB president Maulana Sayeed Mohammad

Rabe Hasni Nadvi and it was coordinated by general secretary Maulana Mohammad Wali Rahmani.

The members expressed their anguish on the verdict of the special CBI court to let off all the accused in the Babri demolition case. It was unanimously decided that the AIMPLB would challenge the verdict in the higher court. AIMPLB spokesperson Zafaryab Jilani said here on Saturday that Haji Mahboob and some others would file the petition in the court against the verdict of the special CBI court in the Babri demolition case.

Haji Mahboob had earlier objected to withdrawing the cases against former deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani and later the court too accepted his demand. The special CBI court acquitted all the 32 accused, including BJP veterans LK Advani, MM Joshi and Uma Bharti, of their involvement in the destruction of Babri Masjid 28 years ago, in December 1992.

North Eastern Railway Notification No. 93/2020. It is notified for information of the general public that following Puja Special Express train will run from 20.10.2020 to 30.11.2020 as under- Puja Special Express Trains. The notification includes detailed train schedules for various routes including Gorakhpur-Okha, Lucknow-Patliputra, and Chandigarh-Gorakhpur.

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Downward trend continues

2,880 fresh cases in state, 317 in district

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh continues to witness a downslide in coronavirus infections and now there is almost a 50 per cent decrease in active patients and the recovery rate has also touched nearly 91 per cent.

The total confirmed coronavirus positives cases in the state on Saturday reached 4,52,660 while 4,11,611 of them recovered. At present, 34,420 COVID-19 patients are admitted in hospitals or are in home isolation for treatment.

As many as 2,880 fresh positive cases were reported across the state on Saturday while 3,528 COVID-19 patients recovered. The patients included 81 from Kanpur, 127 from Prayagraj, 153 from Gorakhpur, 189 from Ghaziabad and 137 from Varanasi.

There were 40 deaths across the state, including five

from Gorakhpur, three from Sonbhadra, two each from Prayagraj, Meerut, Mathura, Basti & Chitrakoot, and one each from Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Varanasi, Jhansi, Lakhimpur Kheri, Shahjahanpur, Deoria, Muzaffarnagar, Jaunpur, Kushinagar, Ghazipur, Sitapur, Rae Bareilly, Siddharthnagar, Bijinore, Jalaun and Kanpur Dehat. The recovery rate in the state has increased to 90.93 percent. A total of 6,629 people have lost their lives to the lethal virus with 40 fresh fatalities being reported in the last 24 hours.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said on Saturday that the health workers in the state had prepared a list of children under one-year age and of pregnant women who had missed their vaccine and tetanus injections during the lockdown period. He said there were 3.25 lakh children and around four lakh pregnant women who would be given vaccines and injections, respectively, during a special drive in November.

On Friday, 1,62,471 samples were tested and with it the total Covid tests in the state

went up to a record 1,28,41,878.

Prasad said there were 15,831 asymptomatic COVID-19 patients in home isolation while 2,980 patients were admitted in private hospitals and the rest were recovering in government-run Covid hospitals. Over 4.22 lakh surveillance teams have covered 1,42,139 areas of the state and visited 2.72 crore 998 houses to check the health of over 13.44 crore people.

Meanwhile, as many as 317 persons tested positive for coronavirus in the city on Saturday while 476 patients recovered, taking the number of recoveries to 54,786. The death toll in Lucknow is 811.

A senior official at CMO office said the new patients included 38 from Gomtinagar, 32 from Rae Bareilly road, 24 from Indiranagar, 18 from Alambagh, 16 each from Aliganj & Madioan, 14 from Chowk, 13 from Chinhat, 12 each from Ashiyana & Hazratganj and 10 from Jankipuram.

There were eight deaths in the district and the deceased included three from Lucknow while five from other districts.

Two patients died at KGMU, including a 52-year-old man from Unnao and a 68-year-old man from Faizabad.

With the number of coronavirus cases coming down, the focus is now on reducing the positivity rate further. Incharge of Integrated Control and Command Centre Manish Bansal said they were prepared for the coming months and continuously working on increasing their capacity and with the festive season round the corner, they were chalking out a strategy to prevent crowding.

He said they had done the ground work thoroughly and were hopeful that there would not be too many cases in the coming months.

Bansal said to curb the spread of coronavirus with further relaxation in guidelines, the district administration was ready and it had already started a widespread IEC campaign.

"Today itself, we connected 1,000 private and government schools in an online meet and all were given detailed instructions on how to adhere to Covid-19 guidelines," he added.

Dental OPDs to resume at KGMU tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Various departments of dental sciences at KGMU will be resuming their OPDs from October 19. KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh said the patients were required to complete online registration before visiting OPDs.

"There will be a capping of 100 patients a day. All patients need Covid negative report which should not be more than three days prior to the OPD visit. Fresh Covid tests will be offered to patients with older or no reports. Those accompanying the patients will also be required to produce a Covid negative report," he said.

Reception facility will run at the department of oral medicine and radiology and all patients will be first examined at the department of oral medicine from where the patients will be referred to respective departments. There will be various services like root canal treatment, braces treatment, partial and complete denture, implants, trauma, cavity filling, tooth extraction and scaling on day care basis. Special clinical facilities will also be available for paediatric patients and other clinics like pyorrhea clinic will also resume.

Meanwhile, KGMU's department of trauma surgery organised a walkathon on World Trauma Day on Saturday. The walkathon was organised at 1090 crossing. It was flagged off by KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri. Doctors, health workers and general public participated in the walkathon. In his speech at the training camp at Shatabdi Hospital, the VC said around one million people die due to road accidents in the world and about 5 to 6 lakh people suffer from disabilities every year. Trauma is the third leading cause of death in the world after heart attack and cancer, he pointed out.

Truck conductor killed in road mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, a 30-year-old truck conductor died after being hit by another speeding truck in Ashiyana early Saturday morning. The victim was identified as Jitendra Yadav of Farrukhabad and the mishap occurred at Shaheed Path under Ashiyana police station area.

As per reports, Jitendra, along with truck driver Ram Brij Singh of Mainpuri, was returning from Khalilabad after unloading goods. When they reached a private company office at Shaheed Path, the truck developed a snag around 5 am. As Jitendra came down to fix it, he was knocked down

by the speeding truck and he bled to death on the spot.

In another case, a 40-year-old labourer died after a wall collapsed at an under-construction nullah in Kakori on Thursday morning. The deceased was identified as Javed of a slum area in Thakurganj. Reports said Javed was hired by a contractor who is carrying out the construction work close to a primary school and a park in the area. Around 8:30 am, the park's boundary wall collapsed all of a sudden and Javed got buried under the debris. He died on the spot. Police sent the body for autopsy and a case was registered on the complaint of deceased's wife.

BBAU receives ISO 14001 certification

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) has received ISO 14001 certification for better environmental management. ISO 14001 is an internationally agreed standard that sets the requirements for an environmental management system. It helps organisations in improving their environmental performance through more efficient use of resources, reducing waste, in competitive advantage and stakeholder confidence.

BBAU spokesperson said that recently, a green audit was done by LMS Certification Limited Company at the university. "The audit independently evaluated the university's environmental management system. Assessed by the company in accordance with the International Green Building Certification Standards, in which all standards related to the environment have been met. The university has been awarded green certification by the company after the evaluation. The ISO 14001 certificate shows that the BBAU is able to provide a better environment for students and staff to work and learn and at the same time, the university has made good arrangements to improve the environment, which is the greatest need of the hour," the spokesperson said.

2 thieves land in police net

Lucknow (PNS): Recovery of a mobile phone dropped in a hurry by thieves while fleeing a house that they had struck in Aliganj helped the police nab them. Those arrested were identified as Mohammed Salim and Mohammed Samad, both of Thakurganj. The police recovered stolen ornaments, a washing machine and Rs 62,000 in cash from their possession.

As per reports, Yasin of Triveni Nagar in Aliganj had lodged a case of house theft on October 12. He had told the police he, along with his family, had gone to attend a wedding in Mahanagar and when

he returned home around 2:10 am, he found two miscreants inside the house. The thieves fled the scene after they heard the commotion and in a hurry, one of them dropped his mobile phone.

Yasin chased the miscreants and picked up the mobile which he handed over to the police. Initially, the police did not give much credit to Yasin's claim suspecting it could be a ploy to frame some persons. Later on the instructions of senior officials, the police worked on the case and found the suspect who was nabbed later. The police nabbed his aide as well.

Worked on streamlining supply of fertilizers: Min

Lucknow (PNS): Speaking at the CII conference on agri inputs, Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda said the theme of the conference (Ease of doing agriculture - farming innovations) is apt and timely. He enlisted the steps taken by the government to streamline the supply of fertilizers to the farmers in Covid times. He highlighted the role of direct benefits

transfer (DBT) in decision making by analysing real-time information on demand Vs supply.

Secretary, department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Chhabindra Roul also spoke on the innovative steps taken by the ministry for the benefit of farmers. He highlighted the two initiatives, dashboard 'urvarark' for information on

availability of farmers and as an extension of it, an SMS gateway which gives real-time information on fertilizers in retail stores. He shared with the audience how the government is engaging with farmers on the use of new types of fertilizers such as nano or biofertilizers for productivity and sustainability. Roul said his motto is ease of living for 140 million farming families.

MORE FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2020

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during forthcoming festival season, Railways have decided to run the following Festival Special Trains as per details given below:-

02595/02596 Gorakhpur - Anand Vihar Terminus - Gorakhpur Humsafar Superfast Express (Tri-Weekly)					
Train No.: 02595		STATIONS		Train No.: 02596	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	20:00	GORAKHPUR		07:50	---
08:50	---	ANAND VIHAR TERMINUS		---	20:00

DAYS OF RUN: 02595 Ex Gorakhpur from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20 on every Monday, Tuesday & Thursday and 02596 Ex Anand Vihar T. from 21.10.20 to 01.12.20 on every Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday.
STOPPAGES: Basti, Gonda, Lucknow & Kanpur Central stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 3 Tier.

05018/05017 Gorakhpur - Lokmanyatilak Terminus - Gorakhpur Special Express (Daily)					
Train No.: 05018		STATIONS		Train No.: 05017	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	05:30	GORAKHPUR		19:10	---
18:05	---	LOKMANYATILAK TERMINUS		---	06:05

DAYS OF RUN: 05018 Ex Gorakhpur Daily from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20 and 05017 Ex Lokmanyatilak Terminus Daily from 22.10.20 to 02.12.20.

STOPPAGES: Chauri Chaura, Deoria Sadar, Bhatni Jn., Salempur, Lar Road, Belthra Road, Indara Jn., Mau Jn., Dullahapur, Jakhania, Sadat, Aunihar Jn., Varanasi City, Varanasi, Chaukhandi, Sewapuri, Kapsethi, Parsipur, Bhadohi, Mondhi, Suriawan, Sarai Kansrai, Janghai Jn., Ugrasen Pur, Phulpur, Sarai Chandi, Phapha Mau Jn., Prayag, Prayag Raj Jn., Naini Jn., Jasra, Shankar Garh, Dabhaura, Manikpur Jn., Jaitwar, Satna, Maihar, Katni Jn., Sihora Road, Jabalpur, Madan Mahal, Shri Dham, Narsinghpur, Kareli, Gadarawara, Pipariya, Sohagpur, Itarsi Jn., Banapura, Timarni, Harda, Khirkhya, Barud, Chhamera, Surgaon Banjari, Talvada Jn., Khandwa Jn., Nepa Nagar, Burhanpur, Raver, Bhusawal Jn., Jalgaon Jn., Pachora Jn., Chalisgaon Jn., Nandgaon, Manmad Jn., Lasal Gaon, Nasik Road, Devlali, Igatpuri, Kasara, Kalyan Jn. & Thane stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

02597/02598 Gorakhpur - Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus - Gorakhpur Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 02597		STATIONS		Train No.: 02598	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	08:30	GORAKHPUR		18:35	---
12:20	---	CHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ T.		---	13:30

DAYS OF RUN: 02597 Ex Gorakhpur from 20.10.20 to 24.11.20 on every Tuesday and 02598 Ex Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus from 21.10.20 to 25.11.20 on every Wednesday.

STOPPAGES: Khallabab, Basti, Gonda, Lucknow, Kanpur Central, Orai, Jhansi, Bhopal, Itarsi, Bhusawal & Kalyan stations.
ACCOMMODATION: Second Seating (Reserved).

02521/02522 Barauni - Ernakulam - Barauni Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 02521		STATIONS		Train No.: 02522	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	22:50	BARAUNI		23:10	---
12:50	---	ERNAKULAM		---	10:15

DAYS OF RUN: 02521 Ex Barauni from 21.10.20 to 25.11.20 on every Wednesday and 02522 Ex Ernakulam from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20 on every Sunday.

STOPPAGES: Samastipur, Muzaffarpur Jn., Hajipur Jn., Sonpur, Chhapra, Siwan Jn., Bhatni Jn., Deoria Sadar, Gorakhpur Jn., Khallabab, Basti, Mankapur Jn., Gonda Jn., Barabanki Jn., Badshahnagar, Aishbagh, Unnao Jn., Kanpur Central, Pokhrayan, Orai, Jhansi Jn., Lalitpur, Bhopal, Itarsi Jn., Ghoradongri, Betul, Amla Jn., Pandhurna, Nagpur, Sevagram, Hinganghat, Chandrapur, Balharshah, Sirpur Kagaznagar, Belampalli, Mancherla, Ramgundam, Warangal, Khammam, Vijayawada Jn., Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Chennai Central, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem Jn., Erode Jn., Tiruppur, Coimbatore Jn., Palghat, Ottappalam, Wadakancheri, Thiruv., Irinjilakuda, Chalakudi, Angamali, Aluva & Ernakulam Town stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09027/09028 Bandra Terminus - Jammu Tawi - Bandra Terminus Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09027		STATIONS		Train No.: 09028	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	12:15	BANDRA TERMINUS		22:25	---
01:25	---	JAMMU TAWI		---	09:30

DAYS OF RUN: 09027 Ex Bandra Terminus on 24, 31.10.20, 7, 14, 21, 28.11.20 on every Saturday and 09028 Ex Jammu Tawi on 26.10.20, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.11.20 on every Monday.

STOPPAGES: Borivali, Vapi, Surat, Vadodra Jn., Anand Jn., Nadiad Jn., Ahmedabad Jn., Mahesana Jn., Palanpur Jn., Abu Road, Falna, Marwar Jn., Pali Marwar, Jodhpur Jn., Merla Road Jn., Degana Jn., Chhoti Khatu, Didwana, Ladnun, Sujargarh, Ratargarh Jn., Churu, Sadulpur Jn., Hisar, Barwala, Dhuri Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Jalandhar Cant., Pathankot Cantt & Kathua stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09017/09018 Bandra Terminus - Haridwar - Bandra Terminus Superfast Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09017		STATIONS		Train No.: 09018	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	13:05	BANDRA TERMINUS		22:00	---
15:50	---	HARIDWAR		---	18:30

DAYS OF RUN: 09017 Ex Bandra Terminus on 21, 28.10.20, 4, 11, 18, 25.11.20 on every Wednesday and 09018 Ex Haridwar on 22, 29.10.20, 5, 12, 19, 26.11.20 on every Thursday.

STOPPAGES: Borivali, Boisar, Vapi, Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Bharuch Jn., Vadodra Jn., Godhra, Ratlam Jn., Nagda, Bhawani Mandi, Ramganj Mandi, Kota Jn., Sawai Madhopur, Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn., Palwal, Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin Jn., Ghaziabad, Meerut City, Muzaffarnagar, Tapri & Roorkee stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09313/09314 Indore - Rajendra Nagar - Indore Special Express (Bi-Weekly)					
Train No.: 09313		STATIONS		Train No.: 09314	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	13:55	INDORE		15:20	---
17:20	---	RAJENDRA NAGAR		---	10:45

DAYS OF RUN: 09313 Ex Indore on 21, 26, 28.10.20, 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30.11.20 on every Monday & Wednesday and 09314 Ex Rajendra Nagar on 23, 28, 30.10.20, 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27.11.20, 2.12.20 on every Wednesday & Friday.

STOPPAGES: Dewas, Ujjain Jn., Shujalpur, Sant Hirdaram Nagar, Bina Jn., Lalitpur, Jhansi Jn., Orai, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Sultanpur, Jaunpur City, Varanasi, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. & Patna Jn. stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09321/09322 Indore - Rajendra Nagar - Indore Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09321		STATIONS		Train No.: 09322	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	13:55	INDORE		15:20	---
17:20	---	RAJENDRA NAGAR		---	10:45

DAYS OF RUN: 09321 Ex Indore on 24, 31.10.20, 7, 14, 21, 28.11.20 on every Saturday and 09322 Ex Rajendra Nagar on 26.10.20, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.11.20 on every Monday.

STOPPAGES: Dewas, Ujjain Jn., Shujalpur, Sant Hirdaram Nagar, Bina Jn., Jhansi Jn., Orai, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Faizabad Jn., Akbarpur, Jaunpur Jn., Varanasi, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. & Patna Jn. stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09057/09058 Udhna - Manduadih (BSBS) - Udhna Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09057		STATIONS		Train No.: 09058	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	22:50	UDHNA JN		09:00	---
01:40	---	MANDUADIH (BSBS)		---	04:50

DAYS OF RUN: 09057 Ex Udhna Jn on 23, 30.10.20, 6, 13, 20, 27.11.20 on every Friday and 09058 Ex Manduadih (BSBS) on 25.10.20, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.11.20 on every Sunday.

STOPPAGES: Nandurbar, Amalner, Jalgaon Jn., Bhusawal Jn [c], Khandwa, Itarsi Jn., Jabalpur, Katni, Satna, Manikpur Jn., Prayagraj Chheoki & Varanasi stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09019/09020 Udhna - Chhapra - Udhna Superfast Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09019		STATIONS		Train No.: 09020	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	23:55	UDHNA JN		12:15	---
06:15	---	CHHAPRA		---	07:50

DAYS OF RUN: 09019 Ex Udhna Jn on 25.10.20, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.11.20 on every Sunday and 09020 Ex Chhapra on 27.10.20, 3, 10, 17, 24.11.20, 01.12.20 on every Tuesday.

STOPPAGES: Nandurbar, Jalgaon, Bhusawal, Khandwa, Harda, Etarsi, Pipariya, Narsinghpur, Jabalpur, Katni, Maihar, Satna, Manikpur, Prayagraj Chheoki, Varanasi & Ballia stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09451/09452 Gandhidham - Bhagalpur - Gandhidham Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No.: 09451		STATIONS		Train No.: 09452	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	17:40	GANDHIDHAM		08:00	---
20:15	---	BHAGALPUR		---	06:30

DAYS OF RUN: 09451 Ex Gandhidham on 23, 30.10.20, 6, 13, 20, 27.11.20 on every Friday and 09452 Ex Bhagalpur on 26.10.20, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.11.20 on every Monday.

STOPPAGES: Bhachau, Samakhiali, Dhrangdhra, Ahmedabad, Nadiad, Dahod, Ratlam, Bhawani Mandi, Kota, Sawai Madhopur, Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bayana, Bharatpur, Achnera, Mathura Jn., Kasganj, Farrukhabad, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur, Narkatiaganj, Bettiah, Sagauli, Bapudam Motihari, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Monghyr & Sultanganj stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

05056/05055 Ramnagar - Agra Fort - Ramnagar Puja Special Express (Tri-Weekly)					
Train No.: 05056		STATIONS		Train No.: 05055	
ARR.	DEP.	↓	↑	ARR.	DEP.
---	17:50	RAMNAGAR		00:15	---
05:00	---	AGRA FORT		---	13:05

DAYS OF RUN: 05056 Ex Ramnagar from 20.10.20 to 29.11.20 on every Tuesday, Friday & Sunday and 05055 Ex Agra Fort from 21.10.20 to 30.11.20 on every Wednesday, Saturday & Monday.

STOPPAGES: Kashipur, Bazzpur, Lalkuan, Pantnagar, Kichha, Baheri, Izzatnagar, Bareilly City, Bareilly, Budaun, Ujhani, Soron, Kasganj, Sikandra Rao, Hathras City, Mathura Cant, Mathura Jn., Achhnera Jn. & Idgha Agra Jn. stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Security Helpline No. 182 Integrated Helpline No. 139

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108 more test positive in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 108 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district here on Saturday, increasing the total number of cases to 15,705. The day also saw one more death, increasing the toll to 252. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 97 patients and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 11,655, while the number of patients discharged from the hospitals remained at 2,773. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 14,428, leaving 1,025 active patients. The recovery rate has slightly declined to 91.86 per cent but mortality rate has improved to 1.59 per cent.

Meanwhile, moving forward on its commitment to provide good and accessible health facilities to the patients, Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH),

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is going to triple its oxygen storage capacity soon. The hospital currently has a storage capacity of 10 kilolitres of liquid medical oxygen. To increase this, another cylinder of capacity of 20 kilolitres is being installed, whose work is in final stages and it will be commissioned by the end of this month. Medical Superintendent (MS) Prof SK Mathur said that in the wake of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in oxygen demand at the hospital. At the same time, with the introduction of Mother and Child Care Wing in the coming time, the demand for oxygen will also increase, so it was very important to increase the oxygen storage capacity of the hospital.

"The biggest advantage of liquid medical oxygen is that it can be stored in large quantities in less space. Apart from

this, oxygen supply is also available in the hospital through conventional means. For this, large oxygen cylinders are in sufficient quantity in the hospital and along with their numbers, the frequency of filling them has also been increased. Small oxygen cylinders are also available in the hospital so that they can also be used when needed," he said, adding that apart from this, work is also going on to set up Oxygen Generation Plant in SSH in future as the hospital is ready to deal with any situation due to the steps taken to increase oxygen availability and storage. Earlier, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has informed that in the first report of the day, 69 positive patients were found out of 4,094 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 2,75,947 and the results of 1,456 are awaited. Out of them, 2,60,281 were nega-

tive, while 15,666 positive. The total number of samples collected was 2,91,808. A male aged 62 from Kadipur (Shivpur) succumbed to COVID-19 at SSH BHU. With the addition of 12 new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,224 including 265 red zones. Two green zones have been converted into red zones again. There are 1,959 green zones with 29 new ones. Under ongoing mass/ group antigen tests, all 489 tests at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, Kabirchaura, 462 at adjacent Government Women's Hospital and 91 at Swami Vivekanand Government Hospital, Bhelupur were found negative. However one out of 111 wards was tested positive at CHC Shivpur while four each out of 210 and 335 at LBS Hospital, Ramnagar and SSH BHU respectively were also detected positive.



Hindu devotees offer puja to Alopsankari Devi on the occasion of first day of the nine days Navratra at Alopevite temple in Prayagraj on Saturday

Pioneer

Devotees throng Shailputri Devi temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Hundreds of devotees thronged Shailputri Devi temple near Shakkur Talab behind Varanasi City railway station on the auspicious occasion of first day of Shardiya Navratra here on Saturday. Though the district administration and temple management tried their best to maintain COVID-19 guidelines, many could not follow the same by removing their masks when they reached the temple where social distancing could also not be maintained. In view to control the rush of devotees, outside temple areas were barricaded apart from making elaborate security arrangements.

Besides, rush was also seen throughout the day at famous Durga Mandir (Durga Kund)



Devotees thronging Shailputri temple on first day of Navratra in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

where the devotees lined up in long queues and waited for hours to offer prayers. Near the temple, huge quantities of coconut, chunnis and other puja articles were sold. Rush

was also seen at some other temples including Navdurga temple at Navapura. Not only this, hundreds of devotees through various vehicles also rushed to Vindhyachal in

Mirzapur district to offer prayer on this auspicious occasion at Maa Vindhyavasi Devi.

Apart from this, at many places, idols of Goddess Durga were installed where the puja committees observe nine days festival. The idols were installed as per the guidelines of district administration. All the confusions came to a halt when puja was started by installing Kalash at Townhall where the Mayor Mridula Jaiswal herself offered prayer. The idols were also installed under the auspices of Maa Durga Pujanotsav Samiti at Daranagar Maa Durga Puja Navyuvak Samiti at Navapura and others. After the auspicious month of Shraavan, religious mood was seen for the first time in this holy city as it virtually reached a standstill since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

World needs to follow path of Lord Ram: Indresh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the joint aegis of Vishal Bharat Sansthan (VBS) and Shri Indresh Ashram, a nine-day Hanuman Chalisa Havan Mahayagya began with the offering of ahuti by national executive member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Indresh Kumar at Lamahi here on the first day of Navratra on Saturday. This Ram Path is being organised to mobilise the people towards their faith in Lord Ram. The main priests of Mahayagya were Pt Anuj Pandey and Pt Pradeep Shastri who performed the religious rituals amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras. Indresh Kumar laid the foundation-stone and Bhoomi Pujan of the temple of Lord Ganesh and Lord Dattatreya. For popularising Shri Rampanth's sutra sentence 'Sabke Ram, Sabme Ram' among all without any distinc-



RSS leader Indresh Kumar offering ahuti at Mahayagya at Lamahi in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

tion of religion and caste, Indresh Kumar inaugurated 'Sri Ram Rajya Vahan' donated by a Haryana industrialist Sunil Goyal.

Speaking on the occasion, Indresh Kumar said that today the whole world needs to follow the path of Lord Ram. "The

whole world can be freed from discrimination with the help of devotion to Lord Ram. Global discrimination is a major challenge. Everyone has the right to devotion to Lord Ram. No deprived group can be separated from Lord Ram's devotion on any basis," he said,

adding that Kashi has always advocated reforms and Rampanth will become a symbol of the social reform movement of the world. The founder of Indresh Ashram and VBS president Dr Rajiv Srivastava said that the people from Dalit and Kinnar (eunuch) communities would be given training to become priests and would be given the responsibility of worshipping the temples of Shri Rampanth. Spiritual leader from Mumbai Arvind Nagar said that Rampanth will be the most liberal cult in the world. Chatto Baba presided over the Mahayagya. Ashok Sehgal, advocate of the Supreme Court, was nominated as the head of the international unit of the ashram. The function was also attended by Prof SP Singh, Dr Nilesh Dutt, Moin Khan, Abhijeet Singh, Anand Mishra, Archana Bharatvanshi, Najma Parveen, Nazneen Ansari, Dr Mridula Jaiswal and Ramesh Sharma.

132 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The reduction in the number of corona infected patients is a major relief for both Health department and district administration. In the last 24 hours only 132 new corona cases have been reported, while two patients died. 3493 samples were tested in which 3361 reports were negative. 183 corona patients overcame the disease. Now the number of corona patients has reached beyond 22,000 and the number of healthy people is more than 20,000.

Those who got infected included an Assistant Professor of Allahabad Central University. He is posted in the Economic department. A doctor from Preeti Hospital, Assistant Manager of Allahabad Bank Jasra, supervisor of Meja Power Plot, a clerk at Ishwar Sharan Degree College, Staff Nurse at Kaurihar Community Health Centre, Manager of Baroda of Gramin Bank Bahria, clerk of SBI Life Insurance Katra and others

including ANM have also been found infected.

Patients admitted to Swaroop Rani Nehru Covid Hospital are now being shifted to the new Covid Hospital. 35 patients admitted to Covid isolation ward have been shifted. Serious patients of corona admitted in ICU and HDU wards will also be shifted to the new hospital.

At present, about 80 corona patients are admitted in the hospital. Superintendent of Covid Hospital, Dr Mohit Jain said that the new 220 bed Covid Hospital has state-of-the-art resources available, it will provide a lot of convenience in the treatment of corona patients

Meanwhile, World Anxiety Day was observed on Friday at Swaroop Rani Nehru Covid Hospital. The doctors cut the cake and congratulated each other. The president of Prayagraj Anesthesia Society, Dr Prabhakar Rai said that during the corona period, anaesthetics are engaged in treating patients by becoming warriors.

They also became a corona infected but after recovering, they also went on their duty. The Head of Department, Dr Neelam Singh said that the doctors of anesthesia in the duty of COVID-19 stayed in Covid ward without caring for themselves. On this occasion, Dr SB Yadav, Dr Dharmendra Yadav, Dr Rajiv Gautam, BK Rao and others were present.

Meanwhile, research is being done in countries around the world for the anti-corona vaccine, and the expectation for its availability in the next few months has increased. If the vaccine is introduced in the district, first of all health workers will be put up who have served their patients putting their health at stake. For this, the government has asked for details of doctors, paramedical staff and other personnel from all the districts.

The third phase of the anti-corona vaccine is still being tested. It will be made available in all the states and districts in the coming days. The CMO has set the Tej

Bahdur Sapru Covid Hospital to keep it. District Immunisation Officer Dr. Amit Srivastava said that no information about vaccines has been received yet, but instructions have been received from the government level that the first anti-corona vaccine will be put to the health workers first, because they are directly in contact with the corona patients. They are at greater risk of becoming infected with corona.

CMO Dr GS Bajpai said that the list of staff working in all other hospitals including Medical College, Ayurveda Hospital, Unani Hospital, Railway Hospital, Army Hospital and ESI Hospital is being prepared. It consists of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lab technicians, ward-boys, sweepers and other health workers. After this, the staff of those departments will be included in it, who continue to work as frontline workers. The vaccine can be anytime so there is a need to stay in alert mode, added Dr Bajpai.

Train service likely to be increased

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Subsequent to restart of passenger service after the lock down, the number and frequency of passenger trains are being increased by Indian Railways based on demand. In view of the incoming festive season, the passenger train service is likely to be scaled up in near future.

With additional trains planned for festive season; total 288 special trains and 130 festival special trains i.e. total 418 special trains shall be catering to different stations over North Central Railway. Thus, festive season will also witness manifold increase in

footfall at Railway stations and trains thereby making enforcement of protocol to control the spread of corona virus in railway stations and train difficult. Keeping this in view an intensive publicity campaign has been launched to make the people aware about the rationale in following the guidelines issued by the railway administration and also to inform them regarding the prospect of facing penal action if the following guidelines are not followed.

Not wearing a mask or wearing a mask improperly.

Not maintaining social distancing. Coming to railway area or station or boarding a

train after having been declared Covid positive.

Coming to railway area or station or boarding a train after giving samples for testing of corona virus and awaiting result. Boarding a train after having been denied to undertake travel by the health check up team at the railway station

Spitting or wilful ejection of body fluid/waste in public area Activities which may create unclean or unhygienic conditions or affect public health and safety in railway stations and trains

Not adhering to any of the guidelines issued by Railway administration for prevention of spread of corona virus

Any other act or omission likely to aid in spread of corona virus.

Since these acts or omissions are likely to aid in the spread of corona virus, they will tantamount to interference with passenger amenities provided by the railway administration, wilful omission or neglect endangering or causing to be endangered the safety of any person or rash and negligent act or omission likely to endanger the safety of any person travelling or being upon any railway and may be punished with imprisonment and/or fine under section 145, 153 and 154 of Railway Act 1989.

Miscreants stab two brothers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Two brothers were stabbed and injured by some unidentified miscreants at Muridpur village in Chaubeypur police station and one of them succumbed to severe injuries during the treatment at a trauma centre in SSH, BHU. When this news came to light Saturday morning on Saturday, it led to a sensation in the village. The police sent a body for autopsy and started an investigation to probe the matter but failed in making any headway in this sensational incident.

According to information, Aman Chaubey (17) and Badal Chaubey (14), sons of Jaiprakash Chaubey, were at home with their grandfather Rajkishore Chaubey and others. Their father Jaiprakash Chaubey was in Azamgarh because of his job, while the mother Rekha was in Delhi owing to personal work on the fateful night.

It was said that the miscreants entered the house from its backside at any time on

Friday late night and went to the room in which both brothers were sleeping. They attacked Aman with knives. On hearing the crying, his younger brother Badal got up and raised an alarm. Sensing danger, the miscreants also attacked him and escaped from the house by crossing the boundary wall.

