

MONEY 6
FY19 GST RETURNS FILING
DEADLINE EXTENDED TILL DEC 31**WORLD 7**
'I VOTED FOR A GUY NAMED
TRUMP,' PRESIDENT SAYS**SPORT 8**
KKR BEAT DELHI
BY 59 RUNS

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**USUAL SUSPECTS**
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Can Modi's appeal do wonders for Nitish?

Opinion polls in India may well be indicative but they are rarely accurate — as opposed to exit polls which tend to be nearer the mark. Part of the reason for unending inaccuracies lie in the flawed methodologies of the polls. Random sampling costs a lot of money, not to mention sampling rigour, and the limited budgets of media organisations often rule out a statistically robust survey. On top of that is the bizarre — but nevertheless real — inclination of some pollsters to produce results that appear good news to their clients. The importance of accurate predictions over make-believe good news has never been fully appreciated by either media organisations or political parties.

The real shortcoming of opinion polls in Indian elections can be located in the restrictions imposed by the Election Commission on the publication of the polls. Since it has been deemed that the campaign should not be influenced in any way by polls that predict winners and losers, the surveys are conducted before the battle lines in the constituencies are clear. The polls published so far contain a significantly large numbers of undecided voters — or voters who refuse to indicate their voting intentions. This means that small shifts can change the outcome. Accurate polls have to track the popular mood as the campaign progresses. Since this isn't possible owing to the restrictions imposed by the EC, speculation based on anecdotal evidence by politicians and media professionals abound.

Notwithstanding these obvious limitations, it is possible to make a few observations on the state of play in the Bihar Assembly elections.

First, there is a huge question mark surrounding the final turnout at a time of pandemic. The crowds at rallies may well be impressive and passionate about their preferences. However, while the mood of the rallies may well turn out to be infectious, it is pertinent to bear in mind the fact that those attending rallies constitute a small percentage of the electorate. Most voters make up their mind on the strength of accumulated experiences built up over the years, traditional affiliations and, finally, community choices. Rallies and smaller campaign meetings do help to disseminate messages, but they are never all-important inputs in the final vote.

Although Narendra Modi's appeal and popularity is intact, can it offset the impression that Nitish is well past his prime? Here the record is mixed. Modi couldn't offset the anti-incumbency against Raghuraj Das in Jharkhand; he and Amit Shah couldn't prevent the AAP victory in Delhi because Kejriwal had a higher leadership rating than local BJP faces. But electoral arithmetic has an important role

This election may be further complicated by the underlying fear of being part of a crowd on voting day. Although the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic is more pronounced in the urban areas, there is still a significant proportion of rural voters who are loath to step out of their safe zones and go into polling stations. I personally feel that the Bihar election may see a dip in the turnout of voters in the 50+ age bracket. If this happens, it is

conceivable that some of the advantages Nitish Kumar has gained on the strength of his governance record and a corresponding fear of the return of "jungle raj" may be neutralised.

Secondly, as a leader and administrator, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is understated. He is a quiet worker and is not inclined to be theatrical in his style. The prolonged disruption of normal life since March has meant that his presence on the ground has become more fleeting. This reclusiveness hasn't affected the administrative reach of the State Government and its work during the migrant worker influx from other States has been quite exemplary. However, quiet work is often peripheral to a loud narrative which exaggerates hardships and underplays administrative depth. It is difficult to know if this can shape the final outcome. The past record is mixed. In Odisha, for example, Naveen Patnaik's low-key approach hasn't affected his party's electoral outcome. In a similar vein, the Left Front in neighbouring West Bengal prevailed for three decades on the strength of the CPI(M)'s formidable network — this despite the fact that in terms of campaigning in the three weeks prior to voting day, the Opposition was more visible.

In Bihar, there is no doubt that in the past week Tejashwi Yadav has generated excitement on the strength of his aggressive campaigning and promise of 10 lakh new Government jobs. The BJP has responded with a promise of 19 lakh additional jobs, a promise which may either be regarded as a copy-cat assurance or have the effect of diluting both assurances. However, the fact remains that the Janata Dal (U)-BJP alliance has been reduced to banking disproportionately on the appeal of the Prime Minister. Now, although Narendra Modi's appeal and popularity is intact, can it offset the impression that Nitish is well past his prime? Here the record is mixed. Modi couldn't offset the anti-incumbency against Raghuraj Das in Jharkhand; he and Amit Shah couldn't prevent the AAP victory in Delhi because Arvind Kejriwal had a higher leadership rating than local BJP faces.

Finally, there is electoral arithmetic to consider. The Opposition in Bihar seems terribly fractured and the anti-Nitish Kumar vote may well be horribly fractured. This may give the incumbent the advantage in a first-past-the-post system. But there is also the uncertainty over the JD(U)'s organisational weakness and its ability to harvest votes in the constituencies it is fighting. What are likely to be the consequences if the BJP's strike rate is significantly higher than that of the JD(U)? This possibility has opened the doors to speculation and many conspiracy theories.

Every election in India is bitterly fought and clouded in uncertainty till the counting of votes. However, when the votes are counted, the results often reveal a clear pattern. Bihar may well be no different.

KITCHEN BUDGET GOES FOR A TOSS

Soaring prices of veggie, pulse, other essential items dampen festive spirits

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Already suffering from the Covid-19-induced miseries, the "aam aadmi" is finding it tough to manage his household affairs with his kitchen budget having doubled or tripled due to soaring prices of vegetables, pulses and even wheat flour (atta). As if the wiping out of the annual festivities due to coronavirus wasn't enough, the price rise has only added to the dampening of the festive spirits.

The kitchen staples are burning a hole in the common man's pocket. Prices of vegetables are already high as onions cost ₹80-100 a kg, potatoes ₹50-60 a kg and tomatoes ₹60-70 a kg while the retail prices of pulses have recently registered a steep hike. There has been a sharp increase in prices of most pulses including tur (arhar), moong, masoor and urad that have crossed the ₹100 per kg mark in most cities

across India.

Interestingly, a significant population avoids consuming onions during the "navratra" period (for nine days) but despite the lower consumption the prices continue to be very high due to shortage of supply.

Officials of the Agriculture Ministry said potato prices too have surged more than 62 per cent since May as production fell in key growing States and demand soared amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Traders in Uttar Pradesh, the largest potato producer in the country, said prices will remain on these lines at least till March.

As for onions, according to Rajendra Sharma, a wholesale supplier of the bulb at Asia's biggest vegetable and fruits market Azadpur, the supply has reduced from Maharashtra and Karnataka due to its shortage. "Of the 28 lakh tonnes stored in Maharashtra, around 10-11 lakh tonnes remain now. The yearly consumption of onions

	MAXIMUM PRICE (RS) PER KG	CITIES
Onion	95	Mumbai
Potato	60	Port Blair
Tomato	80	Raiganj
Moong (dal)	138	Mumbai
Tur/Arhar	130	Varanasi
Urad	130	Thiruchirappalli
Masoor	120	Siliguri
Wheat	48	Nashik
Atta	55	Port Blair

*PRICES AS PER MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS FOR OCT 24

in India is slated to be 160 lakh tonnes with Maharashtra alone consuming around 4,000-6,000 tonnes per day," he said.

"The heavy rain in September not only destroyed the new crop in Karnataka but also took a toll on stored onions in States like Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Farmers in Maharashtra alone had marketable onions, having stored the 28 lakh tonnes at the start

of summer," he added.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has imposed a stock limit of two tonnes on retailers and 25 tonnes for wholesalers till December 31. The Ministry has also supplied 35,000 metric tonnes of onion to States and Union Territories to maintain certain stability in prices.

The national acreage for rabi onions last season was 10

lakh hectares as against 7 lakh hectares of 2018-19. But the additional wastage has constrained supply. There are three main onion crops — kharif (June-July sowing, post-October harvest), late kharif (September sowing, post-December harvest), and rabi (December-January sowing, post-March harvest). The rabi crop has the least moisture content, making it amenable to

storage.

Given the steep hike in the onion price, the Telangana Government on Saturday decided to sell the edible bulb at ₹35 per kilo at the Government-run "Rythu Bazaars". Two kilos of onions would be sold per person and the consumers have to show any identity card.

According to Suresh Agarwal, All India Dal Miller Association, there is a shortage of pulses in the country as farmers have switched over from pulses to wheat and soybean since 2018. Besides, the Government policies also led to this situation.

Most pulses come to India from South African countries, Canada and Myanmar. India had imported 3.17 MT of pulses in 2014. This rose to 5.8 MT in 2016. It further rose to 6.6 MT in 2017, followed by 5.6 MT in 2018. In 2018-19 though, the imports reduced to 2.527 MT.

Cashback of extra interest on loans up to ₹2 cr soon: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In line with the Supreme Court's directions in view of the festival season and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre has finalised a scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of the difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months of loans up to ₹2 crore.

The move will cost the State exchequer ₹6,500 crore. The Supreme Court had directed the Centre to implement such a scheme "as soon as possible".

As per the operational guidelines issued by Department of Financial Services, the scheme can be

availed by borrowers in specified loan accounts for a period from March 1 to August 31, 2020.

"Borrowers who have loan accounts having sanctioned limits and outstanding amount of not exceeding ₹2 crore (aggregate of all facilities with lending institutions) as on February 29 shall be eligible for the scheme," it said.

Housing loan, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME loans, consumer durable loans and consumption loans are covered under the scheme.

As per the scheme, the lending institutions shall credit the difference between compound interest and simple

interest with regard to the eligible borrowers in respective accounts for the said period irrespective of whether the borrower fully or partially availed the moratorium on repayment of loan announced by the RBI on March 27, 2020.

The scheme is applicable on those who have not availed the moratorium scheme and continued with the repayment of loans.

The lending institutions after crediting the amount will claim the reimbursement from the Central Government.

According to sources, the Government will have to shell out ₹6,500 crore for the implementation of the scheme.

Income tax returns' deadline extended till December 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to provide relief to taxpayers facing constraints due to Covid-19, the Income Tax Department on Saturday yet again extended the deadline for individual taxpayers for filing their returns for Financial Year 2019-20 (assessment year 2020-21) by a month till December 31.

For those taxpayers whose accounts need to be audited, the Income-Tax Return filing deadline has been extended by two months till January 31, 2021.

The Government had in May extended the date for filing ITR for FY2019-20 from July 31 to November 30, to give



compliance relief to taxpayers.

In a statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said, "The due date for furnishing of Income Tax Returns for the taxpayers [for whom the due date (i.e. before the extension by the said notification) as per the Act was July 31, 2020] has been extended to December 31, 2020."

The due date for furnishing

of ITR for the taxpayers, who are required to get their accounts audited (for whom the due date as per the I-T Act is October 31, 2020), has been extended to January 31, 2021, it added.

The CBDT said the deadlines have been extended in order to "provide more time to taxpayers for furnishing of Income Tax Returns".

CAPSULE

FREE VACCINE PROMISE IN PERFECTLY IN ORDER: FM

New Delhi: Amid Opposition's criticism of the BJP's Bihar poll promise of free Covid vaccines, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asserted that the announcement was perfectly in order and a party can announce what it wants to do when it comes to power.

FAROOQ TO LEAD GUPKAR ALLIANCE

Srinagar: Seven mainstream parties of Jammu & Kashmir on Saturday gave a formal shape to their cobbled Gupkar alliance for the restoration of Article 370, electing National Conference's Farooq Abdullah as its chairman and PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice-chairperson.

RISHI SUNAK 'BARRED FOR LIFE' FROM UK PUB

London: UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak and three fellow ruling Conservative Party members of Parliament from northern England have been "barred for life" by a local pub and restaurant in their constituency region after they voted against free school meals for children during the holidays.

The Pioneer

wishes its readers
HAPPY DURGA PUJA

The offices of *the Pioneer* will remain closed on October 25 and 26 on occasion of Durga Puja. The next issue of the edition will appear on October 28.



A medic collects swab samples from a person for COVID-19 test, amid the ongoing Unlock 5.0, in Ranchi on Saturday
Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

PNS ■ RANCHI

The rate of Coronavirus transmission seems to be gradually going down in the State as with each passing day the number of infected persons is decreasing, as per the data provided by the National Health Mission (NHM), Jharkhand. Covid-19 tally in the State drew close to 99,428 on Saturday after as many as 383 people, including 86 in Ranchi, tested positive for the virus in 24 hours.

Notably, the figures of new infections in the State are on constant decline and the number of people recovering from the deadly disease is increasing at a high rate.

According to the NHM bulletin issued on Saturday out of the 383 fresh COVID cases 86 are from Ranchi district, 50 from Dhanbad, 48 from East Singhbhum, 40 from Bokaro, 28 from Garhwa, 21 from Khunti, 16 from Deoghar, 17 from Gumla, 16 from Hazaribag, 10 from Ramgarh and rest are from other districts

of the State.

Jharkhand on Saturday reported two Covid deaths, and both the deaths were reported from Ranchi. The Covid mortality rate of Jharkhand, as on Saturday night, was 0.86 per cent against the national average of 1.50 per cent.

As many as 470 Covid patients recovered from the infection in Jharkhand on the day.

However, Jharkhand's Covid recovery rate was still higher than the national average of 89.80 per cent. The Covid recovery rate in Jharkhand was 93.13 per cent on Wednesday.

The government has so far collected swab samples of around 31.03 lakh people and tested 30.87 lakh of them. Of the 30.87 lakh people tested, 98,061 were found Covid positive. At least 92,598 Covid patients have defeated the virus in the state, while 5,966 people were still infected, figures compiled by the NHM highlighted.

Govt to raise quota for ST, SC, OBCs in State: CM

Soren accuses BJP of posturing dummy candidates

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today said in Dumka that the State government has decided to change the reservation percentage of ST, SC and OBC communities in the State. The JMM executive president, who was on a two-day election campaigning tour to Dumka for the upcoming bypoll said that his government has decided to give 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in the State to, 28 per cent to St community and 12 per cent to SC community in the State.

The Chief Minister holding a press conference in Dumka on Saturday said that today thousands of daughters of Jharkhand are working forcibly in other states as bonded labourers.

"The situation of the girl child victims of human trafficking is quite bad. In this way, his government pioneered their return home. Recently, such girls working in Tamil Nadu were brought back home. Where they used to get a salary of 7000 rupees, today they are given jobs with salary of Rs10,000 in their own State. A work plan to provide jobs to about 8000 to 10,000 girls has been prepared and within the next one month they will get the jobs. Girls from Santhal Pargana region are also among such girls," he said.

Targeting the BJP Soren said that there should be a limit to telling lies. "People change parties, election symbols, colour of flags etc but by changing all these a person's thought process also changes. Our principal opposition party BJP has



Chief Minister Hemant Soren alongwith JMM candidate of Dumka constituency Basant Soren during an election campaign in Dumka on Saturday
Pioneer photo

fielded its candidates and some independent candidates are also contesting the polls in a planned manner so that they could distribute the votes by any means," he said.

Hemant sharply reacted to former CM Babulal Marandi's statement in which he said why only a Santhali tribals contest from Santhal region. He asked Marandi, "Does the BJP want a Chhattisgarh resident should contest elections from Santhal region? People of the state have seen that when a person of Chhattisgarh got power and looted Jharkhand."

Hemant said that in these bye-elections, the BJP has also kept some people as independents in a planned manner so that votes can be scattered. He said that when you ask such a candidate, he will tell that he has been raised in a planned manner.

Several Congress leaders, including Agriculture Minister Badal, Mahagama MLA Deepika Pandey Singh, Jamtara MLA Irfan Ansari, Boriyo MLA Lobin Hebram among others were present.

The JMM executive president attacked State BJP leaders. Not taking anyone's name, the Chief Minister said that today many BJP veterans, middle and small leaders are roaming in the by-elections. There are some Union ministers, some State level big leaders and some national level biggies leaders too. "Babulal Marandi, who has contested elections from different regions of the State, is the star campaigner of BJP in the bye-election. A few months ago, Babulal, who used to put BJP government in the dock, is seeking votes for the BJP," he said.

Hemant said Babulal should tell what he thinks about the CNT-SPT Act. "What does he think about the loot in the Momentum Jharkhand event? What does he think about the tribal-Dalits jailed in small cases? What does he think about those whom the previous government declared as Naxalites in the name of getting jobs in a fake way? What is his opinion on scams? What is his opinion on the arrest of Stan Swamy?" he asked.

