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MY BIGGEST
CRITIC IS MOM:
SONAKSHI
10 VIVACITY

हरियाणा देश का एकमात्र राज्य

जहां सर्वाधिक 10 फसलों की खरीद न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य पर होती है

वर्ष 2020-21 में

किसानों को 29,950 करोड़ रुपये MSP के रूप में दिए

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Bengal votes amid rigging cry

Turnout impressive; Mamata alleges EC bias, seeks action

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
NANDIGRAM/HALDIA

Amid accusation by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that Home Minister Amit Shah was influencing the Election Commission and the Central forces into manipulating the conduct of elections, the second phase of polling ended in West Bengal with an impressive turnout despite reports of stray violence, rigging, threats and alleged murder of political workers coming in from both East and West Midnapore.

Though elections were conducted in 30 constituencies across four districts, Nandigram — from where Mamata is fighting against her protégé-turned-challenger Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP — remained at the centre stage of all controversies with Mamata bringing charges of rigging and violence by BJP supporters. Just as the Chief Minister personally intervened entering a booth at Boyal village following reports that BJP men had turned TMC polling agents out of the booth, hundreds of

supporters from two sides armed with brickbats and lathis gathered in the area shouting slogans.

Even as the police and Central forces had a trying time to keep the two sides away from each other, the TMC chief got trapped inside the booth for more than two hours. The administration had to arrange for a large contingent of security men to escort her back to her temporary residence at Reyapara.

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EC seeks report on Didi's plaint

New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday asked two poll observers to submit a report on complaints by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the State witnessed the second phase of voting across 30 Assembly seats. "A separate hand written complaint was received from Chief Minister via CEO West Bengal today in the late afternoon," the poll body said.



Security personnel keep vigil as villagers raise slogans against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, waiting inside a polling station, during the second phase of West Bengal Assembly polls, at Boyal in Nandigram on Thursday

77% turnout in Assam, EC notice to Himanta Biswa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 77.27 per cent of 73.45 lakh voters exercised their franchise in 39 Assembly seats in Assam during the second phase of polling on Thursday.

According to the EC, Bokajan recorded 76.25 per cent turnout; Cachar 72.28 per cent; Darrang 80.81 per cent; Dima Hasao 74 per cent; Hailakandi 78.94 per cent; Hojai



A voter shows her finger marked with indelible ink after casting her vote during the second phase of the Assam Assembly election, at a polling station in Nagaon district on Thursday

75.71 per cent; Karbi Anglong 75.93 per cent; Karimganj 73.02 per cent; Morigaon 84.03 per cent; Nagaon 77.25 per cent; Nalbari 86.69 per cent; Rangia 73.38 per cent.

Meanwhile, the EC issued a showcause notice to Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front.

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New strain raises Covid cases to six-month high

India's situation like UK due to virus mutation: AIIMS Director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the day India entered the third phase of world's biggest Covid-19 inoculation drive with the vaccine net extended to those above 45, the country reported the biggest jump in new coronavirus cases in nearly six months at 81,380. The death toll at 468 was the highest in nearly four months.

This has taken the total Covid-19 tally to 1,23,02,092 and deaths at 1,63,428.

The Covid surge in the country is due to a new strain and the situation is exactly like the one in the UK when the virus underwent a mutation around Christmas, Dr Randeep Guleria, chief of Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences, told a news agency.

Maharashtra with 43,183 cases took the lead followed by Chhattisgarh (4,617) and Karnataka (4,234).



People stand in a queue to undergo Covid-19 testing, as coronavirus cases surge across the country, at Government Fever Hospital in Hyderabad on Thursday

India's active caseload has reached 6,10,914 and now comprises 4.78 per cent of the country's total infections. A net rise of 31,489 cases has been recorded in the total active caseload in a span of 24 hours.

India's cumulative recoveries stand at 1,15,22,877 with 50,377 recoveries being registered in a span of 24 hours.

A new coronavirus variant reported from Chhattisgarh has become a cause of worry for the Government.

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Inoculation on all days, including holidays

New Delhi: The Centre has decided to keep all public and private sector Covid-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs) operational throughout April, including on gazetted holidays.