On Saturday early morning, when the grandfather went to room to wake both up for the morning walk, he was stunned to see them lying on the ground in a pool of blood and started crying. Both were in an unconscious state. On hearing his crying, other family members and neighbours reached there and they rushed the injured to a private nursing home in Maldaahia area. Finding their condition critical, the doctors referred both to the trauma centre in SSH, BHU. During the treatment, Aman succumbed to injuries while the condition of Badal was stated to be critical. The blood stains were also found on the wall of the room.

On getting information, senior police officers including

SSP Amit Pathak reached the village and took a stock of first hand information about the incident. The police also reached the trauma centre to take welfare about the injured. The police also used the help of sniffer dogs to reach the miscreants but in vain. On the basis of complaints of family members, the police lodged an FIR in this connection and started investigation into the matter but failed in making any headway till the news last came in.

FELICITATION FUNCTION: A felicitation function was organised at the office of Apka Swastha, health magazine of Indian Medical Association (IMA). In the function held at IMA building in Chetganj, here, the newly elected office-bearers of the magazine were felicitated.

Dr Ashok Rai was elected as national vice-president of magazine and Dr Manoj Kumar Srivastava as honorary secretary, while Dr Sudhir Singh and Dr Ritu Garg as co-editors of magazine. The election was conducted unani-

mously. A book 'Lockdown's Lakshman Rekha and Aap Ka Swasthya' written by Dr Manoj Kumar Srivastava and Dr Ashok Rai, was also released.

Dr Sanjay Rai, Dr PK Tiwari, Dr Manisha Singh Sengar and others extended congratulations to newly elected office-bearers of the magazine and hoped that the magazine will achieve its new height under the leadership of new office-bearers.

WEBINAR ON FOOD SCIENCE: An international webinar on 'Global Perspective on New Horizons in Food Science' was organised by the Department of Dairy Science and Food Technology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on the occasion of World Food Day here on Friday, in which more than 200 participants across the world took part. The day is celebrated since the founding of the Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN in 1945. This year the theme of the day is 'Grow, nourish, sustain. Together. Our actions are our future'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A sensational incident took place in Gajadharpur village under the Nawabganj police station on Friday night. Here a nine-year-old minor girl was brutally murdered by a man of the same village.

After crushing the face with the brick, the killer was carrying the body on the shoulder and throwing it into the canal, during this people saw him doing so and caught him red handed and informed the police about it. Police reached the spot, took the body of the girl in custody and sent it for postmortem. However, the cause of the incident was not clear until late in the night.

Lavkush, who lives in Gajadharpur village, works as a labourer. Neha was third among his five siblings. She was a Class II student in a primary school located in the village. The kin of the deceased informed the police that around 7 pm on Friday evening, Neha went to the hand pump located in front of the house to fetch water, but she did not return then.

When she did not return for a long time, the family members became distraught and launched a manhunt for

her search. On the other hand, villagers were shell-shocked to find Siyaram (50), who lived in the same village carrying the body of the child on his shoulder and went towards the canal. When some women of the village stopped him, he left the body and fled there.

On hearing the screams, other nearby villagers also gathered there. It was then revealed that the deceased child was Neha. Father Lavkush and other relatives also came on the information. On seeing the body of an innocent daughter, they were taken aback. On receiving information about the child being brutally killed, the Koraon police also reached there. Investigations revealed that he was murdered the murder after brutally trouncing her face with a brick.

After investigation, the police took the body into custody and sent it for post-mortem. Meanwhile, accused Siyaram was taken into custody from outside the village shortly after. He was grilled in the police station. But the police are yet to find out the real reason behind the man killing the minor.

Senior Superintendent of Police Sarvashresth Tripathi said that the accused Siyaram

has been taken into custody. He has confessed to have killed the minor but has not yet given the reason for the incident. He is under interrogation.

FIVE GIRL STUDENTS RELEASED FROM JAIL: Five girl students, including Allahabad Central University former president Richa Singh, were released from Naini Central Jail on Saturday. However, the release of the other three students could not be done yet. All of them were arrested and sent to jail late Thursday night due to protests from outside the Vice-Chancellor's office.

In fact, eight girl students living in the women's hostels of the varsity arrived from different districts (Azamgarh, Ballia, Varanasi and Mirzapur) on Thursday morning to study in the hostels. The students started their dharna outside the Vice-Chancellor's office when they did not get admission. In this situation, the Registrar Prof NK Shukla, Finance Officer Dr Sunil Kant Mishra, Chief Proctor Prof RK Upadhyay, DSW Prof KP Singh and Security Officer Ajay Pratap Singh were kept in the Vice-Chancellor's office, including the officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof RR Tiwari

got stuck in the V-C office for long. When the students remained adamant, the officiating Vice-Chancellor Prof. RR Tiwari conveyed the entire development to the Ministry via mail. It also clarified in the mail that students are pressuring them to open hostels. In such a situation, he also sought instructions from the Ministry in this case whether hostels should be opened or not. No response was received from the ministry on the next day on Friday. At this juncture, the AU administration could not take any decision. In the case, SP City Dinesh Singh arrested the former president Richa Singh, Sakshi Yadav, Ekta, Priyanka Gupta, Shivani Gaur, Sharad Shankar Mishra, Satyam Kushwaha and Aneesh Yadav late on Thursday night. A case was filed against all at the Colonelganj police station late night against all of them for holding hostage of the Vice-Chancellor on the basis of the written complaint made by the Chief Proctor RK Upadhyay. Thereafter, after midnight, all were sent to Naini Central jail after their medical check up. On Saturday, Richa and other girl students were released on bail. However, other students could not be released.

Covid cases, deaths have declined in city: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar's Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra said there was not only a decline in the coronavirus positive cases in the district but the COVID-19 death toll had also been pegged successfully and the credit for this went to the perfect coordination between the medical and district administration officials.

He said now the asymptomatic people were not tested as per the new guidelines and allowed to remain in home isolation for one week. He said the painstaking search for the suspected coronavirus positive cases and their contacts by the surveillance and contact tracing teams had finally borne fruit with the control of the spread of the deadly virus. The CMO said there was a substantial increase in antigen testing and home isolation had proved highly successful. He, however, said this was not the time to relax and become casual as some countries had witnessed a second wave of COVID-19 that was more severe than the first wave of infections.

He said every care would be taken to ensure that Kanpur Nagar was not caught in the problem once again. Dr Mishra said people who develop any COVID-19 symptom should strictly monitor their oxygen level and if it decreased, they should immediately be hospitalised. He said in view of the approaching festival, strict instructions had been issued to take to mask people who did not wear mask or maintain social distancing.

He said police force had been deployed to ensure that people moving on the roads wore masks and maintained social distancing. He said till date more than 24,300 COVID-19 patients had been cured successfully in the district. He said home isolation was highly successful and more than 17,000 affected people were cured, especially those who followed the Covid protocol strictly.

Take pride in speaking and working in Hindi: Mehrotra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Income Tax Commissioner Ajay Das Mehrotra, while addressing the Rajbhasha Karyavayam Samiti meeting, said according to the strategic strategy of a country, it can impress upon the world by projecting and promoting its language and culture and its lifestyle.



The Chief Income Tax Commissioner, Ajay Das Mehrotra addressing the Rajbhasha Karyavayam Samiti

He said there was certainly no doubt that India's ancient language was Hindi and it had successfully made an indelible impact on the entire world.

He said it was the duty of every individual of the country to promote Hindi in every way and also take pride in speaking and working in Hindi. He said the officials of the IT Department should not only work in Hindi but also take initiative to motivate and promote Hindi in the right earnest.

He said Bollywood had since decades been striving hard to promote the Hindi language and culture and this should motivate other departments of the country to simultaneously work in a similar manner. He said differences between two cultures were reflected perfectly through lan-

guages and the only way towards the establishment of a cultured and civilised society was when along with respecting the county, its tradition, culture, history, moral values, literature, dance, music, food, clothes and attires were equally respected and given their due status. He said Hindi was not just a source to express ones thoughts, it was our identity and our pride as well. Commissioner (Audit) Somesh Tiwari said Hindi was the language that we all had

grown up with and it gave us a sense of belonging. "Hindi is a language that binds us together and sets us apart from the crowd," he added. He said that Hindi was not merely a language or an expression, it was the identity and a matter for great pride. He said that Bollywood had tremendous worked for the promotion of chaste Hindi and it was not just a film industry but a cultural phenomenon that reflected India's vibrant and unique culture. Addressing the virtual

meeting, Deputy Director DK Maurya said Hindi was the second most spoken language in the world today. He said more than 75 percent of people in India spoke or understood Hindi. He said apart from India, there were many countries in the world where Hindi was spoken. He said Hindi was also one of the official languages of UNESCO. Prominent among those present included CP Pathak, Harish Chandra, MS Kushwaha, Pradip Kudesia, Manish Kumar and LBS Yadav.

Two held for enticing teenaged Hindu girl

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a case of love-jihad, the Naubasta police arrested a youth and his sister for their involvement in enticing a teenaged girl of another community.



Naubasta police arrest youth and his sister in love-jihad case.

Later, the kin of the accused staged a demonstration at the police station late Thursday night, demanding release of the youth and his sister.

According to reports, a labourer, Mohd Uvaish of Ajjitganj, who was working at an under-construction apartment in Naubasta, developed friendship with a neighbouring girl (13), student of class VII by posing as Babu. Both used to talk on mobile phone.

The kin of the girl alleged that on Thursday, when she went to the market with her elder sister, she was enticed by Uvaish. The police immediately arrested the youth and recovered the girl.

Naubasta Station House Officer Kunj Behari Mishra said during interrogation, the girl disclosed that the sister of

gion. The SHO said on the complaint of the girl's mother, an FIR was lodged against the youth for developing friendship with the girl with a false name to entice her. His sister Gazala was arrested for assisting him in enticing the girl, he said.

BSP candidate, 19 others booked for model code violation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An FIR has been lodged against the Bahujan Samaj Party candidate and 19 four-wheeler drivers for violation of the Model Code of Conduct and prohibitory orders Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code with the Ghatampur Kotwali police on Saturday.



The BSP candidate was found using four-wheelers in excess than the permission for taking out his vehicle procession on Friday. District Magistrate Alok Tewari and Election Commission observer Narendra Kumar Dugga were going for an inspection of the

polling booths in Bhitargaon area of Ghatampur Assembly constituency on Friday afternoon when while passing through Khadri village, they spotted a convoy of 19 four-wheelers, including the one of BSP candidate Kuldeep Sankhwar, against the permission for 10 vehicles. After several vehicles, including that of the candidate, passed with the procession, some of the remaining vehicles having BSP flags were intercepted by the district magistrate for quizzing. Meanwhile, some of the drivers turned their vehicles towards other routes and

escaped. On the directives of the district magistrate, Tehsildar Vineet Kumar with the help of lekhpals noted the registration number of 19 four-wheelers present in the procession. Later, on the complaint of Magistrate (FST-2) Shyam Singh, an FIR was lodged against BSP candidate Kuldeep Sankhwar and 19 vehicle drivers for violating the Model Code of Conduct and prohibitory orders. Station House Officer of Ghatampur Kotwali, Rajiv Singh, said on the basis of inquiry report, penal action would be initiated against the guilty.

VC directive to make Gorakhpur University environment-friendly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GORAKHPUR

Vice Chancellor of Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, Prof Rajesh Singh, has issued directions to strictly implement the ban on plastics and junk food on the university campus. He has also asked the university administration to ensure strict ban on pan, gutka and tobacco on the campus.

In an attempt to make the campus environment-friendly, Prof Singh said that waste material generated in the university would not go out of the campus. The vice chancellor has directed the university officials to start working on recycling and composting of the biodegradable and non-degradable wastes in different ways by making pits at different places on the campus. He said the fertiliser made in the university would also be marketed.

For this innovative effort, different places on the campus have been identified for construction of the pits. They will be made in front of the Botany Research Centre, behind the Home Science Department, next to Delegacy and in Hirapuri Colony. Instructions have been issued to arrange the machines required for the functioning of pits and vehicles to collect waste. Prof. Singh has also directed that trees and plants should not be harmed in any condition on the premises and if required, they be transferred to different place.

Dr Smriti Mall, Botany Department, of the Green Campus Initiative has been given the responsibility for implementation of the initiative.

The vice chancellor inspected the university campus and directed officials to make it environment-friendly.

76 more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 76 more coronavirus positive cases on Saturday evening.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 76 more people had tested positive for coronavirus infection between Friday evening and Saturday evening taking the tally of confirmed cases to 27,222 cases. He said two COVID-19 deaths in the city was reported till Saturday evening keeping the death toll to 711. The CMO said with 79 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals the cured figure in the city was 7092 and at present 1927 active cases were undergoing treatment. Dr Mishra said 5268 samples were sent for testing in the city.

Gangrape accused files paper

KANPUR (PNS): A wanted criminal involved in a gangrape case filed his nomination papers for the Ghatampur Assembly bypoll on Saturday even as the cops waited at the collectorate premises to arrest him. It may be recalled that a few days back, a woman had accused a lawyer, Rajendra Dhamaka of Girs (Ghatampur), of holding her hostage in his house and gang-raping her. An FIR was lodged against him with the Ghatampur Kotwali police and the cops had raided several places to arrest him. With Rashtriya Janutthan Party declaring Rajendra Dhamaka as its candidate for the Ghatampur Assembly seat, the police were deployed at the collectorate to arrest him when he came there to file his nomination. But on Saturday, Dhamaka succeeded in filing his nomination and giving cops the slip. Sources said that Rajendra had managed to get his nomination papers submitted through a close aide on Wednesday. After completing all the formalities, he secretly reached the collectorate along with the proposers on Saturday, a day before the last date for withdrawal of nominations, and filed his papers before the returning officer in the court of ACM-II.

5 held in double murder case

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Five persons were arrested by the police in connection with the incident in which a woman and a child were murdered in Ramjanaki Nagar under the Shahpur police station. Taking a serious view of the incident SSP Joginder Kumar had engaged SOG along with Shahpur police and SWAT team for arresting the accused. Based on CCTV footage surveillance incharge Dharendra Rai in collaboration with the team, after

obtaining detailed information about the presence of the accused had engaged the teams along with informers in different areas. On being tipped off by an informer that the accused, Vishal Singh, son of Virendra Singh, a resident of Ramjanaki Nagar, Basharatpur, and his accomplice, Golu Vishwakarma, son of Telia Vishwakarma, a resident of Telia Tola Mohanapur, were arrested from the garden behind Bansmandi. Police had also arrested the husband of the deceased woman, Virendra

Singh, son of Bhagwan Singh, a resident of Ramjanaki Nagar, Basharatpur, under Shahpur police station, Ranjana, wife of Vishal Singh, BN Singh alias Bhrigunath Singh, son of Bajinath Singh, a resident of Manas Bihar Colony under the Shahpur police station. The team which made the arrest comprised Shahpur SHO SK Singh, S-Is Shobhanath Yadav, Arif Ali and Madan Mohan Mishra besides SOG incharge Chandrabhan Singh. SWAT incharge Sadiq Parvez and others.

One arrested with cell phones, cash

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

The local GRP arrested a youth near platform number 1/2 and on frisking him recovered two mobile phones and ₹700 cash from his possession. The arrested youth was identi-

fied as S Chauhan, a resident of Chandauli, who sole goods of passengers at trains and stations. Meanwhile the trolley bag of a passenger, Manas Rai of Munger, which was left behind accidentally at the DDU station, was spotted by the GRP.

The personnel brought it along with them to the police station. The GRP handed over the trolley bag containing valuable items to the passenger concerned by contacting him. On getting it back his happiness knew no bounds and he thanked the GRP for it.

Gkp-Anand Vihar Terminus puja spl from Oct 20

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

For the convenience of the passengers in view of festivals the following puja special trains will be run between October 20 and December 2 by the railway administration. All the coaches in these trains will be of reserved category and passengers traveling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 norms, CPRO PK Singh said. The 02595 Gorakhpur-Anand Vihar Terminus triweekly puja special from October 20 to November 30 every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday leave Gorakhpur at 20.00 hrs, Basti at 21.03 hrs, Gonda at 22.30 hrs, on second Lucknow at 01.20 hrs, Kanpur Central at 02.45 hrs and reach Anand Vihar Terminus at 08.50 hrs. During the return journey 02596 Anand Vihar Terminus-Gorakhpur triweekly puja special will from October 21 to December 1 every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday leave Anand Vihar Terminus at 20.00 hrs, the second day Kanpur Central at 00.55 hrs, Lucknow at 02.30 hrs, Gonda at 05.10 hrs, Basti at 06.23 hrs and will reach Gorakhpur at 07.50 hrs. A total of 20 coaches, including two of generator-cum-luggage van and 18 of AC third will be attached in it.

Aunrihar at 09.57 hrs, Varanasi City at 10.47 hrs, Varanasi at 11.20 hrs, Chauhhandi at 11.40 hrs, Sewapuri at 11.48 hrs, Kapesethi at 11.57 hrs, Parsipur at 12.05 hrs, Bhadohi at 12.13 hrs, Mondhi at 12.25 hrs, Suriyawan at 12.33 hrs, Sarai Kansari at 12.44 hrs, Janghai at 13.20 hrs, Ugrasenpur at 13.40 hrs, Phulpur at 13.50 hrs, Sarai Chandi at 14.02 hrs, Phaphamau at 15.07 hrs, Prayag at 15.22 hrs, Prayagraj Jn at 16.10 hrs, Naini at 16.32 hrs, Jasra at 16.50 hrs, Shankargarh at 17.10 hrs, Dabhaura at 17.46 hrs, Manikpur at 18.22 hrs, Jaitwar at 19.10 hrs, Satna at 19.50 hrs, Maihar at 20.15 hrs, Katni at 21.10 hrs, Sihora Road at 21.54 hrs, Jabalpur at 22.45 hrs, Madan Mahal at 22.55 hrs, Shri Dharm at 23.35 hrs, on second day Narsinghpur at 00.30 hrs, Kareli at 00.45 hrs, Gadarwara at 01.40 hrs, Pipariya at 02.10 hrs, Sohagpur at 02.30 hrs, Itarsi at 04.30 hrs, Banapura at 04.56 hrs, Timarni at 05.17 hrs, Harda at 05.32 hrs, Khirkiya at 06.00 hrs, Barud at 06.17 hrs, Chhanera at 06.27 hrs, Surgaon Banjari at 06.47 hrs, Talvadia at 06.55 hrs, Khandwa at 08.15 hrs, Nefanagar at 08.50 hrs, Burhanpur at 09.10 hrs, Raver at 09.30 hrs, Bhusaval at 10.20 hrs, Jalgaon at 10.43 hrs, Pachora at 11.20 hrs, Chalisgaon at 11.55 hrs, Nandgaon at 12.22 hrs, Manmad at 12.45 hrs, Lasalgaon at 13:05 hrs, Nashik Road at 14.00 hrs, Deolali at 14.10 hrs, Igatpuri at 15.35 hrs, Kasara at 16.05 hrs, Kalyan at 17.10 hrs and Thane at 17.30 hrs and reach LTT at 18.05 hrs. The 05017 LTT-Gorakhpur puja special during the return journey from October 22 to December 2 will leave LTT at 06.05 hrs daily, Thane at 07.00 hrs, Kalyan at 07.28 hrs, Kasara at 08.30 hrs, Igatpuri at 09.10 hrs,

Devlali at 09.50 hrs, Nasik Road at 10.05 hrs, Lasalgaon at 10.42 hrs, Manmad at 11.05 hrs, Nandgaon at 11:25 hrs, Pachora at 12.25 hrs, Jalgaon at 13.00 hrs, Bhusaval at 13.45 hrs, Raver at 14.15 hrs, Burhanpur at 14.30 hrs, Nefanagar at 14.50 hrs, Khandwa at 16.35 hrs, Talvadia at 16.52 hrs, Soregaon Banjari at 17.03 hrs, Chhanera at 17.18 hrs, Barud at 17.28 hrs, Khirkiya at 17.43 hrs, Harda at 18.15 hrs, Timarni at 18.32 hrs, Banapura at 19.08 hrs, Itarsi at 21.15 hrs, Sohagpur at 22.10 hrs, Pipariya at 22.26 hrs, Gadarwara at 22.56 hrs, Kareli at 23.15 hrs, Narsinghpur at 23.30 hrs, the second day Shridham at 00.02 hrs, Madan Mahal at 00.42 hrs, Jabalpur at 01.05 hrs, Sihora Road at 01.40 hrs, Katni at 02.45 hrs, Maihar at 03.12 hrs, Satna at 03.55 hrs, Jaitwar at 04.20 hrs, Manikpur at 05.45 hrs, Dabhaura at 06.10 am, Shankargarh at 06.34 hrs, Jasra at 06.54 hrs, Naini at 07.41 hrs, Prayagraj at 08.45 hrs, Prayag at 08.58 hrs, Phaphamau at 09.17 hrs, Sarai Chandi at 09.31 hrs, Phulpur at 09.43 hrs, Ugrasenpur at 09.53 hrs, Janghai at 10.13 hrs, Sarai Kansari at 10.23 hrs, Suriyawan at 10.34 hrs, Mondhi at 10.43 hrs, Bhadohi at 10.58 hrs, Parsipur at 11.08 hrs, Kapesethi at 11.29 hrs, Sewapuri at 11.50 hrs, Varanasi at 13.10 hrs, Varanasi City at 13.22 hrs, Aunrihar at 14.02 hrs, Sadat at 14.25 hrs, Jakhania at 14.43 hrs, Dulhapur at 14.55 hrs, Mau at 15.25 hrs, Indara at 15.42 hrs, Belthara Road at 16.07 hrs, Lar Road at 16.20 hrs, Salempur at 16.37 hrs, Bhatni at 17.15 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 17.40 hrs, Chauri Chara at 18.10 hrs and reach Gorakhpur at 19:10 hrs. A total of 22 coaches will be attached.

Gorkahpur-Okha puja spl to run from Oct 22

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The following puja specials will be run between October 20 and December 2 by the railway administration for the convenience of the passengers in view of the festivals. All coaches in these trains will be reserved category and passengers traveling in it will have to follow the standards of Covid-19, CPRO PK Singh said. The 05045 Gorakhpur-Okha weekly puja special from October 22 to November 26 every Thursday leave Gorakhpur at 04.45 hrs, Gonda at 05.58 hrs, Gonda at 07.25 hrs, Barabanki at 09.02 hrs, Badshahnagar at 09.38 hrs, Aishbagh at 10.30 hrs, Kanpur Central at 12.15 hrs, Etawah at 14.04 hrs, Tundla at 15.30 hrs, Raja ki Mandi at 16:45 hrs, Agra Cantt at 17.10 hrs, Dholpur at 18.00 hrs, Morena at 18.25 hrs, Gwalior at 19.16 hrs, Jhansi at 21.30 hrs, second day Bina at 01.35 hrs, Mungaoli at 02.05 hrs, Ashoknagar at 02.49 hrs, Guna at 03.40 hrs, Rithuyayi at 04:15 hrs, Bivavra Rajgarh at 05.30 hrs, Shajapur at 07.20 hrs, Maksi at 08.22 hrs, Ujjain at 09.20 hrs, Nagda at 10.20 hrs, Ratlam at 11.20 hrs, Godhra at 14.12 hrs, Chhayapuri at 15:07 hrs, Anand at 16.26 hrs, Maninagar at 17.27 hrs, Ahmedabad Jn at 18.05 hrs, Viramgam at 19.24 hrs, Surendranagar at 20.26 hrs, Wankaner at 21.35 hrs, Rajkot at 22.40 hrs, the third day Hapa at 00.03 hrs, Jammgar at 00.22 hrs, Khambhalia at 01.28 hrs and Dwaraka at 02.38 hrs and reach Okha at 03:35 hrs. During the return journey 05046 Okha-Gorakhpur weekly puja special from October 25 to November 29 every Sunday will leave Okha at 21.00 hrs, Dwaraka at 21:28 hrs, Khambhalia at 23:02 hrs, on second day Jammgar at 00.04 hrs, Hapa at 00.32 hrs, Rajkot at 02.10 hrs, Wankaner at 03:01 hrs, Surendranagar at 04.08 hrs, Viramgam at 05.15 hrs, Ahmedabad at 06:50 hrs, Anand at 07.56 hrs, Chhayapuri at 08.45 hrs, Godhra at 10.05 hrs, Ratlam

at 13.00 hrs, Nagda at 13.45 hrs, Ujjain at 15.00 hrs, Maksi at 15.50 hrs, Shajapur at 16.15 hrs, Bivavra Rajgarh at 17.54 hrs, Rithuyayi at 19.30 hrs, Guna at 20.20 hrs, Ashoknagar at 21.10 hrs, Mungaoli at 22.02 hrs, third day from Bina at 00.20 hrs, Jhansi at 03:15 hrs, Gwalior at 04.30 hrs, Morena at 04.59 hrs, Dholpur at 05.40 hrs, Agra Cantt at 06.55 hrs, Raja ki Mandi at 07:09 hrs, Tundla at 08.30 hrs, Etawah at 09.32 hrs, Kanpur Central at 12.10 hrs, Aishbagh at 13.52 hrs, Badshahnagar at 14.30 hrs, Barabanki at 15.05 hrs, Gonda at 16.30 hrs and Basti at 17.50 hrs, arrive at Gorakhpur 19.00 hrs. A total of 21 coaches including two coaches of generator-cum-luggage van, three of general second class, nine of sleeper class, two of AC second and five of AC third class will be attached in it.

HOWRAH-KATHGODAM PUJA SPL: The 03019 Howrah-Kathgodam (via Bandel) puja special from October 20 to November 30 will daily leave Howrah at 21.45 hrs, Shriampur at 22.15 hrs, Bandel at 22.39 hrs, Barddhaman at 23.32 hrs, on second day from Durgapur at 00.29 hrs, from Raniganj at 00.52 hrs, from Asansol Main at 01.18 hrs, Chittaranjan at 01:42 hrs, Madhupur at 02:32 hrs, Jaidih at 02.59 hrs, Jhajha at 04.35 hrs, Jamui at 04.54 hrs, Kiul at 05.22 hrs, Luckeesarai at 05:28 hrs, Barhiya at 05:47 hrs, Dinkargram Simaria at 06.58 hrs, Barauni Jn at 07.30 hrs, Bachhwara at 07.51 hrs, Dalsingh Sarai at 08.04 hrs, Nazirganj at 08.14 hrs, Ujairpur at 08.23 hrs, Samastipur at 08.55 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 09.14 hrs, Dholi at 09.28 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 10.05 hrs, Goraal at 10.31 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 10.42 hrs, Hajipur at 11.12 hrs, Dighwara at 11.55 hrs, Chhapra at 13.15 hrs, Ekma at 13.46 hrs, Durandha at 14.09 hrs, Siwan at 14.50 hrs, Mairwa at 15.15 hrs, Bankata at 15.26 hrs, Bhatpar Rani at 15.38 hrs, Bhatni at 16.00 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 16:20 hrs, Chauri Chara at 16.58 hrs, Gorakhpur at 18.00 hrs, Khalilabad at 18.38 hrs, Basti at 19.08 hrs, Gonda at 20.50 hrs, Jarwal Road at 21.35 hrs, Barabanki at 13.00 hrs, on the third day Lucknow at 00.45 hrs, Hardoi at 02.17 hrs, Roza at 03.35 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 03:57 hrs, Bareilly at 05.10 hrs, Rampur at 06.35 hrs, Bilaspur Road at 06.59 hrs, Rudrapur City at 07.23 hrs, Lalkuan at 08.15 hrs, Haldwani at 08.57 hrs and reach Kathgodam at 09.30 hrs. During the return journey 03020 Kathgodam-Howrah (via Bandel) puja special will from October 22 to December 2 leave Kathgodam daily at 21.45 hrs, Haldwani at 22:08 hrs, Lalkuan at 22.45 hrs, Rudrapur City at 23.12 hrs, Bilaspur Road at 23.35 hrs, on second day Rampur at 00.45 hrs, Bareilly at 01.47 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 02.52 hrs, Roza at 03.12 hrs, Hardoi at 04.02 hrs, Lucknow at 06.15 hrs, Barabanki at 07.40 hrs, Jarwal road at 08.25 hrs, Basti at 10.45 hrs, Khalilabad at 11.18 hrs, Gorakhpur at 12.45 hrs, Chauri Chara at 13.12 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 13.36 hrs, Bhatni at 14.03 hrs, Bhatpar Rani at 14.15 hrs, Bankata at 14.27 hrs, Mairwa at 14.38 hrs, Siwan at 15.36 hrs, Duraundha at 15.51 hrs, Ekma at 16.13 hrs, Chhapra at 17.30 hrs, Dighwara at 18.05 hrs, Hajipur at 18.55 hrs, Bhagwanpur at 19.15 hrs, Goraal at 20.07 hrs, Muzaffarpur at 20.07 hrs, Dholi at 20.29 hrs, Khudiram Bose Pusa at 20.43 hrs, Samastipur at 21.40 hrs, Dalsingh Sarai at 22.00 hrs, Bachhwara at 22:19 hrs, Barauni Jn at 23.30 hrs, the third day Kiul at 01.15 hrs, Jhajha at 03.15 hrs, Jaidih at 04.01 hrs, Madhupur Jn at 05:15 hrs, Vidyasagar at 05.37 hrs, Jamtara at 05:56 hrs, Chittaranjan at 06:18 hrs, Rupunayanpur at 06.27 hrs, Sitampur to 07.50 hrs, Asansol Main at 08.40 hrs, Raniganj at 08.57 hrs, Andal at 09:10 hrs, Durgapur at 09.31 hrs, Panagarh at 09.44 hrs, Barddhaman at 10.36 hrs, Bundel at 11.49 hrs and reach Howrah at 12.40 hrs. A total of 17 coaches, including two of GSLR/D and seven of sleeper class will be attached in it.

Ambassador V Madhavan Nair celebrates 101st b'day this week

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

He could be the only surviving Ambassador in the country who scored a 'faultless and brilliant' 101 not out in his bout with life.



Ambassador VM Nair with wife Krishna and daughter Parvati

to watch these developments from close quarters.

He was in Alexandria as India's Charge d' Affaires when the then monarch King Farouk was overthrown in a coup d'etat by Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1952.

While he was serving as India's Ambassador to Morocco and Tunisia, Nair was to witness an unsuccessful bid by the Morocco Army to oust King Hassan II.

King of Nepal to the island nation offered him the rare chance to get a glimpse of it!

The Ambassador had sweet memories about Cambodia and Phnom Penh which he describes as a big town but scarcely a city.

To some of the questions put to him by The Pioneer, the Ambassador chose just one query for answering.

Nair is one not to rest with his laurels. He is still obsessed with the world of diplomacy and wants to be a diplomat in his next birth too.

Rebuilding temple: Security stepped up along Tripura-Mizoram border

Agartala/Aizaw: Tripura and Mizoram beefed up security and promulgated prohibitory orders, even as the Tripura authorities stopped reconstruction of a temple at the disputed Phuldungsei village along the inter-state border.

Mizoram Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuango on Saturday said that in view of the public resentment, the state gov-

ernment has taken precautionary measures along the inter-state borders with Tripura.

"Tripura Home Secretary is yet to respond to our Home Secretary Labiaksangi's letter over the inter-state border issue," Chuango said.

According to Mizoram's Mamit district officials, prohibitory orders under section 144 Cr Pc were clamped in Phuldungsei, Zampui and Zhumantlang villages in view of the proposed construction of a temple in the area by an indigenous organisation of Tripura.

North Tripura district Superintendent of Police Bhanupada Chakraborty said that troopers of the Tripura State Rifles and police were posted at Phuldungsei village on Friday.

"The deployment of security forces was done in view of the controversy over the rebuilding of a temple. However, there is no untoward incident yet or any kind of tension in our side," Chakraborty told IANS.

Mizoram Home Secretary Labiaksangi, in a letter to her Tripura counterpart Barun Kumar Sahu, said that the Survey of India has been requested to facilitate the joint spot verification with the Governments of Tripura and Mizoram to resolve the inter-state boundary issue at the earliest.