HOME THEATRE

Mirzapur 2 as good or bad as 1



MIRZAPUR 2
Amazon Prime Video
***ing: Pankaj Tripathi, Divyenndu Sharma, Ali Fazal, Shweta Tripathi, Harshita Gaur, Rasika Dugal, Rajesh Tailang, Sheeba Chadha, Anjum Sharma, Vijay Varma and others**
Rated: 6/10

First things first. *Mirzapur* has not reformed itself from being perhaps one of the most violent, sleazy, abusive and yet unashamedly luring. Season 2 is even more so, at least in the first three mentioned traits. The disclaimer at the beginning attempts to assuage your alarm by saying totally fictitious and the like. However, the knowledge of this sort of a scenario being a reality in the cow belt of the nation, the unabated goondaism, the police criminal nexus, the impunity and violence with which criminals conduct their business keeps you on the hook all through the 10 episodes of Season 2, which, by the way, has set itself up for a third season. Personally, I eschew and cringe at pronounced screen violence and in this one the bloodbaths are what makes for the story.

Mirzapur is India's *Game of*

Thrones with just a tad less history to it. The man who will be King of Mirzapur has to be powerful, with no chinks of vulnerability in his demeanour. He should be able to kill at will even if it is his favourite and loyal servant for decades or his own father! Corruption of the system matches up with the corruption of the mind, boy and soul of all its main characters who have, come to think of it, done a pretty good job if you hate them all in equal measure. Will not be able to call *Mirzapur* riveting but yes it draws your blood to your temples, makes you curdle in fear and cringe in disgust with such pointed venom and force that it automatically qualifies for a binge watch. The end is predictable and similar to the first season, the characters have matured and the violence here prevails only to push the story into a state of no repair and the climax sets up the window for the next season with the polish of a veteran. *Mirzapur* will be watched in the third season too. How watch-worthy is such content can be a topic for debate on another platform. Meanwhile waiting avidly for the sequel of *The Family Man*.

Short & sweet

LAGHUSHANKA
SonyLiv
Short film, 14 minutes
***ing: Sanjay Mishra, Raghav Juyal, Abhishek Chauhan**
Rated: 8/10

The thing about short films is that they are fully loaded second to second to tell a story. In this format the story has to be short but have the potential of leaving a long term impact. Stunning climax, an ending you may not have fathomed, and every frame meant to tell the story, or should one say race to finish the story because the director has just 14 minutes to leave a mark on you.

Laghushanka is of that

potent, telling and interesting category. It deals with the issue of bedwetting by an adult girl who has a marriage staring down her face, a hysterical family and the prospect of it coming out in the open in her *sasural*. The film has been treated with a lot of acumen, tender loving care and slick production which keeps you hooked from the beginning to the end. It also delivers a powerful message on human weakness and ailments that are often treated with insensitivity and indifference. This head turner film is neither insensitive nor indifferent to the issue it has at and must watch.



Worth a watch

A SUITABLE BOY
Netflix
***ing: Tabu, Ishaan Khatter, Tanya Maniktala, Rasika Dugal, Ram Kapoor, Mikhail Sen, Namit Das**
Rated: 6/10

Many of us over the last 27 years would have tried to reach out to a copy of *A Suitable Boy* only to balk at the sheer size of the novel — 1349 pages. This alone was a good enough for a large number of people to stay away from one of the longest novels published in a single volume. But thanks to Mira Nair, one can now find out why the book had created quite a stir when the book was out in 1993. The subject was enough to make it the talk of the town — a mother's quest to look for a suitable boy for her youngest daughter. Even though there are a few misrepresentations of how women behaved back then and what they wore, one can give them a miss and instead concentrate on how Nair has brought the 1951s era alive once again on the screen. The six-episode limited series takes one on a journey on what it was like to live in a post-Independent India. A few clippings give us a sneak peek of what it was like when people voted for the very first time. But the mini-series and the book is not about post-Independent India but the lives of people in that time and how a mother

goes about choosing a husband for her daughter and rejecting many because they are — of course — not suitable. A mother knows best the adage which comes across loud and clear. Despite the fact that Tanya Maniktala's character keeps smiling even though there is an internal turmoil, she does a great job as the daughter who has to do the choosing. Tabu, Ishaan Khatter and Ram Kapoor



do a brilliant job in supporting roles. In fact, they are the backbone of this mini-series. While many may not agree with the whole concept with a mother looking for a suitable boy given that we are living in the 21 st Century. But the truth remains that arranged marriages and a parent choosing husband/wife is not such an alien concept even today. Overall, the mini-series is entertaining and keeps you glued wanting to know what comes next and who is finally the suitable one. — Shalini Sakesna

Of magic and life lessons

OVER THE MOON
Netflix
***ing: Cathy Ang, John Cho, Ruthie Ann Miles, Sandra Oh, Phillipa Soo, Robert G Chiu**
Rated: 6.5/10

There is something so sweet and cute about watching animation especially if it is a fairy tale. There is a reason why even adults love watching them.

The whole idea of seeing a kid believe in fairy tales and living it, makes us relive the same and take us back to times when we were kids and believed in Santa Claus and the idea of an old lady who lives on the Moon and keeps herself busy by spinning. But as adults, we do know that the dark patches on this natural satellite are actually deep craters on its surface.

Over The Moon, is one such sweet fairy tale even though it does borrow a lot from Disney — a castle, a princess, a side kick and neon colours that covers the entire canvas. But then Disney is the benchmark when it comes to animation and it is no wonder that the makers would want to be as close as they can get to perfection. This lunar adventure has

magical locations, fantastic animation, good music and sweet characters. The stark contrast when the protagonist lands on Moon, makes one feel a bit disconcerting but the vibrancy and positive life lesson — family is what matters the most — makes this a must watch especially if one has kids. — Shalini Sakesna

TELLY TALE

KULFI TURNS HOST
Popular child artist Aakriti Sharma *aka* Kulfi is all set to co-host Star Plus' upcoming singing reality show *Taare Zameen Par* alongside ace comedian Sugandha Mishra. The talented duo will enthrall viewers with various performances on stage, enabling a fun-viewing experience. Premiering on Monday, November 2, the show will highlight the musical journey of 20 children who will be nurtured, supported and encouraged by 3 celebrated mentors Shankar Mahadevan, Tony Kakkar and Jonita Gandhi.

Little Kulfi *aka* Aakriti Sharma has won many hearts with her innocence in her earlier show *Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala* and she is a pro at portraying emotions with much ease and perfection. *Kulfi Kumar Bajewala* fame Aakriti Sharma embarks on a new journey and she says: "I am happy and excited to host/anchor my first show on television. The



entire team has been kind and helpful especially Sugandha *di*, she has been the best partner to me. I get to learn so many things while shooting for this show since singing is my favorite hobby. In the coming days, I wish to learn the music from Shankar Sir who is the mentor on our show." Gear up to watch a unique show which explores the talent, personality and goofiness of young singing wonders. **THE UNBREAKABLE JODI** Sony SAB's widely acclaimed historical fiction show, *Tenali Rama*, continues to win viewers' hearts by reviving the ancient tales and anecdotes of the legendary scholar and poet Tenali Rama and taking them right into the heart of Raja Krishnadevaraya's Vijayanagar. The show continues to gain immense love and support for its engaging and values driven storyline that offers entertainment across all ages in a family. Talking about the glorious success on television and sharing their experience so far, Krishna Bharadwaj — everyone's beloved



Pandit Rama Krishna and Tarun Khanna — the celebrated king Krishnadevaraya, get candid about their journey so far as artistes and a lot more. Krishna Bharadwaj, better known as Pandit Rama Krishna since past three and a half years shared key highlights of the journey so far: "I have lived this character for so long that I do not even remember my life before Tenali Rama. Pandit Rama Krishna is a part of me, and I am so glad that I have had the opportunity to adopt all the noteworthy qualities of Rama. This show has given me immense love and support from the fans, and it is indeed a heartwarming feeling when a character succeeds in creating a positive change in someone's life. A lot of fans reach out to me talking about how the show made them smile or helped them cope with difficult times. As an actor, it is really fulfilling." Tarun, while sharing his views on the reasons behind the success of this show, said: "Since my childhood till now, I have never come across a show that is a total family entertainer and at the same time high on values. Tenali Rama is a show that familiarizes the audience with our Indian culture. In my family my six-year-old son and my 75-year-old father-in-law watch this show together. There are hardly any shows that can bring such distinct age groups together. The characters have been so beautifully and cleverly designed that even a character like Amma who has no dialogues in the show has been loved. The characters are so well rounded and unique that makes him stand out in any situation. This is immense hard work and dedication that has determined the success of this show. Sharing about their experience of working with one another, Krishna said: "I feel Rama and Krishnadevaraya's character are like Lord Krishna and Sudama. Rama practically worships Krishnadevaraya and would do anything for him. So, the chemistry between these two characters are really important for the show. After Tarun's arrival on the show, we never lacked the chemistry. It was there since day one." Adding further, Tarun said, "I was thrilled to be a part of this show as it is fulfilled my childhood dream of being a part of the world of Tenali Rama. Before joining the show, I had not watched any of the episodes and I

got the glimpse of Krishna's talent on my first day of the shoot. I have rarely seen artists who have such a stronghold on their language and Krishna is certainly one of those few actors.." **BEATING THE BLUES AWAY** Given the tough past six months that we have spent during the lockdown, the current festive season is giving a whole lot of positive energy to everyone! Last year during this time, we all were excited and in a festive mood spreading cheer all around. In the same way, Sayantani Ghosh who is currently seen as Rasiya in *Colors' Barrister Babu* & will also be seen in *Colors Shandaar Ravivaar*, misses being in Kolkata for Durga



Puja. The actress says she feels nostalgic about being away from all the festivities in Kolkata. However, the popular show *Barrister Babu* and the upcoming two-hour long special segment *Shandaar Ravivaar* are helping the actress cope up! Sayantani will be seen celebrating Durga Pooja and doing the traditional dance in both the shows. Commenting about the same Sayantani Ghosh said: "The ambience during Durga Puja in Kolkata is totally different. The festival fever is unmatched and everyone is gripped by the festive fervour. I miss the noise of the dhak (drums) and wearing new clothes. These were yearly rituals for me wherein there used to be one pandal in every single lane in Kolkata! This year, I am feeling a bit sad as I will not be able to go due to COVID-19. Although the flights are open now, I do not want to risk travelling especially because of the current situation as my parents are senior citizens and I do not want to risk their health. In our show the current track is around Durga puja and so is my performance in *Shandaar Ravivaar* and the atmosphere around is really making me feel more nostalgic. Hopefully next year, by the blessings of Maa Durga, I'll be able to go there!"

'Interesting to play traditional father'

RAJENDRA CHAWLA, who plays Pratap Ratan Bansal in *Tera Yaar Hoon Main* on Sony SAB, speaks with **SHALINI SAKSENA** about how tough it was to shoot under the new normal, how this role is different and upcoming projects

■ **What is your role in the show?**

The show represents three generations — grandfather, father and son. I play Pratap Ratan Bansal who is the eldest in the family. He lives his life according to what he thinks is right. He doesn't belong to the era where the father is not a friend but someone who needed to be heard when he spoke without being questioned. According to him each relationship is defined and need not be merged.

■ **What is the best thing about your character?**

It is his quirkiness that is interesting. It is not as if he is in a foul mood all the time. However, the other person may think otherwise. He is a fun person to be with. He has fun with this grandson. But he has a grudge. He wanted his grandson to be a cricketer but he could be one. So, Bansal keeps taunting him about this. But he loves his family.

■ **Was it tough to go back to shooting after the lockdown opened?**

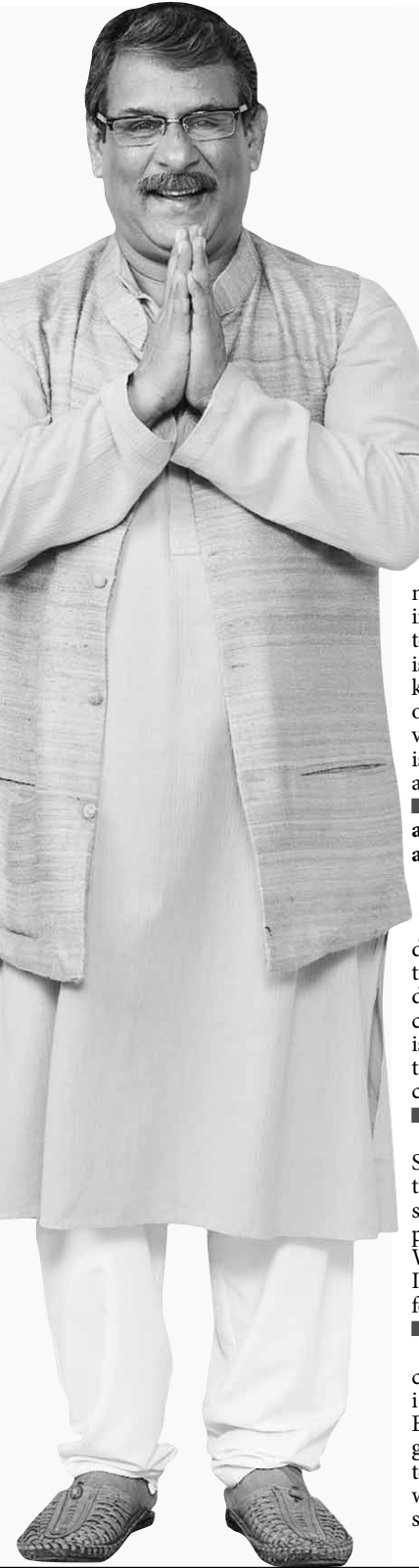
Yes, definitely. Before the show started its shoot, we had a virtual meeting with a doctor. He told us that while on the sets, we must always think that the person in front of us is asymptomatic. He told us that despite all the precautions the production house takes, we must not let our guard down. But doing this was so tough and scary. When we reached the set, the normal was to hug and greet each other. But on the first day, nobody exchanged more than two lines. Each one of us was scared that more conversation will mean a hand on the shoulder and we had to maintain distance. We avoided talking to each other. It will take time to get things back to normal.

■ **You have played the role of a father a few times, how is this different?**

The first thing is that I have never played a father who is from the 40s and the 50s. Till now, I had played the role of a progressive father. Here I play a traditional father which is interesting. Also, the way I deliver the dialogues is different, language here is different. The character is Marwari. I don't know anything about the accent or how they behave.

■ **You have been in the industry for over two decades now. How have things changed?**

Back then there were fewer people in the industry but we managed to get things done. Now, there are a lot more people and jobs are defined. Earlier, a verbal agreement was enough. Now everything has to be done via emails — it has become a corporate set-up



Before the shoot started, we had a virtual meeting with a doctor. He told us that while on the sets, we must always think that the person in front of us is asymptomatic

now. This could be because there is far more work involved. ■ **Does this mean that competition has increased?**

Yes, there is competition. But it also means that there is much more work in the industry. Many youngsters now don't have to struggle for work. There is theatre, there is TV, there is web and films that offer all kinds of diverse work. There is no dearth of work today. This means one gets to do varied work. Even cinema has changed. This is because the younger generation has access to more information. ■ **You have done TV shows and films. How are the two different when it comes to acting?**

There is no difference. For each platform, be it theatre, TV or films, I have always done my work honestly. The only difference is that in cinema, one gets more time to prepare for the character. The director has time to pay attention to how the character needs to go forward. In TV, this is not possible since the director has little time. So here, I have to be prepared 90 per cent before I reach the set. ■ **How did your acting career begin?**

It began with Marathi theatre. I met Satish Kaushik and ended up doing more theatre. In time, I ended up with a Marathi serial. Since I didn't have any Godfather my previous work propelled me further. Wherever I am today, is due to the people I met in my work and I am grateful to them for it.

■ **What are your future plans?**

I am working on two shows. One, of course, *Tera Yaar Hoon Main* and the other is *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* on Sony Entertainment Television. In between, if I get a film, I will do that as well. Also, I love to work with new-age directors. Working on web series doesn't involve too much time since they are finite.

BIHAR POLLS

Security forces watchful on naxal movement in bordering dist

PNS ■ RANCHI

In the wake of the Assembly election in Bihar; CRPF and Jharkhand Police have intensified anti naxal operations in the areas bordering Bihar following intelligence inputs that left-wing extremists can create violence.

While senior police officials of Bihar and Jharkhand as well as officials of central intelligence agencies have been regularly holding meetings to increase vigil in the bordering area sources in the police said that they are receiving intelligence inputs on a regular basis about movement and mobi-

lization of extremists across the border.

According to intelligence inputs the bordering areas of Chatra, Palamu and Garhwa district movement of CPI (Maoist) are being monitored.

The dreaded rebel Mithlesh who was earlier active in North Chhotanagpur has shifted his base to Koyalshank zone.

In Chatra district Naveen Yadav; the self-styled regional commander of CPI (Maoist) carrying Rs 15 lakh is forming his base.



Chatra shares border with Gaya district of Bihar where another dreaded rebel and special area committee member of CPI (Maoist) Sandeep Yadav is operating. Yadav who carries Rs 25 lakh cash prize on his head is also wanted in money laundering case.

Security agency is also watchful about hardcore CPI (Maoist) rebel Pradyuman Sharma who is currently operating in Koderma-Nawada.