Delhi schools to remain out of bounds

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following surge in Covid-19 cases in Delhi, students will continue to attend virtual classes and this was confirmed by the Delhi Government on Thursday.

It announced that students of any class should not be called to schools physically in the new academic session till further orders. The Directorate of Education (DoE) also told schools that teaching and learning activities, which started on April 1, for students should continue through digital mode for academic session 2021-22.

"It is clarified that students of any class should not be called physically in school for the academic session 2021-22 till further orders," the DoE said in an official order.

Schools in Delhi were closed in March last year ahead of a nationwide lockdown to contain surge of novel coronavirus. While several States partially reopened schools in October, the Delhi Government let schools to reopen for students in Classes 9 to 12 for practical works and remedial lessons, from January 18 to February 5.

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Health insurance for all in Rajasthan

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan on Thursday began the registration for an insurance scheme under which each family in the State can claim up to ₹5 lakh every year for medical expenses.

The State began the registration for Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme, announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the state budget 2021-22.

"Rajasthan has become the

first state in the country, where each family will get health insurance of ₹5 lakh each year. People can get registered and be assured of cashless treatment," Gehlot claimed in a tweet.

He said the registrations for the Government's cashless treatment for all have begun in the State from today.

"It is one of our biggest health care schemes aimed at providing medical relief to all residents of Rajasthan," he said.



MLAs gather around CM Ashok Gehlot after his reply on the Budget debate

Govt withdraws order to cut interest rates on small savings schemes

Cong links U-turn to Assembly polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday decided to withdraw the order to drastically cut interest rates on small savings schemes to the relief of millions of small savers and prompting the Congress to link the U-turn to the ongoing State Assembly elections.

A day after delivering a massive jolt to depositors, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the Government will withdraw orders to cut interest rate on small savings schemes and assured to restore the rates to last quarter of the financial year

ending on March 31.

Her own Ministry had on Wednesday reduced interest rate by up to 1.1 per cent across various small savings schemes, including the National Savings Certificates (NSC) and Public Provident Fund (PPF).

"Interest rates of small savings schemes of GoI shall continue to be at the rates which existed in the last quarter of 2020-2021, i.e. rates that prevailed as of March 2021. Orders issued by oversight shall be withdrawn," Sitharaman said in early morning tweet.

Interest rate on PPF was reduced by 0.7 per cent to 6.4 per cent, while NSC was to earn 0.9 per cent less at 5.9 per cent.

Continued on Page 2

Meerut just 45 mins away from Delhi as e-way opens

Earlier it used to take 2.5 hrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The much-awaited Delhi-Meerut Expressway was opened for commuters and general traffic on Thursday. Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari announced the opening of traffic on the 96-km state-of-the-art expressway and said the Government has fulfilled the promise of reducing travel time between Delhi and Meerut.

"Delhi-Meerut Expressway has now been completed and opened to traffic. We have fulfilled our promise of reducing travel time between Delhi and Meerut from 2.5 hours to 45 minutes," Nitin Gadkari took to



Twitter to announce.

During a review meeting of the expressway early this year, Gadkari had committed to complete the full stretch by the end of March 2021.

The 96-km-long 14-lane expressway will reduce travel time between Meerut and Delhi to 45 minutes. At present, commuters travel through NH 58 to reach Delhi and it takes over three hours to cover a distance of 70 km.

The expressway will also reduce the travel time of commuters from Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Haridwar and Dehradun to Delhi.

A portion of the Delhi-Meerut Expressway which was phase I of the four-phase project was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2018.

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CAPSULE

GST MOP-UP AT ALL-TIME HIGH OF ₹1.23L CR IN MAR
New Delhi: GST collections remained above the ₹1-lakh-crore mark for the sixth month in a row in March, rising 27 per cent annually to record ₹1.23 lakh crore, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

BIDEN LETS TRUMP ERA H-TB VISA BAN EXPIRE
Washington: US President Joe Biden on Thursday let the ban on foreign workers visa, in particular H-1B, lapse as the notification issued by his predecessor Donald Trump expired, a move which is likely to benefit thousands of Indian IT professionals.