The October 9 letter said that the Mizoram government has received reports that Songrongma of Tripura, a local indigenous organisation,

is trying to construct a "Mandir" (temple) at the "disputed inter-state border village near Phuldungsei". The letter claimed that the area is under Mamit district.

Northern Tripura's Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Chandni Chandran in a letter to the Vice-President of Bru Songrongma Mtho Babujoy Reang directed to stop reconstruction of the temple.

Chandran in her letter said: "...the undersigned regrets to inform you that such permission cannot be granted. As you are already aware, such large congregations are prohibited in the country in the context of spread of Covid-19.

There is apprehension of a breakdown of law and order and communal clashes as there is a boundary dispute between Tripura and Mizoram in the area and the Phuldungsei village council has objected to the plan.

The letter said: "A path of discussion and reconciliation involving all the stakeholders is necessary on the issue and you are instructed to not undertake any such activities without the prior permission of the authority taking into account the sensitive nature of the issue involving different communities and strategic locations of Phuldungsei."

Phuldungsei has population of both the Hindu Reangs (locally called 'Bru') and Lusai (Mizo), who are Christian.

Kerala CM's ex-Secy admitted in hospital amid customs heat

KOCHI: M Sivsankar, former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was admitted to Thiruvananthapuram Medical College on Saturday following complaints of back pain.

Sivsankar had been admitted to a private hospital in the capital city late Friday evening while he was being taken to the Customs office for questioning in connection with the gold smuggling scam.

On Saturday morning, he was subjected to angioplasty and a team of cardiologists examine him to diagnose the possibilities of cardiac issues. When it was found that

Sivsankar was perfectly alright by the medical team, he started complaining of back pain and he was shifted to Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile a senior Congress law maker P T Thomas alleged on Saturday that the CPI(M) led Kerala Government was out to subvert the probe by the central agencies into the Gold Smuggling Scam and LIFE Mission bribery charges. The NIA is yet to furnish documents linking the accused to terrorism related activities though they were arrested in early July.

Customs officials said that

Sivsankar played a major role in smuggling \$1.9 million from the country to West Asia. Quoting from the submission made by Bank officials, the Customs officials said Sivsankaran had threatened them with dire consequences if they failed to obey his instructions. The Customs officials said the ill gotten money was transferred out of India with the connivance of a UAE Consulate staff.

The Customs officials were hoping to take Sivsankar into custody for questioning when the IAS official feigned sick and managed to derail the Customs.

BJP leader shot dead in Firozabad ahead of bypoll, 3 detained

Firozabad (UP): A local BJP leader was shot dead by bike-borne assailants in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh ahead of the November 3 Assembly by-poll in the area, following which three people were detained, police said on Saturday. D K Gupta, 46, was shot at in the Nagla Beech area Friday evening when he was returning home after closing his shop. He was rushed to a hospital where he died, they said.

The police said three people have been detained for questioning based on a complaint filed by Gupta's family.

The area falls under the Tundla assembly constituency, where a by-election is scheduled for November 3.

Among those detained is a person named Viresh Tomar with whom Gupta had some rivalry, they said, adding the duo even had an exchange of words on Facebook recently.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sachindra Patel said, "All the angles are being thoroughly examined. Police teams were formed and Viresh Tomar and two others were detained for questioning yesterday night itself," he added.

The family members staged a protest demanding justice. The slain BJP leader's sister, who sat on the dharna along with others, alleged that the Vaishya samaj was being targeted. They said they would not allow the cremation till justice was not done.

Later local MP Chandra Sen Jadaun and Firozabad Sadar seat MLA Manish Asija reached the spot and pacified them on the promise that those responsible for the attack would be punished and the family would be taken care of by the party.

The cremation was then carried out in police presence.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-द्वितीय, उद्योग पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड, निकट मंत्री आवास, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ ई-निविदा सूचना अनुमती/फर्म/ हेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निम्नलिखित निविदायें दो भागों में आमंत्रित की जाती हैं ई-निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में मूल्य/ दर वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग के खुलने की तिथि से एक दिन पूर्व 17:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जानी है।

Mithun's son Mahaakshay booked in rape, cheating case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Oshiwara police have registered a case against yesteryear actor Mithun Chakraborty's son and actor Mahaakshay alias Mimoh based on a complaint of rape and cheating filed by a 38-year-old woman.

In a complaint lodged against Mithun's son Mimoh under sections 376 (rape), 376 (2) (n) (repeated rape), 328 (causing hurt by means of poison), 417 (cheating), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention) of IPC, the complainant has named Mithun's ex-wife Yogita Bali as a co-accused in the case.

In her complaint, the 38-year-old woman stated that she was in a relationship with Mimoh from 2015 to 2018 and during this period he had

promised to marry her.

She alleged that during their relationship, she had gone to see Mimoh's flat at Adarsh Nagar in Andheri West, which he had purchased in 2015. "At that time, he offered me a spiked soft drink that had been spiked and forced her to have physical relations with him," he added. The complainant went on to allege that when she became pregnant, Mimoh asked her to abort the baby and gave her pills.

"The woman said she used to ask Mimoh about their marriage. But in January 2018, he told her that he cannot marry her, which led to an altercation between them. She said when she called him, his mother Yogita Bali threatened her," a senior police officer said, quoting the contents of the complaint lodged by the woman.

Jeep, bus collision leaves 9 dead

Pilibhit (UP): At least 9 people lost their lives and more than 30 were injured in a collision between a jeep and an Uttar Pradesh roadways bus in Pilibhit on Saturday, police said.

The accident occurred in Purnapur Police Station area of the district, a senior police official said.

Superintendent of Police, Pilibhit, Jaiprakash Yadav said, "In an early morning accident involving a jeep and a roadways bus, nine persons were killed, while over 30 persons were

injured." He added that the deceased include passengers of the bus as well as the jeep. "Seven of the passengers died on the spot and the injured are undergoing treatment at the district hospital. The ill-fated bus was coming from Lucknow to Pilibhit, and most of the passengers are from Pilibhit and nearby areas," he said.

Police officials said that the accident site is approximately 40 kilometres away from the district headquarters. Agencies

कार्यालय प्रधानाचार्य एवं अधीक्षक, राजकीय तकमील उतिब कालेज एवं चिकित्सालय, लखनऊ. ई-निविदा सूचना. महामहिम राज्यपाल महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश की ओर से अयोध्यास्थानीय द्वारा राजकीय तकमील उतिब कालेज एवं चिकित्सालय, लखनऊ एवं राजकीय यूनानी मेडिकल कालेज प्रयागराज में तकमील औषधि (शास्त्रीय औषधि) को वित्तीय हस्तपुरित्ता खण्ड-5 भाग-1 के परिशिष्ट-19 में निविदा से सम्बन्धित सामान्य सिद्धान्त में निहित निर्देश के अनुसार 40.00 लाख (₹40 करोड़) तक (₹40 करोड़) के अन्तर्गत दर अनुबन्ध के आधार पर आपूर्ति करने हेतु ऐसे अनुमती एवं GMP धारक फर्मों से ऑनलाइन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं जो केन्द्रीय जांच ब्यूरो अथवा किसी विभाग द्वारा बैन (प्रतिबन्धित) Black Listed (काली सूची) हेतु अर्हिक न हो।

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. E-TENDER NOTICE. Following E-Tenders are invited from the experienced/reputed contractors for the execution of following works:- For more details log on to website www.etender.up.nic.in. 1. E-Tender No. 42/AETC/2020-21. Installation of 63 MVA T/F at 132kV S/S Mahalishahar under ETD, Jaunpur. Earnest Money: Rs. 4530.00 (Rs. Four Thousand Five Hundred Thirty) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 535.00 (Rs. Five Hundred Thirty Five) only. 2. E-Tender No. 43/AETC/2020-21. Installation of 63 MVA T/F in place of existing 40 MVA T/F at 132kV S/S Jaunpur under ETD, Jaunpur. Earnest Money: Rs. 4010.00 (Rs. Four Thousand Ten) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 474.00 (Rs. Four Hundred Seventy Four) only. 3. E-Tender No. 44/AETC/2020-21. Providing Man Power for Operation and maintenance of 132kV (SAS) 2x20 MVA Sub station Rani Ki Sarai, under ETD, Azamgarh. Earnest Money: Rs. 21360.00 (Rs. Twenty One Thousand Three Hundred Sixty) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 2521.00 (Rs. Two Thousand Five Hundred Twenty One) only. 4. E-Tender No. 45/AETC/2020-21. Providing Man Power for Operation of 132/33kV (SAS) 2x20 MVA Sub station Mubarakpur, under ETD, Azamgarh. Earnest Money: Rs. 13440.00 (Rs. Thirteen Thousand Four Hundred Forty) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 1586.00 (Rs. One Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Six) only. 5. E-Tender No. 46/AETC/2020-21. Annual maintenance of 132kV Sub station Jaunpur, under ETD, Jaunpur. Earnest Money: Rs. 6900.00 (Rs. Sixty Six Thousand) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 779.00 (Rs. Seven Hundred Seventy Nine) only. Earnest money will be in the shape of RTGS/NIFTY duly pledged in favour of Superintending Engineer, Electy, Transmission Circle, UPTCL, Azamgarh. Tenders can upload their tender bids against E-tender No. 42 to 44 upto 17.00 hrs. of 18.11.2020 and same will be opened on dated 19.11.2020 at 13.00 & 14.00 Hrs. respectively. Intimation regarding opening of Tender Bid Part-II i.e. Price Bid will be given on above e-website in due course of time. Please visit website www.etender.up.nic.in for details/download and for any other corrections/ amendments/Modification/ time extension till the date of submission of tender. In case the tender opening date is holiday or the undersigned remain out of headquarters, the date of opening of the tender will stand extended to next working day. Undersigned has the right to reject/divide any tender without assigning any reason thereof. Conditional tenders shall not be accepted. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (TRANS.) AZAMGARH No. 1295 Date 16.10.2020 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION.

Woman lynched on suspicion of being thief in Bengal, 4 held

Canning (WB): A group of people beat a 41-year-old woman to death and injured her husband in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on suspicion that they were thieves, police said on Saturday.

Four persons were arrested in connection with the incident which happened at Chinepukur village under the jurisdiction of Kashipur police station on Friday.

According to the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's husband, Ali Hossein Molla, a total of 14 people beat him up with sticks and rods accusing him of stealing something from the house of one of them.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ. Tender Notice No.: EL-C-PRYJ-178-20-21. Dated: 15.10.2020. Dr. Chief Electrical Engineer / Const / N.C.Rly. / Prayagraj acting for and on behalf of the President India, invite the following E-Tenders (Two Packet System) on prescribed form for the following work up to 15.00 hrs. on 09.11.2020. The details of the tender are as under:-

610 more test positive in J&K

Srinagar: In all, 610 more persons tested coronavirus positive in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, taking its COVID-19 tally over 87,000 and active cases to 8,704.

The Information and Public Relations Department said 247 new cases were reported from Jammu division and 363 from Kashmir division.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY KANKE, RANCHI-834006 (JHARKHAND). NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR OUTSOURCING OF AGENCY FOR HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES AT CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY, RANCHI. Sealed tenders are invited from the eligible bidders for the outsourcing of agency for 'Housekeeping Services' at Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi. Tender documents can be purchased from the Establishment Section of Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi-834006 by submitting tender fee (Rs. 300/- Rupees Three Hundred) in the form of Demand Draft favoring Administrative Officer, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi-834006 or by submitting Cash Rs. 300/- (Rupees Three Hundred Only) in the Cash Section of Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi-834006 w.e.f. 19.10.2020 to 09.11.2020 between 10.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. The tender documents can also be downloaded from the website free of cost. The last date of submission of tender is 10.11.2020 upto 3.00 P.M. (Tuesday). The details of the tender is available in our website i.e. www.cipranchi.nic.in and also in CPP Portal website i.e. at the www.eprocure.gov.in. Sd/-, Director CIP, Ranchi, Jharkhand

चिकित्सा स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग जनपद - गाजीपुर। ई-निविदा सूचना. चिकित्सा स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, गाजीपुर में विभिन्न कार्य/आपूर्तियों/सेवाओं हेतु ई-टेंडर/आन-लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। 1. निविदा फॉर्म नियम व शर्तें वेबसाइट http://etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 13.10.2020 से 11.11.2020, समय सांय 5.00 बजे तक साइट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। 2. निविदायें दिनांक 11.11.2020 को वेबसाइट प्रातः 10.00 से सांय 5.00 तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। 3. निविदायें दिनांक 17.11.2020 को मुख्य चिकित्सा अधिकारी कार्यालय में अपराह्न 2.00 बजे निविदादाता एवं निविदा सामिति के समक्ष खोली जायेगी। निविदा की शर्तें घटाने / बढ़ाने एवं निविदा को निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी को होगा। मुख्य चिकित्सा अधिकारी गाजीपुर।

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ. E-TENDER NOTICE Prayagraj Division. E-Tender No. PRYJ-Sig-017-2020-21. Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer / Coordination / North Central Railway / Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on opening date of E-tender mentioned therein. The details of the Tender are as under:-

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY NOTIFICATION. Notice Inviting Applications E-Application-01/2020-(YTSK) (This Notification is not for employment) (Notification for applications for setting up of Yatri Ticket Suvidha Kendra (YTSK) for issued of reserved and un-reserved rail tickets for 44 Stations over North Eastern Railway (Lucknow Division) Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial) North Eastern Railway, Lucknow Division, Ashok Marg Lucknow on the behalf of the President of India, invite applications for establishment and operation of Yatri ticket suvidha Kendra (YTSK) through private participation at various places over jurisdiction of North Eastern Railway, Lucknow division: Gorakhpur area, Lucknow area, Khalilabad, Basti, Gonda, Bahraich, Balrampur, Barhni, Anandnagar, Nautanwa, Naugarh, Sitapur, Lakhimpur, Gola Gokannath, Bichhna, Bakshi ka talab, Burhwal, Bahhnan, Biswan, Colonganj, Campierganj, Hargoon, Nakahajungle, Jharkandi, Jarwal Road, Laxmipur, Maghar, Mihnipurwa, Mahmudabad awadh, Maskanwa, Nanpara, Nepalganj road, Payagpur, Pepeganj, Paliakalan, Risia, Sidhau, Shohratgarh, Sahjanwa, Tulsipur, Tikunia, Tahsilfatehpur, Uskabazar & Mallian. All authorized railway ticketing agents including Rail Travell Service Agents (RTSAs), Rail Travel Agents (RTAs) and jansadharan Ticket Booking Sewaks Agents (JTBS) on Indian Railway and also the ticketing agents appointed by Indian Railway catering and Tourism corporation (IRCTC), who worked/are currently working, for at least TWO (02) years are eligible to apply under the scheme of YTSK. The details of the scheme, along with application form, criteria eligibility, terms and conditions are placed in the official website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. Any Manual offer not entertained regarding E-Application-01/2020-(YTSK). SN. 1. Name of Work : Invite applications for establishment & operation of Yatri ticket suvidha Kendra (YTSK) through private participation at various places for 44 Stations over jurisdiction of North Eastern Railway, Lucknow division: Gorakhpur area, Lucknow area, Khalilabad, Basti, Gonda, Bahraich, Balrampur, Barhni, Anandnagar, Nautanwa, Naugarh, Sitapur, Lakhimpur, Gola Gokannath, Bichhna, Bakshi ka talab, Burhwal, Bahhnan, Biswan, Colonganj, Campierganj, Hargoon, Nakahajungle, Jharkandi, Jarwal Road, Laxmipur, Maghar, Mihnipurwa, Mahmudabad awadh, Maskanwa, Nanpara, Nepalganj road, Payagpur, Pepeganj, Paliakalan, Risia, Sidhau, Shohratgarh, Sahjanwa, Tulsipur, Tikunia, Tahsilfatehpur, Uskabazar & Mallian. 2. Application notice no: 01/2020-(YTSK). 3. Earnest Money Deposit: Rs. 00/- (Only to be deposited through online system - www.ireps.gov.in). 4. Cost of Tender Documents* (Non-Refundable) : Rs. 00/- (Only to be deposited through online system - www.ireps.gov.in). 5. Bid Submission: Dated 02.12.2020 upto 14.00 hrs., 6. Opening of Bids : Dated 02.12.2020 upto 15:00 hrs. 7. Period of contract: 03 years. 8. Eligibility Criteria : As per Application Documents. 9. Website address : www.ireps.gov.in. 10. Regarding Signature of applicant: Signature of applicant must be application documents and all other documents which is uploaded. Note- After opening of the proposal of E-application any document related to the application is not entertained. Divisional Railway Manager/Commercial, Lucknow CPRO/Vanija-36 About any passenger enquiry complain SMS on Mobile No. 9979484595 "Never travel on roof and foot boards"

ISIS CONSPIRACY

15 convicted for bid to set base in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Special NIA court in Delhi has convicted 15 accused persons in connection with the ISIS Conspiracy case.

The case pertains to criminal conspiracy hatched by the ISIS to establish its base in India by recruiting Muslim youth for ISIS, a proscribed terrorist organisation by using different social media platforms.

The case was registered at Police Station NIA, New Delhi on December 9, 2015 under section under provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

During investigation, searches were conducted by the NIA in various cities across the country and 19 accused persons were arrested.

It was revealed that the accused persons had formed an organisation styled as Junood-ul-Khilafa-Fil-Hind (a group seeking to establish Caliphate in India and pledging allegiance to ISIS/ISIL) to recruit Muslim youth to work for ISIS and commit acts of terrorism in India at the behest of one Yusuf-Al-Hindi alias Shafi Armar alias Anjan Bhai, who was based in Syria and was purportedly the media chief of ISIS.

"This case had a huge impact on the like-minded people who were likely to join ISIS. After the arrest of the ISIS terrorists, their activities were



After completion of investigation, the NIA had filed chargesheets against 16 accused persons in 2016-2017

minimised and their other associates were identified and questioned to unravel their further plans," the NIA said in a statement.

Several ISIS sympathisers, who had gone to join ISIS, were intercepted at various locations in the Middle East and were deported to India. The investigation conducted by the agency stopped the facilitation of the ISIS members in India as well as abroad, it said.

After completion of investigation, the NIA had filed charge-sheets against 16 accused persons in 2016-2017. On Friday, 15 accused were convicted and sentenced with

rigorous imprisonment (RI) and fine. The convicted terrorists include Nafees Khan, 10 years RI with fine of ₹1,03,000, Mudabbir Mushtaq Sheikh, 7 years RI and fine of ₹65,000, Abu Anas, 7 years RI and fine of ₹48,000, Mufti Abdus Sami, 7 years RI and fine of ₹50,000 and Azhar Khan, 6 years RI with a fine ₹58,000.

Others convicted include Amzad Khan, 6 years RI with ₹78,000 fine, Mohd. Shariff Moinudeen, 5 years RI with ₹38,000 fine, Asif Ali, 5 years RI and fine of ₹38,000, Mohd. Hussain, 5 years RI and fine of Rs 38,000 and Syed Mujahid, 5 years RI and fine ₹38,000.

The five others convicted are Najmul Huda, Mohd. Obedullah, Md. Aleem, Md. Afzal and Sohail Ahmad for five years and a fine each of ₹ 38,000.

This case was first of its kind in which an extensive terrorist conspiracy involving online radicalisation was hatched on cyber space.

Cong launches Smart Village Campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Saturday kick-started the Smart Village Campaign (SVC) with the virtual launch of a ₹2,775 crore campaign to power the complete rural transformation of the State in Punjab.

The smart village concept is to focus on core areas like renovation of ponds, street lights, parks, gymnasiums, community halls, drinking water supply, model anganwadi centers, smart schools and solid waste management, thus making villages self-sustaining by providing enabling environments.

While doing so, the focus shall be on 'inclusive' growth, i.e. to include households such as women-headed households, persons with disabilities, critically ill persons, families of martyrs, scheduled castes, etc, he said.

Party sources said that the same is to be replicated by all the Congress ruled States in way to showcase a better format of the Modi government's Adarsh Village concept which has not shown much enthusiasm.

Launching the campaign virtually from the national Capital, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said the scheme would lead to the creation of enormous rural infrastructure to raise the living standard and quality of life by capitalising on technological advances, as part of his government's Rural Transformation Strategy.

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, officials and Sarpanchs, joined in from



a total of 1,500 digital locations, paving the way for execution of 48,910 separate works across the state.

Singh assured of adequate allocation for the schemes to be undertaken under the second phase, which has been kick-started on the successful culmination of Phase I, which was launched in 2019 for the execution of 19,132 works at a cost of ₹835 crores.

Underlining the importance of villages to keep the nation's foundations strong, Rahul Gandhi said any weakening of the rural structure would impede the nation's progress. He stressed the need to strengthen these foundations for a better India, pointing out that protecting the villages and the people living there would help protect the cities and the country.

Congress' ruled other states of Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Puduchery is also studying the project initiated by their counterpart in Punjab. Rahul said the Congress

believed in working at the grassroots and Congress governments start programmes only after taking the views of the Panchayats into accounts. Since the schemes under SVC have been envisaged after deliberations at the ground level, they will deliver the desired results, he said.

Adequate funds in Punjab had already been transferred to all 13,264 Gram Panchayats in Punjab, the Chief Minister said, adding that his government intends to give assistance to those house-owners who are living in houses having temporary roofs. The intention is "Har ghar pakki chhat" i.e. to provide the rural poor with better housing facility.

In addition, 750 stadiums are being taken up for development in rural areas for 2020-21 in Punjab. For this purpose, a target of minimum of 5 stadiums per block has been allotted for this purpose. New designs of 4 acres, 2 acres and 1 acre playgrounds have been developed.

Govt issues SOPs for cultural functions, programmes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Culture Ministry has issued detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for 'culture functions and programmes' on preventive measures to control the spread of Covid-19, according to which, no cultural activities will be allowed inside containment zones.

According to an official from the Ministry, these SOPs have to be followed by the management of theatres and performance spaces, as well as the entertainment/creative agencies, artists and crew or any other persons who hire the auditoria or any other open/closed performance spaces, whether on payment or gratis.

"Comprehensive guidelines have been issued for artists and crew, management of green rooms, stage management, costume and makeup trials, sanitization of the venue including stage, open area seating etc" the official added.

Further, State/UT Govts may consider proposing additional measures as per their

field assessment. Guidelines issued by the Union Home and Health Ministries shall be strictly complied with during all activities and operations, said the official.

Social/ academic/ sports/ entertainment/ cultural/ religious/ political functions and other congregations have already been permitted with a ceiling of 100 persons, outside containment zones only.

In closed spaces, a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 persons.

Wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing, provision for thermal scanning and use of hand wash or sanitizer will be mandatory, while in open spaces, keeping the size of the space/ground in view, strict observance of social distancing, the mandatory wearing of face masks, provision for thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitizer has to be followed.

"State/UT Govts will issue detailed SOPs, to regulate such gatherings and strictly enforce the same," said the official.

VP Naidu calls for building equitable society on Int'l Day for Eradication of Poverty

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called for building a more equitable society on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

The theme for the Day this year addresses the challenge of achieving social and environmental justice for all,

according to the United Nations.

"Today, let us strive together for the uplift of the downtrodden & build a more equitable society. We need to address the root cause of poverty in all its dimensions, be it economic, social, legal or environmental," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted quoting Naidu.

SCBA condemns Andhra CM's allegation against sitting judge of apex court

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court lawyers' body has condemned Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's action of writing a letter to Chief Justice of India S A Bobde in which allegations have been levelled against a sitting judge of the top court.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) said in its resolution that "such action by constitutional functionaries is opposed to conventions causing serious inroads impacting the independence of the judiciary as enshrined in the Constitution of India".

The SCBA resolution was passed days after another lawyers' body, Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA), had condemned the "unwarranted" release of the letter written by Reddy saying "it tends to scandalise and breach the independence of judiciary".

The resolution of SCBA said

that its executive committee, at a meeting on October 16, strongly condemned the action of the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh in releasing his letter to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) making allegations against the sitting judge in the public domain.

A similar resolution was also passed earlier this week by the Delhi High Court Bar Association (DHCBBA) stating that the "ill-founded" letter "unfairly and without reason casts aspersions" on the conduct of the apex court judge and judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

The DHCBBA said the October 6 letter is an abject and uncalled for interference in the due administration of justice by the high court judges.

In an unprecedented move, the chief minister wrote the letter to the CJI, alleging that the Andhra Pradesh High Court was being used to "destabilise and topple my democratically elected Government.

GADKARI TO MAHA GOVT

Form State Water Grid to tackle flood crisis



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari has requested the Maharashtra Government to take initiative for preparation of detailed project report (DPR) for formation of the State Water Grid to overcome the recurring flood crisis in the State. This would help the Government to ensure the availability of the water in drought prone areas and save the resources to manage the flood crisis.

In a letter dated 14th October, 2020 to Chief Minister Udhav Thackeray, his cabinet colleagues and Sharad Pawar, MP, he has sought early decision of the State Government on this issue, followed by actions thereon. Gadkari has drawn the attention of the Chief Minister in this letter towards the serious issue of heavy loss of lives and property that occur in the state of Maharashtra every year due to floods. He has added that the floods create and trigger serious problems in different parts of the State and there is an urgent need to chalk out a plan to manage this natural disaster that becomes grave because of other man made factors.

The Union Minister has suggested to the Government of Maharashtra to take up the ambitious project of formation of the State Water Grid on the lines of the National Power Grid and Highway Grid. The idea is to divert the flood water from one river basin to the other river basin in the drought prone area of the state. The areas with shortage of the water, scanty rainfall can get relief by the Grid. This would help to increase the area under irrigation, while bringing significant reduction in the numbers of suicides of farmers. The letter goes on to say that various studies have shown that the incidents of the farmers' suicide have come down in the areas where the irrigation cover is more than 55%.

The Minister mentioned that this would also help to increase agriculture produce

and strengthen the rural and national economy. The diverted flood waters would relieve the stress on the local resources. Transportation of goods and passengers through rivers (Water Transport) can be commenced in near future. Fishing and other businesses can flourish alongside and major employment can be generated if such project is taken up as an essential infrastructure.

Gadkari has informed that his Ministry is doing water conservation by using the soil/murum from water bodies, drains and rivers for construction of Highways.

This synchronisation of N.H. construction and water conservation results not only in increasing water storage capacity but saving environment. Initially this activity was done on large scale in Buldhana district as pilot project and hence named as 'Buldhana pattern'. With this activity in Maharashtra, around 225 lakh cubic meter of material from water bodies, drains and rivers has been used in Highway

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works with a result of increase of 22500 TCM (Thousand Cubic Meter) of water storage capacity at 'No cost to State Government'. This has charged ground water table. Due to deepening and training of river, drains, etc, the floods have reduced, which otherwise spreads in nearby field due to reduced discharge capacity of rivers and drains. This convergence has been appreciated and accepted by NITI Aayog, which is in the process of forming policy based on this work done.

The Minister further informed that the Tamaswada Pattern adopted in Wardha and Nagpur districts is another effort towards Rain Water Harvesting, Conservation and Ground Water Recharge.

These works are done on the basis of Scientific and Complete Development of Mini-Micro Watersheds based on study of HydroGeology, Topography and Civil Engineering. Work is done essentially in the direction from Ridge to Valley. Tamaswada Pattern is most helpful to create augmented Surface rain and Ground Water storages. It creates Flood free as well as Drought free situation in treated Watershed. These type of works are resulting in Preservation and Conservation of Traditional natural water bodies.

Peace and tranquillity along LAC 'deeply disturbed': Jaishankar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is "deeply disturbed" and this is obviously impacting the overall relationship between India and China.

Jaishankar made these comments against the backdrop of the over five-month-long border standoff between India and China in eastern Ladakh where each side has

deployed over 50,000 troops. The Sino-India boundary question a very "complicated" and difficult issue, he said at a webinar on his book "The India Way", giving a historical perspective to development of the relationship between the two neighbouring countries in the last three decades.

The external affairs minister said the relationship between India and China, which was "very difficult", was normalised since late 1980s through a plethora of



initiatives like trade, travel, tourism, and societal activities on the premise of peace and

tranquillity along the border.

"It is not our position that we should solve the boundary question. We understand that it is a very complicated and difficult issue. There have been many nego-

tiations at different levels... That is a very high bar for a relationship," Jaishankar said.

"I am talking about a much more basic bar which is that there must be peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the border areas and that has been the case since the late 1980s," he added.

"Now, if peace and tranquillity is deeply disturbed, then obviously there will be an impact on the relationship and that is what we are see-

ing," he said referring to the border situation in eastern Ladakh.

Jaishankar said both China and India are rising and assuming "bigger" role in the world, but the "big question" is how the two countries find an "equilibrium".

"That is the basic case I addressed in my book," the minister said, adding he completed the manuscript of the book in April, before the border row erupted in eastern Ladakh.

BJP hits out at PC over his call for restoration of Article 370



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday came down heavily on the Congress for its unequivocal support for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the past one year. But Congress is echoing the language of the soft separatists," said the BJP leader.

Alleging that Congress was endorsing the agenda of soft separatists, he regretted that the opposition party repeatedly went against the mood of the people.

The Union Minister accused Sonia headed BJP of praising China and Pakistan. Maintaining that Article 370 was always temporary in nature, Javadekar listed the various benefits secured by the people of J&K and Ladakh in the last one year.

"Congress is continuously adopting positions that go against the sentiments of the people of this country. Rahul Gandhi also praises Pakistan. They like to praise Pakistan and China on any issue.

The Constitution also stated that Article 370 is for a limited period, after which it will go. Separatism has ended and all the vulnerable sections of the society got the benefit of reservation.

Many welfare laws were implemented in Kashmir," said the Union Minister.

Union Fisheries Minister Giriraj Singh also expressed 'outrage' at Congress' stance and questioned whether the party wanted to sever J&K from India.

All original Gupkar Declaration signatories barring for J&K Congress chief GA Mir came together for the first time on Thursday since the abrogation of Article 370. The Gupkar Declaration was a resolution passed by National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Congress, CPI(M), JKPC and ANC on August 4, 2019 (a day before the abrogation of article 370), pledging to protect the "identity, autonomy and special status" of J&K.

After the meeting, NC president Farooq Abdullah announced the formation of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' and called for the restoration of J&K's special status.

Ladakh and the rest of the country welcomed the move to abrogate Article 370. They have seen the kind of progress in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the past one year. But Congress is echoing the language of the soft separatists," said the BJP leader.

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2% fee on credit card use to top up Paytm wallets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paytm users will have to pay a 2 per cent fee on the amount added to their e-wallet using a credit card.

Until now, users had to pay 2 per cent fee if they loaded more than ₹10,000 in their e-wallets via credit card in a month.

A message saying "Nominal charge of 2 per cent is applicable on adding money using credit card. Nominal fee is applicable since we pay high charges to your bank/payment network when you add money using a credit card. Please use UPI or debit card to add money for free" is displayed when customers attempt to add money to their Paytm wallet via a credit card.

Paytm is also providing an offer, wherein users will get 2 per cent cashback up to ₹500 on adding minimum Rs 200 using credit card, as per the message.

When contacted, a Paytm Payments Bank spokesperson said customers have the flexi-



bility to add money to their Paytm wallet from any of their preferred funding source, including UPI, net banking and cards.

"The banks and credit card companies charge a fee for loading money into the Paytm wallet from any of these sources.

"The 2 per cent charge is passed on to customers, who use credit cards for adding funds to their wallet. For all other sources, we will continue to absorb the cost of loading money," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson further said the company has temporarily waived the 5 per cent

charge that is levied on money transfer from wallet to bank accounts as a promotional offer for the festive season.

"The amount added in the wallet can be used to transfer money to another wallet or bank account, to make payments to online and offline merchants via QR codes, to process bill payments, do recharges and multiple other forms of transactions. All such transactions will also continue to be free of cost for our customers," the spokesperson said.