Border of districts are being sealed and there is intensive search operation going

A representational picture of CPI (Maoist) rebels. PNS

on. Deployments are done after assessing requirements so strategic details can't be shared. We are sharing details of rebels operating both sides of the border," said a senior police official.

Similarly, security has been beefed-up in Giridih which shares border with Jamui and Nawada district of Bihar.

Significantly, in the last one and half year a number of encounters has taken place and many rebels of CPI (Maoist) were arrested by security forces.

For instance, three rebels were gunned down and one CRPF personnel lost his life during a fierce encounter under

Bhelwaghati police station of Giridih district.

The parliamentary and assembly election in Jharkhand held last year witnessed naxal violence.

Members of armed squad of CPI (Maoist) from Aurangabad district of Bihar were responsible behind killing of two persons at Pipra locality in Palamu district during parliamentary election whereas an election office of the BJP was blown in Latehar by them. During the assembly election rebels had gunned down four police personnel in Latehar during the assembly election.

Lalu likely to sacrifice goats to please Goddess Durga

VIJAY DEO JHA ■ RANCHI

Former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD president Lalu Prasad jailed at the sprawling Kelly bungalow is understood to have decided to sacrifice goats on Navmi, the ninth day of Durga puja apparently to please goddess Durga for electoral and political success of his party and his sons in the Bihar assembly election.

Lalu Prasad has even taken three sacrificial goats on the premise of this British era bungalow after his loyalist and party leader Irfan Ansari was seen taking goats inside the bungalow on Thursday evening. Navmi falls on Sunday and as per tantric tradition devotees sacrifice animals mainly goat to please goddess Durga.

The former Bihar chief minister is not only watching the Assembly

election in Bihar he is said to be controlling electoral strategies for his party and alliance in Bihar that his younger son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav is heading with chief minister ambition.

The RJD heading UPA alliance in Bihar is engaged in a crucial battle with the NDA combine. But like the 2019 parliamentary election, Lalu Prasad is not available for campaigning after he was lodged in jail following his serial conviction in Rs 950 crore fodder scam in 2017 and 2018.

Later on, he was shifted to RIMS for treatment and lodged at the paying ward.

Kelly bungalow became the new address of Lalu Prasad where he was shifted in August from the paying ward of RIMS to protect him from Covid-19 infection.



People outside Kelly Bungalow where RJD chief Lalu Prasad is lodged at RIMS, Ranchi. Pioneer photo

But, there is no clarity whether Bihar jail manual which Jharkhand follows, allows such sacrifices in the name of ritual at a time when the opposition BJP has been alleging the

Hemant Soren government for suspending jail manual for the comfort of Lalu Prasad. Intriguingly, the Jail department and RIMS have always issued conflicting versions whether

Kelly bungalow should be treated as a designated temporary jail or special ward for Lalu's treatment.

On being contacted IG (Jail) Virendra Bhushan said Kelly bungalow and Lalu Prasad are under care and protection of RIMS and Ranchi district administration.

"I don't know from where this report flashed. And, if this is true then security guards on duty should have stopped animals being taken on the premise. Somebody was referring to me on the news that goats were returned," he said. Public relation officer of RIMS Nitish M Paul Ekka did respond to repeated phone calls and text.

When contacted, senior party leader Smita Lakra said that she is not aware that Ansari has arranged sacrificial goats.

JD(U) joins hands with BJP for by-election

PNS ■ RANCHI

In the first ever press conference after notifications for by-election of Dumka and Bermo Assembly seats were announced senior leaders of the BJP and the JD (U) addressed a joint press conference announcing the NDA alliance will win both seats.

BJP's Rajya MP and party president Deepak Prakash and JD (U) national general secretary Praveen Singh addressed the media at JD (U) office in the capital city where Singh announced unconditional support to the BJP candidates against the JMM and the Congress.

Singh said that the BJP and the JD (U) are the natural alliance partners and his party will join shoulder with the BJP to oppose the anti-people poli-



State BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Deepak Prakash alongwith JD(U) General Secretary Praveen Singh during a joint press conference at JD(U) office in Ranchi on Saturday. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

cies of the Hemant Soren led UPA government in Jharkhand.

"This is a historic day for us as Bihar chief minister and JD (U) national president Nitish Kumar has extended support to the BJP in the by-election. Now people of Jharkhand are fed up with the 10-months misrule of the Hemant Soren led alliance government. Situation is quite

terrible in Jharkhand. There is complete lawlessness. Chief Minister neither trusts judiciary nor constitutional institutions," Prakash said.

Prakash poked fun at the chief minister he has announced to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with cabinet minister. "This demonstrates that the chief minister has lost his own confidence," Prakash said.

The NDA expressed concern over law and order situation in Jharkhand and said that so far more than 1200 cases of rape and murder has taken place in Jharkhand.

Both leaders pointed out some of sensational rape cases in districts of Santhal Pargana including Dumka.

Prakash alleged immature decisions have brought economic anarchy in Jharkhand.

Congress intensifies poll campaign in Bermo



Rural Development Minister Alamgir Alam alongwith Congress party leaders during an election campaign at Bermo on Saturday. Pioneer photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) on Saturday intensified its election campaign for the bypoll on Bermo seat. Kumar Jaimangal is Congress candidate for the seat.

Congress Legislative Party Leader Alamgir Alam along with JPCC Working president, Rajesh Thakur, Spokesperson Shamsheer Alam and Bokaro District President Manzoor Ansari visited Chandrapura, Pipradih, Ghatiali, Barwabhedha, Noorinagar, Raja Bazar area to meet public and they also appealed the people to vote for Congress candidate in the by-election of Bermo Assembly.

Addressing the people on the occasion Alam said that the State Government under the leadership of Chief Minister, Hemant Soren is working on various kinds of action plan for the public interest and bringing it down to the ground. "The pace of development work was slowed in the anomalous situation of the Corona transition period. Now the situation is becoming normal, many tasks will start appearing on the ground now," he added.

Alam said that under the MGNREGA scheme, work has been done to provide

employment to lakhs of people through various types of works. He said that the people of Bermo region had worked with great enthusiasm to elect Rajendra Singh as MLA for the sixth time. "This by-election is happening due to his sudden demise. Give an opportunity to Kumar Jayamangal from this region to speed up the development work done by the late Rajendra Singh," he added.

Addressing the gathering Thakur said that it is the traditional seat of the party. The work done by Late Rajendra Singh in Bermo with dedication will benefit the party in the by poll and now Kumar Jayamangal will carry forward his unfinished work.

He further said that the BJP candidate is saying that the people will vote him this time to do development work in the area but when there was a BJP Government at the Center and in the State then they could not do any development work for the people of the State, now how will the public believe their words that this time they work for the people. It is certain that the Congress candidate will win the election by double margin this time, he added.

Shamsheer Alam said that the public has decided to send Anoop Singh to the Legislative Assembly and his victory is certain.

'Thank you' gesture for bearing a girl child

Raj Mitra Mandal to support 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign

DIVYA MODI ■ RANCHI

From making a pandal using cashews to portraying Goddess Durga as Bharat Mata (Mother India) encouraging the soldiers to creating a facsimile of a Buddhist temple, Rajasthan Mitra Mandal is known for its unique concept and elegant decoration. Though the attractive installations may have become a thing of the past and the celebrations may have turned low-key, the organisers of this pandal have decided to convey a social message on 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' this year.

"With the increasing number of brutal atrocities against women making headlines every other day, we have thought of spreading a message on the importance of the girl child. According to the Hindu scriptures, a daughter is always worshipped. During the nine days of Navratri where on each day a form of Goddess Durga is paid obeisance to, I feel no occasion would have been better suited than to welcome the girl child into this world," said Ashok Purohit, president Rajasthan Mitra Mandal.

As a part of the campaign, during these nine days the organisers have decided to support underprivileged families who are blessed with a girl child and give them each a token amount of Rs 5,100 along with a basketful of goodies for the little one.

"On the ninth day, the selected families will be invited to the pandal premises and honoured right in front of Maa Durga. It is not a financial aid that we are giving them but instead is a gesture of our love and best wishes for the child's future. The idea is to encourage girl children and support a good upbringing for them," added Purohit.

Targeting families from the weaker section of the society, the committee members are identifying beneficiaries who are being blessed with a girl child in Sadar Hospital, Sewa Sadan and other places where people from well-off families do not go for delivery.



A woman performs 'Kumari Puja' at a Durga Puja pandal during the ongoing Durga Puja festival, amid the coronavirus pandemic in Ranchi on Saturday. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

"Our organisation has also invited all Durga Puja committees across Jharkhand to take up this initiative. Lets come together to strengthen and educate the girl - a form of sakshat Maa Durga. A step taken by us can give a new direction to the society," added Purohit.

Celebrating the festival in a grand way since 1979, this is the first time the Rajasthan Mitra Mandal pandal will have no fanfare and will also impose restrictions on the entry of visitors owing to the pandemic. As against 2019 when the pandal was made 41 feet high and 35 feet broad, this year the structure will only be about 15 feet high and 20 feet broad with a budget of Rs 5 lakh as compared to Rs 20 lakh spent the previous year.

In view of the present situation, provisions for online darshan have also been made. Live streaming of the aarti, pushpanjali and all other rituals will be done on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube. To avoid a crowd, the committee has also decided to not hold any bhog distribution and the prasad will be given to households living in the vicinity of the pandal.

The organisers have also made arrangements of sanitising the pandal premises on a regular basis. Thermal screening, hand sanitiser dispensers and masks will also be ensured along with social distancing norms.

From aarti to concerts, Durga Puja goes virtual this year

DIVYA MODI ■ RANCHI

The call of the conch and the beats of the dhak that reverberated through the City during the four-day long festivities of Durga Puja will not be heard this year. Adapting to the challenges of Covid-19, puja pandal organisers in Ranchi have decided to adopt technology and take revellers on a virtual tour.

With restrictions being imposed on social gatherings owing to the pandemic, crowded streets, serpentine queues, attractive installations, food stalls and fanfare- anything that would catch the public's eye will be seen missing this year.

"This is for the 50th year that we would be conducting Durga Puja festivities and were looking forward to hold grand celebrations. Keeping the present situation in mind, the festival will not be celebrated like every other year this time. Arrangements for online darshan through our Facebook page YouTube channel- OCC Club and Durga Puja Pandal Committee



Devotees take a selfie outside a Puja Pandal in Ranchi on Saturday

Ratan Lal | Pioneer

have been made. As against a budget of Rs 16 lakh last year, this year the budget is just Rs 2 lakh. The bhog offered to the deity is generally distributed amongst the devotees but this time no prasad distribution will be there," said Rajendra Singh, president of the CC Club and Durga Puja Committee.

Celebrating the festival in a grand

way since 1913, this year marks the 108th year of the Hinoo Puja Committee popularly known as Bangla Mandap. "All guidelines issued by the government regarding the festival will be strictly adhered to. Keeping up with the digital world, we have created a page on Facebook as well as Instagram and all cultural activities are being shared by the members

there since the past two weeks. From Panchami onwards, provision to show all the rituals and customs to the devotees is also being made through these pages. Live performance of Dhanuchi naach, synonymous with the festival will also not be conducted this year. The Committee has also decided that bhog offered to the Goddess will be distributed to the labourers present in the vicinity," said Indrajit Sinha, General Secretary of the committee. "A website www.durgabati-ranchi.in has been created by Durgaa Bati, where videos of all the rituals will be shared. A schedule stating the date and time of rituals like aarti and pushpanjali has also been uploaded and devotees can perform the ceremony by following the mantras from the convenience of their homes. The account number has also been mentioned for those who want to offer donations. We will pray for the well being of all and hope to celebrate the festival in all its glory next year," said Santanka Sen, Assistant Secretary of Durga Bati Main Road.

INBRIEF

SAHAY FLAYS BJP FOR VACCINE PROMISE

Former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Subodh Kant Sahay tweeted on BJP Manifesto, "In its Manifesto for the Bihar elections BJP has mentioned that the people of Bihar will get the COVID-19 vaccine free of cost. PM Modi if you intend to become 'Daani Karn' kindly gift it to the whole country. What crimes have the people residing outside Bihar done? It is a shame that the politics of the vote bank will lead to such discriminative pledges. The people of other states will be waiting anxiously for elections in their State, as it will be then that the BJP will promise them a free vaccine.



AIKM, JASM DECORATE STATUE OF DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

All India Kayastha Mahasabha, Jharkhand Andolankari Sangharsh Morcha Pradesh and Jharkhand Agitational Sangharsh Morcha decorated the statue of Desharatna Dr. Rajendra Prasad located at Rajendra Chowk in the capital city here on Saturday. The statue was neglected and was in a state of disarray due to the crushing of the dyeing crust. AIKM State president, Dr. Pranav Kumar Bablu, said that it is impossible to express in words the happiness of positive work during the Corona period. He said that this behaviour with the life-size statue of the first President of India, Bharat Ratna and Desharatna, is indecent. After the decision painting was done by Babubu, Suraj Kumar Sinha, Atul Anand, Financial Chairman of JASM, Azam Ahmad, Executive Chairman of Morcha Raju Mahto, Spokesperson Pushkar Mahato among others.



VALEDICTORY OF E-INDUCTION PROGRAM AT ICFAI

Valedictory of e-Induction program for newly admitted students during 2020 was conducted at the ICFAI University, Jharkhand here on Saturday. Besides the students, a number of parents also attended the function. Addressing the new students, Prof O R S Rao, Vice-Chancellor of the University said, "We are happy to note that all of you actively participated in the Induction Program and learnt not only about our University and how academic delivery is done but also a revision of fundamentals in Mathematics, Sciences, IT, Management etc."

JAISWAL PERFORMS PUJA



In the mythological temple of Rai Bahadur Thakurdas Jaiswal located at Murhu, Khunti, Aditya Vikram Jaiswal, President of Jharkhand Pradesh Professional Congress, performed the worship ritual of Maa Durga on the occasion of Maha Ashtami. On this auspicious occasion, Jaiswal duly worshipped mother Bhavani on the basis of mythological belief and wished the welfare, prosperity and prosperity of the state. During this period, the state government's guideline, sanitizer, social distancing was followed in the puja work. Shiva Narayan Jaiswal, the first Mayor of Ranchi (95 years old), grandson of Rai Bahadur Thakurdas Jaiswal, was joined by his grandson Aditya Vikram Jaiswal, who offered prayers to Mother Durga.

Time for rituals with a spurt of fanfare

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The steel city is gripped with the spirit of Durga Puja festivities. The festival marks the triumph of good over evil — battle of Goddess Durga with Mahishasura and her emerging victorious.

With creative pandals adoring, Jamshedpur has turned into a walking art gallery. From the well thought out themes of the pandals to beautifully crafted and painted idols of Goddess and her family, every puja committee has gone out to create the best-possible experience for the awestruck visitors.

“Though due to Covid-19 we are taking every precaution but still we are doing our best to give a traditional feel to the pandals. When it comes to the celebration the creative talents of artists get a free flow, bringing out an array of interesting pandals by each of the more than 300 puja samitis in the city every year,” said a member of



Durga Puja Committee.

It is common in our city to have a specially-created pandal for the worship of Durga. Every year devotees pour in to catch the glimpse of our pandal. We are ensuring that devotees follow social distancing norms while performing rituals,” said an official of Kadma Durga Puja committee.

The puja pandals are based on various themes. While some are keeping it simple others are honouring Corona warriors.

The South Eastern Railway Durga, Laxmi and Kali Puja

Committee at Traffic Colony, Bagbera, is Jamshedpur's oldest, founded in 1906, a year older than Tata Steel itself. The then stationmaster of Kalimati (renamed Tatanagar later), Dilip Sengupta, started this tradition way back in 1906. Tata Steel started giving its profit-sharing bonus in 1934 to enable employees to celebrate Durga Puja with fervour. “We maintained the rich legacy of the puja and devotees look forward to being a part of the celebration,” said a committee member.

ESL bags series of awards for community development, sustainability plans

PNS ■ BOKARO

In October this year, Vedanta Electrosteel (ESL) bagged a series of Awards and citations for their tireless efforts on community development and public interest works.

More recently, ESL received Greentech Foundation's 7th CSR India Award, 2020 and the SHE (Safety, Health and Environment) Excellence Award. Besides that, ESL honoured with four more awards, informed a Public Relation Official of ESL.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) presented the Outstanding Manager Award to ESL in support of the company's philosophy and working pattern to recognise and empower skilled managers.

The company, on the other hand, has received a certificate of appreciation from the FICCI for Quality System Excellence Awards for good practice in large-scale manufacturing quality systems, the official said.



Meanwhile, QCFI also awarded ESL employees with the “5S Kaizen Team Awards,” said the official. Sandeep Simone Behera, Director of Karunya Deemed University and Branding and Promotion and Brand India Advisor, said the 2020 Brand India Excellence Awards were organised to recognise and foster creativity, innovation and a culture of quality in enterprises, organisations and leaders.