COP MARTYRED IN LeT ATTACK ON BJP LEADER
Srinagar: A policeman was shot dead by Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorists on Thursday morning in an attempted attack on a local BJP leader on the outskirts of Srinagar city, police said.

Dadasaheb Phalke bestowed on silver screen idol Rajini

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There are superstars and then there is Rajinikanth, the most glittering perhaps in the Indian cinematic firmament whose demi-god status has spawned an entire "Rajini culture" of jokes, devoted fandom and box-office success that is almost always more about him than his film.

Rajinikanth, who was on Thursday named for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Government's highest honour for Indian cinema, is cast in classic matinee idol mould with stories of mass adulation on a scale rare for even the biggest stars.

With his balding pate and greying hair, the 70-year-old is unlike many of the others though and rewrites many rules of traditional showbiz.



The dichotomy between the reel Rajini with exaggerated, stylised movie star mannerisms and the real man with no apparent pretensions is sharp and quite unique.

That the dazzling rise, from coolie and bus conductor to the ever-reigning predominantly South star of films such as "Enthiran", "2.0" and "Kaala", could be the stuff of the cheesi-

Continued on Page 2

Pak rejects Min's plan to resume import of cotton, sugar from India

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected a proposal of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to import cotton and sugar from India, according to a media report.

The decision comes a day after Pakistan's new Finance Minister Hamad Azhar on Wednesday announced to lift a nearly-two year old ban on the import of cotton and sugar from India after a meeting of the ECC chaired by him.

However, a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday rejected the ECC proposal to import cotton yarn and sugar from India, Geo TV reported, cited sources.

Continued on Page 2

In a first, US does not describe Tibet as 'inalienable part of China'

IANS ■ DHARAMSALA

In a first, a US State Department report does not describe Tibet as an "inalienable part of China".

Reacting to the crucial development, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), headquartered in this northern India hill station, on Thursday said this year's report marks a victory for Tibetans, for the report's Tibet section does not describe Tibet as an "inalienable part of China", a departure from past reports.

This symbolic gesture has been repeatedly campaigned by the CTA, and this change is welcomed by the Office of Tibet-DC, it said. The US State Department published "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" report.

DTC driver stabs wife, 2 minor sons to death, hangs self

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 31-year-old contractual bus driver of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) allegedly hanged himself after killing his wife and two sons at their residence at Naharpur village of north Rohini area, police said on Thursday.

Dheeraj Yadav was found hanging from a ceiling fan and the bodies of his wife, Aarti (28), and sons, Hiten (6) and Atharav (3), bore stab injuries, said police.

According to a senior police official, Yadav's father, Maha Singh, spotted his body hanging from the ceiling fan through a window on Thursday morning and informed police.

"The couple and their two children lived in a joint family. They resided on the second floor of the house, while his parents lived on the ground floor and his elder brother and his family lived on the first floor," said the police official.

"Yadav has left behind a suicide note, and an investigation is underway to ascertain the motive behind the killings. Legal action has been initiated, and further investigation is in progress," said Pranav Toyal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district.

A kitchen knife apparently used to stab the woman and the kids was recovered from the spot, said police adding that the bodies will be handed over to the family after post-mortem.

In a first, US does not describe Tibet as 'inalienable part of China'

Dharamsala: In a first, a US State Department report does not describe Tibet as an "inalienable part of China".

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This symbolic yet important gesture has been repeatedly campaigned by the CTA, and this change is welcomed by the

Office of Tibet-DC, it said. The US State Department published its annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" report. Organised by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, this year's report includes over 50,000 words detailing the US's assessment of the deteriorating human rights in China. Reminiscent of past briefings, by the CTA and others, the report details the ongoing human rights issues in Tibet, such as torture, arbitrary detentions, corruption of the judiciary and elections, lack of freedom of association, assembly,

movement, religion, censorship, forced sterilisation, and violence against indigenous peoples.

The forced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (11th Panchen Lama), Derung Tsering Dhundrup (a Tibetan scholar), and Gen Sonam (a senior manager of the Potlala Palace) was highlighted, according to the CTA.