In 2017, Paytm had introduced a similar fee on amounts added to wallet via credit cards, but had rolled back the decision after pressure from users.

IndiGo introduces service fee for check-in counter usage

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to encourage web check-in, airline major IndiGo has introduced a service fee for usage of check-in counters at the airports.

Accordingly, the fee has come into effect from Saturday.

"We encourage all passengers to web check-in as per the government directive, using our website or mobile app. The check-in fee at the airport counters is applicable on all bookings made, starting from October 17," the airline said in a statement.

The airline added that it is committed to take all precautionary measures for a contactless and hassle-free travel experience for its passengers.



₹1.08 lakh crore worth loans sanctioned under discom liquidity package

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



₹30,000 crore to discoms under the scheme," REC said in a statement.

The loans under the package will be co-funded by PFC and REC in equal proportion. The loans would be sanctioned in two equal tranches.

REC also said it has sanctioned ₹2,790 crore to Jammu Kashmir Power Corporation Ltd (JKPCL) under the scheme.

The agreement was signed between the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, JKPCL, REC and PFC.

As much as ₹1.08 lakh crore worth of loans under the liquidity package for stressed power distribution utilities have been sanctioned so far, REC said on Saturday.

In May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced ₹90,000 crore liquidity infusion into cash-strapped discoms, facing demand slump due to the lockdown to contain COVID-19.

This package was later increased to ₹1.2 lakh crore by the Ministry of Power. "Till date, REC and PFC (Power Finance Corporation) have sanctioned ₹1.08 lakh crore and released nearly

Riding on 5G, Apple may see 15% iPhone growth next fiscal year

IANs ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Apple is expected to witness 15 per cent iPhone growth next fiscal year and the primary wave of Apple 5G telephones has placed the ball in carriers and builders court, research-driven US venture capital firm Loup Ventures has forecast.

"While we believe it will take carriers years to build a compelling 5G infrastructure, Apple is ready today with a lineup of phones that should enjoy a three-year upgrade cycle, compared to a typical one-year duration," wrote Gene Munster and David Stokman.

"Additionally, the company continues to advance augmented reality. We see the combination of AR and a 5G iPhone as the basis for why Apple is the best way to invest in 5G."

According to a report in DigiTimes, Apple iPhone 12 series shipments are expected to reach as many as 80 million units by the end of the year owing to more affordable pricing strategy.

Shipments of the new iPhone lineup, including the iPhone 12, iPhone 12 mini, iPhone 12 Pro and iPhone 12 Pro Max, will at least top 70 million units by the end 2020, with the possibility of hitting 80 million barring a further escalation of the US-China trade conflicts, it reported.

According to Munster and Stokman from Loup Ventures, "We imagine the variety of iPhones which are three years or older has elevated by 90 million items over the previous year, which supplies a tailwind for iPhone demand within the coming year."

Low base, attractive interest rates lift Sept domestic PV sales

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Low base, along with more sustainable pent-up demand, boosted domestic passenger vehicles' sales in September on a year-on-year basis.

According to industry data released on Friday, a total of 2,72,027 passenger vehicles were sold in the domestic market, representing a rise of 26.45 per cent, against the 2,15,124 units off-take during the like period of 2019.

The data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) also showed a sequential growth in sales during September.

In August, the domestic passenger vehicles' sales had risen by 14.16 per cent to 2,15,916 units from 1,89,129

units sold during the corresponding month of the previous year.

Besides, the data showed that car sales in the country rose by 28.92 per cent to 163,981 units in September, compared with 127,194 units during the year-ago period.

As per SIAM, the data does not include sales figures from some key players such as Tata Motors.

In terms of utility vehicles, sales grew by 24.50 per cent to 96,633, while vans' off-take went up by 10.64 per cent to 11,413 units against the same month a year ago.

However, three-wheeler sales were 18,640 units in September 2020 compared to 66,362 units on a y-o-y basis, marking a decrease by (-) 71.91 per cent.

India is gradually moving towards an economy based on clean energy

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

As part of reforms oriented towards providing cleaner auto fuels in the country, government will soon launch a pilot on hydrogen CNG or HCNG soon, a senior government official said on Saturday.

Petroleum secretary Tarun Kapoor said that a pilot project on HCNG is being undertaken in Delhi soon that will improve efficiency and reduce emissions drastically," the secretary said.

Speaking the Inaugural Session of 'Alternative Fuel Technology for Vehicles: A Cure-all for Sustainable Mobility' organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in association with CSIDC, Government of Chhattisgarh, Kapoor said.

India is becoming a leader in CNG, there has been a significant transition with the need to move towards cleaner fuels like CNG, ethanol, biodiesel, and electric vehicles.

He said that we need to ensure that CNG is available and affordable ensuring that vehicles are modelled to incorporate CNG smoothly.

Discussing city gas distribution, he shared that there is significant work happening especially in the infrastructure so that CNG is seamlessly available. "We will be doing a pilot project in Delhi on HCNG that will improve efficiency and reduce emissions drastically," the secretary said.

Talking about ethanol, he mentioned that by the next year, there would be a jump in the ethanol production and India is planning to introduce E12 and E15 shortly.

Gradually, we will have blended petrol all over the country and moving to a higher percentage. We have to make pure ethanol available that is happening in several countries and, some countries also have multi-fuel vehicles like Brazil. There is a pilot project

which will be implemented for pure ethanol that will take place in Pune shortly, he said.

Kapoor deliberated about the need to make biodiesel affordable and freely available. On the sector of compressed biogas, he discussed that it's an area of focus as it's important for the agriculture sector and, there is a huge source available in the country. He also discussed the projects undertaken by the government for setting up biogas plants that will help in producing a large quantity of biogas that will also flow in the city gas distribution network making it available along with CNG.

On Electric Vehicles, the oil marketing companies are available to facilitate and, we are looking forward to better swapping coming to the petrol station, retail outlets, putting up electric charging. We look forward to work closely with the industry so that we can go forward, said Kapoor.

HDFC Bank Q2 consolidated profit rises 16pc to ₹7,703 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 16 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹7,703 crore for the second quarter ended on September 30, 2020.

The private sector lender had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹6,638 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Total consolidated income during the quarter under review rose to ₹38,438.47 crore from ₹36,130.96 crore in July-September 2019, the bank said in a release.

Consolidated advances grew by 14.9 per cent to ₹10.89 lakh crore at the end of September 2020 from ₹9.47 lakh crore a year earlier, HDFC Bank said.

On standalone basis, HDFC Bank said after providing ₹2,597.2 crore for taxation, it earned a net profit of ₹7,513.1 crore, an increase of 18.4 per cent over the quarter ended September 30, 2019.

Total income (standalone) grew to ₹36,069.42 crore in the second quarter of FY2021 from ₹33,755 crore in the year ago quarter.

"While the previous quarter largely bore the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the softness continued into the current quarter leading to lower retail loan origination, use of debit and credit cards by customers, efficiency in collection efforts and waivers of certain fees.

As a result, fes/other income were lower by approximately ₹800 crore.

Festivities boost diesel sales in Oct, demand up over last year

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

First time since lockdown, diesel sale in the country has crossed over the pre-covid level with the country's most widely consumed fuel witnessing a nine per cent year-on-year growth in the first 15 days of October. The surge in demand after months of subdued sales is the direct result of an increase in the transport activities ahead of the festival season as consumers move out to make those necessary purchases. According to official sources, during the first fortnight of October, the sale of diesel increased by nine per cent (YoY) to reach a level of 2.65 million tonne. The growth is even more significant at close to 25 per cent in relation to the previous month of September.

BARC says its efforts focused on individuals

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Hit by the fake TRP scam, TV Ratings computing body Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) on Saturday said it believes channels are committed to maintaining a clean ecosystem and its efforts presently are focused on "individuals" responsible for infiltrating homes to influence the data. The body said it is also cooperating with the probe by Mumbai Police, which has so far arrested six people for allegedly influencing particular channels' ratings by inducing the homes which formed the sample size which was being monitored to determine the ratings.

"Our efforts on combating infiltration are focused on the individual(s) responsible for these activities and we firmly believe that television channels are committed to maintaining a clean and transparent ecosystem," it said in a statement. The city police had claimed that three channels, including Arnab Goswami-headed Republic Media Network, were allegedly influencing the TRP numbers. The Republic has denied the allegations.

According to the city police, brands take advertising calls based on TRPs and over Rs 32,000 crore of ad inventory is sold every year, which makes it think that it is a multi-crore scam. The arrested include former employees of an agency engaged by BARC.

"BARC is providing the necessary assistance to the ongoing investigation by law enforcement agency and this should be seen in the light of larger stability of the panel and in the interests of self-regulation, rather than in isolated cases of particular channels which leads to a distortion of facts," the BARC statement said.

Earlier, Singh also inaugurated Divyang Park at Indirapuram and Nandi Gaushala at Rajnagar Extension. A cost of ₹10.89 crore has been incurred on these three projects.

On this occasion, General VK Singh said in a function organised at RDC that we want to make Ghaziabad a world class city. GDA is playing an important role in realizing this dream.

Will make Ghaziabad world class city: Min



PNS ■ GHAZIABAD

On Saturday evening, Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways General VK Singh inaugurated the free vehicle zone food bazar in a ceremony at the Rajnagar District Center (RDC) developed by the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) on the lines of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

JDA to develop Agro-warehousing scheme near Amber

Jaipur: In order to fillip the economic growth in the city, Jaipur Development Commissioner (JDC) Gaurav Goyal announced that in the meeting of PWC, for the first time JDA has decided to develop Agro-Warehousing Scheme near Amber tehsil in Jaipur.

JDC said that in Zone 12 falling in village Akeda and Maheshpura in Amber tehsil, one lakh nineteen thousand square meters of land has been earmarked for the project.

In it, 33000 square meters has been reserved to develop 18 big warehouse plots.

Balance of the land will have facilities like Hotels, Restaurants, Petrol Pumps,

Banks, Electric Sub-station, Commercial Shops and establishments, weighbridges, and automobile shops.

Speaking about its locational advantage JDC informed, that the scheme is situated on Jaipur-Sikar National Highway Number 11 in the west direction on a 30 meters wide road that is just 2 kms before Tatiawas Toll Plaza. From the highway, it is only 10 Kms away, 30 Kms from Jaipur Airport, 20 kms from Jaipur Railway Station and 10 Kms from Vishwakarma Industrial Area.

JDA's famous housing project Anand Lok and Swapna Lok are very near to the upcoming project.

Genex to provide FD of ₹11,000 to girl child to promote gender equality

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Genex Child Development Programme, that works on gender equality, on Saturday said it will provide a fixed deposit of ₹11,000 to every girl child born in India, whose parents register for the initiative.

Under the Genex Girl Child Development Programme, every girl born in the country, whose parents register for the same, will be given ₹11,000 fixed deposit at the time of birth. This is irrespective of the religion, social status or geographical location of the parents, Genex said in a release.

This programme is open to everyone in the entire coun-

try and it is free to avail the benefits of this initiative, it said, adding parents can register on www.Genexchild.com.

This initiative is designed to empower the girl child with her own money when she turns 18 and she would then have all the right to use the same for her education, business or marriage wherever she deems fit. This is just a step to make her feel independent at the age of 18. The aim is to make girls economically strong and narrow the age gap, Genex added.

Genex founder Pankaj Gupta said, "We feel privileged to be announcing the initiative along with our 1,50,000 network partners. It is just a small step towards making the next generation an independent.

Jet Airways' CoC approves insolvency resolution plan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Jet Airways' committee of creditors (CoC) on Saturday approved the resolution plan submitted by the consortium of UK's Kalrock Capital and UAE-based entrepreneur Murari Lal Jalan under the insolvency resolution process. The plan was approved after the conclusion of the e-voting on the proposal, Jet Airways RP (resolution professional) Ashish Chhawchharia said in a BSE filing.

"The resolution submitted by Murali Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch has been duly approved by the CoC under Section 30(4) of the Code as the successful resolution plan," said the filing.

The grounded airline had received bids from two consortiums, one comprising UK-based

Kalrock Capital founded by Florian Fritsch and UAE-based entrepreneur Murari Lal Jalan.

The other bid was submitted by the consortium consisting of Haryana-based Flight Simulation Technique Centre, Big Charter of Mumbai and Abu Dhabi's Imperial Capital Investments LLC.

The RP is in the process of filing an application in accordance with section 30(6) of the Code for approval of the said resolution plan by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and intimation of the same shall be given to the members as required, the statement to the BSE stated.

The defunct airlines on Friday had extended the deadline for voting on the resolution plans as only half the lenders had

submitted their votes and the remaining had sought time till Saturday evening to submit their votes.

The carrier was admitted to the NCLT in June 2019, and the CoC has met 16 times since then.

The airline, which ceased all operations in April 2019, owes more than Rs 8,000 crore to banks, with public sector lenders having significant exposure.

The NCLT had on June 20, 2019, admitted the insolvency petition filed by the lenders' consortium led by State Bank of India against Jet Airways.

The insolvency process for Jet Airways was supposed to be completed by June this year and the deadline was first extended to August 21, due to lockdown curbs, and then extended for an unspecified time by the RP.

Economy recovery may be fragile: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After six months of severe stress triggered by the toughest lockdown so far, some high-frequency indicators point towards economic recovery but there are signs that this revival is fragile, Brickwork Ratings said.

It estimated that the economy is likely to contract by 13.5 per cent in the second quarter (July-September), and the contraction in FY21 (April 2020 to March 2021) is likely to be around 9.5 per cent unless the government takes immediate initiative to revive the economy. "After six months of severe stress triggered by the severest lockdown so far, there finally is some good news on the economy. Some high-frequency indicators point towards economic recovery," it said in a report.

The manufacturing PMI

has shown a sharp increase from 52 in August to 56.8 in September, the highest in eight years.

GST collections at Rs 95,480 crore in September have recovered to increase by 3.8 per cent from last year and were higher than August collections by 10 per cent. Passenger vehicle sale has increased by 31 per cent while railway freight traffic showed a 15 per cent rise.

After a gap of six months, merchandise exports registered 5.3 per cent growth, driven by outbound shipments of engineering goods, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals and readymade garments. There was an increase in power demand and generation as well.

"However, there are indications that this recovery is fragile. Capital expenditure on new projects declined by 81 per cent in the second quarter over the corresponding period

last year, showing a continuous declining trend in investments," the rating agency said.

Also, core sector growth was (-)8.5 per cent in August.

The credit-deposit ratio declined in the three fortnights ended September 11, 2020, and non-gold, non-oil imports continue to decline.

In the first quarter, the GDP contraction was 23.9 per cent, and except agriculture and allied sectors, all other sectors suffered negative growth rates. The sharpest contraction was in the construction sector (-50.3 per cent), followed by trade, hotels, transport, storage and communication (-47 per cent) and manufacturing (-39.3 per cent).

"Even as the economy is seen to be on the mend, contractions in these sectors are likely to continue, although at a slower pace," it said. Stating that 'crisis is the

mother of reforms', Brickwork Ratings said the government has rushed in some important reforms to remove constraints in the farm sector and impart greater flexibility to the labour market. "The merging of 24 central labour laws into four codes is an important reform to impart greater flexibility to the labour market and ending inspector raj," it said.

It said these structural reforms are important to improve the economic environment, ease of doing business and ending inspector raj.

"However, the immediate task the government has to address is the removal of supply chain disruptions and augment aggregate demand to lift the economy out of the morass," it said.

"This requires the government to initiate measures to increase public spending, undertake banking reforms to

incentivise lending, police and judicial reforms to protect life and property, and enforce contracts and reverse the protectionist trend that has crept in during the last three years in the interest of making the domestic production sector competitive and export-oriented," the agency said.

Brickwork Ratings said the stimulus package announced so far does not entail a substantial fiscal package.

The quick economic revival requires the government to loosen its purse to augment aggregate demand, it said. "It should be less dogmatic on fiscal targets in the current and next year. More importantly, it can substantially augment public spending by undertaking disinvestment and in some cases such as Air India, privatisation to increase public investment expenditures," the agency said.

AS US ELECTION NEARS

Virus surges in key battleground States

Madison: Rising coronavirus cases in key presidential battleground states a little more than two weeks before Election Day are the latest worry for election officials and voters fearing chaos or exposure to the virus at polling places despite months of planning.

The prospect of poll workers backing out at the last minute because they are infected, quarantined or scared of getting sick has local election officials in Midwest states such as Iowa and Wisconsin opening more early voting locations, recruiting back-up workers and encouraging voters to plan for long lines and other inconveniences.

Confirmed virus cases and deaths are on the rise in the swing states of Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Wisconsin broke records this week for new coronavirus cases, deaths and hospitalisations, leading to the opening of a field hospital to handle COVID-19 patients. Gov. Tony Evers said he plans to activate the Wisconsin National Guard to fill any staffing shortages at election sites.

While holding a competitive presidential election during a pandemic is "tricky business," the governor said, "People are ready to have this election over, and I think it will be a successful election with very few hiccups."

In Iowa, Scott County Auditor Roxanna Moritz opened additional early voting sites in and around Davenport, the state's third-largest city, to try to reduce the number of people casting ballots on Election Day and to keep the virus from spreading in large precincts.

"We have to remember that there is this thing called COVID," Moritz said. "Our numbers aren't getting any better. The more people I can get to early vote, the better." The pandemic's recent trajectory close to home has some voters reconsidering a lifetime habit of entering a voting booth on Election Day.

Tim Tompkins, a welding engineer in Iowa, took the day off work to cast an early ballot at the Bettendorf Community Center. Tompkins, 62, said he and his wife, Pat, were afraid of coronavirus exposure in Election

Day crowds but determined to vote, so they brought their own sanitizer to the community center Friday.

"We'd go through a vat of boiling COVID to get the current president out of office," Tompkins said.

In some states, voting early still has carried health risks. Voters in Georgia, Texas and elsewhere encountered hours-long lines that required congregating with hundreds of other people this week. In Georgia, nearly a quarter of the workers in a warehouse where Fulton County's election supplies are kept and voting equipment is readied tested positive for COVID-19.

The positive test results for 13 of the preparation center's 60 workers shouldn't delay election operations, county elections director Rick Barron said. Barron said Georgia's most populous county is working to hire replacement staff and to implement additional safety measures, including daily rapid testing.

Voters in several Midwest states contested by U.S. President Donald Trump and his

Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden, encountered lines when they went to cast early ballots on Friday. Some described the decision to vote this year as one that

Biden warns Trump wants to scrap health law

Washington: Joe Biden is warning Michigan voters that President Donald Trump wants to strip health insurance from tens of millions of Americans with preexisting conditions.

Campaigning outside Detroit on Friday, the Democratic nominee said Trump promises to protect the insurance eligibility of all Americans but in reality wants to scrap the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

That law for the first time set a federal standard that requires insurers to offer health insurance to customers regardless of their health history.

Biden says Trump "can only see from his penthouse" in Manhattan and doesn't see most Americans' daily struggles.

A 2017 study from the Department of Health and Human Services found that as many as 133 million Americans could be defined as having a "preexisting" condition by the standards insurers used before the 2010 law.

required deliberation and even courage.

Robert Baccus, 52, an independent contractor from Columbus, Ohio, was among hundreds in line at the Franklin

County Board of Elections early voting center. He said he doesn't trust voting by mail, so early voting was his best option for casting a ballot while trying to safeguard his health. **AP**

Obama to campaign for Biden, Kamala

Macon: Former US president Barack Obama will campaign for Democratic party presidential candidate Joe Biden in Pennsylvania next week, the Biden campaign has said.

President Donald Trump, however, told his supporters here that Obama was an "ineffective" campaigner and this was good news for him as in 2016 "they did a lousy job and that's why I'm your president". Biden, 77, was the vice president during Obama's two terms. While Obama has endorsed Biden and his running mate Harris by making online campaigns for them, this would be the first time that the 59-year-old former president would be campaigning in person.

Four years after he left the presidency, Obama because of his oratory skills, still remains the biggest crowd puller for the opposition Democratic party. "On Wednesday, October 21, (former) president Obama will travel to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to campaign on behalf of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris," the Biden campaign said in a statement on Friday afternoon. **PTI**

Armenian missile killed 13, wounded over 50: Azerbaijan

Baku (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan on Saturday accused Armenia of striking its second-largest city with a ballistic missile that killed at least 13 civilians and wounded 50 others in a new escalation of their conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.



The Armenian Defence Ministry denied launching the strike, but the separatist authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh put out a statement listing alleged "legitimate" military facilities in the city of Ganja, although they stopped short of claiming responsibility for the attack.

Azerbaijani officials said the Soviet-made Scud missile destroyed or damaged about 20 residential buildings in Ganja overnight, and emergency workers spent hours searching in the rubble for victims and survivors.

Scud missiles date back to the 1960s and carry a big load of explosives but are known for their lack of precision.

In a televised address to the nation, Azerbaijan's president,

Ilham Aliyev, denounced the missile strike as a war crime and warned the leadership of Armenia that it would face responsibility for that. "Azerbaijan will give its response and it will do so exclusively on the battlefield," Aliyev said.

While authorities in both Azerbaijan and Armenia have denied targeting civilians, residential areas have increasingly come under shelling amid the hostilities that have raged for three weeks despite Russia's attempt to broker a cease-fire.

Stepanakert, the regional capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, came under intense shelling overnight, leaving three civilians wounded, according to separatist authorities. **AP**

NZ PM Ardern wins 2nd term in landslide

Auckland: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a second term in office on Saturday in an election landslide of historic proportions.

With most votes counted, Ardern's liberal Labour Party was winning 49% of the vote compared to 27% for its main challenger, the conservative National Party.

Labour was on target to win an outright majority of the seats in Parliament, something that hasn't happened since New Zealand implemented a proportional voting system 24 years ago. Typically, parties must form alliances to govern, but this time Ardern and Labour can go it alone.

In a victory speech in front of hundreds of cheering supporters in Auckland, Ardern said her party had gotten more support from New Zealanders than at any time in at least 50 years.

"This has not been an ordinary election, and it's not an ordinary time," she said. "It's been full of uncertainty and anxiety, and we set out to be an antidote to that." Ardern promised not to take her new supporters for granted and to



govern for all New Zealanders.

"We are living in an increasingly polarized world, a place where, more and more, people have lost the ability to see one another's point of view," she said. "I think in this election, New Zealanders have shown that this is not who we are." A record number of voters cast early ballots in the two weeks leading up to the election.

On the campaign trail, Ardern was greeted like a rock star by people who crammed into malls and spilled onto streets to cheer her on and get selfies with her.

Her popularity soared earlier this year after she led a successful effort to stamp out the coronavirus. There is currently no community spread of the virus in the nation of 5 million and people are no longer required to wear masks or social distance. **AP**



Pro-democracy protesters gather during a protest in Bangkok on Saturday

Transit shutdowns fail to deter Thai pro-democracy protests

Bangkok: Pro-democracy activists in Thailand staged a fourth straight day of high-profile protests in the capital on Saturday, thwarting efforts by the authorities to stop them, including a shutdown of the city's mass transit systems.

Unlike protests a day earlier, which saw police using water cannons to keep the protesters at bay, Saturday's demonstrations were peaceful, with no reports of any clashes by the time participants started heading home in the evening.

The protesters are calling for Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to leave office, the constitution to be amended to make it more democratic and the nation's monarchy to undergo reform.

All stations of Bangkok's elevated Skytrain transit system were closed Saturday afternoon to try to keep protesters from gathering. The underground MRT system was also shut, and police blocked off several roads. Protesters met anyway as planned at the Skytrain stations, where they held small impromptu rallies, in effect establishing a temporary but active presence across the city. **AP**

Canada won't stop calling for human rights in China: Trudeau

AP ■ OTTAWA

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday his government will not stop standing up for human rights in China.

On Thursday, the Chinese ambassador to Canada warned Ottawa against granting asylum to Hong Kong residents fleeing the situation. Cong Peiwu said if Canada cares about 300,000 Canadian citizens in Hong Kong — and Canadian companies doing business there — it should support

efforts to fight what he called fight violent crime. "We will stand up loudly and clearly for human rights," Trudeau said. "Whether it's talking about the situation faced by the Uighurs, whether it's talking about the very concerning situation in Hong Kong, whether it's calling out China for its coercive diplomacy."

Trudeau said Canada stands with allies around the world and the United States, to Australia, to Great Britain, to European nations to many nations around the world who share these concerns.

Canada's opposition Conservative leader said the Chinese ambassador should apologize or be expelled from Canada. "The Chinese ambassador has decided to engage in belligerent rhetoric unbecoming of his office," Conservative leader Erin O'Toole said in a written statement. Protests against the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese governments swelled last year, and Beijing clamped down on expressions of antigovernment sentiment in the city with a new national security law that took effect June 30.

Feds to execute woman who killed victim

Washington: A woman convicted of fatally strangling a pregnant woman, cutting her body open and kidnapping her baby is scheduled to be the first female inmate put to death by the US government in more than six decades, the Justice Department said Friday.

Lisa Montgomery is scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on December 8 at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana. She would

be the ninth federal inmate to put to death since the Justice Department resumed executions in July after a nearly 20-year hiatus. Montgomery was convicted of killing 23-year-old Bobbie Jo Stinnett in the northwest Missouri town of Skidmore in December 2004.

Montgomery drove from her Kansas home to Stinnett's house in Skidmore under the guise of adopting a rat terrier puppy, prosecutors said.

When she arrived at the home, Montgomery used a rope to strangle Stinnett, who was eight months pregnant, but Stinnett was conscious and trying to defend herself as Montgomery used a kitchen knife to cut the baby girl from the womb, authorities said.

Prosecutors said Montgomery removed the baby from Stinnett's body, took the child with her, and attempted to pass the girl off as her own. **AP**

FROM PAGE 1

COVID CASES, DAILY COUNT DROP SHARPLY

Echoing the Prime Minister's sentiments on letting the guard down, Dr RK Dhamija, public health expert and HoD of the Neurosurgery department at Delhi-based Dr Lady Hardinge Hospital, said in Kerala after Omam there was a 126 per cent increase in active Covid cases.

"People need to be cautious, maintain social distance, wear mask and implement hygiene. Gatherings and crowded places must be avoided. The Government should also be prepared and make arrangements for patients' admission with moderate and severe disease," Dr Dhamija said while welcoming the Government decision to initiate the process of importing liquid oxygen to meet any unforeseen shortage during the winters and festival times.

The National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC) in consultation with State Governments and all relevant stakeholders have prepared and presented a detailed blueprint of vaccine storage, distribution, and administration. The Expert Group, in consultation with States, is working actively on prioritisation and distribution of the vaccine, the PMO stated.

Modi directed that keeping in view the geographical span and diversity of the country, the access to the vaccine should be ensured speedily. He stressed that every step in the logistics, delivery, and administration should be put in place rigorously. "It must include advanced planning of cold storage chains, distribution network, monitoring mechanism, advance assessment, and preparation of ancillary equipment required, such as vials, syringes etc," the statement said.

According to Government data, the active caseload is now only 10.70 per cent of the tally. "This significant achievement is the outcome of Central Government-led targeted strategies leading to high number of recoveries and steadily falling number of fatalities," the Health Ministry said.

DR REDDY'S, RDIF GET NOD FOR SPUTNIK V TRIALS IN INDIA

"In addition to Indian clinical trial data, we will provide safety and immunogenicity study from the Russian phase 3 clinical trial. This data will further strengthen the clinical development

of Sputnik V vaccine in India," he added.

Last month, Dr Reddy's and RDIF (Russian sovereign wealth fund) had entered into a partnership to conduct clinical trials of Sputnik V vaccine and its distribution in India. As part of the partnership, RDIF shall supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr Reddy's upon regulatory approval in the country.

On August 11, the Sputnik V vaccine developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology was registered by the Ministry of Health of Russia and became the world's first registered vaccine against COVID-19 based on the human adenoviral vectors platform.

Sputnik V is currently undergoing phase 3 clinical trials in Russia and the proposed number of subjects is 40,000. Additionally, phase 3 clinical trial of the vaccine has commenced in the UAE last week.

FRENCH TEACHER BEHEADED FOR CLASS ON PROPHET CARICATURES

The prosecutor said a text claiming responsibility and a photograph of the victim were found on the suspect's phone. Ricard said the suspect had been seen at the school asking students about the teacher, and the headmaster had received several threatening phone calls.

French leaders offered messages of sadness but also of hope after the killing. "We'll pick ourselves up together, thanks to our spirit of solidarity," said Laurent Brosse, mayor of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine.

"We are all affected, all touched by this vile assassination," said Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer in a video message.

Mourners marched near the school in solidarity, holding signs that read "I am a teacher". A police official said the suspect was shot dead about 600 meters (yards) from where Paty died. Police opened fire after he failed to respond to orders to put down his arms and acted in a threatening manner. The official could not be named because of the ongoing investigations.

French President Emmanuel Macron went to the school on Friday night to denounce what he called an "Islamic terrorist attack." He urged the nation to stand united against extremism.

"One of our compatriots was murdered

today because he taught... the freedom of expression, the freedom to believe or not believe," Macron said.

The presidential Elysee Palace announced Saturday that there will be a national ceremony at a future date in homage to Paty, about whom few details have so far emerged.

In a video posted recently on Twitter, a man describing himself as the father of a student asserted that Paty had shown an image of a naked man and told students it was "the prophet of the Muslims."

Before showing the images, the teacher asked Muslim children to raise their hands and leave the room because he planned to show something shocking, the man said. "What was the message he wanted to send these children? What is this hate?" the man asked. The AP has not been able to independently confirm these claims. Chechnya is a predominantly Muslim Russian republic in the North Caucasus. Two wars in the 1990s triggered a wave of emigration, with many Chechens heading for western Europe. France has offered asylum to many Chechens since the Russian military waged war against Islamist separatists in Chechnya in the 1990s and early 2000s.

France has seen occasional violence involving its Chechen community in recent months, believed linked to local criminal activity and score-settling. This is the second time in three weeks that terror has struck France linked to caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. Last month, a young man from Pakistan was arrested after attacking two people with a meat cleaver outside the former offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

The weekly was the target of a deadly newsroom attack in 2015, and it republished caricatures of the prophet this month to underscore the right to freedom of information as a trial opened linked to that attack.

Friday's terror attack came as Macron's government works on a bill to address Islamic radicals, who authorities claim are creating a parallel society outside the values of the French Republic.

9.9 LAKH LT LIQUOR SEIZED IN DRY BIHAR AHEAD OF ELECTION

To maintain law and order, the authorities have acted against 2694 people under the

crime control act. The police have registered 203 cases for violation of model code of conduct including 84 illegal gathering and luring voters. Interestingly, a large number of sim cards were also recovered during checkings.

According to the EC, 91 'expenditure sensitive' constituencies of Bihar have been identified based on both the profile of the constituency and the candidates in the fray. As per the data, as many as 319 out of the 1,066 contestants in fray in the first phase of polls having a criminal record. 71 constituencies situated in 16 districts are going to polls on October 28, the first phase of the three-phase elections for the 243-member Bihar legislative assembly.

During the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the EC had seized Rs 9.12 crore black money, 1.24 lakh litre liquor, 717 kg drugs and 62 kg precious ornaments and jewelry from Bihar. In the Assembly elections in 2015, seizures worth Rs 23.8 crores were registered by the EC machinery with Rs 19 crore of cash found circulating besides 5.48 lakh litres of illicit country-made and foreign liquor from different places in Bihar.

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX: INDIA AT 94TH AMONG 107 NATIONS

GHI score is calculated on four indicators — undernourishment; child wasting, the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (who have low weight for their height reflecting acute undernutrition); child stunting, children under the age of five who have low height for their age reflecting chronic undernutrition; and child mortality -- the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Experts have blamed poor implementation processes, lack of effective monitoring, siloed approach in tackling malnutrition and poor performance by large States behind the low ranking.

According to the report, 14 per cent of India's population was undernourished.

The index showed India recorded a 37.4 per cent stunting rate among children under five and a wasting rate of 17.3 per cent while the under-five mortality rate stood at 3.7 per cent.