For their outstanding work in CSR activities such as Women's Empowerment, Wellness, Education, Climate, Hygiene and Sports, Vedanta-

Electrosteel was selected for the Brand India Excellence Awards, in which they were awarded the most creative CSR Program category of the year, he said.

“I appreciate the initiative taken by the CSR Department of ESL and hope that the company's initiative will continue in serving the community,” he added. As a responsible brand, ESL always prioritises the security of the environment, the health and welfare of its workers and its society. The ESL official confirmed that ESL is still committed to serving its society.

Trade union politics to play decisive role in Bermo

ROSHAN KUMAR ■ RANCHI

The battle of Bermo will decide the trade union politics of the coal belt area of Bokaro and other adjoining areas. The Bermo bye-election will be the first poll in the past four decades that will be held in absence of coal belt veteran late Rajendra Prasad Singh.

Singh, a political veteran and towering trade union leader, who donned many hats and had an illustrious career passed away in May this year.

Singh, a Congressman who had held ministerial posts at various capacities had represented the Bermo seat for six times in both Bihar and Jharkhand Assembly. The Congress party with an attempt to regain the legacy of late Rajendra Babu popularly known by his supporters has given ticket to his son Jaimangal Singh.

The Congress is banking on sympathy votes and work done by Rajendra Babu.

Fighting against Jaimangal Singh is Yogeshwar Mahto Batul whom the BJP has fielded from the prestigious seat. Mahto had represented the seat on earlier

occasions too as in 2009 election, Batul defeated Rajendra Babu.

State Congress working president and party spokesperson Rajesh Thakur said, “There is no if and but, we are confident that Jaimangal Singh will win the Bermo seat easily. The man during Rajendra Singh's tenure as MLA has travelled the area and knows the pulse of people.”

Thakur further said, “We are also confident that Jaimangal Singh has a clear cut edge in election as the frustration shown by senior BJP leaders who are campaigning in election is much indicative that BJP has lost the battle.”

However, BJP leaders opine that in just nine months the Soren government has become unpopular. State BJP spokesperson, Pradeep Sinha said, “We are going to voters against the dynastic politics. Moreover, the people of the region are fed up with the failure of the Soren government in just nine months.”

Though both BJP and Congress are making their own claims behind their parties, the bye-election will decide the coal belt politics of the region.

Palamu Police visits families of martyrs, offers flowers, shawls

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Palamu police officials visited the families of the martyrs telling them they continue to be a family of State police. Flowers and shawls were offered to the head of the families said sources.

Sources said the martyrs' families too reciprocated it saying they feel attached to police even after years of losing sons in war against extremists.

SDPO Sadar Sandip Kumar Gupta leading a team of police officers including circle inspector Paton Sunit Kumar and officer in charge Vishnu Singh visited three such families of the martyrs on Friday under Paton police station and inquired about their welfare or if they have any problem then the local police will give them an all out co operation and support.

A family of martyr Ram Surat



SDPO (in blue mask) and team at a martyr's family in Paton. Pioneer photo

how the daughter in law (wife of the martyr Kishori Prajapati) has deserted them and does not at all take care of them to which Gupta asked police official of Sadar police station to take full details of this family for further follow up.

The 3 families where Gupta and his team visited got overwhelmed with gratitude as it had not expected them to be with them on Saptami of the great Durga Puja.

At one of the three martyr's house Upender Singh the police team of Gupta was offered slices of apples and pure milk tea which everyone partook. Group photographs were taken at each of the 3 families of the martyrs which the families loved giving for.

Singh asked Gupta to include names in the family ration card to which inspector Sunit Kumar and OC Vishnu Singh asked the family to come to Paton police station where his problem would be sorted out in collaboration with block level civil supplies official and thereafter at district level by district supply officer.

Another family of the martyr Kishori Prajapati told Gupta as to

Speedy train crushes two-wheeler in Dhanbad

PNS ■ DHANBAD

A two wheeler was crushed by Aspeeding Ajmer - Sealdah express train on Saturday near Renguni crossing under jurisdiction of Bhuli railway station on New Delhi- Howrah grand chord line.

Incidentally, the driver of the two wheeler escaped injury and managed to escape from the spot. The driver of the train stopped the train by applying emergency breaks. The station master of Bhuli station was informed who called the Railway protection force (RPF) that seized the crushed two wheeler and is in search of the owner.

The engine driver examined the engine position and when found to be safe took the train to its destination.

Eyewitness said the driver was trying to cross the tracks along with the two wheeler but got stuck. However, when the train reached near the driver left the vehicle on tracks and escaped

Eyewitness said the driver was trying to cross the tracks along with the two wheeler but got stuck. However, when the train reached near the driver left the vehicle on tracks and escaped.

In another incident, two engines of a good train detailed near Barmasia outer signal while it was going towards marshaling yard.

However, no one was injured in the incident. Accident relief train from Dhanbad was rushed to the spot to clear the tracks.

SOF Olympiad exams to be conducted online this year

51,000 students of Ranchi appeared in the Olympiads last year

PNS ■ RANCHI

Science Olympiad Foundation, the biggest organizer of Olympiad exams for school students in the world, has announced that the Olympiad exams will be conducted online during the current academic year. Considering the safety and health concern of students as paramount, all students will be able to appear in SOF Olympiad exams from their homes. Every year around millions of students appeared in the SOF Olympiad exam.

Last year, around 51000 students from hundreds of schools of Ranchi appeared in the Olympiads from class one to twelve.

Mahabir Singh, the founder director

of SOF shared that SOF is partnering a leading international organization to conduct online exams. Extensive use of Artificial Intelligence, remote proctoring, video recording of exams and various other tools will be used to ensure integrity of exams.

He also informed that during 2019-20, over 56000 schools from 32 countries registered for the 6 Olympiad exams and millions of students appeared in them. Awards, gifts, prizes and scholarships were awarded to the winning schools and students from each class, state and also at the International level.

SOF will conduct four Olympiad exams this year, including SOF International General Knowledge Olympiad, SOF International English Olympiad, SOF National Science Olympiad and SOF International Mathematics Olympiad.

Registrations are open and students may register up to 15 days before the date of each.

4 held for petrol pump loot in Giridih

PNS ■ GIRIDIH

Police claim to have busted a gang of robbers, who were involved in looting of a petrol pump in Giridih, while two gang members are still at large. Police arrested the accused from Simutalla area in Chakai on Saturday afternoon following a tip-off, said SP of Giridih, Amit Renu.

The accused have been identified as Deepak Kumar Paswan, Vikash Kumar Turi, Dipak Paswan and Vikash Paswan.

Police have also recovered one country made pistol, one cartridge, one mobile phone looted from petrol pump staff. Two other mobile phones used in loot were also recovered, besides one Mauti Van (JH-15T- 4816)



from their possession.

Giridih Superintendent of Police Amit Renu claimed that the accused were hatching a conspiracy to loot a Maa Durga Kisan Sewa petrol pump at Chitrokura. The SP stated that the accused were involved in several criminal activities, including attempt to loot and snatchings.

The robbery took place on

October 21 during which four youths snatched a bag containing several thousand rupees from one Soamitra Kumar Samant, a petrol pump employee here.

During a press conference, SP Amit Renu said, “The CCTV footage was of great help in tracing the accused. The accused persons belong to Chakai in Jamui district in Bihar”

Skyrocketing onion prices affects common man

PNS ■ RANCHI

Common people are very upset with the rising prices of onions in the State. Onions are being sold from Rs 60 to 80 per kg in retail markets in the State. Due to rain, onion crops in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have suffered damage due to which there is less supply of onion in the market.

Traders say that prices have increased due to short supply. Due to heavy rains in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, standing kharif crop has also been damaged, due to which supply has been disrupted.

Significantly, the traders of the wholesale market of onion are saying that there is no hope of relief for a month at the moment. It is estimated that the onion will be expensive till the new crop comes. The cost of onion will increase due to shortage, because after Navratri, its consumption can increase more rapidly. The government has banned the export of onion, but it does not have much effect.



A vendor selling onions at a market in Ranchi on Saturday

Pioneer photo

Onion prices rise not only affecting common people's kitchens but also street food vendors also. A food cart vendor Shreeram who installed his cart in front of Gandhinagar Hospital at Kanke Road in the State Capital said it has become very difficult to run the shop in such a situation. The customers are not willing to pay increased prices of products and selling in

existing prices is not profitable at present.

Expressing his unhappiness over onion price rise, Rajesh Prasad resident in front of Gandhinagar Hospital said people it has become difficult for people like us who are not salaried class. He decided not to buy onion in his weekly purchases because of the increased prices of onions, as he can-

not tolerate it. He has two children, worked in a salon but missed his job during lockdown.

Prasad said, “We have to manage everything without onions. I have been at home for the last seven months. I am not getting any job. I have two children and they are finding it very difficult to maintain. When the price of onion drops, only then we will be able to buy it.”

After the onion price rise, politics always intensifies and pressure on the Government starts increasing. Onion prices had become an issue in last year during the months of October and November when the State Assembly election was going on.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal has defended the Government by tweeting. He tweeted that many steps have been taken by the Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister to make onions available to consumers at an affordable price, ranging from restrictions on onion exports, relaxation of import rules, and supply of onions from buffer stocks.

Covid Plasma therapy controversy and the first Nobel prize in medicine!



■ DR. RAJENDRA KUMAR JHA

The latest controversy in COVID 19 regarding the usefulness of plasma therapy after ICMR - WHO disowned it and the government of Delhi insisted on its use, has brought the issue back into focus.

It is a little known fact that the knowledge that antibodies present in the plasma of an infected patient can be used as a useful drug to combat and cure the disease, had brought the very first Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in the year 1901.

This Nobel Prize went to Emil Von Behring who is regarded as the founder of Plasma Therapy.

Behring belonged to an era when modern scientific understanding of microbiology and immunology was nascent. He worked with all-time greats such as Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, P. Ehrlich, Loeffler; the who's who amongst the founding fathers of modern medical science in late nineteenth century. They together produced several research papers in the diverse field of Bacterial immunology. Behring specially worked towards curing the curse of Diphtheria, Tetanus and also controlling the menace of Tuberculosis in the later part of his life. These problems together were responsible for millions of helpless deaths in those days.

Behring was born on 15th March 1854 in Hansdorf (West Prussia), now Poland, in a large family of 13 siblings. His father was a school teacher who had difficulty in supporting his family with meagre income. After studying medicine with full scholarship in military medical

school Behring joined the armed forces so that he could start supporting his family. He spent most part of his active life in Germany and France where later on he would get the chance to work at the famous 'Pasteur Institute' and subsequently at Marburg where he became professor of infectious diseases.

In the year 1898 - 99, he demonstrated that Diphtheria culture, when separated from bacilli completely, still contained pure toxins and that these toxins were lethal. Such toxins, when injected into animals (initially guinea pigs and later on horses) produced copious antitoxins. When plasma containing such antitoxins was transfused into diseased animals, and later on in human beings, it controlled and cured the certain fatal disease.

This instantly brought Behring huge fame and recognition and consequently the very inaugural Nobel Prize was awarded to him in the year 1901

by Nobel foundation.

Later on, with F. Wernicke, he established that lasting immunity to diphtheria could be produced for prophylaxis by injecting the toxin-anti-toxin mixture producing antibodies which could neutralise the lethal bacterial toxins and antigens, eventually leading to final banishment of diphtheria from the scourges of mankind.

I don't think the last word on the usefulness of plasma therapy has been pronounced as yet. The fact that monoclonal antibodies based on the same basic principle, made of specific clones against COVID antigens recently produced by REGENERON and used for American President Trump's successful treatment vindicates its basic premise!

The Author is Currently Professor of medicine at Manipal Tata Medical College and Formerly Professor and Head, Department of Medicine at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi, Jharkhand.



■ DR AMBRISH GAUTAM

Charles Darwin gave a theory about 100 years ago, which is known as survival of the fittest. That is, whoever is eligible will live. In this theory he studied the relationship between nature and animals, and the conditions of their existence in nature, which has been used by sociologists in social studies in the context of man's relationship with nature. Just as creatures in nature preserve their existence, increase their vigour, in the same way humans also maintain their existence in the society.

The present society is considered as a capitalist society, which is mainly concerned with the creation of capital from capital and the creation of more capital and wealth. That is, property is the basis

of man's ability at present. A person who has property is able to withstand the dragon-like capitalism, but a man without property proves to be perfect in proving his worth. Current capitalism is like a spinning wheel, in which a person who can maintain harmony establishes himself and manages to save himself while the other, who cannot do so, is thrown away from the wheel and loses its existence.

In the present scenario, a person has to be so capable to save his/her existence that he/she can protect his existence with the help of a circle. This is not always possible in the current changing society because as the society easily moves towards complexity, the standards of survival also continue to deteriorate.

But not all human beings are like this and their coordination becomes difficult or rather they go beyond the periphery of the society.

These circumstances can be easily seen even in the present Pandemic times. Although the human beings, who are able to meet the standards of global capitalism

In the present scenario, a person has to be so capable to save his/her existence that he/she can protect his existence with the help of a circle. This is not always possible in the current changing society because as the society easily moves towards complexity, the standards of survival also continue to deteriorate

are able to save their existence, in the state of incompatibility, they have to go out of the mainstream. Workers are such a society on which large industries run, on which development paradigms are created.

And big skulls are erected; the same manus is unable to raise the standards of global capitalism for him and ends his illusion even after giving his all. In which farmers, labourers, daily workers can be easily seen. Those people suffering from pandemic, who are able to meet these standards for themselves, are able to survive their existence, the deprived people are becoming extinct from society. The standard tool of current capitalism is money, the availability of which determines the survival of a person.

So, even in the present times, Darwin's survival of the fittest theory is proving right.

The writer is Assistant professor at Amity University, Ranchi and the views expressed in the article are his own.

China’s aggression on LAC, South China Sea to figure in 2+2 talks

Defence, Foreign Ministers of US, India to have extensive discussions on strategic, defence ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

China’s aggressive moves in theatres across the world, including the South China Sea and the ongoing stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC)in Ladakh, will figure prominently during the 2+2 dialogue here next week.

Given the growing profile of the 2+2 grouping and seriousness of the situation at the LAC, the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries will hold intense talks during the two-day conference beginning Monday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will have extensive discussions on the entire range of strategic and defence ties with their counterparts Mark Esper and Mike Pompeo.

The visiting ministers will also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor(NSA)Ajit Doval. Incidentally, the dialogue takes place days before Presidential elections in the US in early November. This will be the third edition of the annual dialogue. The last one was held in the US.



While the two sides will review the whole range of bilateral ties, the ministers will also discuss the growing aggressive stance and expansionist behaviour of China on the LAC and the South China Sea.

Beijing is also against the Quad formation and not in favour of Australian Navy joining the Malabar series of exercise. India, last week, however, brushed aside China’s objection and invited Australia to take part in the annual exercise in late November in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. In all four countries including India, US, Japan and Australia will take part in the exercise.

The two countries are likely to ink the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement(BECA). It will facilitate sharing of classified satellite and sensor data. Officials from both the sides are now fine tuning the final format of the proposed pact.

Meanwhile, a senior Trump administration official said in Washington on Friday the US is closely monitoring the border row between India

and China and does not want the situation to escalate.

The official told the reporters during a conference call on Friday, ahead of the next week’s 2+2 India-US Ministerial in New Delhi, that the Trump administration was providing support to India through defence sales, joint military exercises and information sharing.

“We as a Government are covering the situation in the Himalayas closely, and understandably. We certainly want to ensure that the situation doesn’t escalate,” the official said. “These are all areas where we cooperate with the Indians on, and not just as it relates to the tensions in the Himalayas,” the official said.

In response to a question, the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the US was having an ongoing dialogue with India about increased cooperation in Southeast Asia, and not simply about the South China Sea.

“And we encourage their involvement. That cuts across development investments, it

ITBP has broken myth that some countries have powerful armies: Reddy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Junior Home Minister G Kishan Reddy on Saturday said the ITBP has broken the myth that some countries have powerful armies, in an oblique reference to China that is at the core of the ongoing standoff in eastern Ladakh.

The Minister of State for Home was addressing the troops of the mountain warfare-trained border force on its 59th Raising Day at the paramilitary’s facility in neighbouring Greater Noida.

Without taking names, the minister said while India believes in the philosophy of “vasudhaiva kutumbakam” or the world is one family, the culture of the country teaches it to worship both “shastra and astra” (sacred scriptures and weapons at the same time).

“This has taught us that the enemy can raise its head anytime, anywhere and we should be fully prepared to face any possibility. The ITBP is an important pillar of that preparedness of the country,”

cuts across security cooperation, and then it also involves presence. So, we welcome greater Indian participation in Southeast Asia across all three of those areas,” said the official.