Wasting is children who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute under-nutrition. Stunting is children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic under-nutrition.

Kangana, sister booked for 'creating hatred'

On Bollywood casting director Sayyed plea, court orders probe

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai Police on Saturday registered an FIR against Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel following an order by metropolitan magistrate court for allegedly promoting enmity between different communities.

Kangana found herself in the dock as the Mumbai court directed the Bandra police to investigate a complaint alleging that she and her sister Rangoli Chandel through their tweets had tried to create "hatred" and "communal tensions" between Hindus and Muslims.

After hearing a complaint filed against Kangana and her sister Rangoli Chandel by Bollywood casting director and fitness trainer Munawwarali alias Sahil A Sayyed, Metropolitan Magistrate Jaidev Ghule of Bandra 12th court ordered investigations under section 156(3) of CrPC into Sayyed's complaint alleging among other things that both Kangana and Rangoli had tried to create "hatred" and "communal tensions" between Hindus and Muslims and that Kangana had tried to lower the image of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and created disaffection among the people against the Maharashtra Government.

"Perused the complaint, heard the advocate of the complainant along with the documents filed on record. On prima facie perusal of com-



plaint and submission I have found a cognizable offence has been committed by the accused," Magistrate Ghule noted, as he directed the Bandra police to register an FIR against Kangana and her sister Rangoli.

"All allegations are based upon comment on electronic media that is twitter and interviews. The accused used social media like twitter and thorough investigation is necessary by the expert. All offences alleged and levelled against the accused are cognizable. Search and seizure is necessary in this case, in such circumstances I have found it to be proper to pass order under Section 156(3) of CrPC," the Judge ruled.

Among other things, the section 156(3) of CrPC read with section 190 empowers to Magistrate - upon receiving a complaint of facts and upon information received from any person other than a police officer, or upon his own knowledge that such an offence has been committed any magistrate empowered under 190 can order an investigation to into a complaint.

HOME THEATRE

Must watch for dog parents

PUP ACADEMY 2
Netflix
*ing: Don Lake, Christian Convery, Aria Birch, Gabrielle Miller
Dog Voice Over: Riley O'Donnell, Chance Hurstfield, Dylan Schombing, Brian George
Rated: 6/10



There is something inherently cute and sweet when one watches movies that have animals especially dogs. Remember *The Call of the Wild*, *Benji* and *Marley & Me*? While not all animal movies have a happily ever after, but it doesn't take away the aww factor from them and *Pup Academy* that dropped its second season on the OTT platform is no different. It goes without saying that the pups are adorable, sweet and cute and if one has ever had a dog before, a need to have another one is going to be tough to resist.

If you are not a dog lover, this series that takes off where the first one ended — a street pup — Boxer being thrown out of pup academy for bringing in other street dogs into the academy who then wreaked havoc may have a change of heart.

In the meantime, why not have fun and watch the little pups get up to no good, get into trouble and do what pups do best — shower love on their master.

But then the show is not about the story as much as it is about the bond between a human and pup and how much it affects the dog if he doesn't have this bond with his chosen human. The adage: Dog is man's best friend couldn't have had a better setting than this show. So much so that there is a dog named D.O.G. Couldn't be cuter than this.

However, if one is looking for a story that stimulates the brain, this is not a show to watch. The story is simple and banal and take-off from Season 1 — a bunch of wolves, instead of dogs — who want to take over the running of the academy their way.

The good part is that it is family-friendly and a perfect watch for all dog parents and kids of all ages.

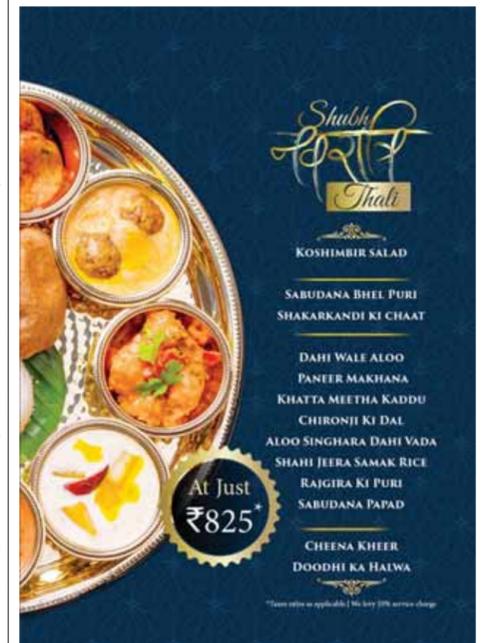
— Shalini Saksena

Plan Your Day

A delightful Navratra Menu specially curated for your Festive Indulgence! at Select CITYWALK. **Falahari Malai Paneer Tikka** (Fresh Cottage Cheese chunks in vrat special creamy marinade of cashew nut, cream & cardamom; Cooked in tandoor)

Price: ₹310 plus GST
Navratra Special Thali (Malai paneer tikka two pcs, kuttu puri two, paneer makhani/shahi, falahari kofta, aloo tamatar subzi, sanvat pulao, salad, raita, sabudana papad, vrat wale aloo/banana chips & sweet)

Price: ₹440 plus GST



Real emotions are revealed

BLACKPINK: LIGHT UP THE SKY
Netflix
*ing: The band members: Jisoo, Jennie, Rosé, and Lisa
Rated: 5.5/10

K-pop made its presence felt back in 2012 when Psy released his single — *Gangnam Style*. The song had gone viral and propelled Psy into instant stardom. Since then K-pop has become a must-listen for all music lovers. So it is not surprising that when the all-woman band came into the scene with their debut album *Square One* after a gap of seven years launched by YG Entertainment,

the group won its first award during a musical programme for Whistle at Inkigayo, becoming the girl group that won the award the fastest. Since then the album's tracks have since surpassed 1.73 billion streams worldwide.

This and much more is revealed in *Black Pink: Light Up the Sky*, a documentary that follows the lives of the girl group and how they reached where they are today given that each one of them came from a different background.

But the thing binding them was and is their love to perform and sing.

The documentary introduces

the girls collectively and individually which gives us a little peek into what makes them tick. But the real emotions come into play when their guards are down and they talk about missing their family and experiences that a 15-16-year-old would normally be part of.

The whole, now that we are so successful, how do we live up to the expectations of the fans is real. Where they will be when they are 42-44 — married with kids? How long will this success last? It gives a glimpse of real fears and reiterates that all that glitters is not gold.

— Shalini Saksena

TELLY TALE

IT'S CHAMPI TIME

Sidharth Shukla has been a part of both *Bigg Boss 13* and *14* and two things have remained common for him. One is the platform and the other is *champi*.



While we have seen Shehnaaz Gill as his *champi* queen in the past season, Hina Khan is filling in for Shehnaaz's absence in this season.

Khan is often seen giving Sidharth Shukla a powerful *champi*, which seems to be the booster to keep him going in the game.

Shehnaaz has always been very possessive about Sidharth when they were together in the house. Wonder what she has to say about the *champi* sessions in this season.

ALL BECAUSE OF AAHANA'S MARZI

A glittering award ceremony celebrating Asia Pacific's leading cinematic performances, the Asian Academy Creative Awards through a virtual event, announced the list of national winners of its third edition. Touted as the epitome of success for artists, this award is looked upon by fans across the continent and signifies



artistic dominance. In a major coup across the leading categories of this gala, Aahana Kumra bagged the national award for 'Best Actress In A Leading Role' for her phenomenal performance in Voot Select's Original series *Marzi*.

Ecstatic about her big win at the 2020 Asian Academy Creative Awards, Aahana Kumra said: "When I read the script of *Marzi*, I immediately knew it would emerge to be a game changer. The character of Sameera Chauhan will always be closest to my heart. This is a milestone win for me and it simply wouldn't have been possible without the love from my fans and support from the entire cast and crew of *Marzi*. I would like to thank Rajeev for being a phenomenal co-star, Radhika Anand for penning this marvelous script, Anil Sir and of course Bodhi Tree Productions for bringing this fabulous concept to life. And last but not the least, a big thank you to Voot Select for giving me a fantastic platform to showcase my talent. I look forward to delivering more of such impactful performances and will continue to dedicate myself to each character that I bring alive on screen."

Based on the novel *Liar* which is written by the BAFTA and Emmy nominated Jack and Harry Williams, Voot Select's original *Marzi* is a crime thriller that follows a web of lies and betrayals through a date night which leaves everyone conflicted on who is speaking the truth. The series has a rating of 7.3 on IMDB and is an odyssey of the marvelous slate of originals available on Voot Select. Launched on March, the OTT platform has captivated viewers across all age groups with its diverse content lineup.

DANCE WITH THE SISTERS

It's official! This festive season, the dancing divas and absolute sensations — Shakti and Mukti Mohan will be seen donning a new hat. That's right! In Zee Café's all new show, *Dance With Me*, the Mohan sisters will set the floor ablaze as the celebrity dance experts. Rumor has it that the talented duo will jazz things up engaging with fans via fun hook step sessions. So, here's an exclusive opportunity to brush up those moves as Shakti and Mukti take center stage every week. Inviting viewers with *khul ke nacho* as the clarion call, the show is set to launch on October 25 airing every Sunday at 10 pm on Zee Café and 10 am on Zee TV, November 1 onwards along with Zee5.

Confirming the buzz doing the rounds, Shakti and Mukti Mohan on their Instagram made the official announcement on October 16. Sharing the happy news with her fans and followers, Shakti unveiled the foot-tapping promo that features professional dancers and people from all walks of life grooving to the peppy beats. The track, created by ace composer Mayur Jumani, mixes popular Bollywood numbers that are sure to get you grooving as you break free and make way for happiness this festive season.

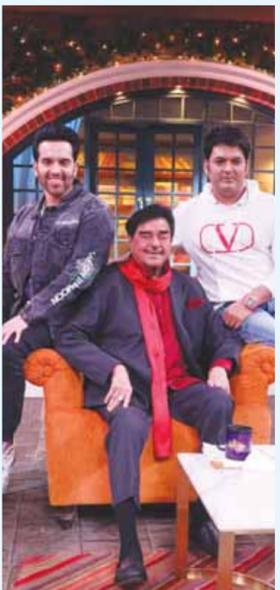
Speaking about the announcement, the reality TV superstar and dance maestro Shakti Mohan said: "Nothing compares to the feeling of dancing your heart out. I believe it to be the most beautiful emotion

that truly elevates happy moments in our lives. Both Mukti and I feel an instant rush of positivity and energy boost whenever we're on stage and it we're super excited to be a part of Zee Café's latest show *Dance With Me*. We have put a lot of heart and soul in curating the best performances that are sure to set you dancing in your living rooms and we hope the viewers enjoy watching the show as much as we did in being a part of it."

To this, her sister and dance partner Mukti Mohan added: "Growing up, dance has always been an intrinsic part of our lives. Both Shakti and I share a passion for dance that goes beyond words and we can't wait to celebrate the joy dancing together with our fans truly unleashing the spirit of *khul ke nacho* on Zee Café's *Dance With Me*. This being one of the most interactive shows at present, we're super excited to directly engage with dance enthusiasts through fun hook steps and performances that both entertain and inspire."

SINHA FAMILY ON KAPIL SHOW

This weekend, *The Kapil Sharma Show* will be welcoming one of the legendary superstars of Bollywood Industry; Shotgun aka Shatrughan Sinha



with his son Luv Sinha. The duo will come to promote their upcoming song; *Zaroorat*, featuring Shatrughan Sinha and daughter Sonakshi Sinha. It will be quite exciting for the viewers to watch Kapil and Shatrughan Sinha discuss the tremendous journey of the veteran actor while unveiling few unknown facts about his remarkable career in the Indian film industry.

The episode will definitely be a joyful ride for the viewer and to add to the fun and entertainment quotient, Krushna Abhishek and Kiku Sharda will be seen donning new characters in the show.

Welcome your favourite bahu

Star Plus is all set to roll out the Season 2 of the much awaited show *Saath Nibhaana Saathiya* from tomorrow. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with DEVOLEENA BHATTARCHARJEE aka Gopi Bahu about how excited she is to be back on screen and how the character changed when she stepped into the show

Watching one or the other daily soap is our guilty pleasure. There is no denying that it makes for a good watch if one wants to take a break from the reality of their lives. Of late, daily soaps are so in trend and the one which tops the charts is *Saathiya*. Not because the storyline is something out of the box, but because Yashraj Mukhate decided to mix a scene from the popular show and it went viral within no time.

Even Rupal Patel, who played Kokila Ben couldn't help but appreciate Mukhate's take on the popular scene. Now that the show has already received it's share of admiration from the audience, it is just the right time for the makers to launch *Saath Nibhaana Saathiya 2* on Star Plus tomorrow.

Devoleena Bhattacharjee, who was seen in *Bigg Boss 13* is all set to play Gopi Modi once again. If one is to ask what Season 2 has on offer for the audience, it's a no-brainer that they have to give it a watch.

"I can't give out the story for Season 2, because we are also not told about the whole story, we just shoot as per our director's direction. Also there are frequent changes during the shoot. But one thing is for sure, that the entertainment quotient will surely be high and with a message of women empowerment. There will be a new love angle between Gehna and Anant. I am sure audience will love it," Bhattacharjee tells you.

Ask her about how excited she is to be back on screen as Gopi and she is quick to answer — that her excitement has no bounds. "I am super excited. I never imagined that I will be coming back on TV as Gopi. It gives me a different feel. Most of the times when there is a Season 2 of a show, the character remains the same but the actors change. But I am getting to play Gopi again and it is nothing short of a gift to me," she tells you.

A new season, she says, comes with a lot of new challenges. "With a second season, the expectations of the audience are high. So it is challenging that way. To bring a second season of a hit show is risky in itself, because of the high expectations. But I think, we have proved ourselves and now the responsibility lies on the newer lot and it's their chance to prove themselves. Having said that, it doesn't mean we don't

First six months in the show were challenging. Things were not falling in place. I got to know that people felt that this was not my cup of tea. It felt bad. But I am a very stubborn person, if I take up a job, I do my best to make it happen



have any responsibility, it is just that they have a larger part of play in it," she explains.

If one is to remember, the infamous scene of the show where Gopi washes off Ahem's laptop with soap and water and hang it to dry, one would remember Gaa Manek, who was then replaced by Bhattacharjee. Ask her if it is challenging to step in to the shoes of an already established character, she says that for her the role was as new as it can be.

"I never thought that I am replacing someone. If I had would have focused about these things, I would have not been able to pull that off. My focus was on to do justice to my character. That's all. I saw it as a new role," she says.

Initially, Bhattacharjee struggled with the character, so much so that people told him that she won't be able to play it. "First six months were challenging. Things were not falling in place. I got to know that people felt that this was not my cup of tea. It felt bad. There were talks that the show might get off air after Gaa's replacement. People expected me to act like Gaa, but that's not possible. I have a different personality and I will act in my way. I can't copy someone. But despite all this, I am a very stubborn person, if I take up a job, I do my best to make it happen. So was with Gopi. I fought for my character. I did things in my own way. I just didn't let it go. I put in all my efforts and hard work and eventually it did work. And when the audience accepted me, Gopi's character was changed quite a bit. She was shown as a progressive woman. Even her style was changed," she tells you.

She tells you that she has a lot of fun memories from the sets of the previous season. "I was like the queen on the sets. I shared a good rapport with everyone. We did so much fun. Some days were exciting, some were good and some were bad. I laughed, cried, got angry and what not. We were like a big family and we enjoyed every bit of it," Bhattacharjee recalls.

Daily soaps are always tagged as over dramatic and over the top, Bhattacharjee has a say on that. "That's not true. The reason people love daily soaps is that they find a connection with it. Everything that has been show happens with us at some point of time. It's just that we modify it as per the need of the story. Otherwise it is not over dramatic, it is just a reflection of the society," she opines.

The birdman of Assam



ANWARUDDIN CHOUDHURY
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
ASSAM

He is an ornithologist, mammalogist, an artist, avid photographer and an author. He is also the honorary Chief Executive of the Rhino Foundation for Nature in North-east India and was Deputy Commissioner of Baksa and Lakhimpur districts in Assam. He retired as Divisional Commissioner of Barak valley, Development Commissioner for Hill Areas and Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Assam last year.

If this was not enough to add to his list of accomplishments, Choudhury is a member of as many as nine IUCN/SSC/BLI specialist groups. Due to his work, at least 12 wildlife sanctuaries and two elephant reserves have been established. He was also instrumental in upgrading Dibru-Saikhowa into a national park, inclusion of Laokhowa and Burhachapori Sanctuaries in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

Known as the Birdman of Assam, he was the first to produce books on the birds of different Northeastern State. His studies have contributed enormously to the conservation and awareness in the region.

"I was born and brought up in Nagaland. Back then it was a part of Assam. But later, I ended up finishing my schooling and college from Guwahati. I was always interested in Nature and the diverse wildlife this region has to offer. I used to draw birds from the region which later turned into a scientific study. But I also wanted to be a Civil Servant and hence took the UPSC exam and got selected. As a Government official one can do so much good and that is what I did," Choudhury says.

He tells you how as an officer in the region he was able to do so much for the conservation of wildlife and get the files moving at a fast pace. Though he agrees that it is not always easy to get things done but since he was an officer, doors that were difficult to open, were wide open for him.

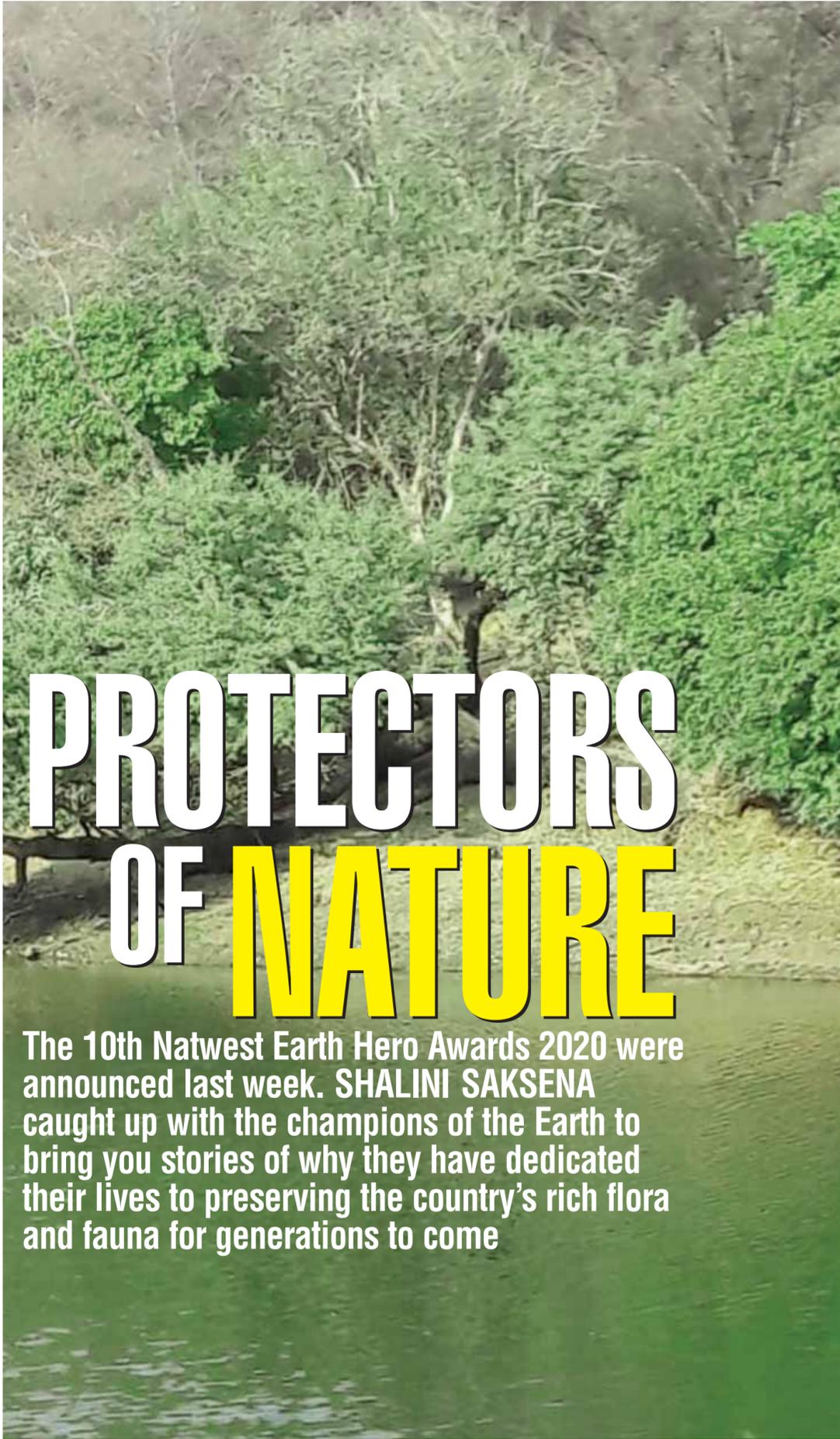
"Of course, I could sanction my own recommendations. Once I was in the Forest Department, we didn't have to coordinate with other departments but where required, it was easy if you take personal interest. Instead of sending the file, I would take it myself to my colleagues. Once I got talking about Nature, people got interested too. This made it possible for me to a lot when it came to conservation," Choudhury says.

He tells you that even though it was easy to get paperwork done, it was tough to involve the local communities. But in districts where he had independent charge, he would organise awareness programmes particularly at the *panchayat* level. "I would tell them the importance of conservation," Choudhury tells you.

Another challenge that the region faces is the loss of wildlife due to floods especially of the Kaziranga. But he explains why flooding in this area is extremely important for the eco-system.

"Without floods, the eco-system would collapse. Some seven-eight decades back, during floods the animals would move to higher ground — Karbi Anglong without any human interference. Slowly, people took over and highways were made and the region became busy restricting the movement of the wildlife. Unfortunately, there is no long-term solution though some higher grounds are being constructed where animals can rest during flooding," Choudhury explains.

A major part of his work was declaring the white-winged wood duck as the State bird. This bird, one is told is endangered. This was part of Choudhury's work with the birds in the North-east. In India, there are 1,300 species. Out of which around 1,000 are



PROTECTORS OF NATURE

The 10th Natwest Earth Hero Awards 2020 were announced last week. SHALINI SAKSENA caught up with the champions of the Earth to bring you stories of why they have dedicated their lives to preserving the country's rich flora and fauna for generations to come

WITHOUT FLOODS IN KAZIRANGA, THE ECO-SYSTEM WOULD COLLAPSE. SOME SEVEN-EIGHT DECADES BACK, DURING FLOODS ANIMALS MOVED TO KARBI ANGLONG WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS. SLOWLY, PEOPLE TOOK OVER AND HIGHWAYS WERE MADE AND THE REGION BECAME BUSY RESTRICTING THE MOVEMENT OF WILD ANIMALS

found in this region with Assam topping the charts with 850 species — the highest in any State in the country.

Now that he has retired, he tells you he has more time to write. But during the lockdown, field work was hampered. However, things are back to normal and Choudhury is back to traveling and working towards general conservation.

A specific project that he just finished working on is Amur Falcon, a migratory bird that moves from Assam to South Africa with their breeding place in eastern Siberia. There are two roosting sites in Assam that we observe since lakhs of birds roost here. We had been working on this project for the last three years and last year saw the highest number — three lakh — with the world population standing at 10-12 lakh this was a great achievement," Choudhury says.

Eco-tourism key to conversation

ANSHU PRAGYAN DAS
GREEN WARRIOR AWARD
ODISHA

She is Deputy Conservator of Forest (Ecotourism), Forest & Environment Department, Odisha. She joined the service in 2007. She has extensively worked in Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR), Mahanadi Wildlife Division to reduce the depletion of the tiger habitat. She mobilised the local community to create Odisha's first eco-village — Muduligadia inside STR. The ecotourism project — Satkosia Sands Resort and Nature Camp run by 34 community members has a capacity to accommodate 19 guests and has generated a revenue of ₹3 crore in the last four years.

She tells you that eco-tourism and conservation of wildlife are two sides of the same coin. "One very important threat to wildlife and conservation is human-related pressures. Conservation can bring good results only if there is support from the locals. Eco-tourism is one such area that can help us strengthen economic development in remote areas. It can also bring social wellbeing," Das explains.

She tells you that it was not easy to involve the locals with the conservation. There was a lot resentment from the locals. Das and her team started working in two areas — punishing the guilty for illegal activities and addressing the long-standing grievances like all-weather road, we provided them electricity and introduced different livelihood alternatives. Gradually, this reduced the reduced their dependency on the forest.

The success story of Satkosia Sands Resort and Nature Camp tells you that when one involves locals, the results can be amazing. So much so that seven-eight villages are no longer dependent on the forest. "Earlier, they were totally dependent on the forest for their firewood needs. We provided LPG. The income from the resort bettered their lives. It has also controlled migration. Locals helped the department set-up antipoaching camps. The protection at the tiger reserve got better. We enrolled women in protection activities. We managed to get good informer network. People have understood that if they work towards conservation their livelihood and lifestyle will improve," Das says.

Due to the information provided, the department was able to nab an international smuggler of pangolin Shamsuddin Khan in 2018. This would not have been possible without local support.

The good part about the revenue generated from the resort is that it goes back to the people who run it. About 80 per cent is distributed as salaries depending on the work they do and how to manage the resort and its upkeep. Part of the money — 10 per cent goes to their community development as eco-villages. There is no plastic, there is no litter outside and no open defecation. The houses are colourful and depict their traditions and cultures. So much so that people visit these villages just to see the houses. The rest 10 per cent goes the Government as revenue. There are 47 such eco-tourism that are under one portal. People can go the website and book wherever they want to stay," Das says.

She tells you that the duty of a Government servant it is their duty to do their work diligently and honestly wherever they are posted. "Forest and Environment is one department where one gets to do varied work — there is general conservation work, there is eco-tourism and there is working towards saving species from extinction. One can even take up hobbies like photography and writing that I have been doing for the last seven-eight years," Das says.

Her publications *Avifauna of Satkosia*, *Satkosia Seen and Unseen* and *Birds of Satkosia Landscape* have garnered a lot of attention. Another feather in Das' cap is her work towards the *gharial* in STR.

"Back in 2015, there was only one left in the region. Illegal fishing in the area led to the extinction of this animal here. It lives in deep waters. Satkosia gorge is the only place in Odisha where we find *gharial*. Below Satkosia, there are no *gharials*. All the earlier release programmes didn't help because the entire gorge was under the cover of illegal fishermen.

"We apprehended 38 of them and rehabilitated them. We gave some of them jobs in the department and others were given alternatives. *Gharials* are extremely sensitive to the fishing nets. After the arrests were made, we artificially released a *gharial* and the numbers went up to eight in 2019. Of course, the success of this rehabilitation is not just mine. I need to thank all my team members for their contribution in ensuring that the *gharial* thrives here once again," Das says.

She opines that aim of conservation is to remove illegal activities. Hence, the area became safe for other wildlife as well. This increased tourism. Today, people are not just traveling to see the tiger or eat good food or go shopping. People today are looking for experiential travel. They want to explore new places. Photography is a passion for the young. Then there is biking, hiking and bird watching. One of our projects offer canopy walk. These activities go well with eco-tourism and hence we have seen such large number of travellers. Seeing wildlife is not the aim," Das says.



'SAVING GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD IS MY CALLING NOW'



MALSINGH JAMARA
SAVE THE SPECIES AWARD
RAJASTHAN

He was 18 when he enlisted in the Army. At age 35 he retired after serving the country for 17 years as *havaladar*. When he came back to his hometown in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan he was at a loose end and didn't know what he should do next till he came to know that Great Indian Bustard (GIB) had practically disappeared from this region. That is when he knew what his calling would be henceforth.

"When I came back to Jaisalmer in 2010, I came to know how this large bird found in our State had almost disappeared thanks to extensive poaching. I was always interested in photography. My home is inside the park. Whenever I was home on a holiday, I would roam the area and take photos. But once I was back for good, I reported

poaching from Sudhasar area to the Forest Department in 2012 because I released one thing — if we save GIB, we would save Nature. Since then I have made it my mission to save this species from extinction.

But the task was not an easy one. People living in the area depended on the money that came to them when people would come to hunt GIB and illegal farming and grazing. To change their thinking and get them to take an alternative method to eke out a living was not easy.

"It is very easy to say that people who depend on the forest need to look for an alternative way to earn a living. One has to understand that to change one's dependency on Nature and to change one's thinking is not easy. People have families to feed. You just can't tell them to not enter a certain area because it is now under State protection. Also, a large portions of forest area in Rajasthan is not owned by the Forest

Department. Then there is the desert. People have been living off it for generations. To ask them to stay off the land where the GIB lives was next to impossible. But I never gave up. I would go from village to village that surround the grassland enclosures where the GIB lives. I told them the importance of grasslands. The habitat of GIB is the tall grass found here. This grass is special. A bit of rain is enough for it to sprout," Jamarra says who is also the founder secretary of Godawan Conservation Society.

He has also served as the honorary Wildlife Warden, Jaisalmer and eco-development, Sudasari, Forest Department. Since he reported the first poaching, he has played a huge role in the renovation of old grassland enclosures and creating new ones with the cooperation from surrounding villagers. Jamarra has also been instrumental in providing employment to local people through eco-development committee —

guarding the area and labelling for renovation. In the last eight years, he has engaged in advocacy for the GIB and grassland conservation with State and Centre.

"Even though we gave them an alternative means to earn a living. To convince them to take them up was tough. People were used to illegal farming and grazing their cattle here endangering not just GIB but the entire habitat of the region. They didn't see how what they were doing was wrong; they had been doing this for years. I told them if we increased the grasslands, it would good for them as well — they can take their cattle to graze there legally — leaving a large portion for GIB and other wildlife to thrive here. But to give alternative employment to so many people is difficult. But the villagers tell me that if they are given a job, they would stop traditional practices," Jamarra explains.

He started working on making the area a tourist attraction — Sam being a prime example. "With eco-tourism, it opened doors to alternate job opportunities. The grassland enclosures can be saved as well as GIB's habitat. But more needs to be done. The money that is earned from eco-tourism should go to the local communities and ensure that the money is spent for their betterment," Jamarra tells you.

He tells you that back in the 80s, the number of this beautiful bird stood at 1,500, unfortunately, the number has dwindled to less than 100 according to 2011 census. However, Jamarra's work has paid off. The Wildlife of India picked up 10 GIB eggs to be artificially hatched in Desert National Park in Rajasthan. All the eggs were picked up from where Jamarra has been working tirelessly.

"It is good to see my work been has paid off but there is much to do. I want to thank NatWest as well for the award," Jamarra says.



Given the strength and depth we have in our batting-line, and the different skill-levels and skill-sets that we have, we have to be as adaptable as possible going forward



The preparations for play-offs haven't started. We are taking every game as it comes. Whatever happens we got to keep it simple, stay humble and play to our strengths



I'm very very nervous and erratic (in chase) and I get very stressed like any player. I want to perform for the team and show the owners I'm here for a good reason



We wanted to use Jaydev to the bigger boundary, he bowls a lot of slower stuff into the wicket. Obviously the boundary was not big enough for De Villiers

AB deVilliers again

Former South African skipper's 22 ball 55* takes RCB past finish line

PTI ■ DUBAI

AB de Villiers' swashbuckling 22-ball 55 fashioned an incredible seven-wicket victory for Royal Challengers Bangalore over Rajasthan Royals on Saturday.

Chasing 178, De Villiers smashed six sixes to help RCB win the game after all seemed lost for them following the dismissal of Virat Kohli with the team struggling at 102 for three in the 14th over.

The seasoned South African launched into Jaydev Unadkat for three successive sixes in the 19th over to swing the match in his team's favour. He finished the game in style, hitting Jofra Archer for a maximum with two balls still to go.

RCB lost Aaron Finch (14) after Australia's limited overs captain had hit two sixes.

Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal stitched a 79-run partnership for the second wicket but consumed too many deliveries in doing so, failing to keep pace with the required run rate.

Kohli brought the team's hundred by lofting Rahul Tewatia for a big six over long-on, but Padikkal, while trying to break the shackles after struggling his way to 35 off 37 balls, got out when his pull shot failed to clear Ben Stokes in the deep.

And then came the big wicket of Kohli, thanks to a brilliant piece of fielding by Tewatia, who pulled off a catch inches from the line at deep midwicket on the rebound after the batsman whipped it off his pads.

The ball travelled at a



great speed but Tewatia, coming off a wicket in his previous ball, balanced himself after nearly falling over the line to complete a fine catch.

Kohli made 43 off 32 balls with the help of two sixes and a four.

The required run rate rose rapidly as RCB struggled to find the big overs, but de Villiers had other ideas.

Earlier, skipper Steve Smith's counterattacking 36-ball 57 guided Rajasthan to 177 for six.

Smith struck six fours and one maximum before Chris Morris bowled a brilliant final over, conceding only four runs while taking two wickets to check RR from going past 180.

Fast-medium bowler Morris finished with excellent figures of 4/26 in four overs.

Earlier batting first, Rajasthan were off to a brisk start as opener Robin Uthappa (41 off 22 ball) launched into the RCB attack with a flurry of fours and a six.

Back in his favoured position alongside Ben Stokes after another change in the combination, Uthappa saw his team play two quiet overs before smashing Washington Sundar for four boundaries in the innings' third over.

Isuru Udana was pulled and then lofted over long-on by Uthappa for the day's first maximum as RR raced to 38 for no loss in four overs.

Morris gave RCB their first

'AB is IPL's most impactful player'

PTI ■ DUBAI

RCB skipper Virat Kohli on Saturday called AB de Villiers the "most impactful player in IPL" after the South African blasted a 22-ball 55 to set up an incredible win against Rajasthan Royals.

"AB is always been someone who's been ready to look at the situation and adapt his game accordingly. In my eyes he's the most impactful player in the IPL," Kohli said during the post-match presentation ceremony.

"If he goes, the opposition know they have a slim chance and there's a good reason for that. It's purely because of the presence of someone like him that teams feel we are never out of the game."

"To be honest, you're always tense in chase because you're not sure how many balls AB is going to get. Credit to Gurkeerat as well, he stuck with AB, got that important boundary. It doesn't matter who the bowler is, he does what he does."

The seven-wicket victory takes RCB to 12 points — same as table-toppers Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals.

"The individuals are stepping up and we've been done that all through the tournament, which is why we have 12 points. Very happy right now because after this we get three days off," Kohli said.

Talking about his team, the Indian skipper said: "Our game pattern is very clear. Young Dev (Devidutt Padikkal) has batted beautifully, Finchy (Aaron Finch) has played some impact innings. We understand the dynamics and we're sticking to our plans. The bowling has really stepped up this season."

"(Chris) Morris has been brilliant, just that energy he brings. (Navdeep) Saini, Washy (Washington Sundar) and Isuru (Udana) as well, the bowling has come together well."

De Villiers, who was adjudged the Man of the Match for his blistering knock, said he was nervous in the 19th over as he had to hit those big sixes to get his team home.

"I didn't hit even one of them (sixes) off the mid-



Skipper Virat Kohli reacts after RCB win | IPLT20.com

dle. When Unadkat was bowling, I was looking leg side but to be honest I was nervous because I knew I had to hit it well. Luckily I got a few away," he said.

With four fifties, including a 33-ball 73 against Kolkata Knight Riders, the former South African skipper has been in rampaging form this IPL.

"I'm very very nervous and erratic (in chase) and I get very stressed like any player. I want to perform for the team and show the owners I'm here for a good reason."

"Last game I didn't perform my role as well as I should have, but this time I did. It's a cat and mouse game, I always respect the bowlers. If they bowl well to me, they'll have the upper hand."

RR captain Steve Smith was crestfallen after yet another defeat, their sixth in nine games.

"Sure it is a hard pill to swallow. Just got ABd there. That's two in a row we were in the box seat to win but didn't. Disappointing," he said.

"I think it was a good score on a slow wicket. I thought we built the pressure pretty well and it took a pretty special innings to take RCB home."

KKR aim to sort out batting woes

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

MATCHES	18
SUNNISERS HYDERABAD	07
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	11
Stats: Faisal Features	

A new captain in the saddle, Kolkata Knight Riders would look to sort out their batting woes and strive for consistency when they face Sunnisers Hyderabad in an intriguing mid-table clash here on Sunday.

After a string of below par performances, Dinesh Karthik handed over the reins to his deputy Eoin Morgan hours before KKR's match against Mumbai Indians on Friday. But the World Cup-winning England captain's campaign as leader was off to a disappointing start with MI handing KKR an eight-wicket mauling.

KKR are still in the top four of IPL points table behind Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore with four wins and as many defeats. But if the two-time champions want to seal a play-off spot, their batsmen need to step up, shrug off their inconsistencies and win matches for the team.

After a massive 82-run loss to RCB, the KKR batsmen failed yet again against MI bowlers as they were reduced to 42 for 4 in the eighth over. Half of KKR batsmen were gone for 61 in the 11th over. An 87-run unbroken stand for the sixth wicket between Morgan (39 not out) and pacer Pat Cummins (53 not out) took them to 148 for 5.

But MI needed just 16.5 overs to overhaul the target, losing two wickets in the process.

At the top, Shubham Gill has failed to capitalise on his starts, while Rahul Tripathi has not gone past the 20-run mark after his brilliant 81 against the Chennai Super Kings.

Nitish Rana has been profligate and Karthik's batting slot has been experimented with throughout the tournament. Andre Russell and Morgan have also not been able to make the kind of impact expected from players of their calibre.

The KKR bowlers did well to fashion narrow victories against Kings XI Punjab and

CSK, but leaked runs against RCB and MI. To add to their woes, star spinner Sunil Narine has been reported for suspect bowling action and he has missed two matches since then.

The Sunnisers, who occupy the fifth spot on the points table with just three wins from eight outings, are also struggling. With the injuries ruling out pace spearhead Bhuvneshwar Kumar and all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, the Orange Army is facing a conundrum of whether to strengthen their batting or their bowling unit, a fact that skipper David Warner conceded.

The team heavily relies on its batting unit, mainly on the top four comprising Jonny Bairstow, Warner, Manish Pandey and Kane Williamson. A cause of concern for the Sunnisers is Rashid Khan's form. After returning impressive figures like 3/14, 0/12, 3/12, the Afghan leg-spinner remained ineffective in the team's last two losses. And skipper Warner will desperately hope that his star spinner finds his mojo back which is imperative for the team's success.

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Captain's knock by Dhawan subdues CSK

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Spared by the fielders a number of times, opener Shikhar Dhawan (101) hit his maiden IPL hundred while Axar Patel pulled off three sixes in the final over as Delhi Capitals moved to the top of the table with a tense five-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings, here on Saturday.

Dropped on 25 and 79, apart from surviving a half chance and a run-out opportunity, Dhawan made full use of the lives given to him to raise his best IPL knock as the Capitals overhauled a stiff 180-run target with one to spare.

On 99, Dhawan also got a caught-behind decision reversed, using DRS. Despite a well-set Dhawan at the crease, Sam Curran bowled an exceptional 19th over, giving away just four runs to keep CSK in hunt.

Capitals needed 17 runs off

the final over and it looked Dhawan's effort could go in vain but Axar Patel played a blinder of a knock, hitting three sixes off Ravindra Jadeja to finish off the game in style.

DC now have 14 points from nine games, one more than second-placed Mumbai Indians (12).

Dhawan took 58 balls for his unbeaten knock that was studied with 14 shots to the fence and one over it. He shifted the gears with ease as he not only worked the ball around but found boundaries consistently to keep the asking rate under control. His straight six off Curran stood out.

After CSK pacer Deepak Chahar, who was as usual very impressive, sent back Prithvi Shaw (0) Ajinkya Rahane (8), Dhawan kept one end safe.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer (23), who hurt his shoulder in the previous game was not his usual

aggressive self. The fluency with which he times the ball was missing. His 68-run stand with Dhawan ended when he holed one out to Du Plessis off Bravo. It was a slower ball but Iyer could have dispatched that easily into the empty stands on any other day.

Marcus Stoinis added 24 quick runs before being dismissed.

Earlier, Faf Du Plessis hit his fourth half-century of the season before Ambati Rayudu produced another useful cameo as a collective batting effort propelled Chennai Super Kings to 179 for four.

Du Plessis (58) added 87 runs with Shane Watson (36) after early fall of Sam Curran (0), setting it up nicely for the CSK.

Rayudu hit 45 off 25 balls while Ravindra Jadeja hit four sixes in his fiery 33-run knock.

One of Jadeja's sixes landed on the road outside the stadium.

They added 50 runs in 3.3 overs during their unbeaten fifth wicket partnership.

While Watson relied on safe ground-strokes considering the sluggish track Du Plessis did not hesitate to improvise, playing a lot of scoop shots. He pulled the short ones with ease.

Young pacer Tushar Deshpande bowled a tight line with decent speed and was rewarded when Curran, without measuring the bowler, swung his arms but just managed a top-edge that was taken by Anrich Nortje (2/44).

Watson, using his experience, got some quick runs by placing the ball instead of going after the bowlers. His handling of the both pacers and spinners was sensible as the Australian kept the scoreboard moving.

Top meets the bottom

PTI ■ DUBAI

They have been in rampaging form with five straight wins but Mumbai Indians can ill afford to be complacent against a Chris Gayle-inspired Kings XI Punjab side here on Sunday.

A win for Mumbai Indians will virtually seal them a spot in the play-offs while a loss for KXIP could send them out of contention.

Mumbai Indians have steam-rolled opposition teams with an explosive batting line-up complemented by a lethal bowling attack and the latest side to bear their brunt were the Kolkata Knight Riders who suffered an eight-wicket defeat on Friday.

Table-toppers MI boast of top batsmen such as captain Rohit Sharma (251 runs) and his opening partner Quinton de Kock (269) and both are in good touch, while the middle-order is manned by the likes of Suryakumar Yadav (243 runs) and Ishan Kishan (186 runs).

Rohit played second fiddle to de Kock in MI's win against KKR, with the South African hitting



Rohit Sharma prepares to bat at nets | @mipaltan

78 not out from 44 balls.

In the bowling front, pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult have formed the most successful pair this IPL with 12 wickets apiece from eight matches so far. Spinner Rahul Chahar chipped in against KKR with two wickets for 18 runs.

On the other hand, KXIP are languishing at the bottom of the table despite having the top-two

leading run-getters of the tournament in skipper K L Rahul (387 runs at a strike rate of 134.84) and his opening partner, Mayank Agarwal (337 runs).

KXIP's problem has been that their batting and bowling have not fired in unison on most occasions even though their confidence has been boosted by the return of Gayle.

The self-proclaimed Universe Boss made his first appearance this IPL with a bang, hitting a 45-ball 53, a knock that was laced with five sixes and a four in KXIP's win over Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore.

A captivating duel may be in store between Gayle on one side and Bumrah and Boult on the other.

KXIP have other in-form batsmen in Rahul and Agarwal, with both or at least one of them scoring big in almost every match.

But their bowling has been the weakest link. Barring Mohammad Shami and Ravi Bishnoi, none of the bowlers have inspired confidence, especially in the death overs.

Not being able to find the right balance despite trying out many options has also contributed to KXIP's rapid slide.

Planning to start domestic cricket from Jan 1: Ganguly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much awaited domestic cricket season will start from January 1, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said on Saturday.

The BCCI Apex Council met on Saturday evening and a good amount of time was spent on discussing the domestic calendar which had been thrown in disarray by the surging cases of Covid-19 in India.

"We have had extensive discussions on domestic cricket and we have tentatively decided to start the competitions from January 1, 2021," Ganguly told PTI from Dubai.

When asked if it would be a curtailed season or not, the former Indian captain said the board won't be able to accommodate all domestic tournaments for practical purposes.

"We will certainly have the full fledged Ranji Trophy redball tournament. It will probably not be possible to hold all tournaments," Ganguly said, hinting that BCCI is eyeing the January-March window for Ranji Trophy.

The BCCI president also assured that the junior cricket and women's tournaments will be held between March and April.

"We also have elaborate plans for

our age group and women's cricket. We will start with Ranji Trophy and then we will also have the other tournaments between March and April," he said.

He also informed that the Indian team will be allowed to train in Australia during their quarantine phase.

"Cricket Australia has sent us an itinerary and we discussed the modalities of that itinerary. We will be playing four Tests and that will end in third week of January," the BCCI president said.

The Indian team is expected to play three ODIs, three T20Is and four Tests Down Under.

On the home series against England, Ganguly said that the BCCI is monitoring the situation and the final itinerary will be prepared in due time.

"The England series is good three and a half to four months away. We still have time. We are monitoring the situation (Covid-19) which is pretty fluid and will take a call accordingly," he said.

While hosting the series in India (Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Dharamsala being likely venues) remains priority, the UAE is a second option.

DUGOUT



Yuzvendra Chahal fiancé Dhanaashree Verma arrives at Dubai International Stadium on Saturday to watch IPL game between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals | IPLT20.com



Mumbai Indians pacer Jasprit Bumrah chats with KKR's young pacer duo of Shivam Mavi and Kamlesh Nagarkoti | @KKRiders

BOOM'S WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE

Mumbai Indians' bowling coach Shane Bond heaped praise on Jasprit Bumrah, saying the India fast bowler's desire to improve makes him one of the best fast bowlers in the world. Bumrah is one of the world's premier fast bowlers currently, having led the India attack in their first-ever Test series win in Australia in 2018-19. "It's been fun, always loved working with Booms (Bumrah), six years now," said Bond in a video on Mumbai's pace attack posted by MI on Twitter. "The thing I love about Jasprit is his willingness to want to improve. He's turned up in this series (IPL 2020), he has got another different ball in his armoury and when you're seeing it from a player who's self-motivated, doing things in the background to make himself better, then there's no surprise to me that he's one of the best fast bowlers in the world."

DON'T BAT IN PRACTICE PANTS

Mumbai Indians' opening batsman and wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock put up a perfect performance with the bat on Friday night, scoring a 44-ball 78 to lead his team to an eight-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders. But if you ask team head coach Mahela Jayawardene, his show on the batting crease wasn't exactly perfect. In a video released by the Mumbai Indians on Twitter, the former Sri Lanka batsman is seen telling De Kock to avoid batting in practice pants which the South African did on Friday. "Apart from Quincy going and batting with his practice pants, everything else was pretty decent," he said during a post-match pep talk in the team camp, leaving others in splits. "Ok, so don't do that again because the marketing guys are going nuts, people went nuts as well. If it works, it works but we'll sort something else," he said to De Kock. De Kock had to lower his jersey during the innings to hide the orange strip on the practice pants.

POINTS TABLE

		P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1	MI	8	6	2	+1.353	12
2	DC	8	6	2	+0.990	12
3	RCB	9	6	3	-0.096	12
4	KKR	8	4	4	-0.684	8
5	SRH	8	3	5	+0.009	6
6	CSK	8	3	5	-0.390	6
7	RR	9	3	6	-0.778	6
8	KXIP	8	2	6	-0.295	4

All square at Merseyside

VAR cancels Henderson's winner as Everton comeback twice to hold Champions for 2-2 draw; Saints steal late point at Bridge; Sterling scores in Man City win against Arsenal



AFP ■ LONDON

Liverpool were denied a cathartic victory against Premier League leaders Everton on Saturday when Jordan Henderson's late strike was controversially ruled out for offside as Chelsea shared the spoils with Southampton in a six-goal thriller.

Jurgen Klopp's champions were desperate to atone for their 7-2 humbling against Aston Villa before the international break but had to settle for a 2-2 draw in an incident-packed game at Goodison Park.

Everton stayed unbeaten this season to remain three points clear at the top of the table after a number of controversial calls went their way.

Klopp was mystified as to why Henderson's goal was ruled out by VAR.

"There were a number of big moments in the game," he said. "The only situation I saw back is the Henderson goal and I didn't see offside. The picture I saw is no offside, but it was offside because somebody decided it."

Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with his side's performance, even though they were denied a fifth straight Premier League win.

"We competed with them," he said. "We were 1-0 down and equalised, 2-1 down and equalised. It was a good test and I have a good feeling."

"To know we can compete with the champions of the last season it gives us more confidence for the future."

Sadio Mane missed the Villa Park mauling after testing positive for coronavirus and the Senegalese showed he was badly missed, with a smart finish from Andy Robertson's cut-back to open the scoring in the third minute.

The pivotal moment came when Virgil van Dijk was on the receiving end of a dangerous late lunge from Jordan Pickford inside the box minutes early in the game.

However, no penalty was awarded after a VAR review because Van Dijk had been marginally offside and Pickford was lucky to avoid a red card.

The Dutchman's towering presence was missed at the other end as Michael Keane equalised in the 19th minute.

Mohamed Salah put Liverpool back in front with a spectacular strike with 18 minutes to go but Dominic Calvert-Lewin headed Everton level again.

The home side were reduced to 10 men after Richarlison was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle on Thiago Alcantara and looked to have conceded in the dying seconds.

However, the drama did not end there as VAR deemed Mane to be offside as he provided the cross for Henderson, despite television

replays proving inconclusive.

CHELSEA DRAMA

Frank Lampard demanded Chelsea cut out their costly mistakes after Jannik Vestergaard snatched a stoppage-time equaliser for Southampton in a dramatic 3-3 draw.

Germany forward Timo Werner scored his first Premier League goals to put Chelsea two up in the first half at Stamford Bridge.

Danny Ings got one back for Southampton before mistakes from Kurt Zouma and Kepa Arrizabalaga gifted an equaliser to Che Adams in the second half.

Kai Havertz appeared to have spared his team-mates' blushes when the Germany midfielder restored Chelsea's lead.

But Lampard's side were denied when Southampton defender Vestergaard headed home following more poor defending in the closing moments.

Chelsea have just two wins from five league games and have already conceded nine goals, leaving Lampard to plead with his team to be more efficient at the back.

"We need to be more solid. Making individual mistakes gives other teams chances," he said.

"We are seeing lots of goals across the league and no manager is happy."

"There are attacking players in this league and maybe pre-season and lack of working time plays a part. But we have to get better at it."

Lampard was encouraged to



Southampton's Jannik Vestergaard, second right, celebrates after scoring his side's third goal against Chelsea

see Werner score for the first time in the league in his fifth appearance in the competition since his move from Leipzig.

"They are great goals. The second in terms of the team was class but it is a lot to do by Timo. Those moments will come from him and other players," Lampard said.

But, as ever with Chelsea, the miscues from Zouma and Kepa underlined problems that remain unsolved at the back and could prove fatal to their chances of mounting a title challenge.

With Senegal keeper Edouard Mendy injured, Kepa was making

his first Chelsea appearance in almost a month after being dropped following an error-strewn start to the season.

Kepa's latest blunder is likely to see him exiled again and Zouma may be axed as well once Thiago Silva returns.

"You go two goals up, you want to finish it off. Southampton are a good side. They put pressure on us off the ball," Lampard said.

"My message at half-time was that the goal shouldn't change too much. We never got to the same levels in the second half. We can do better."

STERLING SCORES

Manchester City eked out a hard-fought 1-0 win over Arsenal, thanks to Raheem Sterling's first-half goal.

Sterling slotted a rebound into an empty net in the 23rd minute after City midfielder Phil Foden had a shot parried away by Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno at Etihad Stadium.

City was missing star midfielder Kevin De Bruyne because of injury, but did welcome back Sergio Agüero. The team's all-time record scorer played 65 minutes in his first match since June.

Ibra is king of Milan

AFP ■ MILAN

Zlatan Ibrahimovic made a winning return after being sidelined with the coronavirus as AC Milan beat Inter Milan 2-1 in an entertaining derby match on Saturday.

Ibrahimovic only resumed training this week after recovering from the virus but the 39-year-old Swede scored twice early on. Romelu Lukaku netted for Inter in the 29th minute.

It was Milan's first win in the derby since 2016 and sent the Rossoneri top of the table. Milan is the only team with a perfect record, having won all four of its matches this season.

Milan is three points above Atalanta, who lost 4-1 at Napoli, and five above Juventus, which visits Crotona later.

Lazio lost 3-0 at Sampdoria. It was a strange atmosphere at San Siro with only 1,000 fans allowed in the 80,000-seat stadium because of the coronavirus pandemic.

However, both teams were welcomed by hundreds of supporters as the team buses arrived at the stadium. Flags were waved, banners unfurled and fans roared their support — through their masks.



The virus had ruled out Inter players Ashley Young, Alessandro Bastoni, Milan Skriniar, Radja Nainggolan, Roberto Gagliardini and Jonut Radu.

Ibrahimovic won a penalty after a reckless tackle by Aleksandar Kolarov and, although his spotkick was saved by Samir Handanovic, the former Inter forward tucked home the rebound to put Milan in front in the 13th minute.

Milan doubled its lead just three minutes later with a fantastic team move as Hakan Calhanoglu sent Rafael Leão down the left flank and he crossed for Ibrahimovic to volley in.

Inter halved the deficit when Ivan Perisic crossed for Lukaku

to sidefoot home. It was the first league goal Milan had conceded this season.

Inter, which had fought back from 2-0 down to win 4-2 the last time the two sides met, almost leveled shortly after as Lautaro Martinez's header looped over Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma but Simon Kjær cleared off the line.

The Nerazzurri should have equalized on the hour when Achraf Hakimi was left unmarked but his header flew inches wide of the left post.

Inter was awarded a penalty in the 75th after Donnarumma brought down Lukaku but the referee changed his mind after video review showed the Inter forward was offside.



Atlético end goal drought

AFP ■ MADRID

Luis Suarez partnered Diego Costa for the first time and scored as Atletico Madrid beat struggling Celta Vigo 2-0 in La Liga on Saturday.

But the Suarez-Costa combination came to an early end as Costa was forced off injured in the second half.

Sitting in the stands, Costa was seen with his face in his hands and he was also hobbling after the final whistle.

He is now likely to miss Atletico's Champions League opener away at Bayern Munich on Wednesday.

For Atletico, this was a much-needed victory after back-to-back goalless draws had dampened enthusiasm following their 6-1 opening win against Granada.



AFP ■ BERLIN

Robert Lewandowski maintained his magnificent goalscoring form as Bayern Munich eased to a 4-1 Bundesliga victory over Arminia Bielefeld on Saturday.

Lewandowski scored four times in Bayern's 4-3 win over Hertha Berlin in their last match before the international break and struck twice for Poland in a victory over Bosnia-Herzegovina in mid-week.

The prolific striker took his goalscoring tally for the season to nine goals in seven matches with a first-half double at Bielefelder Alm after playing a big part in Thomas Muller's opener.

He then set up Muller for Bayern's fourth as the champions, who conceded to Ritsu Doan's low drive before losing Corentin Tolisso to a straight red card, made it four wins in a row in all competitions and climbed into second place.

Earlier, Substitutes Erling Braut Haaland and Marco Reus fired Borussia Dortmund into second (actually third after Bayern's win) place in the Bundesliga, linking up in the second half to seal a 1-0 win at Hoffenheim.

Dortmund, who had already lost one game this season, looked set to drop further points before youngster Haaland and veteran Reus

Bayern run riot



Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring Bayern's third goal

came off the bench in the second half to breathe new life into a blunt performance.

Haaland, 20, surged forward on the break to set up Reus with a tap-in and snatch Dortmund's first away victory over Hoffenheim in eight years.

Haaland was initially rested after he played three times for Norway in the previous two weeks, prompting criticism of the busy international schedule.

Hoffenheim were also without three first team regulars, as Croatia's Andrej Kramaric, Ghana's Kasim Adams and Czech defender Pavel Kaderabek were all sent

into quarantine after their return from international duty. The club confirmed on late on Friday that two of three had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Mijat Gacinovic missed a gilt-edged opportunity for Hoffenheim early on, and both Giovanni Reyna and Thomas Meunier came close for Dortmund.

Yet it was Reus who landed the decisive blow, slotting Haaland's square pass into the open net to score his first goal since February.

Dortmund now sit one point behind league leaders RB Leipzig, who held onto top spot with a 2-0 win against surprise high-flyers Augsburg.

Mbappe takes PSG to top

AFP ■ NIMES

Kylian Mbappe shrugged off any lingering fatigue to score twice in his second game in 48 hours as Paris Saint-Germain defeated 10-man Nimes 4-0 on Friday to take over top spot in Ligue 1.

The France forward struck the opener on 32 minutes at the Stade des Costières and netted again late on as a weary Nimes folded following the early dismissal of centre-back Loick Landre.

Alessandro Florenzi scored PSG's second on 77 minutes and Pablo Sarabia notched a fourth for the reigning champions as PSG climbed above Rennes on goal difference after a fifth successive win.

"I spoke with Kylian yesterday (Thursday), he told me that he felt good and that he absolutely wanted to play," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel.

"He's the guy who can always make a difference and he did just that."

New signings Moise Kean and Rafinha made their PSG debuts with a host of players missing following the international break and just four days ahead of the visit of Man United in the CL.

Earlier, Rennes extended their unbeaten start to the Ligue 1 season despite drawing 1-1 at bottom side Dijon.



Rangers beat Celtic in Old Firm derby

AFP ■ GLASGOW

Rangers beat a coronavirus-depleted Celtic side 2-0 at Celtic Park on Saturday to move four points clear of their bitter rivals at the top of the Scottish Premiership.

Two goals from Connor Goldson proved enough for Steven Gerrard's men, who are desperate to stop their bitter rivals winning a record-breaking 10th consecutive title.

In the first Old Firm derby without fans, Goldson headed in James Tavernier's free-kick in the ninth minute and tapped in from close range in the second half as Rangers recorded back-to-back wins at Celtic Park for the first time since 1995.

It was a first domestic defeat since the last clash between the Glasgow giants in December for Neil Lennon's men, who have a game in hand over Rangers with a long title fight still to come.

Celtic were without star striker Odsonne Edouard, Nir Bitton and Hatem Elhamed due to Covid infections, while Ryan Christie missed out as he was forced to self-isolate for being a close contact of Southampton's Stuart Armstrong, who also tested positive, while on



international duty with Scotland.

But Gerrard said that took nothing away from a dominant performance by his side.

"We've put in a really controlled, professional performance," Gerrard told Sky Sports. "I don't think we were at our fluent best but we've come here and controlled the game with and without the ball."

"We could maybe have scored more," he added. "There will be no getting carried away. We need to remain humble."

Steven Gerrard's side looks a different proposition this season and stayed unbeaten after 11 games. The team has conceded just three goals and scored 26 — one more than Celtic.

Umar Gul retires

Karachi: Veteran Pakistan pacer Umar Gul on Saturday announced he will retire from all forms of cricket after the ongoing National T20 Cup, ending an international career spanning 17 years.

The 36-year-old Gul, who played his last match for Pakistan — an ODI — in 2016, featured for the Balochistan team in the National T20 Cup, which ends on Sunday.

His side lost to Southern Punjab in Rawalpindi on Friday to be out of reckoning for the semifinals.

"With a very heavy heart and after a lot of thinking, I have decided to bid farewell to all forms of cricket after this National T20 Cup," Gul wrote on his Twitter handle.

"I have always played for Pakistan with all my heart and 100 percent of hardwork. Cricket is and will always be my love and passion but all good things have to come to an end," he added.

Gul could barely hold back his tears as his Balochistan teammates gave him a guard of honour.

The Peshawar-born Gul made his international debut in an ODI in 2003. He played his first Test that year itself. His last Test was against South Africa in 2013.

From 47 Test matches, Gul took 163 wickets at an average of 34.06. He also claimed 179 wickets from 130 ODIs, besides 85 wickets from 60 T20Is.

"Praying that the future will hold much more for me. Secondly, I would like to thank @TheRealPCB and all the coaches and people who have been a part of my cricketing journey. Special thanks to media, my fans and followers who made it all worthwhile. I supported me at all times," he said.

Planning to start domestic cricket from Jan 1: Ganguly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much awaited domestic cricket season will start from January 1, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said on Saturday.

The BCCI Apex Council met on Saturday evening and a good amount of time was spent on discussing the domestic calendar which had been thrown in disarray by the surging cases of Covid-19 in India.

"We have had extensive discussions on domestic cricket and we have tentatively decided to start the competitions from January 1, 2021," Ganguly told PTI from Dubai.

When asked if it would be a curtailed season or not, the former Indian captain said the board won't be able to accommodate all domestic tournaments for practical purposes.

"We will certainly have the full fledged Ranji Trophy redball tournament. It will probably not be possible to hold all tournaments," Ganguly said, hinting that BCCI is eyeing the January-March window for Ranji Trophy.

The BCCI president also assured that the junior cricket and women's tournaments will be held between March and April.

our age group and women's cricket. We will start with Ranji Trophy and then we will also have the other tournaments between March and April," he said.

He also informed that the Indian team will be allowed to train in Australia during their quarantine phase.

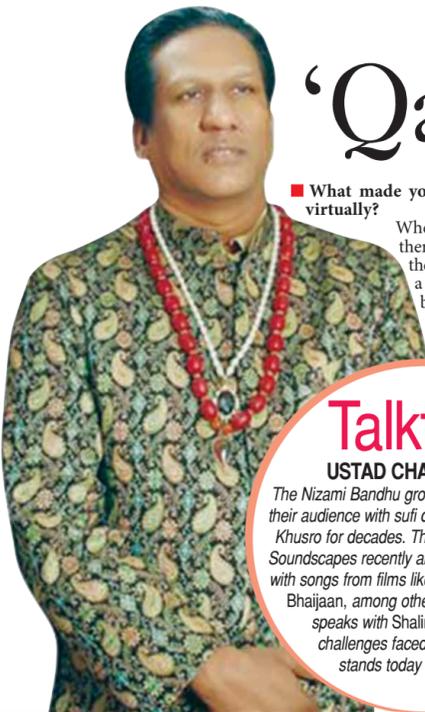
"Cricket Australia has sent us an itinerary and we discussed the modalities of that itinerary. We will be playing four Tests and that will end in third week of January," the BCCI president said.

The Indian team is expected to play three ODIs, three T20Is and four Tests Down Under.

On the home series against England, Ganguly said that the BCCI is monitoring the situation and the final itinerary will be prepared in due time.

"The England series is good three and a half to four months away. We still have time. We are monitoring the situation (Covid-19) which is pretty fluid and will take a call accordingly," he said.

While hosting the series in India (Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Dharamsala being likely venues) remains priority, the UAE is a second option.



'Qawwali is not about competition'

■ What made you say yes to perform virtually?

When they approached us, there was no reason to turn them down. They are such a big name and have been promoting music for sometime now. It is an honour for us that they gave us an opportunity to perform during these testing times. It was such a nice feeling to finally do a live performance albeit virtually.

Talktime

USTAD CHAND NIZAMI

The Nizami Bandhu group has been enthralling their audience with sufi qawwalis written by Amir Khuro for decades. They performed at HCL's Soundscapes recently and wowed their listeners with songs from films like Rockstar and Bajrangi Bhaijaan, among other sufis. Ustad Chand speaks with Shalini Saksena about challenges faced, where qawwali stands today and its future

■ In qawwali you need a certain setting, what were the challenges?

Not really. We have been singing for decades. Sufi qawwali has been in our family for over four hundred years. Singing is in our blood but we had to learn from my father, chacha and mamu. The good part was that the technical team provided all the help that we needed on site.

■ What is the reason why you choose to perform sufi qawwali written by Amir Khuro in honour of Nizamuddin Auliya?

This is not always the case. But yes, it is true. We are associated with the Nizamuddin Auliya dargah. Our identity is from here. Hence, our sufi qawwalis are by Amir Khuro. But we sing Meera Bai and Kabir Das too. We sing Bulleh Shah too. Since we are associated with this dargah we start off with Amir Khuro's praise for Nizamuddin Auliya. Our main stay is classic sufi qawwali.

■ Where does qawwali stand today as opposed to what it was before?

Sufi qawwali is here to stay as long as there will be dargahs and khan khaye. There may be some changes but it will not end unless the world ends

So much has changed — zameen aasmaan ka — I would say. The kind of singing that used to take place four hundred years back was on dhap (shallow rimmed drums) and in Persian or Arabic. Over the years, things changed. The person responsible for bringing sufi qawwali to the forefront is Khwaja Garib Nawaz — Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer. Back then, there weren't many instruments. Today, there are so many instruments — banjo, guitar table, harmonium to name a few.

■ Do you think that people's preferences have changed, how and why?

Yes. There is change in people's thinking and understanding as well. Even artists have had to change. If we don't change ourselves, we will lose our art and listeners. Jaisa desh, waisa bhash. It is important to have a taal-mel between the artist and the audience. We play what the audience wants but sometimes, we get requests that have no relationship with sufi qawwali. But we pander to their requests.

■ Bollywood shows qawwali between two groups — men on one side, women on the other. Is that a true portrayal?

One has to understand that what was

being shown in films back then was not qawwali. Qawwali is not about competition. It is something that was sung at dargah or what is happening now in films and what AR Rahman introduced. Not that the qawwali shown in films like *Barsaat Ki Raat* or *Mughal-E-Azam* was not good. But it was not qawwali. Sufi qawwali came into prominence due to Sabri Brothers and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

■ Have you had to change your style with the changing times? Has this been tough?

There are problems. But *agar ghora ghaans se dosti karega toh khayega kya*. People who call me and pay money, when they request a certain song, I sing for them but tell them that this is being done at their request and has nothing to do with sufi qawwali. It feels strange but we do. However, we always end with sufi qawwali. But I rarely get requests to sing other songs from people who know who and what we are.

■ What is the future of qawwali in India?

Sufi qawwali is here to stay as long as there will be dargahs and khan khaye. There may be some changes but it will not end unless the world ends.

Berco's food is music to your tongue

Berco's is to Delhi what the moon is to Earth, a given in good taste. Years of changing taste buds have not deterred the Capital's love for this vintage eatery

Every city, for decades, has had three main Chinese stops — a Chinese doctor, a Chinese shoemaker and a Chinese restaurant. All three come with an old world charm to them, igniting a strange kind of loyalty for the welfare of the tooth, foot and palate.

Lucknow has grown on its first offered Chinese restaurant Jone Hing, now a woebegone eatery in Hazratganj which once did brisk business on the experimental and growing tastes of college students. So much so that students would often book a table a weekend in advance so that the queues could be navigated faster.

That was the early 80s and the *samosa* was slowly being taken over by chowmein doused as it came in tangy vinegar, oil and chilli sauce. Those were the days when vinegar meant to Indian tongues either a cleaning agent or a condiment used for subtle enhancement and preservation of winter vegetable pickles.

Some tastes stay forever without any change or corruption. Zone Hing's chilly dry shredded lamb came in that category. And you can say the same for Berco's, Delhi's oldest and most visited Chinese restaurant whose Chilli Chicken Dry has such a distinct crunch and juiciness that none has been able to crack, not even the likes of Mainland China or Yo C h i n a

which are young in the journey and have, in the name of corporate eating, changed the joy of eating in the old time, family outing manner.

From that solitary Connaught Place inner circle perch to now over 18 restaurants all over and growing presence in malls, not to mention home deliveries, Berco's has not just survived the changing eating mores but also maintained its distinctness of taste, dishes and restaurant ambience which continues to give family values the place it deserves in our evolving society where value systems are being eaten up by cut throat survival in a liberalised globalised environment.

As you spoon up the chicken corn soup with some real good pieces of chicken and not just shreds that others have resorted to, you wonder what Berco's means. It's very distinctly not Chinese! It has no known Indian meaning either, or anything to denote any kind of food consumption. Well, it is not all those things simply because it is not even an English word in that sense. It is an acronym which stands for Bombay Electronics Radio Company, which used to sell musical instruments, cassettes etc, s o m e -



A platter of Honey Chilli Potatoes

thing that you may remember as a shop next to the original Berco's before it was taken over by a suitcase company.

It's, indeed, been a pleasure to grow up with Berco's as a restaurant, be it their undented fruit beers or hot and sour series of soups.

No other Chinese restaurant worth its name, and there are as many in NCR as there are mobikes zipping around on crowded streets, can claim to give you the same flavour and taste as Berco's.

Time may have changed enough for Berco's to expand into Thai and Burmese dishes to its original menu, but the originals continue to dominate a t e

like the honey chilli potatoes for one, or the honey chilli lotus stem. Add to that chilli fish, paneer and juicy chicken drumsticks and it becomes difficult to progress to the main course with an accommodating stomach.

Talking about expansion, again, the Phat Thai and the Khao Suey can never be assembled with the same finesse that Berco's does, especially the latter which comes with a bevy of condiments to enhance the coconut cream adding paradise to this cloud nine dish. Have savoured this Burmese speciality at almost all tables in all leading Chinese eateries but all will fall by the wayside, with you regretting the hole in your pocket with an anti-climax dish.

The same goes for the lemon coriander fish which delights you with its GH colour clarity as it does with its softness of being. The staples, chilli garlic noodle, egg fried rice and the American chopsuey (kids love this sweet mess) are vintage stuff in the Chinglish section as is the Mogolian stir fry vegetables to go with egg rice or hakka noodles.

In these pandemic times, home delivery has become inevitable but the most difficult foods to deliver and yet maintain their texture are Chinese and Italian, both of which get soggy and inedible. Two things here, maybe order stuff that can beat this trap or eat the moment it is delivered. But like in all its fare which Berco's has nurtured with sparing loyalty and indulgence, home delivery too is being tackled well, and of course with clean no contact delivery. For a music company to excel in old age is definitely music to your tongue.

'I make songs that I love listening to'

Lyricist-screenwriter-filmmaker AMITABH S VERMA, who has recently turned a singer with Awalla, tells MUSBA HASHMI about the response that the song is getting, what goes into writing songs and his upcoming projects

■ What is your song Awalla about?

Awalla is about supreme love. The highest form of love — the love for God. It is a sufi song where the devotee sees God as his/her beloved. Meera bai was one of the most prominent sufi poetess in the Bhakti movement whom we have mentioned in the song.

■ Your song has been receiving lots of love and appreciation. How does that feel?

Yes. A lot of my industry friends have showered their love and appreciation on social media. It feels great to see so much appreciation that the song is getting. More so because we made this song without any commercial compulsion. We just wanted to make a nice song with everything from music to lyrics to the video according to our liking. This is the kind of song that I would want to listen to and I was sure that there would be many who would appreciate this kind of music. My brief to my arranger and programmer Nirmalya Humtoo Dey was simple: I wanted the music to sound rich. We have used live instruments and that has added a lot of value to this song.

■ You have penned down many beautiful and hit songs. Any memories that you can share.

Every song has an interesting story and every memory is worth sharing. I can go on and on. Let me share the story of one of my earlier films *My Brother Nikhil*. It had only one song *Le Chale* in three different versions sung by KK, Shaan and Sunidhi Chauhan. The song was to be used throughout the film in different situations. While recording the song with Shaan, Director Onir felt the need of another *antra* for a particular situation. Shaan was about to finish his recording. So Sanjay Suri who was also the producer of the film got into a conversation with Shaan and offered him tea to kill time while I was frantically trying to add a new *antra*. Thankfully I managed to write it in minutes.

The cult song *Alvida* from *Life in a Metro* was written about 10 years before it was finally used in a film. Pritam and I have been friends for a long time and we were also classmates in FTII. We made this song then and there. Anurag Basu heard this song and loved it so much that he decided to use it in a film. Another popular song of mine *Maa Ka Phone Aaya* from *Khoobsurat* was not supposed to be a song. We were making a ringtone to be used in the film. Once that was made Rhea Kapoor, the producer of the film loved it so much that she asked Sneha Khanwalkar, the music director and me to make it into a full song.

■ What does it require to come up with such good songs, Love is a waste of time and Alvida to name a few?

I try to make a song that I would love to listen to. It becomes a good song for the audience too because somewhere you connect with your audience. There are actually no rules. But there are a few things that I keep in mind while writing a song. But to answer your question, for me it is the melody and arrangement and then the choice of words that I feel makes a good song. A situation decides the thought and the mood of the song. The director gives a brief according to which it is written.

■ How has your experience been in the industry?

So far so good. No complaints and no regrets. I have been very lucky to get a chance to work with directors like Raj Kumar Hirani, Anurag Basu, Hansal Mehta, Onir, Vikram Bhatt and many more in various capacity. I think I am one of the few filmmakers who has actually experimented with various departments and have good work to my credit. From working as an Editor in feature films for which I was actually trained in FTII to getting to write scripts, to being a lyricist for songs that have become successful to becoming a director and now a singer, God has really been kind.

■ A change that you would like to see in the industry for musicians, singers and lyricists?

There is a lot of talent waiting to be explored. New people should be brought to limelight and new talent should be given chance. We have to make this industry accessible to more and newer talent.

■ Any upcoming projects?

Yes quite a few. My first film as a director called *Teen Do Paanch* should come out soon. Though we had planned a theatrical release but going by the present situation it will now be released on an OTT platform.

I have just finished a Musical Travelogue called *Kaleidoscope of North East* which I have produced, written and directed with my wife Shruti Anindita Verma. This is for Doordarshan and it has given me a chance to explore the unexplored. I recently made a short film *Bholi* which has won five international awards and is still doing rounds to various International film festivals.



Give your home a festive makeover

An inevitable responsibility marking the beginning of festive season in India is the clean-up drive in most homes. The cleaning spree, akin to a family tradition, gets in full swing once the festive season is near. But before moving to that stage, a crucial step that one has to go through is decluttering - it not only amplifies the aesthetics but also aids in physical and mental well-being.

Answering the tough questions Has this specific product or object been used in the last 1 year? If your answer is no, then chances are you won't in the coming future either. It's time to quit the 'you never know' outlook towards the things in your house — if you don't foresee yourself using a particular object in the coming six months definitively, then it's time to bid it a nostalgic goodbye.

Space it out It's never easy to admire the beauty of an over decorated home. One should remember to have distinctive high traffic and low traffic areas in your house. High traffic areas should be minimal with an easy grab-and-go flow for your everyday essentials. Low traffic areas can be as beautiful as they are useful.

Importance of Compartmentalising

In order to make your home look clutter free, one should divide up corners into convenient sections everywhere around the house. This not only helps to identify things which are useful, but also make every space easy on the eyes.

Arrangement is key Get to the bottom of those galling wires which are just piling up — they're probably not useful and all your electronic junk, including bat-



teries can be donated. Be fastidious about these little things — get wire organisers, label makers, baskets, acrylic storage to aesthetically organise every corner.

Transform the old into new

Make use of everything in that one corner of your house which is a Pandora's box of all the festive gifts from the

past. Break out that new silverware, glasses, tea light holders etc. or simply give them to someone who will use it. The festive, Indian clothes which have been nudging you during the months of lockdown can finally break free — audit your outfits and brighten up someone's day by donating clothes, shoes, accessories and bags you no longer need.

Getting rid of the unnecessary

Scan your kitchen thoroughly — take stock of everything which has piled up and look up the expiry dates. Unnoticed condiment packets, chipped crockery and mugs which haven't seen one useful day must be discarded from the cabinets. Your beauty and grooming essentials need to be separated with a fine tooth comb as well. So, avoid the unnecessary hoarding of those supplies and keep only those which are still good to use.

Glamming up your new space

It is now time to decorate your house by being picky about what you put out and choose your curio with care - less is more in recent times and nobody ever has complained about less dusting. Recycle old cards, newspapers, magazines, manuals, coupons, take out menus, old paperwork, half-used notebooks etc. Or get a little creative and refurbish some items in a fun family/friends group activity. Partly used candles can still add the glow to your house — collect all of them and look up an easy DIY tutorial on how to repurpose your used candles to make a new one.

Follow these simple and effective steps to declutter your homes to give your home a vibrant and spacious look this festive season. The writer is Pritika Singh, Founder, Mohi



"I'd rather be by myself than spending any time or energy on somebody that I didn't feel sure about"
— Blake Lively



FROM THE INSIDE

A super thriller all the way
Balla House puts to rest a lot of controversies and versions on the infamous Balla House encounter

2

4
Test of astrologer/astrology
The astrological chart at the moment makes one aware of the potential seeded in mind, making it possible to foresee the future



Will this year see the beginning of the return of the Durga Puja in its original form? SAIMI SATTAR discusses the idea with Kolkata denizens to find out more

THE HOMECOMING

This year, 41-year-old Arpita Sarkar is relieved that rather than being stuck for hours in traffic in the month preceding Durga Puja, she has been able to commute smoothly to and from office. "Things had come to such a head that we had decided that even though we hate spending these days away from Kolkata, we would do so," she says. But a tiny miniscule virus had other plans. So now, for the six days of the Puja, rather than engage in *pandal*-hopping, Arpita along with her family will cook something special at home, probably go to a relative's house where children too would be able to catch up with their cousins. "That is what *Puja* signified for us when we were growing up. Heading to *Mama baari* or *Bade Papa's* place with our parents is what we did as children. Even though, it is a community celebration, the crowds that have become synonymous with Durga Puja are not the essence of the festival," says 41-year-old Arpita who works as an HR in a multi-national company in Kolkata and counts dance and drama as her areas of interest. She often performs at the cultural programmes organised during Puja and this year she is recording the performance which is being put up jointly with other artistes on YouTube channels.

Over the years, for Bengalis and non-Bengalis, Durga Puja came to be centered around how many *pandals* they had hopped, which one displayed the best theme and which Puja Committee was likely to win an award that year. The lament, especially among the older generation, was that the emphasis was now on an extraneous journey while the festival was more of an inward cruise of devotion which had gone completely missing. But nature often has a way of setting humans on the path of course correction, sometimes in the form of a virus, only if they are willing to listen to its call.

Like every year, Ayandrali Dutta, travel and food writer who has made Delhi her home for the past 12 years, will be making her way back to Kolkata as a part of the 168-year old ancestral Burrabazar Mallick Bari Durga Puja that is celebrated at her house. "Over the past five-six years, Durga Puja has become a social media activity where you have to do a check in at all the *pandals*," says Dutta who sees her annual homecoming as something akin to the Goddess Durga's return to her maternal house.

At Ayandrali's, till last year, there would have been around 300-400 people visiting and eating at her house. These would be family friends, relatives, people who had heard about the *puja* through word-of-mouth. "This won't happen this year," says Ayandrali firmly. While the *aarti* would take place, the ceremonial conch would be blown but the place where the five-foot idol is placed would not be flocked with people who had queued up for a *dekkho* at the *prati-ma*. This year there would not be more than five-six at one time. But Ayandrali believes that this was very much-required. "We needed to slow down and cut down on lot

of frills which we thought were an important part of life. After all, that is what we have been doing during the past seven months and it has done us a lot of good. It has made us realise that minimalism could be a part of life. Instead of 400 people eating earlier, now there would be 50 and that it is perfectly fine. If we are feeding for the sake of charity, we can do it in some other place and in some other way," she says adding that *Pujas* had become a larger than life affair.

While Ayandrali is much younger, Arup Sarkar, a retired government servant can recall a time when *Pujas* were simpler affairs. "The budgets have become huge due to sponsorship by political parties and corporates. There is an excess of everything — lighting, theme, decoration. A lot of money is thrown around on the display but the devotion that is needed is nowhere to be found. Earlier, the way the face was crafted, the body made and the decorations done were exceptional. The idols were simpler but they inspired devoutness. The *bhakti* that came from the heart is no longer there," he says. He hopes for a return to the simplicity of earlier times but is not relying on the fulfilment of his wishes — even during the pandemic.

Arpita, a trained Bharatnatyam and Odissi dancer, too is not fond of the theme *pandals*. "The competitions are a way of showing off how much money can be splurged. The focus is on making expensive *pandals* and political parties have jumped into the fray as well. When we were younger, we went to see the *pandals* every year. The idols and *pandals* were the same each year but they inspired devotion. Since they are so intricate and expensive now, there are many restrictions about where we can sit and what we can touch so much so that people are not able to enjoy themselves," she says.

Arup points out that earlier there was a lot personal involvement. "The entertainment was different. Everyone from the extended family pitched in ensuring that the festivities went off smoothly. On the cultural side, someone sang, another one recited. It was unparalleled *anand*," he says.

Ayandrali too agrees that the complexion of Puja underwent a change as different members of the household became busier and a lot of work was outsourced to people. "Earlier every member had a responsibility to go and get the flowers, buy the vegetables, decorate the house and more so there was personal touch. Many of us no longer stay in Kolkata and when we return for Puja we prefer to outsource the work and spend time with family," she says.

Of course, like contemporary times, earlier too *pujas* entailed dressing up to the nines; *dhaaki* players who by their rhythmic percussions signalled the arrival of *Maa Durga* to her maternal home; the *dhumochi naach* made popular in the non-Bengali speaking areas by countless Bollywood films as well as *pandal*-hopping but it is the



OVER THE YEARS, FOR BENGALIS AND NON-BENGALIS, DURGA PUJA CAME TO BE CENTERED AROUND HOW MANY PANDALS THEY HAD HOPPED, WHICH ONE DISPLAYED THE BEST THEME AND WHICH PUJA COMMITTEE WAS LIKELY TO WIN AN AWARD THAT YEAR. THE LAMENT WAS THAT THE EMPHASIS WAS NOW ON AN EXTRANEANOUS JOURNEY WHILE THE FESTIVAL WAS MORE OF AN INWARD CRUISE OF DEVOTION WHICH HAD GONE COMPLETELY MISSING

new norms of social distancing that have forced many to sit back and rethink about the hijacking of this festival by Mammon.

The change had started around 25 years back when the concept of "theme *puja*" made an entry. From 1993-94 each of the *paara* (area) began to conceptualise the *pandal* around a contemporary issue. It could be questioning violence against women while celebrating a goddess or depicting the condition of refugees or creating awareness about social issue of contemporary relevance. As the *pandals* grew in scale, awards started being handed out for different categories like best idol, lighting, decoration, social work and more. To remain a contender in the competitions needed a scaling up of budgets and corporate sponsorship or by political parties entered the picture. And after that there was no looking back as each year the magnificence and size of the *pandals* grew and visitors from and around Kolkata lined up.

However, 48-year-old Sutritha Basu, a regional manager in a pharmaceutical company has a different take. Sutritha, who used to visit nothing less than 50-60 *pandals* every Puja, feels that these gave artistes and craftspeople a platform to display their talent. "Artistes who conceptualise the *pandals* are from arts college and are really talented. Depending on the theme, they get village artisans adept in crafts like mud, metal or others to make the *pandals* and give them an opportunity to showcase their ability. An entire economy depends on Durga Puja. These people have tremendous flair but it was never exhibited," he says and adds, "The awards are a recognition of the hard work and talent." Not just the *pandals* and idols but also the social work done by Puja Committee is rewarded.

Despite the changes, a *bonedi puja* or the one celebrated at a *Zamindar baari* (home) like the one at Ayandrali's ancestral home, still maintains tradition. "Even if they do not assemble at any other time, they make sure to come during *puja*. They dress up in traditional attire, wear the heirloom jewellery and have cultural programmes," says Arup.

In fact, historically it was only the *zamindar* and other rich families who celebrated Durga Puja at their homes. "There was no *paara puja* which started 100-110 years back during the British Raj. The *zamindars* objected to the *paara pujas* as earlier they had exercised a monopoly over organising Durga puja. Being allowed to visit one was considered to be a favour bestowed upon one. While all the *paara* people were not freedom fighters but they wanted that they should be able to express their hatred against the British. So the *asur* (demon) in the *pratima* (idol) was depicted like the British and the Goddess was shown to be killing him," says Basu.

Fast forward to today. And whether we would be able to annihilate materialism and imbibe the true spirit of the festival, this year and in the ones that follow, is a story that is unfolding and yet to be written.

MEANWHILE IN THE CAPITAL...

For sometime now the Durga Puja Committees in Delhi were in a quandary about the way they could go ahead and celebrate the festival without endangering people while ensuring that the festivities remained intact. The Purbanchal Bangiyo Samiti, a forum of 38 committees which celebrate Durga Puja in East Delhi formed about two years ago decided to take the lead and, post several parleys with Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi finally, managed to come out with a set of guidelines that attempts to do both.

While the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Govt. of India had already issued a Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the first week of the month, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) suggested some additional measures. All the event organisers have to obtain requisite permission from the District Magistrate concerned for organising the festival events well in advance. The order says that the capacity of each event site would be decided on the basis of area and social distancing norms, laid down by MHA by which in a closed space, a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity would be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 persons, and in an open spaces the size of the ground would be kept in view and strict observance of social distancing norms would be followed. Naturally, the seating capacity for each such site would be determined according to the norms of social distancing and observing Covid-appropriate behaviour.

This would include ensuring separate entry and exit at each event which will be strictly regulated and only those wearing a face mask would be allowed inside.

Every organising committee is supposed to video-record the entire event and a soft copy of the unedited video recording in pen-drive and a certificate, certifying that no violation of the SOPs/Guidelines issued by Govt. of India and Govt. of NCT of Delhi has taken place, shall be submitted to Nodal officers within three hours of closing of the programme of each day. In case of any violation of SOPs/guidelines the permission for conducting such an event shall be revoked immediately for all subsequent days. At all events only sitting on chairs with social distancing norms shall be allowed. Suitable arrangements have to be made for an adequate number of temporary toilets and other public facilities like electricity, water, sanitisers and thermal screeners at each site venue.

Mrinal Biswas is the general secretary, Milani Cultural & Welfare Association, Mayur Vihar, as well as the Purbanchal Bangiyo Samiti, a forum of 38 committees which celebrate Durga Puja in East Delhi formed about two years ago. Says he, "Only 11 of the 38 committees will organise the Durga Puja with a small idol. The rest would have a *kalash/ghot puja*. The idol would be eco-friendly with water-based colour and of the height of three-five feet. Some of the *puja* committees would be organising online pushpanjali. No cultural events, *bhandara* and stalls would be allowed."

At the Milani Clubhouse, they are registering members and handing out digital tokens for visiting the place where the idol is kept. The restricted entry would be rotated after every half an hour so that everyone gets a chance to offer prayers while maintaining social distancing. Children below 12 and elderly people above 65 will not be allowed inside.

For the immersion, a metal tank is being arranged by Purbanchal Bangiyo Samiti at Mayur Vihar Kali Bari Ph-1 and at Purbasha Kali Bari (IP extn) premises with each Puja committee being given a different time slot. Puja material like flowers, leaves and decorative items will not be allowed at the time of immersion.

Photos: Ayandrali Dutta



FAIRY TALES ARE MORE THAN TRUE:
NOT BECAUSE THEY TELL US THAT
DRAGONS EXIST, BUT BECAUSE THEY
TELL US THAT DRAGONS CAN BE BEATEN
— NEIL GAIMAN

Batla House enlists the details of an anti-terror operation and lives in uniform. It also puts to rest a lot of controversies and versions on the infamous Batla House encounter, writes J GOPIKRISHNAN

A super thriller on anti-terror ops

The book *Batla House* written by former police officer Karnal Singh is a real thriller and gold mine of information on the anti-terror operations, history and great analysis on the terror outfits targeting India. Karnal Singh (IPS) who retired as Chief of Enforcement Directorate was the Chief of Special Cell of Delhi Police which conducted the encounter with Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorists at Batla House in Delhi in September 19, 2008. The terrorists were hiding in a flat in Batla House after unleashing a series of terror attacks in various places in Delhi six days ago on September 13 evening by placing bombs in waste depositing boxes, which killed 22 people and injured more than 130 people. There were lot of controversies and different versions and even a movie was produced on the Batla House encounter, which was the finest precision operation of the Special Cell, the counter terrorism unit of Delhi Police.

After 12 years, the writer — Karnal Singh — the man who headed the encounter is declassifying the details of country's much talked about encounter operation. Apart from thrilling moments of the encounter declassified by the very man who conducted the operation, the writer explains how his trusted deputies cracked the case within six days of the serial blast which shook the Delhi on September 13, 2008 evening. This book also details the personal life of police personnel and their sacrifices in family life for the Call of Duty for the Nation.

Singh goes in detail about the life of his team members of the Special Cell, where the life of the policemen is always 24x7. The blast day was a Saturday and the writer, who was then Joint Commissioner and head of the Special Cell of Delhi Police, was helping younger son in solving Maths problems. While rushing to the blast spot hearing the serial blasts in Delhi, he tells wife to call elder daughter, who was in the city enjoying weekend with friends, back home. In six days of hectic work, team cracked down the hiding terrorists. There are many tearful moments in the book when the writer talks about late Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma, who lost life in the encounter.

On September 18, a day before the operation, Singh recounts getting calls from wife reminding him of their elder daughter's birthday. That very day, the writer learns (from other colleagues) that the key officer Mohan Chand Sharma's



son was in intensive care unit with acute dengue and dipping platelet counts. When he asked Sharma, the officer dismissed it saying wife and parents were taking care of the child, and got back to work. ACP Sanjeev Kumar Yadav who led the back-end team in the operation was facing tussle with wife due to his late hours. On the day of the operation too, he had fought with his wife and upon getting a call from office did not think twice before leaving his wife mid way to rush to office.

The writer details the lives of all his team members giving due credits to them, which is very rare in service stories. From constables to officers, the book details their role in the operation — unearthing the location of the hiding terrorists by tracing emails and mobile phones, using human intelligence, analysing the previous blasts in Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Surat etc. The writer acknowledges the role of each team mate checking the blast sites, explosive materials, forensic work and digital mapping to the person and how they undertook the recce operations before the shootout.

The writer clears all the doubts on the Batla House encounter in the minds

of many for the past 12 years. There were many questions including why Sharma was not wearing a bullet proof jacket. In their defence, it was a secret operation and the main team was disguised in plain cloth shirts. Batla House is a crowded area and densely populated by Muslims. As it was the festive season, the team decided to strike in the day, as many would be trying to catch up on sleep post night celebrations. Singh and team reached the spot upon hearing about the bullet injuries of Sharma, requisitioning more force and commandos. He details how he entered the encounter spot with a small team, weaving their way through narrow bylanes, past angry crowds.

This book exposes the dark side of Indian politics that works on appeasing minority vote bank. As all the terrorists belonged to a community and hailed from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh and shoot out location was a densely Muslim populated location in Delhi, the entire political vultures were parading in the Batla House.

This book is full of so many interesting stories. One terrorist, who left the scene in the morning, got so frightened upon hearing the news of the encounter

that he landed at a TV channel for live show in the evening. Nine bombs had been planted and explosion and diffusion took only in eight areas only. Explosion happened at five areas and bomb diffusion happened in three areas. One bomb did not work and could not be identified. The email claiming the role by Indian Mujahideen (IM) sent to media houses after the first blast claimed nine spots. Book also explains back ground of many terrorists, their role in money making by engaging in kidnapping for ransom, apart from role of radicalising agents.

The writer explains tough laws for dealing with terrorists. One such example is two days after the Delhi Blast, one terrorist Aftab Ansari (already facing death conviction jailed in Kolkata for 2002 American Centre) sent message to Singh saying he wanted to give details of the Delhi blasts. He had been caught by Singh in Delhi in 1995 and was jailed for some years. Once out of jail, he masterminded the American Centre blast and is now facing death conviction from 2005. After consulting Intelligence Bureau, Singh decided not to meet him in Kolkata jail. This episode shows how flimsy are our laws in dealing terrorists

and Ansari is still on appeal against the death conviction. The writer argues for different rules while arresting a person involved in terrorist cases. He says civilian norms on arrest can't be applied to a terrorist, explain the loopholes in it. When a person is arrested, police is mandated to inform relatives or near and dear ones. This is helpful for the other accomplices in the terror operations.

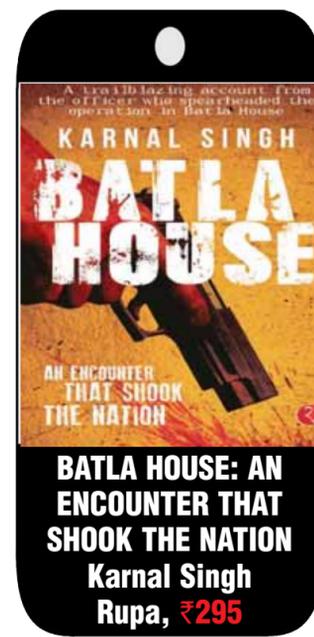
Singh explains the need for the maximum possible information to be shared with media to avoid fake and wrong stories. He explains in detail, how Delhi Police suffered bad press due to the stoppage of press conferences by Home Ministry and how he managed to handle the media by calling people to provide right things.

He narrates how a lady journalist and her journalist husband gave valuable inputs on tackling wrong reports being spread in media. The writer explains how he met the Jamia Milia University Vice Chancellor and appraised the exact information. Earlier the Vice Chancellor declared legal help as some students were arrested. Actually the terrorists were living in garb of students and were doing private jobs. After an explanation by

Singh and DCP Alok Kumar with all evidences, the Vice Chancellor changed the mind. The writer also explains how he convinced then Union Minister Kapil Sibal with all details, when many ruling party leaders were questioning the Batla House encounter, as Delhi Assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections were nearing. Sibal appraised the facts to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that day itself.

Apart from the thrilling narration of a detailed probe on the blast and identifying the hidden terrorists in six days and executing encounter in a crowded area, that too in daylight, this book explains many other aspects of policing.

This book is a classic book to be placed in Police academies and libraries for reference as it explains how to handle operations and future cases on human rights violation allegations and how to conduct trials. The book also details the history of terror outfits like SIMI, Huji, IM and their linkages with Pakistan and its ISI funded training and how they radicalise the youth to work against India. Let us hope more declassifications will come from Singh in the future through more books.



NEW ARRIVALS

A PLATE OF WHITE MARBLE
Bani Basu; Translated by: Nandini Guha
Niyogi Books, ₹450

First published in 1990 in the original Bengali, *A Plate of White Marble* tells the tale of the 'new woman' of an era that just witnessed the independence of a nation. Bandana, the protagonist, though grieves over her husband's early death, never conforms to the social connotation and ideals of 'widowhood', thanks to her uncle. She dares to begin her life afresh in every possible sense. But naturally, the road proves to be full of thorns as she gradually faces bitterness from many quarters of the society. The only thing she clings to is her son, but once that anchor too is lost, she leaves behind the safe concrete walls of what she used to consider 'home', only to work for a far greater cause — she joins a children's home to work for those who need her the most.

UTTARA KAANDA
S.L. Bhyrappa
Eka, ₹599

In Bhyrappa's *Uttara Kaanda*, Sita looks back on her life — abandoned at birth and abandoned again by her husband. Her entire life has been a quest for home, a sense of belonging. When they return from their long exile, Rama is anointed king of Ayodhya, but a pregnant Sita is sent away to live in a forest. Her exile doesn't end. *Uttara Kaanda* is Sita's soliloquy: O Rama, I loved the pure man you were in your youth, not the man you have become — not this man who is shackled by the royal throne. My love for you died sixteen years ago. A master of detail, Bhyrappa mines the ancient epic to humanise characters who have, for centuries, been looked upon as gods beyond reproach, bringing us as close as we'll ever come to understanding them.

A tribute to the frontline protectors

Sashidhar Vempala's book is about the lives and stories of the forest guards who are the real men behind the tiger conservation and the wildlife in India, writes DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

The story of India's wildlife success is incomplete, unless its frontline warriors are part of it. They are the first line of defence in protecting India's precious natural heritage and safeguarding its ecosystems. According to Sashidhar Vempala, author of first of its kind coffee table book, titled *The Tigers Behind the Tigers*, these men and even women are the unsung heroes of India's conservation success story. Vempala is an acclaimed wildlife photographer, documentary filmmaker, conservationist and a sustainability professional. His films on conservation topics and human wildlife conflict, have won awards at international forums.