The senior official’s remarks came in the midst of a growing global concern over China’s expansionist behav-



Junior Home Minister G Kishan Reddy addresses ITBP force on its 59th Raising Day at paramilitary’s facility in Greater Noida Agency

Reddy asserted.

“The armies of some countries had a myth that they were among the powerful armies of the world, but during the developments in the past few months, the ITBP has broken that myth,” he added.

The country and its citizens are proud of the ITBP’s

valour and dedication, he said.

The ITBP is the designated force to secure the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the Indo-China frontier that runs from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh in the Northeast.

Earlier, the ITBP had said it “fought the whole night” and

gave a befitting reply to the Chinese PLA troops during a violent clash between the two sides on June 15-16.

“India is surrounded by a hostile neighbourhood and our enemy, time and again, puts obstacles to stop our economic development. When you defeat these designs of the

enemy, you ensure the country’s economic development,” he further said.

The minister asserted that the government is “determined” to strengthen and “modernise” the Force and announced certain sanctions given to it recently.

“I am happy to inform that the ITBP has been given the approval by the Ministry of Home Affairs to establish 47 border posts, uniform special clothing and mountaineering equipment for high-altitude locations, latest weapons are being provided and work is on to prepare priority border roads for the Force,” he said.

The minister said the Centre had approved a budget of Rs 7,223 crore for the Force for financial year 2019-20.

“I assure you that there will be no dearth of funds for the ITBP,” he added.

ITBP Director General (DG) SS Deswal also spoke at the event and lauded the bravery displayed by the troops recently in Ladakh under “very challenging circumstances”.

Hoshiarpur rape-murder of minor: BJP flays Congress over silence



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing criticism over the Hathras rape and murder case, the BJP on Saturday returned fire by attacking the Congress and its leadership for its silence over the rape and murder of a 6-year-old child of a Dalit migrant labourer from Bihar at Hoshiarpur in Punjab.

Union Finance Minister and senior BJP leader Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday hit out at Congress’s “double-standards” and the “silence” of the “brother-sister (Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi)” on the incident in their party-ruled State and asked why there was “no picnic on this”.

She also sought to know why RJD’s “Yadav-brothers (Tejashwi and Tej Pratap)” in the poll-bound Bihar were “chup” on the issue. Sitharaman herself went on to explain the “silence” of the Yadav brothers as she quoted media reports in 2008 saying the duo was themselves accused of “chhed-chhad” (molestation) in New Delhi.

The BJP leader condemned the Congress for suppressing “freedom of expression” by its Maharashtra government and imposing emergency-like situations and asked the left and

the extreme-left of “tukde-tukde-gang” to comment as to who was restricting the media in the country.

Addressing a press conference here in the BJP headquarters, the Union Finance Minister alleged that the Congress is silent when it is about voicing horrors from States ruled by them.

“A 6-year-old child of a Dalit migrant labourer from Bihar is raped, killed and body half-burnt in Hoshiarpur (Punjab) and it doesn’t shake the conscience of the brother and sister who rush to every other place which can help them politically,” she said.

She further attacked the Congress leadership saying, “Not a word from the tweet-friendly leader Shri Rahul Gandhi. No tweets on this (Hoshiarpur rape incident), no outrage on this, and no picnic on this. A woman (Sonia Gandhi) heads the party. Does this kind of selective outrage suit the stature of their party?”

She questioned why RJD leader Tejashwi and his brother were silent on the issue when their alliance partner Congress was running the state of Punjab.

“Are you not answerable to that family in Punjab,” she asked the Yadavs, sons of former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad, currently in Jail.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar also attacked the Congress saying, “We demand strict action against the culprits.

Instead of going on political tours, Rahul Gandhi should visit Tanda (Punjab) and Rajasthan to take cognisance of incidents of crime against women.”

In the same vein, he too targeted RJD leader Tejashwi and said: “Tejashwi Yadav is sharing the stage and campaigning with the people who are committing atrocities on Bihar’s daughter. How will it go?”

Sitharaman condemned the Congress and the RJD while herself maintaining that rape “should not be politicised” and all political parties should do their best to mitigate the situation.

When asked about the promise to provide Covid-19 vaccines free in Bihar, she justified her party’s manifesto and said health is a state subject and the party has every right to make such a statement in the manifesto.

Answering a question on cases filed by Maharashtra Government, the finance minister said freedom is in danger wherever Congress is in governance. She said the Prime Minister and Home Minister were abused regularly but no action was taken against them (by us) but now the liberal diaspora has refused to speak on what is happening in Maharashtra, she said.

31% adolescents battled extreme anxiety about finances in past few months due to Covid: Survey



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

About 31 per cent surveyed adolescents battled extreme anxiety in the past few months worrying about the impact of coronavirus pandemic on their family’s financial status, according to a survey of over 7,300 adolescents from four states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Odisha.

The survey on ‘What do the Adolescents have to say? COVID-19 and its Impact’ by NGO Centre for Catalysing Change was conducted in two rounds in the months of April, July and August.

Out of the 7,324 adolescents surveyed, 31 per cent admitted to battling extreme anxiety worrying about the pandemic’s impact on their family’s financial status.

The survey also found that adolescent girls faced significant gender discrimination in these months due to the pandemic.

Only 12 per cent of surveyed adolescent girls had access to their own mobile phones, while 35 per cent boys had access to their

own mobile phones,” the survey found.

“Further, 51 per cent of the adolescent girls surveyed lacked access to essential textbooks in comparison to boys, highlighting how the pandemic had jeopardized girls’ access to education,” it said.

About 39 per cent of the girls were found to be contributing to housework as opposed to the number of boys at 35 per cent, it said.

Under the survey, the adolescent girls also stated how their mobility has been curbed, with only 39 per cent girls saying they were allowed to go out alone in comparison to 62 per cent boys of the same age who were allowed to go out alone.

“At the same time, only 36 per cent adolescents knew the correct helpline numbers, while awareness about the use of the helplines was even lower. Only 18 per cent was aware that the helplines could be used in reporting domestic violence and only 22-23 per cent knew that it could be used in reporting child labour and child trafficking cases,” it added.

Govt taking steps to strengthen agri sector to help farmers: Modi

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his Government is taking initiatives to strengthen the agriculture sector in the country so that farmers do not have to face any trouble.

His statement comes amid opposition to the new farm laws by farmers’ groups and political parties.

Modi was speaking after inaugurating three projects in Gujarat- one each related to agriculture, healthcare and tourism development- via video conference from New Delhi.

“In order to double the farmers’ income and to reduce the production cost and their troubles, we will have to increase our efforts with the changing times,” he said.

“Whether granting freedom to farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country or creating thousands of

farmer producer organisations, whether completing stalled irrigation projects or improving crop insurance scheme or 100 per cent neem-coating of urea or soil health card...The aim is to strengthen the agriculture sector so that farmers do not have trouble in farming. Initiatives like these are being taken continuously for it,” he said.

He launched the state government’s Kisan Suryoday Yojana (KSY) aimed at providing day-time electricity to the farmers in the state for irrigation and farming purposes. The PM also inaugurated Paediatric Heart Hospital at the U N Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre in Ahmedabad, developed at a cost of Rs 470 crore by the state’s health and family welfare department.

Besides, he launched the recently-completed ropeway project on Mount Girnar, a major tourist and pilgrim site near Junagadh city in the state.

The 2.3-km long ropeway is being touted as the longest temple ropeway in Asia.

Modi held the opposition responsible for the delay in completion of the Girnar ropeway project.

The project was proposed in 1983, and was delayed due to various reasons, most importantly due to the environmental concerns, before the UPA government granted it conditional approval in 2011.

“Had they not created hurdles in the Girnar ropeway project, it would not have got stalled for so many years. People and tourists should have got its benefit a long back,” he said.

“As a nation, we all should think of the loss caused to the people and the country when such projects (Girnar ropeway) of public importance are stalled for a long time,” he said, adding that the new project will facilitate the pilgrims and tourists, and create job opportunities.



TMC MPs Nusrat Jahan, Mimi Chakraborty dance to traditional dhakis on Durga Puja Maha Ashtami in Kolkata Agency

Stay vigilant in fight against polio amid pandemic: WHO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the world marks the World Polio Day on Saturday, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF are urging nations to stay vigilant in the fight against poliomyelitis (polio) and bolster vaccination services amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

India was declared polio-free (wild polio virus) in March 2014. This was a huge accomplishment as India was considered one of the most challenging countries. Though polio still exists in neighbouring underdeveloped nations like Pakistan and Afghanistan, the instances have decreased by over 99% in comparison with the 1980s,

Polio is a crippling and sometimes fatal disease with no cure. However, there are safe and effective vaccines and infection of polio can be pre-



vented through immunization. Eradication of polio is based on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops and the country, region, and world is polio-free. Thanks to these vaccination efforts, cases of polio have been reduced by about 99% over the past decade.

However, since March 2020, the pandemic has disrupted life-saving immunisation endeavours around the

world, putting millions of children at risk of diseases like polio, diphtheria, and measles.

The disruption of such routine immunisation services may be unprecedented since the inception of the expanded programme on immunisation (EPI) in the 1970s, in both government and private sectors.

In order to successfully eradicate polio, experts said that parents should get their child immunised with OPV

and IPV and also continue to get the vaccine administered during government polio drives. Both vaccines are very safe and their use should be continued. The government should have campaigns to strengthen the immunisation drive.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF in July 2020 had warned of an alarming decline in the number of children receiving life-saving vaccines around the world due to disruptions in the delivery and uptake of immunization services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to new data by the two UN bodies, these disruptions threaten to reverse hard-won progress to reach more children and adolescents with a wider range of vaccines, which has already been hampered by a decade of stalling coverage.

53,370 new cases take India’s Covid tally to 78,14,682

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India’s COVID-19 tally climbed to 78.14 lakh with 53,370 fresh cases in a day, while 70,16,046 people have so far recuperated pushing the national recovery rate to 89.78 per cent on Saturday, the Union health ministry said.

The total number of coronavirus cases mounted to 78,14,682 and the death toll to 1,17,956, with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 650 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the ministry data updated at 8 am on Saturday showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to



1.51 per cent.

There are 6,80,680 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 8.71 per cent of the total caseload, the ministry data said.

According to ICMR, a cumulative total of 10,13,82,564 samples have been tested up to October 23, with 12,69,479 samples tested on Friday.

Govt sets up high-level committee to commemorate 400th birth anniv of Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday set up a high-level committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate the 400th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The mandate of the 70-member committee includes approval of policies, plans, programmes and supervision and guiding the commemoration, besides deciding broad dates for detailed programmes of celebration.

The members of the committee include former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Hardeep

Singh Puri, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, chief ministers of Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan.

Other members include Congress leader Gulam Nabi Azad, Akali Dal leaders Parkash Singh Badal, Sukhbir Singh Badal, SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal, former chief of Indian Army J J Singh, former chief of Indian Air Force Birender Singh Dhanoa, and sportspersons Milkha Singh and Harbhajan Singh.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla will be the member secretary of the high-level committee.

FY19 GST returns filing deadline extended till Dec 31

New Delhi: The government on Saturday extended the deadline for furnishing GST annual returns for FY 2018-19 by two months till December 31.

The government had last month extended the last date for filing GST annual return and audit report for the 2018-19 fiscal by a month till October 31, 2020.

In a statement, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said the government has been receiving a number of representations regarding need to extend due date for filing Annual Return

(Form GSTR-9) and Reconciliation Statement (Form GSTR-9C) for FY 2018-19.

The representations have been made on the grounds that due to the COVID-19 pandemic related lockdown and restrictions, normal business operations have still not been possible in several parts of the country, it said.

The statement said it has been requested that the due dates for the same be extended beyond October 31, 2020 to enable the businesses and auditors to comply in this regard.



"In view of the same, on the recommendations of the GST Council, it has been decided to extend the due date for filing

Annual Return (Form GSTR-9/GSTR-9A) and Reconciliation Statement (FORM GSTR-9C) for Financial Year 2018-19 from October 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020," the CBIC said.

GSTR 9 is an annual return to be filed yearly by taxpayers registered

under the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It consists of details regarding the outward and inward supplies made or received under different tax heads. GSTR-9C is a statement of reconciliation between GSTR-9 and the audited annual financial statement.

Furnishing of the annual return is mandatory only for taxpayers with aggregate annual turnover of above Rs 2 crore while reconciliation statement is to be furnished only by the registered persons having aggregate turnover above Rs 5 crore.

PTI

Base year revision for CPI-industrial workers suspicious: AITUC

New Delhi: The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) on Saturday said the labour ministry's move to revise base year for consumer price index for industrial workers (CPI-IW) is "suspicious". The AITUC further said that it is of the view that the move will lead to "depression" in dearness allowance (DA) paid to workers.

The labour ministry has recently revised the base year for CPI-IW from 2001 to 2001.

The retail inflation measured in terms of CPI-IW is the single most important price statistics with financial implications.

The CPI-IW is primarily used to regulate the dearness allowance of government employees and the workers in the industrial sectors.

It is also used in the fixation and revision of minimum wages in scheduled employments besides measuring the inflation in retail prices. In a statement issued on Saturday, the AITUC said that "the Centre's move to shift base year for calculating DA is suspicious".

The Labour Bureau of the Ministry of Labour sent out emails announcing revision of base year for calculating CPI-IW from 2001 to 2016, on October 22, 2020, it claimed.

This decision follows the earlier pattern practiced by the labour ministry: making a show of consulting stakeholders at the eleventh hour and then completely ignoring the responses received, it alleged.

The entire lot of central trade unions had opposed through a written, signed communication, the recommendations of the Labour Bureau point by point, only to discover that they have simply been brushed aside, the AITUC said.

The so-called consultations on labour codes, including recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Labour, met the same fate, it added.

"Since the present decision of shifting the base year to 2016, linking factor of 2.88, proportions of items of household expenditures, points of data collections, all are going to result in depression of dearness allowance payable to industrial workers, the employers stand to gain that much as their profits," it opined.

PTI

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PTI



E-tailers begin 2nd festive sale round after 7-day fiesta

New Delhi: After registering record sales in the seven-day period to kick off the festive season after pandemic-induced lockdowns, ecommerce marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart have announced the second round of online sales to keep up the momentum.

Amazon on Saturday announced its 1/2 Happiness Upgrade Days' where customers will get special offers on a wide range of products across categories from top brands till October 28.

The e-commerce platform is offering up to 40 per cent off on latest smartphones from top brands, 65 per cent off on large appliances and TVs and up to 80 per cent off on Amazon fashion and home and kitchen products.

The sale brings over 6,000 deals on consumer electronics and accessories, up to Rs 30,000 off on laptops, up to 75 per cent off on headphones and up to 60 per cent off on camera devices, the company said in a statement.

"The customers can save big with a 10 per cent instant bank discount on Axis Bank, Citibank and ICICI Bank credit and debit cards and EMI transactions.

They can get 5 per cent instant discount plus up to 5 per cent reward points with Amazon Pay ICICI Bank credit card.

Flipkart has also started Dussehra sale from October 22 till October 28 and after that, the ecommerce platform will begin its 1/2 Big Diwali Sale'.

According to industry reports, the seven-day sales likely witnessed over \$4.8 billion (nearly Rs 35,273 crore) in sales.

According to Bengaluru-based market research firm RedSeer, \$3.1 billion (about Rs 22,000 crore) of goods were sold online from brands and sellers in the first four-and-a-half days of the online sales event that started from October 15.

Online retailers are expected to generate approximately \$6.5 billion (Rs 47,751 crore) in sales during the festive month (October 15-November 15), with around 5.5-6 crore online buyers participating, according to a Forrester report.

IAN S

'IBC raised confidence of all investors in Indian economy'

New Delhi: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has not only strengthened the banking system by helping them resolve outstanding debt piled over years but has also come as a big booster of confidence of national and foreign investors in the Indian economy, a senior SBI official said on Saturday.

In his address as the Guest of Honour in the inaugural session of the international conference (online) on "Insolvency Resolution Paradigm: Global Headwinds and Responses", State Bank of India's Managing Director, Commercial Clients Groups, Arijit Basu, said that earlier banks only had "loan structuring" option which used to take five to six years.

"Now, the IBC has provided equal opportunity to corporate sector and banks. It has changed the relationship between borrowers and creditors and provided a mechanism of insolvency.

"Unsustainable debt is a symptom of fundamental issues in the 'business model' of the concerned company. In case if you don't have a viable resolution plan, we (banks) have a viable resolution plan under IBC," he said.

However, Basu expressed satisfaction that the big corporate houses in India have efficiently managed their cash flow during Covid-19.

The event was organised by the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIIPi).

In his address, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) President Atul Kumar Gupta highlighted the role of CAS as being played in IBC ecosystem as insolvency professionals (IPs).