The book talks about the lives and stories of the forest guards, who are the real men behind the conservation of tigers and the wildlife of India. The gist of six chapters of the book is that these men in *khaki*, patrolling the jungles are the real reason the tiger survives today.

All over India, 1,75,000 men and women serve the forests of India, 24x7, striving to protect the amazing natural habitat. Several lose their lives battling poachers of both wood and animals, many are seriously injured in animal attacks, but they go on with a courage and valour that is inspirational. They have learnt the ways of the forest, the sounds, the animals tracks, the secrets and a sense of fearlessness, always bumping into the wild and that too, dangerous ones when on foot.

This book, published during



the Covid pandemic lockdown period, is a collection of pictures and the stories captured during Vempala's work with them and hence it's a tribute to these frontline forest protectors, who are always at the frontlines of wildlife protection in our country.

In a recent conversation with *Agenda*, Vempala raised apprehensions about the possibility of the big cat being susceptible to Coronavirus when Jim Corbett National Park built quarantine wards. "But what about the forest guards? Are they still on duty?" asked Vempala. But then he goes on to say most guards are under permanent lockdown anyway.

Vempala in his book says each forest has a legend and even the vehicles have their stories. He refers to one such instance in the department bus at Kabini which

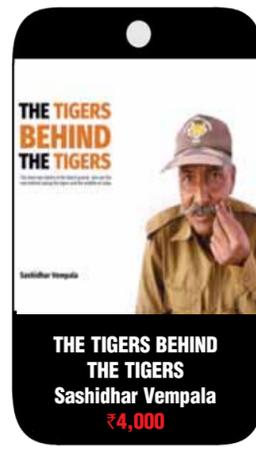
has many untold luck stories. Many, who cannot afford the exorbitantly high costs and monopoly of Jungle Lodges and Resorts, have to take this bus. The bus is considered extremely lucky in terms of a good sighting of the wilds when on board.

Each chapter deals with the importance of the frontline workers, who have made it possible to help tigers, lions, elephants, rhinos etc grow in numbers for decades. Saving Tigers on Land, Saving Tigers in the Mangroves, Some Fauna They Save, Human Elephant Conflict, Conflict Within and the Godspeed are the titles which deal separately on subjects and issues like economic valuation of the tiger reserve, gene pool protection services, carbon sequestration, zone of influence outside the reserve,

anti-poaching camps, the Sunderbans mangroves, some keystone species saved by the fauna alongwith hundred images.

While the book has notes on Kaziranga, a separate chapter makes for an interesting read on the human elephant conflict. Vempala talks about a case study in West Bengal where he mentions that for many centuries, elephants have roamed the forest of South West Bengal which has no natural elephant/animal corridor. Yet, the elephants have passed on their knowledge of the routes to their young ones.

Previously, the size of herd of elephant was small — 15-20, and total numbers of elephant that roamed the zone was between 30 and 45. This was for the period 1970s-1980s when the forest cover was degraded to some



their own meals, also cook for small animals to mighty elephants of the jungles.

In the last chapter, Vempala rues about the paltry wages of the guards risking the lives. World over, every year, more than 100 rangers are killed in the line of duty. India loses more forest rangers each year than any other country in the world. Yet, a forest guard in India is rarely felicitated or celebrated.

The book urges us to acknowledge the work of the forest frontiers and details how they work around the clock; what is a forest guards' life like and how they ensure that the tiger and all other wildlife is protected in the forest. The book also mentions that the forest reserve runs on acute shortage of manpower and of available approved positions, they operate at 60 percent, going to as low as 30 percent in some lesser important reserves. Daily wages form the bulk of the frontline forest force and they supplement the permanent staff of guards and foresters.

Such is Vempala's passion for the constituents of forest, that he founded a nature conservation organisation — Guardbook Conservation Foundation — which works towards forest conservation and supporting the forest guards of India in their duties. Guardbook helps the forest guards not only with boots, jackets and torches but also with powering up camps with solar energy, setting up rainwater harvesting pits and a lot more.

Farm reforms for realising its full potential

There are exigent issues in Indian agriculture. India, despite being the largest milk producer and second largest producer of food in the world, has just 2.3 per cent share in global export market, with low value addition. We process less than 10 per cent of agricultural produce and lose ₹90,000 crore rupees annually due to wastages. 44 per cent of Indian workforce is engaged in agriculture, contributing only 14 per cent to GDP — keeping these people tied in very low-income traps.

India's agricultural productivity is drastically low even as compared to global counterparts like BRICS; at Chinese yield levels, India could nearly double its production or halve the amount of land devoted to cultivation — freeing up that land for other purposes. So far, the Government's strategy to help the farmers has been to provide subsidies, especially the MSP and input subsidies. However, only 6 per cent of the farmers have benefitted from the fruits of MSP, which mostly happen to be the big farmers; farmers from only few States like — Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana; and mainly for wheat and paddy. Another undesired offshoot of the MSP policy is the excess procurement of food grains by the Government — it has to procure 90 per cent of wheat from Punjab and Haryana — while 62,000 tonnes of food grains was damaged in FCI warehouses between 2011 and 2017.

At the time of independence, facing food deficit, we needed the targeted approach of MSP to increase the production of food grains.

Currently, while having food surplus, we are suffering with the unsustainability of growing water intensive food crops at the lands ill-suited for them, owing also to free water and highly subsidised electricity, resulting in alarming fall of water table in certain States, especially Punjab and Haryana.

If agriculture is to be made profitable, a focus on productivity increase, crop diversification, exports and food processing is essential, while creating infrastructure for minimising losses.

The productivity trap

The productivity difference between the rainfed agricultural area and irrigated lands is immense. Swaminathan Commission stated that 60 per cent of cropped area falls under rainfed agriculture contributing to only 45 per cent of total agricultural output. Thus, poverty is concentrated and food deprivation acute in this area.

Agriculture is a very high-risk enterprise, much more so for small and marginal farmers which form 86 per cent of Indian farmer community and possess land holdings of less than 2 hectares. It is difficult to make agriculture profitable for them because they are too small for the use of modern implements, suffer from high input cost due to lack of economies of scale, leading to low productivity. Only 40 per cent of them manage access to formal credit, with low penetration of crop insurance. Thus, bearing the brunt of vagaries of nature as well as market volatility of food crops, stuck in the debt trap of money-lenders; these farmers are pushed to suicide. In 2019 alone, around



10,000 farmers and farm labourers died by suicide.

The Ashok Dalwai Commission has also called productivity increase as the single most important factor in doubling the income of marginal farmer group.

Contract Farming and FPOs

In the recent policy initiative, the Government has adopted a two-pronged strategy: Contract farming and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO). Contract farming will help the farmers, especially small and marginal farmers to access formal credit, modern implements, technical assistance, low cost inputs and assured price at the

farm gate; thus, increasing crop productivity, avoiding wastage, shielding the farmer from pre and post-production risks. Another benefit of contract farming is selection of crops based on agro-climatic and soil condition of the area, making the agriculture sustainable.

FPOs are registered groups of local farmers — especially small and marginal ones — with a company like management structure. The function of FPOs is to help farmers in pre and post production operations from access to formal credit, inputs, technical assistance to primary processing, marketing, etc. They will also be well placed to negotiate over contract

farming or private purchase of food produce with private players. They will be given monetary grant and credit guarantee by the Government to promote local produce. Government has also created Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) of Rs 1 lakh crore for creating post-harvest infrastructure, which will be mostly functional by providing interest subvention on such projects; and the Government intends to utilise this Fund through the FPOs.

It will have to be seen how much of this vision is actually implemented on the ground. The sustainability of the FPOs, post Government grant period, shall also be an area of concern.

State rights and APMCs
Allegations of encroachment of State rights and federalism are also being made as the Central Government used the entry 33 of the Concurrent List to bring out the farm Acts. It would be interesting to note that none other than Prof MS Swaminathan, the biggest well-wisher of farmers' rights in India, had recommended shifting agriculture to the Concurrent List and creation of a single Indian agriculture market in his report in 2006.

While the APMCs were formed for fair and transparent price discovery for farmers, they have failed and succumbed to cartelisation, while becoming highly politicised. In return to the mandi fee, the services provided to the farmers are abysmal — with no cold storage facility, no facility for grading, sorting, packaging of food produce. Before the onset of e-NAM, the pan India e-trading portal by the Central Government, and push for mandis to connect — most weren't providing e-trading facilities. Ashok Gulati, an agricultural expert, has placed an important question in the public domain: instead of fearing the redundancy of APMCs, why don't the State Governments take this opportunity to make them a competitive option for farmers by providing better services at lower price? In fact, we are seeing a trend to that effect — Karnataka has greatly reduced the mandi fee; Punjab and Haryana have reduced the mandi fee for basmati by 50% or more. So, the future of APMCs is to become more efficient and effective and not be wrapped up, and States must work to that regard.

Farmers vs corporates
The reforms in agriculture have also created certain areas of potential hazard to farmer's interests. As restriction for stocking up food is removed, it can lead to big retailers or corporates manipulate prices in the market, often to the disadvantage of the farmers. In contract farming also, corporates can dictate price to farmers and reject produce on the basis of quality, shape, size, colour, etc. Same fear of less negotiating power of farmers vis-à-vis big buyers, during sale of food produce even outside APMC, exists.

Create Market Regulator

While capitalism has taught the world that competition improves quality of options, we are equally aware of tendencies of monopolies forming without any active oversight of State, rendering the competition neither free nor fair. Hence, an independent market regulator and dispute redressal forum (akin to TRAI and TDSAT) must be created for agricultural sector to check unfair practices by corporates and private players and protect the interests of farmers.

Further, if the farmers are to be truly free and agriculture to be made profitable and sustainable — there's still no alternative to Government's own work on the front of setting up cold chain for farmers in villages, implementing more irrigation projects, recharging of aquifers, greater push to extension services and primary processing at farms.

(The author is a public policy analyst and a lawyer, an alumnus of National Law University, Joalhpur)

Instead of whipping up the esoteric phobia that the new farm laws will render APMCs redundant, the protesting State Governments should take this opportunity to make these sluggish bodies competitive for farmers by providing better services at lower prices



SONAL SHUKLA

PERSPECTIVE

New revolution in making in Kyrgyzstan

The sudden political unrest and conflicts in former Soviet nations are not accidental. The primary reason is that all of them have suddenly ceased to become a sphere of Russian influence after 1991. Kyrgyzstan, known as the only democracy in Central Asia, has literally turned herself into a mobocracy in a span of few days. The rag-tag Opposition backed groups are fast occupying Government establishments, including the most prestigious Parliament building of the country. Currently, the protesters are appointing their favourites as mayors, ministers and even Prime Minister. The only problem with these self-declared or mob-appointed authorities is that all of them can be overturned by stronger and well-armed groups again. So, there would be no end to such chaos if it persists like this. The safe road ahead is to bring legitimate authorities back to the seat of power as per the law of the land.

However, Kyrgyzstan is no stranger to such calamities as its people had a good experience of Tulip Revolution of 2005 and the resurgence of violence in the year 2010. The Tulip Revolution is also known as the First Kyrgyz Revolution that led to the ouster of President Askar Akayev in early 2005. Going back to the recent history of the country, what we find is the people of Kyrgyzstan had a strong yearning for democracy. The country conducted parliamentary elections on February 27, 2005. The revolution started after the parliamentary elections when Askar's allies came out victorious. But it was alleged that the election was marred by widespread election frauds. In fact, such malpractices were also confirmed by the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) after the election. Thus, a massive protest campaign started to dislodge the corrupt and authoritarian regime of Akayev, who had been ruling the country since the 1990s. The revolution was a turning point for Kyrgyz people as it made them realise that democracy is possible in their country.

The 2010 crisis took place because President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from power in an uprising on April 7, 2010. His stronghold in the south of Kyrgyzstan witnessed massive violence. During that time, the pro-Bakiyev supporters organised resistance to the interim Government led by President Rosa Otunbayeva by seizing Government buildings and taking officials hostage. What added fuel to the fire was that the sizeable Uzbek community in the country backed the interim Government. Taking advantage of the power vacuum, criminal gangs and

drug mafias aided in sparking communal violence in the southern city of Osh between Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups. It forced thousands of Uzbeks to flee the region. Most of them had fled to neighboring Uzbekistan only. As per the UN estimate nearly 4,00,000 people were displaced during this violence. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees regarded the crisis as ethnic clashes. But many say that there was a strong element of Bakiyev in stoking violence across. But only this factor could hardly be blamed for mass killings and indiscriminate fighting among numerous groups.

The current political turmoil started only after the results of the parliamentary election held on October 4 was declared. Interestingly, only four political parties out of 16 have crossed the threshold to claim a seat in the country's Parliament called Supreme Council. This council was earlier known as the Supreme Soviet of the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic until 1991. Unfortunately, out of all these four parties, three are closely connected to ruling President Sooronbai Jeenbekov. None of the established Opposition parties has even secured a single seat in Parliament. Therefore, all the 12 Opposition parties have come together after the election to reject the results. That is how the current political drama unfolded across the country, mainly in the capital city of Bishkek. The primary charges brought against the pro-Jeenbekov parties are vote-buying and voter intimidation. For now, the authorities have annulled the results of the disputed election, necessitating a re-run of the vote in the country of more than 6.5 million people. What now the protesters are demanding is the immediate impeachment of the President. A group set up by several Opposition parties called as the Peoples Coordination Council Opposition for now has assumed all state powers and dissolved the Parliament. Meanwhile Parliament agreed to nominate Opposition leader Sadyr Zhaparov for the post of Prime Minister. He also aired his view that he would propose a constitutional reform before holding presidential and parliamentary elections within two to three months from now. But he was uncertain about the backing of the coordination council about his candidature because there are strong differences of opinions among all the allies. It was absolutely unclear when Parliament agreed to convene to approve his appointment as Prime Minister. This all demonstrates that the current situation is too fluid. And there is every possibility that some other leaders might also

claim key political offices. As Prime Minister Kubatbek Boronov resigned, Jeenbekov called for an all-party meeting to resolve the political crisis.

Former President Almazbek Atambayev might play a key role in this crisis. It's very apparent from the series of events that have taken place in and around Bishkek. The mob led by Atambayev's son went to the State Committee for National Security and released his father from the prison. Therefore, Jeenbekov has termed this crisis as an attempt to seize power. Precisely, Zhaparov do not have a clean background and he was sentenced to prison for ten years for taking a person hostage. He is a former MP from the nationalist Ata Jurt Party. Around the same time, some other notorious leaders have also appeared in the scene just to take the advantage of the chaos. Among them the most prominent one Melis Myrzakmatov, who was a former mayor of Osh city, is now back from his self-exile and started gathering his supporters. He is well known for his ultra-nationalistic campaigns in the region wherein ethnic clashes took place in the year 2010. Incidentally, he was the mayor of the Osh when these conflicts took place there.

The problem at the heart of Kyrgyzstan is that it is the poorest nation of the former Soviet Union. There is an acute shortage of natural resources in this country. But after the sudden collapse of the USSR, the country became a gateway of trans-shipment of Chinese goods for the whole post-Soviet republics. And the problem was that since the beginning, no single group or leader could have monopoly over the country's political landscape. It is only the coalitions that have been dominating the political scene so far. But ironically, there is no broad consensus among all these coalition groups. And again, those who were not included in the coalitions have also been able to exert control over some pockets across the country.

Another issue is that in most of the Central Asian Republics, the power of the First Secretary was brought to practice. But this did not materialise in both Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan. As a result in Tajikistan, the absence of an efficient leadership led to bloody civil war in that country. When it comes to Kyrgyzstan, the power calculation was initially stable, but gradually the fissures have come to the fore. In fact, frequent changes of leadership have led to fierce political competition. Many a time, there is insufficient legitimacy of people who are occupying the corridors of power in Bishkek. These have added to

It has been a fortnight since the Kyrgyz people raised the banner of revolt against the October 4 parliamentary election results, which have been annulled for fresh polls. However, aggravating the crisis is Opposition groups' inability to arrive at a consensus on picking up a leader



MAKHAN SAIKIA

what we have witnessed today in Kyrgyzstan.

At present, it's simply mob rule. Now, to be pragmatic, Bishkek needs to find a way to hold a fresh parliamentary election. But the worst-case scenario could be a fresh civil war. The chances of such a catastrophe are too high. Too many groups are claiming and re-claiming their leaders as genuine representatives of the people. Better for Kyrgyz people is to see that situation remains under control. The plain and clear message for both the vigilante and the activists is not to destroy public properties in the days to come. After all these are public assets. No one will gain anything by smashing public squares. Of course, they represent symbols of power and authority. But in reality, they are run by the politicians. Hence instead of crushing the physical structures, it is better to change the leaders. And bring back true leaders so that they would be able to safeguard common interests. Finally, it's high moment for Jeenbekov and the rest of the political folk display complete sense and sensibility to save the fragile democracy of this former Soviet republic.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

Sir Syed Ahmad's pluralistic ethos

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) is generally misunderstood as a rabid communalist or, at best, a parochial activist who promoted Western education among his co-religionists by founding in 1877 Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College which grew into Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. He was a social reformer who sought to improve morale, education and infuse critical thinking and scientific spirit among his country people. Several articles in his Urdu periodical, The Aligarh Institute Gazette, 27 April 1866, against the backdrop of their reservations about sea voyage, he advises: "We recommend all Indians, particularly the competent lawyers, to undertake a visit to England. We should make it a point to sponsor the visit of talented, sincere persons of integrity to England. They will learn there the norms of governance. Their interaction with the British public figures will be of immense benefit to India and Indians."

Equally sagacious is his following advice to Hindu brethren, published in Aligarh Institute Gazette, October 29, 1868: "Your plight is owing to your low morale while you keep blaming others. Would you like to remain in the same mess forever? We believe that if Hindus persist in their superstitions, other communities in the country will outpace them and assume honour and power. Hindus will only then regret, full of remorse. We are confident that their giving up superstitions will accrue to them very rich dividends."

Against the backdrop of the British policy of "divide and rule" by creating discord among Hindu and Muslims, he instructed them to live in harmony. "India is inhabited by the adherents of many religions. Hostility on the grounds of their religious diversity mars their relationship. They have turned more antagonistic to one another by the day. As citizens of the same country let us have cordial relations, good

conduct and treat one another well as fellow countrymen. We cannot have a single religion for the whole country. However, this should not give rise to intolerance and bigotry...We Indians are afflicted with such sectarian hostility that we have turned into foes, forgetting all of our common ties. Those guilty of it are utterly foolish. This foolishness will disgrace us and our country."

Female infanticide, remarriage of widows as a taboo, and child marriage vitiated the then Hindu society. Far from demonising Hindus and placing the blame at the door of Hinduism, Sir Syed exhorted them to reflect on these issues and act in a logical, humane way: "Our fellow countrymen oppose the remarriage of widows. So doing, they violate the laws of nature. This prohibition is against the will of the creator of this world."

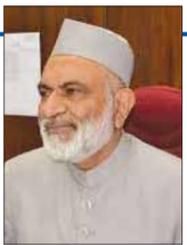
On receiving reports about cordial inter-caste programmes in Punjab, he delightfully remarked: "We are proud of those gentlemen in Punjab who have eliminated inter-caste segregation and forged a bond among all. Let our other Hindu brethren emulate this practice. This will bring about real progress and happiness in our country."

He spoke highly of those Bhargavas, Thakurs, Vaishyas, Chaturvedi's, Chaubeys, Jats and Brahmins who had set up educational institutions in Agra, Bareilly, and western UP: "Out Hindu brethren have excelled us, while we sit idly. They have paid special attention to promoting education."

Equally gratified he was to note Rajputs having meals together with members of other castes, as mentioned in Aligarh Institute Gazette, January 3, 1873: "In Jaipur, food was served. All of them sitting on the same table took it. Rajputs joined, without any reservation."

Being an educationist, he realised the importance of interaction and academic excellence which could take the country to greater heights. He urged: "Let all patriots note that if you have a sincere love of your country, you should encourage overseas education. This will sensitize our youths to the latest happenings in the world, boost their morale and

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was one of the most outstanding gems India produced in the 19th century. The rationalist, moralist and humanist dynamic force who devoted his life in promoting modern scientific education, particularly among Muslims, is often forgotten about his pluralistic vision. On his 203rd birth anniversary on October 17, it is time to remember that Sir Syed was a bridge builder between Hindus and Muslims as well



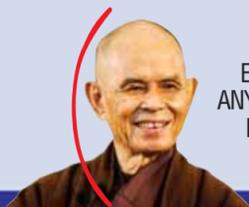
ABDUR RAHEEM KIDWAI

reinforce their confidence."

Sir Syed had cordial relations, notwithstanding occasional ideological differences, with the leading reformers of the day. He paid glowing tributes in his writings and speeches to Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1823), Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), Sir Surender Nath Banerji (1848-1925), Keshab Chandra Sen (1834-1884), Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928), Raja Shiv Prasad (1824-1985) and Bhartendu Babu Harish Chandra (1850-1885).

Sir Syed brought out for years an Urdu periodical aptly titled Tabzeel Akhlaq (Social Reformer) which upheld the ideals of pluralism, peaceful coexistence, critical thinking civic sense and self-respect. In the words of noted historian Professor Mushirul Haque, "As a Muslim, he considered it his duty to help the Muslims; as an Indian, he made it a point to work for the good of the whole country. There was no ambiguity in his concept of nation."

(The writer is a Professor of English. Presently, he is Director at UGC Human Resource Development Centre, Aligarh Muslim University)



EVERY THOUGHT YOU PRODUCE,
ANYTHING YOU SAY, ANY ACTION YOU
DO, IT BEARS YOUR SIGNATURE
— THICH NHAT HANH



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

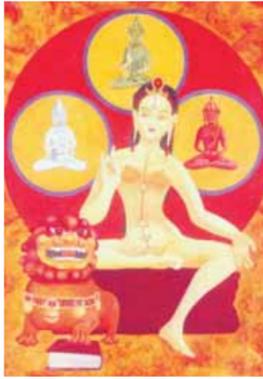
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week is a good time to enjoy your health and add extra charm to your persona. You are cheerful, hopeful, and full of life. You take good care of yourself, and the people you are concerned with. Compromising on health issues is not advisable. Balancing in your work and relations is important. On the career front, be cautious if you are in a job. Follow the discipline and set rules of the organisation you are working with, else be ready to face some displeasure of your seniors. Businessmen should be careful in their money transactions. There are conflicts and confrontations which may make you lose your calm. On the personal front, you may get involved in a great relationship. You are likely to be in a romantic mood.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You are a very positive, creative, and happy go lucky person. This is reflected in your personality. It is an excellent time to flaunt your charm and enjoy the path of personal development. The completeness, sense of vitality and peace in mind will make you very efficient this week. On the career front, you are confident and ready to face any challenges that come your way. You may win and earn accolades for your performance this week. You will be in your senior's good book. Do not let this success get into your head. On the relationship front, be careful as there are chances of counterfeit love. Investigate before you take any final decision. Existing relations should clear the doubts and confusions, if any, to avoid misunderstanding in future.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You are likely to change your mind about something that you think is wrong with you physically. Do not ignore what your doctor has told you. Those suffering from serious ailments need to be under the constant observation of doctors. Others also need prevention from seasonal ailments, which might aggravate if timely attention is not taken. On the work front, confusion about whether to leave the present job, start a business, or some undesirable circumstances is likely to occupy your mind. Changing your field would get you nowhere. Find out your interest and potentials. This is the time to be firm in your decisions and keep your ears and eyes open. On the personal front, there exists hope and happiness on the emotional level, along with a sense of security.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you need a break from normal life. There is a need to slow down from the hectic work pace and relax. Do not push yourself when you are tired, it may cause illness and injury. On the career front, you have the benefits of your communication both verbal or written and will get the good news regarding your career. Businessmen can acquire a secure position monetarily. Those in service will get the support of their seniors and boss this week, which is likely to prove a stepping stone in their career. Be cautious, stay focused on what you want to achieve. On the personal front, a new beginning and higher expectations are on the cards. This is the time when you need not put extra efforts in the relationship area.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Pastel colours
Lucky day Wednesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week work at balancing your *chakras* or your body, mind, and spirit. Pay adequate attention to all three. Meditation, *Pranayam* and walk in the nature would work wonderfully. The benefits are far greater than any effort you can put in. Professionally, connections with new people, especially people from other lands, will be beneficial. This is the time to make new business deals, sign new projects and assignments. Crack your potential. Stars are favouring you. Creativity, change, and development are the themes of the week. On the personal front, new ideas and plans will help you to revitalise your relations with the loved ones. Love is in the air and you are in full mood to express your feelings. This is a good time to make relations.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week take some time out for yourself. You are on the right track now, keep doing what you are doing. Learn more about rituals from the past. They will deepen your spiritual understanding and practice and help you to bring balance. On the career front, lots of activity, getting things accomplished is on the cards. You may make your peers look bad. You don't feel tired; being workaholic is your passion. Keep your behaviour in check, there are chances of using harsh words that create a hostile situation around you. Maintain your cool and equilibrium whatever the situation, that quality will add a feather in your career. On the relationship front, if you are currently committed, it may well rise to new and better heights soon.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Listen to your body with great care and attention. You are either overeating or starving yourself to lose weight. Both situations are bad for health. Bringing balance in food habits not only helps you to maintain your weight but it gives you a confident mindset. You are otherwise hale and hearty, enjoy the week. On the work front, investment done in the past is coming to fruition this week. This can be literal such as a bank account returning money to you. You will be reaping what you have sown. You are in the good books of your senior and soon there will be rewards. On the personal front, love and emotions will take back seat. You prefer isolation. Those committed must stay connected with their time to keep the spark alive.

Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

You need to balance your health efforts with your personal and professional responsibilities. Make sure that you are taking time out for your self, for rest and healing. If you put yourself last on the list of things, your health will suffer. Make sure to take adequate rest and sleep, too. On the professional front, if you are looking for a job, you have the ability and the skill to find it. If you are already employed, you will find a better position. If there's no room for a promotion in the current job, give serious thought to finding something where there is this possibility. On the relationship front, if you are committed, don't hesitate to speak your mind to your beloved. You stand with pride and express your feelings. This will only improve your relationship.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Saturday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you are likely to feel stressed out. You may be suppressing your emotions, and this will impact your body negatively. Be careful how, when, and where you vent your emotional reactions. Work to reduce your stress level. Think positive. Stay calm and connected. Anger is a silent killer. On the career front, tension is indicated. Be positive, this is a temporary phase. If you are trying for a job change, this is the right time. Making plans only will not help, execute them with sincerity. You have the potential to achieve the desired position. On the personal front, the time is right for soul-searching and discovery of the inner realms. It is a very positive time for you and an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Blue
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Tension and depression might take toll leaving you exhausted and under-confident person. Reading, meditation, and light exercises will give you relief and good sleep will help improve your state of mind. Uncertainties and confusion in life will melt away if you have a positive and creative mind. On the work front, you need to make some quick decisions. Make sure your intelligence and logic are used for a good cause. Do not waste your time in disputes. Solution for a problem is already there or will come soon. On the personal front, work with a cool mind rather than the raging heart. If you are already in a relationship, this can be a make-or-break period. This is a time to get very clear about what you want out of your relationships, and then take steps accordingly.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

On the health front, you seek to self-validate and believe in your talents. Your motto of a disease-free, happy family will get you busy. It is time to see how totally different and wonderful things can be. Professionally, you are positive and will try to bring love and compassion in your work. You are highly intuitive too. People are amazed to see this persona of you. This is a time to focus on your goals and targets. Be firm and determined. Those in business need to be tough in the money transactions. On the personal front, mind, heart, and emotions are going in different ways. This is a highly emotional time in love relationships. Things can quickly become heated. Treat your lover like a friend. Don't be in a hurry to end or to begin a relationship.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week keep your stress level under control to stay in good health. Deal with any problems that come up physically, don't try to avoid them. Be sure to get enough rest. If you need healing, ask for it. Sensitive people need caring, nurturing, massage, and hugs from dear friends, which will go a long way toward keeping them healthy. On the career front, other people may propose your new ideas or proposals, but if you know that you are right to go ahead. You are enthusiastic, full of energy and want to put your best, but others are not taking it positively. Leave your simplicity behind, be smart and little articulate. On the personal front, your relationship will move into a lighter, easier, and more balanced phase when you are sure of yourself.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Thursday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Test of astrologer/astrology

A couple of years back, a very dear friend sought appointment for his estranged wife. Though they had separated, they remained good friends. The lady offered her birth particulars, based on which her astrological chart was drawn. I, then, drew the chart at the moment of consultation. The ruling planets emerging at that that moment did not match with those of the chart drawn against birth particulars provided by her. It implied that the birth particulars were not right. In the Krishnamurti system, there is a proven method to check whether the birth chart is right. I then asked the lady: "Are your birth particulars correct?" "Yes," she affirmed. There was no fun in arguing with her. So, I made all my observations based on what the chart drawn at the moment of consultation reflected. After having answer to her questions, she satisfactorily went home. She then called up and thanked ex-husband for leading her to a good astrologer.

My friend then called me informing that the lady was quite happy with you. He then asked me: "Please tell me the birth particulars she furnished." He was left agast when I shared the birth par-

ticulars she had furnished. "Sir, she gave you wrong birth particulars. It was the one given to me at time of marriage to hide her actual date of birth. Later, I found her true horoscope. How come, your observations were so apt, even though she did not furnish her true birth particulars?" "Well, I ignored the birth chart, and instead counted on what the astrological chart at the moment of consultation reflected". I replied.

"How can the chart drawn at the moment of consultation reveal her state of affairs so correctly?" He countered. "Remember, there is continuum in time. What one is faced at a particular moment is culmination of doing and undoing in the past. Seeded in the present moment is how future is expected to unfold. The chart at the moment of consultation, reveals what prevails in your mind, and the way it is going to progress in the emerging times. If you know that you are planting a mango seed, being aware of its chemistry, you may be able to figure out the timeline of its progressive growth. The astrological chart at the moment makes aware of the potential seeded in mind, which makes it possible to foresee the impending future events."



We are often faced with such challenging encounters in our professional life, particularly in marriage matching. It has been observed that many parents of girls in marriageable age, fudge their birth particulars so that it matches with the groom's chart, to seal the marriage. They though hasten their girl's marriage, but with what end? In their rush to shed their responsibility, they don't care for their own daughter's marital happiness. When problems arise, the groom side comes with the question: "Sir, we had done matching before the marriage. Yet, why is it not working?" When cross checked, it comes out that the girl's chart was incorrect.

Recently, I came across such a situation when hassled parents of a newly married son came the other day with their charts. They asked me to suggest some *puja* that may help restore his marital happiness. Well, marital discord is always because of attitudinal differences of the partners. So, problem is seeded in their minds. How can any *pundit* invade their mind space through *puja* to make necessary attitudinal correction? They have to self-correct themselves to ensure marital happiness.

A look into the boy's chart revealed

that he had an inflated ego — bound by his own self-defined do's and don'ts — coming as it may with Mars conjunct Uranus, opposite Jupiter. He can't digest anything happening at variance with his own beliefs and perceptions. Being tactless and undiplomatic, his ill-timed and ill-framed reactions often unnerves others. When I looked at the girl's chart, it was found fudged. After making necessary correction, the chart revealed her true nature.

She was born in Gemini *lagna*. The sign lord Mercury conjunct Sun and Jupiter were in the *lagna*, opposite erratic Uranus, mischievous Neptune and Saturn in the marriage signifying 7th house. Debilitated Moon was opposite Venus. It implied that the girl lived in her own delusory perceptions, distanced from ground realities. She wished to live exclusively on her own terms, least bothered about other's sensibilities and concerns. Her sense of reasoning and judgment would be impaired. If things don't move her way, she may go wild. The result is there to see.

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