"About 62 per cent of insolvency professionals are CAS. Besides, IBC has opened several new opportunities for CAS

in the form of valuer, liquidator, technical experts in the NCLT, the NCLAT, high courts, and also the Supreme Court, and also various kinds of advisory services," he said.

Gupta also appreciated the initiatives of the Central government in helping businesses to wade through the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the session titled "Perspective on Global Insolvency Regime", Joint Secretary, Corporate Affairs, Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh said: "IBC has not only served corporates but livelihoods also. As per estimates, the total value of insolvency cases amount to about Rs 5.63 lakh crore. If it had undergone through liquidation, only about 7 per cent of the money would have been recovered. This would have adversely impacted the Indian economy."

"With IBC in place, there will be no sick companies and sick banks in the future".

In the same session, Paul Bannister, Head (Policy), Insolvency Service, UK, appreciated the response of India in handling the economic crisis caused by Covid-19.

"These are very difficult times. We already have a world-class insolvency regime but we are developing further against the context of crisis and changing international context including Covid and UK's exit from the European Union," he said.

IAN S

Weak demand from power sector pushes up CIL's e-auction of coal

New Delhi: With weak demand from the power sector in the wake of Covid-19 disruptions, the country's largest coal producer Coal India Ltd shifted its attention to the non-power sector to see around sixfold increase in the sales of the dry fuel.

In the first half of the current fiscal (FY21), CIL's fuel allocation under the exclusive e-auction scheme for the non-power sector rose close to six times at 13.44 million tonnes as against a mere 2.31 million tonne during the same period of previous year.

Lockdown in various parts of the country and continuing sluggish economic conditions dried up demand for the dry fuel pushing CIL to explore new avenues for growth.

The government had earlier asked state-run power companies such as NTPC to reduce coal imports needed for blending purpose and look more at the domestic sources.

The CIL has also set up various washeries to supply good quality coal that could replace imports.

IAN S

PHD Chamber: Refuel demand to attract pvt investments

New Delhi: India's healthy debt to GDP ratio has created scope for raising investment funding for 'National Infrastructure Pipeline' through borrowings from overseas markets.

According to Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, although, early signs of recovery are visible from the recent data on economic and business indicators, the need of the hour is to put the policy attention on refueling consumption demand in the country to regain the lost growth momentum.

"Since the lockdown caused by Covid-19 in the month of March 2020, Government has very well addressed the investors' and the industry's sentiments, the focus should now be on fuelling consumption growth, which is one of the key engines of economic growth," Aggarwal was quoted as saying in a PHD Chamber statement.

"At this juncture, the next stimulus package should prioritise demand creation measures to attain a positive growth trajectory in the later quarters (Q3 / Q4) of this financial year 2020-21." Besides, he said that demand creation will have multiplier effects on the other sectors of economy including enhanced production, increased investments and employment creation.

"The increased spending on infrastructure will give a multiplier effect to rejuvenate the aggregate demand in the economy and to mitigate the daunting impact of Covid-19 on the economy," said Aggarwal.

IAN S

Steady oil prices holds up any reversion in petrol-diesel prices

New Delhi: The pump prices of auto fuels petrol and diesel remained unchanged on Saturday as softer global crude and product prices prevented oil marketing companies from carrying out any revision in prices.

With this, Petrol prices have now been unchanged for 32 days at a stretch while diesel prices were the same for the 22 consecutive days.

Price of petrol in the national capital stood at Rs 81.06 per litre. In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, the fuel was sold for Rs 87.74, Rs 84.14 and Rs 82.59 per litre, respectively.

Diesel prices in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata continues to be at Rs 70.46, Rs 76.86, Rs 75.95 and Rs 73.99, respectively.

Oil sector experts said that with global oil prices under pressure from slowing demand

Petrol prices have now been unchanged for 32 days at a stretch while diesel prices were the same for the 22 consecutive days

auto fuel consumers in India by way of a fall in retail price of petrol and diesel.

Global crude prices are holding close to \$42 a barrel now. It has been hovering between \$40-42 a barrel for over a month now. But with lower oil demand and rising inventory, there is fear among oil producing companies that crude prices may start falling again.

IAN S

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED BOY



Ankit Kumar

General public is hereby informed that this boy namely **Ankit Kumar S/o Jitender Pathak R/o RZF-82, Nihal Vihar, Nangloi, Delhi Age : 14 years, Complexion : Wheatish, Height : 5'2", Face : Round, Identification:** An old scar mark on left side of face, wearing white colour T-shirt, black colour trouser and white colour sports shoes in feet, has been missing/kidnapped since 25.05.2019 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 352/19 dated 25.05.2019 u/s 363 IPC has been lodged at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi.

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

E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in Website: http://cbi.nic.in

SHO : P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Ph. : 011-25946700, 25946710

Fax: 24368639, 24368641

SEARCH FOR MISSING



Yogita D/o Mukesh, R/o C-1325, Jahangir Puri, Delhi, Age: 22 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Strong, wearing Grey colour Frock and Black Leggie or Chappal in feet, has been missing from the area of P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 111A, dated 13.10.2020 has been registered at P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi.

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

Website : http://cbi.nic.in E-mail : cbc@cbi.gov.in

SHO P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax: 011-24368639

DP/454/NW/2020 Ph. No.: 011-27636000, 27631600

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED						
Regd. Off. : 43/5, Bahalgarh Road, Sonipat - 131021 Tele : 0130 – 2216666, Fax : 011-66173923						
CIN : L24302HR1985PLC022758 Website : www.jaschindustries.com, Email : accounts@jasch.biz						
Extract of Standalone Reviewed Financial Results for the Quarter ended 30 th September, 2020. (₹ in Lakhs)						
Sl No	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Half Year Ended	
		30.09.20	30.06.20	30.09.19	30.09.20	30.09.19
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations.	2645.23	1488.66	3117.23	4133.89	6597.24
2	Profit before Interest, Depreciation & Taxes (EBITDA)	331.08	181.40	59.79	512.48	446.05
3	Net Profit for the Period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	245.53	85.37	(74.25)	330.90	172.13
4	Net Profit for the Period before Tax (after Exceptional Items)	245.53	85.37	(74.25)	330.90	172.13
5	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional Items)	183.73	63.88	(60.99)	247.61	123.80
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period ((Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	183.73	63.88	(60.99)	247.61	123.80
7	Equity Share Capital	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00
8	Reserves	4904.18	4387.64	4326.65	4904.18	4326.65
9	Earnings Per Share (of ₹10/- each)	1.62	0.56	(0.54)	2.19	1.09
	Basic & Diluted:					4.00
Notes :						
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of Stock Exchange at www.bseindia.com and also on Company's website at www.jaschindustries.com.						
2. The Company has prepared these results in accordance with the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 (Ind AS) prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013.						
3. Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.						
Sd/- (J. K. GARG)						
MANAGING DIRECTOR						
Sonipat, 24th October 2020						

Karnataka HC restrains Franklin Templeton to wind up schemes without investors' consent

Bengaluru: In a major victory for investors, the High Court of Karnataka on Saturday restrained Franklin Templeton (FT) India's decision from winding up its six debt schemes without obtaining the consent of unitholders.

Pronouncing the verdict in petitions challenging the winding-up of six debt fund schemes of FT, a division bench of Chief Justice A.S. Oka and Justice Justice Ashok S. Kinagi directed that trustees should not take any action on the winding up of the six schemes till a simple majority consent of unit holders is obtained.

"We hold that no interference is called for in the decision of trustees to winding up of the said schemes. We hold and declare that the decision of the trustees to winding up the six schemes cannot be implemented until consent from the unitholders is obtained in accordance with Sub Clause C of Regulation 15.

Hence, we restrain the trustees to take any further steps based on the notice April 23, 2020 and May 28, 2020, issued till the consent of the unitholders is obtained. It will open for trustees to obtain the consent of unitholders and to take further steps," the division bench stated in its 330-page order.

Market regulator SEBI should have played a more active role in the matter and it failed in its duty towards taking prompt actions, the court noted, adding that the forensic audit report in the case is tentative and doesn't include final findings.

In view of the Supreme Court's vacation, the operation of the order has been stayed for six weeks to give time to FT

India to appeal the order, the Karnataka High Court ruled, directing that status quo on refund and redemptions should be maintained till then.

It also restricted the asset management company and trustees from taking on any fresh borrowings in the six debt schemes, which were shut in April.

Reacting on the High Court order, Franklin Templeton said: "Court has upheld the authority and decision taken by the Trustees to wind-up the schemes under regulation 39(2)(a). As per the judgement, for operationalising such a decision, approval of the unitholders will be required

under regulation 18(15)(c). "We are considering the order and will take appropriate steps in consultation with our legal experts in the best interest of the unitholders.

Our focus remains on maximizing value for unitholders in these schemes and returning monies as soon as possible," said FT in a statement.

Notably, on April 23 amid severe redemption pressure and illiquidity, Franklin Templeton had decided to shut down its suite of six debt schemes, affecting 3,00,000 investors adversely and assets under management of Rs 26,000 crore.

IAN S

CFMA hails HC verdict in FTMF case, to move SC for unit-holders' interests

Chennai: Hailing the Karnataka High Court's verdict that upheld the rights of unit-holders of the Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund (FTMF), the Chennai Financial Markets and Accountability (CFMA), an investor's protection organisation, said it would approach the Supreme Court to safeguard the entire interests of investors.

The Karnataka High Court has directed Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund to not proceed with the winding-up of its debt schemes without obtaining the consent of its unit-holders. It clarified that the consent of unit-holders as per the regulations is to be obtained before going through the winding-up process.

Stating that the half-battle

was won wherein rights of unit-holders are upheld by the Karnataka High Court, Nithyaesh Natraj, the counsel for the CFMA, noted: "There are few areas which the court has not decided upon (which) may set a wrong precedent for the Mutual Fund Industry."

He pointed out that it has been rightly observed by the court that the SEBI has failed to be proactive in this case and reiterated that the CFMA would challenge the order in the apex court so that the entire interests of unit-holders are protected further.

"Leaving the fate of three lakh unit-holders at the mercy of trustees without knowing the content of forensic audit will set a bad precedent," he added.

IAN S

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that my client Mr. Manveer Parsad & Mrs. Pushpa Devi owner of Shop and land ad measuring 1200 sqyds out of 4800 sqyds, situated at Mohalla Gomdpuri, Modinagar, Pargana Jajalabad, Tehsil Modinagar, Distt. Ghazabad, U.P. By virtue of Sale Deed dated 13.07.1998 Registered as Doc. No. 3980, Book No. 01, Volume No. 489, Page No. 447-454, on dated 13.07.1998-SRO-Modinagar-Ghazabad and at present at present property shop no. s 12/26 and same property to be loan financed by M/s Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. A-32, 2nd Floor, Industrial Area, Phase-1, Naraina New Delhi-110028. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or Claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property then contact us within 7 days from the date of this notice on the number mentioned herein below failing which my client i.e. M/s Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. A-32, 2nd Floor, Industrial Area, Phase-1, Naraina New Delhi-110028 shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever.

Naveen Kumar Verma, Advocate
F-211, Sector-3 vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010

WESTERN RAILWAY

(SURVEY & CONSTRUCTION)

E-TENDER NOTICE

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, 8th floor, station building, Churchgate, Mumbai-400 020 invites offer through e-tender portal **www.reps.gov.in** under single packet system for the following tender: **Tender No.:** Dy CE (CJ)-775(R), **Name of Work:** Mahim-Bandra- Construction strengthening of cast iron screw piles (bridge No. 20) Placing of precast RCC box segments between south abutment and pier No. 1 and strengthening of piers and other Misc works, Mumbai Division W. Rly. **NIT Cost (Rs.) :** 5,14,46,942/- **EMD (in Rs.) :** 4,57,200/- **Bid submission closing date:** 17.11.2020 at 15.00 hrs. **Instructions of tenderers:** Only E-offers submitted online through e-tender portal will be considered. Please note that printed offers will not be entertained. The date of tender, terms & conditions and scope of work are uploaded and are available only in electronic format in our website **www.reps.gov.in** 0375

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Quad interested in boosting rules-based order in Indo-Pacific: US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Quad — comprising Japan, India, Australia and the United States — is not an alliance but a grouping of countries driven by shared interests and values and interested in strengthening a rules-based order in the strategically-important Indo-Pacific region, a senior Trump administration official has said.

The four countries had in 2017 given shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the “Quad” or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China’s aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region.

“There’s nothing about the Quad that it is an alliance. It is not formalised. There’s no reciprocal obligation among the countries who are involved. It’s not an organisation that solicits its membership,” a senior administration official said during a conference call with reporters ahead of the next week’s 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and the US.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Mark Esper are travelling to India to hold talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The

visiting American officials would also be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

To a query, the official said, the Quad ministerial meeting that they had in Tokyo in October just demonstrated the strong ties among the Indo-Pacific democracies.

“I would say it’s a grouping of countries who are interested in strengthening a rules-based order in which all nations are sovereign, strong, and prosperous. It’s an opportunity for us to carry out continued dialogue and to work towards mutually agreed-upon outcomes.

“It’s a grouping of countries

that’s driven by shared interests and values rather than binding obligations. That’s an example of effective multilateralism at its best,” the official said, requesting anonymity.

As the US, Japan, Australia, and India are getting together to cooperate on one issue or another, if there are other countries that want to participate in those discussions or those activities, the door is always open, the official said.

The cooperation of the US and India on the Quad along with Australia and Japan really reflect a convergence of common values and interests in the region, the official said.

“We’re the two largest democracies in the Indo-Pacific region, and we have shared values and interests with all four countries. It’s not an exclusive grouping by any means. All four countries are interested and eager in welcoming other countries to the table for individual elements of cooperation that we do, some of them under the Quad framework but not all of them. That’s for sure,” the official said.

“It is something that’s flexible and reflects our common values and interests, and I think is really for the long term,” the official said.

In November 2017, India,

Japan, the US and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the “Quad” to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

In the midst of growing global concern over China’s expansionist behaviour, the foreign ministers of the Quad member nations met in Tokyo on October 6 and reaffirmed their collective vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

The foreign minister of the four countries held their first meeting under the ‘Quad’ framework in New York in

September 2019.

The evolving situation in the Indo-Pacific region in the wake of China’s increasing military muscle flexing has become a major talking point among leading global powers. The US has been favouring making Quad a security architecture to check China’s growing assertiveness.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarising its man-made islands in the past few years.

Beijing claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea.

But Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. In the East China Sea, China has territorial disputes with Japan.

The South China Sea and the East China Sea are stated to be rich in minerals, oil and other natural resources. They are also vital to global trade. Although the US lays no claims to the disputed waters, it has challenged China’s growing territorial claims in the South China Sea by deploying warships and fighter jets to assert freedom of navigation and overflight patrols in the strategically vital region.

I voted for a guy named Trump, says President

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has casted his ballot Saturday morning in West Palm Beach, Florida, and he tells reporters afterward: “I voted for a guy named Trump.”

West Palm Beach is near his private Mar-a-Lago club. He used to vote in New York but changed his residency to Florida last year.

There were several hundred supporters gathered with flags and signs outside the library where he voted. And there were chants of “Four more years.”

The president wore a mask while voting but he took it off as he approached reporters afterward in the building.

He called it “a very secure vote. Much more secure than when you send in a ballot, I can tell you that.”

Democrat Joe Biden hasn’t voted yet and it likely to do so in person in Delaware on Election Day, Nov. 3. Delaware doesn’t offer early, in-person voting like Florida.

Trump said at a Florida rally



President Donald Trump walks with Wendy Sartory Link, Supervisor of Elections Palm Beach County, after casting his ballot for the presidential election, on Saturday

on Friday that he likes being able to vote in person. “I’m old fashion,

ion, I guess,” he said. The President has a busy Saturday,

with rallies scheduled in North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Oli’s office rejects claims of using Nepal’s old map in PM’s Dussehra greeting

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has been criticised by netizens for deliberately not using the updated map of Nepal, showing three Indian areas as part of its territory, in his Dussehra greetings, a claim rejected by his office which said the revised map was not visible due to its tiny size.

In June, Nepal’s Parliament approved the new political map of the country featuring Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura which is part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

In response to the criticism, Prime Minister’s Press Advisor Surya Thapa in a statement claimed that the revised map was used in the prime minister’s message, but was not visible due to its tiny size.

“It is natural for the map to appear in such a manner due to its tiny size but the same map, if enlarged, may clearly show the updated areas,” he claimed.

He also asked the people not to be misled by such pre-planned efforts to spread rumours about the map included in the greetings.

“How can we consider using Nepal’s old map in the PM’s greeting without incorporating Limpiyadhura as a simple error?” asked main Opposition Nepali Congress spokesperson Bishwa Prakash Sharma.

Many people in their social media posts asked why did the prime minister’s office remove the government’s coat of arms from the map which includes Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura.

In its response to the criticism, Prime Minister’s Press Advisor Surya Thapa in a statement claimed that the revised map was used in the prime minister’s message, but was not visible due to its tiny size.

“It is natural for the map to appear in such a manner due to its tiny size but the same map, if enlarged, may clearly show the updated areas,” he claimed.

He also asked the people not to be misled by such pre-planned efforts to spread rumours about the map included in the greetings.

“There should not be any confusion that the map used in the greetings is the updated version which was endorsed by Nepal’s Parliament,” Thapa said. The Press Advisor in his press note issued through social media also included an enlarged version of the map, which clearly shows the map which includes all the three territories. The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

India too had published a new map in November 2019, showing the areas as its territories. After Nepal released the map, India reacted sharply, calling it a “unilateral act” and

□ In June, Nepal’s Parliament approved the new political map of the country featuring Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura which is part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand

□ Oli in a Twitter message on Friday conveyed his best wishes to the people of Nepal for Vijayadashami or Dussehra

□ Many people in their social media posts asked why did the prime minister’s office remove the government’s coat of arms from the map which includes Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura

cautioning Kathmandu that such “artificial enlargement” of territorial claims will not be acceptable to it.

In its reaction, after Nepal’s lower house of parliament approved the bill, India termed as untenable the “artificial enlargement” of territorial claims by the neighbouring country. India said Nepal’s action violates an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks.

Prime Minister Oli has been asserting that Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura belong to his country and vowed to “reclaim” them from India.

Biden promises free Covid vaccine for everyone in US if elected as President

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged that if elected as president in the November 3 election, he will ensure free COVID-19 vaccination for all Americans, laying out his pandemic response plan just days before the US presidential polls.

In a major policy speech on the coronavirus in his home state of Delaware, Biden on Friday flayed US President Donald Trump for his policies to combat the coronavirus pandemic that has killed over 220,000 people and has had a devastating impact on the country’s economy.

“President Trump said we’re rounding the corner, it’s going away, we’re learning to live with it. They are quotes. But as I told him last night, we’re not learning to live with it. We’re learning to die with it. This is a dark winter ahead,” Biden, 77, said.

Already more than 220,000 people in the US have lost their lives to this virus. Worse yet, a new study from Columbia University suggests that anywhere between 130,000 and 210,000 of those deaths were avoidable, he said.

“Once we have a safe and effective vaccine, it has to be free to everyone, whether or not you’re insured,” the former vice president said.

He said that if elected, he would direct the federal government to “bulk-purchase as many doses as necessary of the COVID-19 vaccine so we can provide it free to those who are uninsured, under-insured or Medicaid-eligible.” “COVID-19 dwarfs anything we’ve faced in recent history and it isn’t showing any signs of slowing down. The virus is surging in almost every state. We passed 4.8 million cases. And when Trump was asked this week what he’d do differently to get the pandemic response right from the start his answer was and I quote, “Not much. Not much,” he said. Alleging that Trump does not have a plan to fight the coronavirus, Biden said the longer he is the president, the “more reckless” he gets. “We don’t have to be held prisoner by this administration’s failures. We can choose a different path. We can do what Americans have always done: come together and meet the challenge with grit, compassion, and determination,” he said.

democratic response right from the start his answer was and I quote, “Not much. Not much,” he said. Alleging that Trump does not have a plan to fight the coronavirus, Biden said the longer he is the president, the “more reckless” he gets. “We don’t have to be held prisoner by this administration’s failures. We can choose a different path. We can do what Americans have always done: come together and meet the challenge with grit, compassion, and determination,” he said.

Teens behind latest art damage on Berlin’s Museum Island

AP ■ BERLIN

Several teenagers sprayed graffiti on a piece of art outside one of Berlin’s most famous museums and that the vandalism was unrelated to the damaging of more than 60 other art works on the city’s Museum Island that were smeared with an oily liquid early this month, police said on Saturday.

A huge granite bowl in front of the Altes Museum, which is part of the German capital’s museum complex and houses antiquities, was defaced Friday night by some teenagers and adults, Berlin police said. Two of the suspects were temporarily detained.

Museum Island is a UNESCO world heritage site in the heart of Berlin and one of the city’s main tourist attractions.

Dozens of other exhibits at the Museum Island complex were vandalized Oct. 3. Investigators said they had watched hours of surveillance camera footage but not found

any obvious sign of anyone applying the liquid.

Museum experts have said the motive remains a mystery and there appeared to be no thematic link between the targeted works. They expressed optimism that the apparently random damage can be repaired.

Berlin police said the graffiti sprayed on the granite bowl did not have any political content or appear related to the damaging of the other art works.

Poland’s President tests positive for coronavirus

Warsaw: Polish President Andrzej Duda said he feels well despite testing positive for the coronavirus, and he apologised Saturday to everyone who must quarantine because they had contact with him. Duda, 48, said in a recording published on Twitter that he was experiencing no COVID-19 symptoms “but unfortunately, the test result is absolutely unambiguous.” “I would like to apologise to all those who are exposed to quarantine procedures because of meeting me in recent days,” he said. “If I had had any symptoms of coronavirus, please believe me, all meetings would have been cancelled.” AP

Biden’s warning on oil tests voter resolve on climate change

AP ■ OKLAHOMA CITY

Joe Biden is confronting the harsh political realities of combating climate change.

The Democratic presidential nominee has spent months touting a \$2 trillion plan to boost investment in clean energy and stop all climate-damaging emissions from the U.S. economy by 2050. The plan implied that he would wean the U.S. off oil and gas, but Biden wasn’t so explicit about the industry’s fate — until Thursday night.

During the final moments of the presidential debate, Biden said he would “transition away from the oil industry.”

President Donald Trump,

trailing Biden in many national and battleground state polls, immediately sensed an opportunity to appeal to voters in competitive states like Texas and Pennsylvania that produce oil and gas.

“Basically what he is saying is he is going to destroy the oil industry,” Trump said. “Will you remember that, Texas? Will you remember that, Pennsylvania? Oklahoma? Ohio?” With less than two weeks until the election, Biden’s comment is prompting a sudden test of whether voters who increasingly say they are worried about the climate crisis will embrace steps to confront it. During a season of worsening wildfires, hurricanes and other

disasters, scientists are issuing urgent warnings that big cuts in burning oil, gas and coal are needed right away.

Republicans, eager to shift focus away from the intensifying coronavirus pandemic, say Biden’s plan would cost jobs. Biden “just killed paycheck(s) earned by hardworking families in Texas,” Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, tweeted after Thursday’s final presidential debate saw Trump and Biden spell out their worlds-apart stances on climate-damaging fossil fuels.

“Joe just wants to transition away from Texas. Remember that on election day,” Abbott

wrote.

Even some Democrats distanced themselves from Biden’s comment. Rep. Kendra Horn, a Democrat who flipped a Republican seat in Trump-loyal Oklahoma in 2018, tweeted: “We must stand up for our oil and gas industry.”

So did Rep. Xochitl Torres Small, a first-term Democratic congresswoman in a tossup race in New Mexico, in the oil- and gas-rich Permian Basin.

“We need to work together to promote responsible energy production and stop climate change, not demonize a particular industry,” she tweeted, adding that she was ready to “stand up to” the Democratic Party.

Big suicide bombing in Kabul kills 18 at education centre

AP ■ KABUL

The death toll from the suicide attack Saturday in Afghanistan’s capital has risen to at least 18 killed and 57 people wounded, including students, the interior ministry said.

The explosion struck outside an education center in a heavily Shiite neighborhood of western Kabul, Dasht-e-Barchi.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian says that the attacker was trying to enter the centre when he was stopped by security guards.

According to Arian, the casualty toll may rise further as family members of victims of the suicide bombing are still searching the several different hospitals where the wounded have been taken.

No group claimed immediate responsibility for the bombing. The Taliban rejected any connection

with the attack.

An Islamic State affiliate claimed responsibility for a similar suicide attack at an education center in August 2018, in which 34 students were killed. Within Afghanistan, IS has launched large-scale attacks on minority Shias, Sikhs and Hindus, whom it views as apostates.

Hundreds of Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan fled the country in September after a gunman loyal to the militant group killed 25 members of the shrinking community in an attack on their share a place of worship in Kabul.

The U.S. signed a peace deal with the Taliban in February, opening up a path toward withdrawing American troops from the conflict. U.S. officials said the deal would also help refocus security efforts on fighting the Islamic State, which is a rival of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

There has been an upsurge in violence between Taliban and Afghan forces in the country recently, even as representatives from the two warring sides begin their own peace talks in Doha to end the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

Earlier Saturday a roadside bomb killed nine people in eastern Afghanistan after it struck a minivan full of civilians, a local official said.

Ghazni province police spokesman Ahmad Khan Sirat said that a second roadside bomb killed two policemen, after it struck their vehicle that was making its way to the victims of the first explosion.

Sirat added that the bombings had wounded several others, and that the attacks were under investigation.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. The provincial police spokesman claimed the Taliban had placed the bomb.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead at Subway, Near Hanuman Mandir, Kashmir Gate, Delhi on 20.10.2020. In this regard a DD No. 59-A u/s 174 CrPC, Dated 20.10.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 30-35 years, **Height:** 5'8" Feet, **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Red Colour T-Shirt and Blue Colour Pant.

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

S.H.O
P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23967889, 23968730

DP/669/N/2020

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/175/e-tendering Dated: 22.10.2020
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the **Registered, reputed & experienced firms** as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:
Name of Work:- Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 2-Post Hydraulic Lifts and Pneumatic guns along with allied fittings at Regional Workshop at State Motor Garages Department, Bemina, Srinagar.
Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 12.45
Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 1000/-
Earnest Money (Rs):- 25,000/-
Time of completion (in Days):- 30
Position of AAA/funds:- Available
1. Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website **www.jktenders.gov.in** from **22-10-2020 (18.00 hrs)** and can be downloaded from **22.10.2020(18.00 hrs)**.
2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **23-10-2020(10.00 hrs) to 11-11-2020 (18.55 hrs)** in two (02) covers.
3. Opening of Bids:- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on **12-11-2020at 14.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD , Srinagar.**
No. DIPPK-7928/20
Dated:-23.10.2020
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar



Dussehra at Kulasekaranpatinam

A sleepy coastal village deep in the heart of South India (Tamil Nadu) gives Dussehra its own twist

2



4

Season of empowerment

Shardeya Navaratri provides us with an occasion to get periodically geared up to take on life ahead in all strength

Your regrets aren't what you did, but what you didn't do. So I take every opportunity
— Cameron Diaz



As the world battles a pandemic this year, the smog situation in Delhi can wreak havoc on public health, writes SONAL SHUKLA, as she details the factors and challenges before the concerned governments in handling the perennial hazard

THE RETURN OF DELHI SMOG

A blanket of haze has been shrouding the National Capital for some days now: the smog season is back. The AQI has crossed 300, pushing air quality to 'very poor' level, which was last witnessed in February. NASA images show clusters of fire in Punjab and Haryana, as the post-harvest paddy stubble burning has started in the farms.

Last year towards October end, the Delhi Government had to declare a 'public health emergency' for nine days, as Delhi experienced its longest period of hazardous air pollution. This year, as the world battles a pandemic, the smog situation can wreak a havoc on the public health. The health experts warn that smog can increase the time the virus can stay in the environment, increasing the infection rate. The increased number of Covid cases in Delhi and Mumbai are already being linked to the higher pollution level of these cities. Pollution also affects immunity and lungs, thus placing the Delhi residents at higher Corona susceptibility and fatality risk.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE DELHI SMOG?

The trough like topography of North India and meteorological conditions set by winter season makes the pollution linger over it, creating the condition for Delhi smog. With the onset of the winter season, weather condition becomes conducive to pollution, as cold settles air closer to the surface (inversion), wind speed drops and moisture goes up — so the pollution is not dispersed. Diwali firecrackers and stubble burning which also occur in the months of October-November, become contributory factors to the smog, as they add on to Delhi's pre-existing air pollution. As around this time the wind direction also changes to north-westerly, the stubble burning pollution is carried towards Delhi from its neighbouring states.

CONTRIBUTION OF STUBBLE BURNING TO DELHI SMOG

As the Government of Delhi, Punjab and at Centre, squabble over the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's smog — while the Punjab CM cited the findings of IISER, to state that stubble burning is not responsible for most of the Delhi's pollution — a look at other studies on the matter is merited.

A recent study undertaken by IIT Kanpur and Delhi Pollution Control Board links contribution of PM 2.5 as 38% to road dust, 20% to vehicular emission, 11% to industries etc; with stubble burning merely adding on to the current load. Council of Energy, Environment and Water, a Delhi based think tank, which also arrives at similar figures, agrees that local sources and unfavourable meteorological conditions are the main factors behind Delhi's air pollution woes; with transportation and road dusts as the biggest culprits. Massive Earth Foundation, another think tank, also undertook a research to find the impact of stubble burning, thermal power plants, Diwali crackers and broken transportation of the air pollution; and found vehicular traffic as the biggest culprit, which has shifted base line of air pollution in India from a desirable 60 AQI to unhealthy 200.

According to Government's analysis of Delhi

smog during 2019, the contribution of stubble burning was variable, only peaking at 44% once.

However, it will be pertinent to quote Supreme Court mandated agency, Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) on the issue, "even if it is not the only cause of pollution in the region, there is no doubt that the transportation of pollutants from burning fields is the tipping point that makes winter's already unhealthy air quality into a public health emergency."

CASE OF STUBBLE BURNING

The whole issue of stubble burning is based in structural fault in the Indian agriculture system, which promotes wheat and rice crops through assured MSP — even though India is the second largest producer of rice and wheat in the world, and a foodgrain surplus state. This is creating many ecological problems for Delhi's neighbours — the erstwhile Green Revolution states, Punjab, Haryana and Western UP — like alarming rate of ground water depletion due to excessive water intensive crop of paddy and stubble burning. The use of combined harvesters for paddy which is common in these states, leaves behind a nine-inch stubble in the farm. Moved by the Government assured economic returns, farmers in these states sow wheat after paddy harvesting — the time duration between the two is a month or less; not enough for the stubble to decompose naturally, thus stubble burning, the cheapest option, is resorted to.

Not just is the stubble burning polluting, it is equally harmful for the soil itself, which loses most essential nutrients like organic carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur with the burning of the stubble. The heat destroys the beneficial microflora and fauna from the soil and hardens it; thus affecting physical, chemical and biological attributes of soil making it less fertile and vulnerable to weed and drought.

The long term solution to the problem lies in crop diversification: a move towards less water intensive crops like soyabeans, pulses, corn — which are harvested by hand or can be harvesting mechanically earlier on, providing sufficient window for the residue to decompose before the next sowing. For the time being, the in-situ and ex-situ sustainable management techniques for crop residue are an alternative.

SUPREME COURT IN ACTION

The Supreme Court (SC) has been quite proactive on the issue of air pollution in Delhi; closely monitoring the situation since last year, when it criticised Punjab, Haryana and UP Governments for failing to control stubble burning. In February, SC directed Central and Delhi Government to take strong measure for stopping stubble burning; and approved an action plan on the matter, based on the affidavit of Ministry of Agriculture — which included steps like setting up smog towers, smog guns in Delhi, and implementing other in-situ and ex-situ stubble management techniques which will be funded by Central Government and implemented by the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, UP and Delhi. In September, the SC had rebuked the Delhi and Central Government for delay in setting up of the Smog Towers in Delhi. A few days back SC



THE LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LIES IN CROP DIVERSIFICATION: A MOVE TOWARDS LESS WATER INTENSIVE CROPS LIKE SOYABEANS, PULSES, CORN — WHICH ARE HARVESTED BY HAND OR CAN BE HARVESTING MECHANICALLY EARLIER ON, PROVIDING SUFFICIENT WINDOW FOR THE RESIDUE TO DECOMPOSE BEFORE THE NEXT SOWING. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE IN-SITU AND EX-SITU SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR CROP RESIDUE ARE AN ALTERNATIVE



appointed former judge, Justice Lokur as one man committee to monitor stubble burning in Delhi, and its neighbourhood, and report to SC directly in 15 days.

ACTION BY EPCA, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND NEIGHBOURING STATES

EPCA is monitoring the implementation of the SC approved Action Plan, by the Centre and the States. It also suggests other measures to the States like setting up control room, obtaining undertakings from big construction projects and red and orange category industries on pollution. Central Government is experimenting with PUSA decomposer in farms in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and UP. It is also funding Smog Towers, in-situ stubble management machines, farmer awareness campaigns and has set off 50 teams of Central Pollution Control Board for monitoring the situation in Delhi and its neighbourhood.

The steps taken by Punjab, Haryana and UP as reported to EPCA, mentioned in its last month's report are: making in-situ stubble management machines available to farmers at highly subsidised rates through purchase by farmer directly, or on rental through village panchayats and Farmer Producer Organisations by setting up Custom Hire Centres. A mobile app is also being launched for creating awareness in the farmers about the scheme. Ex-Situ management steps are also being taken for converting stubble into bio-energy and power plants are being set up for the purpose.

Despite of these steps by the Central Government and the States, farmers especially of Punjab and Haryana are complaining about not receiving any help from the Governments, thus being forced to burn the stubble. Hence, the implementation of these schemes seems to be rather thin on the ground, also its being reported that the action against stubble fires has not been as widespread this year, as before.

TOWARDS A SMOG FREE DELHI

Delhi needs 65% reduction in PM 2.5 to meet the desirable national standard. The strategy for that has to be comprehensive and multi-pronged. First, adopting crop diversification, proper implementation of in-situ and ex-situ residue management policies by States, creating a market for crop residue, setting up crop residue collection system based on municipal solid waste collection system — thus giving alternative options to farmers to opt out of stubble burning.

Second, to fix Delhi's broken public transport infrastructure. There has been four-fold increase in vehicles in Delhi between 2000-2018. The pandemic has further aggravated this trend, pushing up the purchase and plying of private vehicles on the road. Number of public buses in Delhi need to be ramped up, while creating smooth connectivity with the metro. Emission testing, which is only 25%, must be pushed up. More incentives on e-vehicles like waiver of road fee and low interest loans must be provided. Third, controlling the road dust by intensive roadside plantation of big crown trees, planting grass on the sidewalks and improved solid waste management.

The writer is a public policy analyst, and a lawyer, an alumnus of National Law University, Jodhpur

STEPS TAKEN BY DELHI GOVERNMENT

- Campaign called 'Yuddh Pradhushan ke Viruddh'
- Green War Room for monitoring, enforcement compliance, complaint redressal
- Green Mobile app for launching complaints
- Spraying PUSA decomposer for free in fields for composting of stubble
- Smog towers to come up in Connaught Place and Anand Vihar in few months
- Strict anti-dust policy for construction and demolition sites
- Smog guns for hotspots
- Transplantation policy for projects
- Campaign 'Red light on, Gaddi off'
- E-vehicle policy — by 2024, 25% new vehicles be electric



WHAT'S GRAP (GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN)

- Comes into effect in Delhi and its neighbouring towns based on the severity of pollution
- Put in effect from October 15, by EPCA as AQI turned 'very poor'
- Banning of electricity generators apart from essential and emergency services, was ordered under it
- Other measures include increasing bus and metro services and raising the parking fee
- Steps when situation turns 'severe': closure of brick kilns, water sprinkling, frequent mechanised cleaning of roads, maximisation of power from natural gas
- 'Emergency situation' measures: odd/even scheme, banning construction activity and entry of trucks in Delhi



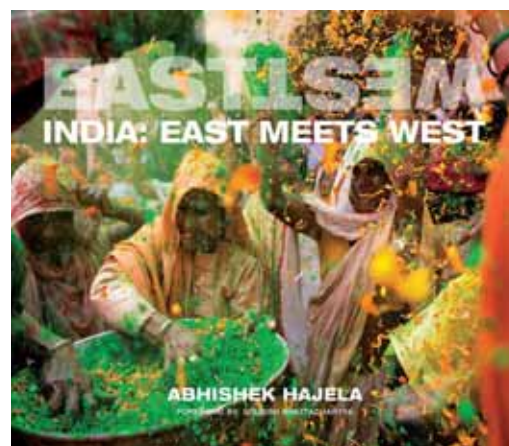
IT'S NOT THAT GOOD
DOESN'T TRIUMPH OVER
EVIL, IT'S THAT THE POINT
SPREAD IS TOO SMALL
— BOB THAVES



Devotees carry fire in earthenware pots and bowls, as fire is considered holy in Hindu mythology and is used during the festival to signify purity and the new beginnings that it brings

DUSSEHRA

OF KULASEKARANPATINAM, TUTICORIN



Signifying the triumph of good over evil, Dussehra is celebrated with much gusto and fanfare and in several forms and almost all parts of India.

The most interesting place to observe this epic festival is at Kulasekaranpatinam, near Madurai. A sleepy coastal village deep in the heart of South India—Kulasekaranpatinam, near Madurai, in Tamil Nadu, gives it its own twist. Devotees converge in Kulasekaranpatinam from all parts of Tamil Nadu as they take to the streets in the village dressed as Goddess Kali and various other mythological characters.

The 12-day celebrations begin on the starting of the lunar cycle, and culminate on the day Dussehra is celebrated. The events take place in and around the 300-year-old Mutharamman Temple in the village, which is an important part of the town's history. The beginnings of the festival was much more humble, but over the years the participation of many more villages and towns have given it a deeper significance and fervor. The vast stretch of seashore along the area plays a gentle host during the occasion and a general air of gaiety, excitement and festivity hangs in the air...

Excerpted with permission from Abhishek Hajela's India: East Meets West. A recipient of International Nikon Award, Hajela is a passionate travel photographer, who loves to capture people in their environment and likes to tell life stories through visual imagery



A number of villages and towns in Tamil Nadu field participants during the festival who divide themselves into groups of 6-10 people. These people dress up as mythological characters, saints and Goddess Kali. An accompanying orchestra team that loudly announces their arrival and presence further enhances this procession



Once a person wears the Kali outfit, they go into a state of trance and start dancing almost maniacally. It is said that the Goddess Kali possesses whoever wears the Kali outfit and those people become manifestations of her divine form



The trident represents the three supreme beings of Hindu Mythology, which are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It is also said to represent the past, present and the future, the seven *chakras* and the three energy channels of *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushmana*

Larger than life US elections and Trump’s comeback

US elections are a spectacle and roller coaster ride par excellence with their intertwined doses of confetti and the minitiarised Star-Spangled Banner with the poignant Bald Eagle in the background. It is all symptomatic of the oeuvre of symbolism, American homeland’s verve and the patriotic and the MAGA phenomenon, (Make America Great Again). The US elections are an extravaganza normally but with the Trump Administration battling the Covid-19 pandemic, the spectacle and the larger verve of the exciting hustings have been dampened a bit. But, no one can keep the palaver about American Presidential elections down for long, not even a deprecatory Joe Biden, who leads by a slender margin of 10 per cent in the aftermath of the first presidential debate hosted by Wallace of Fox News a few days backs.

In the first televised debate between the twin candidates, Joe Biden, the Democrat candidate, has raised questions about the anti-pandemic policies and proclivities of President Donald Trump. He contended aloud in the Fox TV moderated debate, “The Administration should provide masks and other paraphernalia to the American citizens. It’s a different matter to talk aloud about the measures the Government has undertaken. The functional aspect of the Administration should not be relegated to the backburner in the light of hyperbole.” Another brick bat which Joe Biden utilised to beat the incumbent with was the allegation that the question of removing the race factor from the sensitivities list of the US Marines was a blunder which the presidential seat of power which the White House has indulged in. Thus in a manner the debate brought out contradictory aspects of US presidential elections but the chutzpah attached with the elec-

tionering extravaganza remains subdued due to the persistent essential evil of the novel coronavirus which has taken a heavy toll on the world’s sole surviving superpower.

US elections in the past were carried out in the grand old rail road and big business era of the United States through whistle-stop tours carried on by the candidates who addressed audiences from the pulpits of the last coaches of the trains. Thus, apart from the foggy trail of the big bosses of the political parties, it can be ascertained that the spectacle still remains the core refrain of any US elections in the past era too. The strategy earlier was to sway the voters with the hidden intent of President Donald Trump that he will win the elections through the modicum of postal ballots which will be the praxis in a pandemic infected scenario in the homeland’s domestic polity, society and economy. It might be a close race and President Donald Trump has lived true to his image of lambasting the left liberal domain of the Democrats, especially in the States of California and Montana which need to be strengthened as they are swing States going by the nomenclature of the American elections. This was one riposte cannily advanced by a fighting and adversarial entrepreneur, President Donald Trump presented in the televised debate when being riled for the case of Peter Floyd in Charlottesville.

It was in 2016 that the presumptive candidate, Hillary Clinton, was leading till late in the US elections but the white collared vote along with the ecclesiastical support base of the WASP majority let him sail through with the flailing Star-Spangled Banner. Will it be the same fate of the US elections in line with what transpired in the 2016 contest with Hillary Clinton? This happens to be a million dollar question. Al



President Donald Trump dances after a campaign rally at Pensacola International Airport in Pensacola on Friday

AP

Jazzera has reported that Biden is winning with the lot of undecided voters while Joe Biden is also taking an expanse amid all kinds of voters. This might be early days but the US President has returned to the White House in the wake of his testing positive for coronavirus which might be what the doctors ordered for the electoral fortunes of President Donald Trump. The Democrats are uselessly cranking up the fact that single mothers have been hard hit by the novel coronavirus retrenchment in an

unimaginative to ratchet up the support of the single women which Hillary too had attempted in the year 2016 to no avail. So it’s a known and tried strategy which did not work the way of the Democrats in 2016 and is a fashionable tenet of referring to fake concerns of lift and liberals for spawning political gains in the American political firmament. Al Jazzera reports, “The US Senate Judiciary Committee announced that it would open a confirmation hearing for President Donald Trump’s

Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, on October 12, making clear that an outbreak of Covid-19 will not interfere with the election schedule.” Thus, the Opposition attempts to ratchet up all possible permutations and combinations and commissions and commissions indulged in by the American President in the 2020 election trail.

As part of the process part of the US elections in 2020, the American Embassy has to inform that, “Americans will go to the polls on November 3,

2020 to cast their ballots for the man who will serve as US president for the following four years, but first they must select delegates who will vote at national conventions to determine which candidates appear on those ballots.” The Democrats are also creating the wily canard that President Donald Trump is a Teflon President and if Joe Biden does not come through as the victor then the grand American nation would crack up badly and inimitably.

In the contemporary times,

the US elections are slated to take place in the month of November, 2020, Joe Biden, the Democratic presumptive candidate, made an issue out of the Covid outbreak in the US wherein, he cannily, forecasted that President Donald Trump would postpone the elections in the light of the ravaging impact of the pandemic which was denied by President Donald Trump and the Republic establishment. The initiation of the Indian origin Kamala Harris is being posited a voice of the Indian diaspora in the United States but little is known of her in the sphere of foreign policy making and decision-making experience. Kamla Harris has many times repeatedly stated, “I am a Negro and I am a Negro first and nothing more with my American underpinnings.” She has never actively confabulated with the public sphere in the United States concerning her Indian origins. She might be the first non-white Vice Presidential candidate but does not have many credentials to show off herself, as being the sole feminine voice of the Indian diaspora in the American homeland. In summation it can be argued that a stable but happening world comity of States chaperoned by the American dreamers and the vishwa gurus might be the panacea for what the doctor ordered for the larger ecosystem of nation states in a to be turbulent and testy 2020. With the pandemic becoming a larger reality, it can be argued that the gaffes committed by the White House in the light of calling the novel coronavirus as a flu and a mild malady, President Trump might still romp home with the backing of the global coalition of the Quad comity of nations and the global churn against China.

(The writer teaches at International Relations and International Organisations, IIPA, New Delhi)

With the pandemic becoming a larger reality, it can be argued that despite the gaffes committed by the White House in the light of calling the novel coronavirus as a flu and a mild malady, President Trump might still romp home with the backing of the global coalition of the Quad comity of nations and the global churn against China



MANAN DWIVEDI

PERSPECTIVE

Hard task ahead for charismatic Jacinda

At a time when right-wing parties have a field day around the world, Jacinda Ardern has led the centre-left Labour Party to a historic victory. Considering her winning formula of compromise and consensus, the absolute majority might prove a challenge for her as she needs to take along the polar opposite groups: the affluent middle class and the poor



MAKHAN SAIKIA

The recently concluded New Zealand parliamentary election has once again brought back Jacinda Ardern to power. The election was scheduled for September, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed by a month. Since the introduction of the MMR in the 1996, the Labour Party has become the first ever party to form Government on its own, winning 64 seats out of total 120 in the House of Representatives. Looking at the results: Labour Party 64 seats (49.1%), National Party 35 seats (26.8%), ACT (Association of Consumers and Taxpayers) 10 seats (8%), Greens 10 seats (7.6%), NZ First (2.7%), but no seat, Maori Party 1 seat (1%) and others got 7.7 % (no seat), it is clear that the centre-Left Labour has recorded a landslide victory.

With this thumping victory, Ardern has spread the message of stability and certainty to the people of New Zealand.

Jacinda’s foray into politics is an interesting story. With her father being a police officer and mother a school cook, Jacinda had a ground experience of poverty that her country was facing. When she was 17, she was an active Labour Party worker. After completing her degree in Communication Studies in Politics and Public Relations, she started working for Helen Clarke, the then Prime Minister of the country. She also had the experience of working in the UK Cabinet Office when Tony Blair was the Prime Minister of the UK. By 2008, she was back to her country from London and became an MP of the Labour Party. One of her most controversial political moves was an attempt to introduce a Bill to support gay rights in her

country. She even renounced the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints in her early twenties as the Church’s views on gay rights clashed with hers. Thus, she is in favour of equal rights for the LGBTs.

“Jacinda Mania” has finally worked. She has been awarded an outright majority, with an approval rating of 55 per cent. The election was set behind an extraordinary background accompanying three pronged crises — the first being a terror attack, second the natural disaster, and third the global pandemic of Covid-19. She has been able to handle all the three issues much better than any other leader of the country. Her unequivocal stand not to defend the white man accused of the terror attack in the Chirstchurch area that killed 50 and wounded more than fifty in mid-March 2019 earned her admiration of the people.

The mass shooter Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white man driven by anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments, was temporarily based in the country before the incident took place. In fact, an unsigned manifesto before the carnage on the Twitter and 8chan, an online messaging platform which has been used by anonymous accounts to share extremist messages and cheer on mass shooters, was posted in Tarrant’s name. The attack threatened the country, particularly the Muslim community. Throughout the entire crisis, Jacinda stuck to her stand that the white gunman was a terrorist and emphasised that he did not represent the people of New Zealand.

Second, when a volcanic eruption rocked the White Island or Whakaari, a small volcanic Isle in New Zealand’s



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is congratulated by her partner Clarke Gayford following her victory speech to Labour Party members at an event in Auckland on October 17

AP

Bay of Plenty, on December 9, 2019, it shocked the nation as Covid-19 was already gripping the world around the same time. This was probably the worst case scenario for the islanders that killed more than 17 people. Jacinda joined a nation-wide mourning on this incident. The fact is that the White Island is a summit of a complex submarine volcano. As the island is regularly visited by tourists, the Government was extremely careful in taking the best of the post-volcanic disaster management measures.

Third, unlike many other countries, the Covid-19 handling was too early and followed by extremely hard actions by the Jacinda Government. Its success in controlling the virus has been widely described as “crushing the curve”. The island nation’s Covid strategy was based on speedy testing, contact tracing and isolation, while adhering to strict public health guidance norms across the country. Indeed, the country benefitted from being a high income and an island nation with an advanced health care system at

its best. But the best part of the Government was that it called on its entire population to fight the menace as a “team of five million” to protect their families, friends and all the neighboring nations. And Jacinda has earned rare reputation and fame by taking such preventing measures to save her people from this health havoc.

Her charisma is well appreciated. On record, she has become a Labour leader just seven weeks before the 2017 parliamentary election that gave her a rare opportunity to

grab power at Wellington with a coalition Government with the New Zealand First Party and the Greens Party, although she was able to score only second highest number of votes. But the country’s unique proportional representation system had helped her to form the Government with these two coalition partners. Very soon, she was branded as an anti-Trump liberal icon at a time when the international community witnessed a wave of rightist nationalist leaders around the world. Again she came into prominence for

wearing a Maori cloak, known as “Korowai”, while meeting her monarch Queen Elizabeth-II in April 2018.

Jacinda’s popular slogan “be strong, be kind” has worked magic in this election. And she has become the third woman Prime Minister of the country. She has driven a positive message across. Considering her age, unlike the other Opposition leaders, she has long and bright future in New Zealand’s politics. But the critics and global political experts say that the absolute majority could be a problem for her, even as top Opposition leaders like Judith Collins of the National Party has accepted her defeat and she has vowed to play the role of a robust Opposition figure in Parliament.

Much more than this, people have also voted on two critical referendums; the first being the legalisation of euthanasia and the second, for using cannabis. The first will offer terminally ill patients to go for assisted dying. It is a binding vote and if more than 50 per cent voters say yes, this will be implemented soon. The second is related to the recreational use of cannabis making legal. This is not a binding vote which implies that even if more than 50 per cent people say yes, cannabis can’t be made legal on the basis of this referendum. The Jacinda Government has to bring a fresh Bill to legalise this. And finally when the results of both these referendums are expected on October 30, the decisions delivered by the voters will make a lot for the entire nation and especially for the widely popular Jacinda.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