The Tibet section also mentions the Chinese Communist Party's forced labour programme for approximately 500,000 rural Tibetans, which was noted last September. In the China section,

the report affirms the Trump Administration's assertion that the Chinese Communist Party is conducting "genocide and crimes against humanity" during the year against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. "These crimes were continuing and include the arbitrary imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty of more than one million civilians; forced sterilisation, coerced abortions and freedom of movement."

The Biden

Administration's report highlights the concerning mass surveillance of Tibetans, Uyghurs, dissidents, and religiously affiliated peoples by China's Ministry of Public Security. The China section details how the Chinese government installed surveillance cameras in monasteries in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas, which would allow the Chinese government to cut communication systems during "major security incidents". The report cites Human Right Watch's findings that the Ministry of Public Security has been partnering

with technology companies to create "mass automated voice recognition and monitoring system" that were created to help the Chinese government more easily understand Tibetan and Uyghur languages. Fingerprints and DNA profiles and other biometric data were also being stored by the Ministry of Public Security, this practice is implemented for all Uyghurs applying for passports.

The report addresses the racist discriminatory practices that deprive Tibetans, Mongolians, Uyghurs, and other ethnic minority groups of

their fair right to language, education, and jobs. The report details how the Han Chinese benefit from these racist policies, "government development programmes and job provisions disrupted traditional living patterns of minority groups and in some cases included the forced relocation of persons and the forced settlement of nomads".

Han Chinese benefited disproportionately from government programmes and economic growth in minority areas. As part of its emphasis on building a 'harmonious society' and maintaining social stability,

the government downplayed racism and institutionalised discrimination against minorities and cracked down on peaceful expressions of ethnic culture and religion.

The State Department report mentions how Chinese officials restrict NGOs that provide assistance to Tibetans as well.

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has lived in India since fleeing his homeland in 1959. The Tibetan exile administration is based in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh.

IANS

Man shot at over old enmity in Seelampur; three nabbed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday nabbed three people after two of them opened fire at a man in northeast Delhi's Seelampur area and injured him over some old enmity. The firing incident occurred on Wednesday.

The victim, Kallu, was admitted to a hospital on Wednesday night after the accused identified as Shawez and Sahil fired at him.

According to a senior police official, an investigation was launched after police were informed about it.

"During the probe, police apprehended Shawez, Sahil and another person, identified as Aman. Shawez was found to be previously involved in a case of attempt to murder," said the senior police official said.

"A country made pistol and a semi-automatic pistol were found in their possession. It was learnt that Shawez and Kallu had an old dispute and both have criminal background," said the senior police official adding that further through investigation is underway.

Bengal votes amid...

From Page 1

This, apparently to protect her from hundreds of people standing on road at various pockets raising Jai Shri Ram slogan.

At Reyapara a furious Chief Minister said, "I am not concerned about my victory in Nandigram which is anyway coming ... my concern is for democratic norms ... elections are festivals of democracy and I am sorry to say that the Election Commission is acting partially at the behest of Home Minister Amit Shah who is instructing the Commission and the Central forces."

Mamata said that she had sent 63 complaints to the Commission but not a single of them has been taken care of.

"We are considering legal action as our voters are not being allowed to vote," she

nonsense... she knows that she has been defeated ... she is losing Bengal... In his comments critics saw a desperate bid to polarise the election atmosphere.

A desperate Chief Minister even called up Governor Jagdeep Thakkar --- with whom she had no love lost --- seeking interference and redressal. She however refused to comment on what transpired between her and the Governor or the Commission officials.

"The BJP are attacking our men and candidates not only in Nandigram but all places where elections are taking place," Mamata commented in an ironical reminder of similar refrains being by the Opposition parties in Bengal for the last one decade or so.

Mamata's complaints were not unfounded as reports of violence and rigging came in from other constituencies too. A TMC supporter was dragged

out of his party office at Keshpur in West Midnapore and hacked to death, party men said accusing the BJP of the attack. Seven people had been arrested in that incident. A BJP supporter allegedly committed suicide by hanging at Nandigram after he was intimidated by the TMC men, his family members said though the police said there was no external injuries found on his person. The Commission had sought report on both the incidents.

In a third incident the polling agent of another TMC candidate Siuli Saha was attacked and hit on his head by alleged TMC men. The victim had been hospitalised with Saha complaining of large-scale rigging by the BJP men.

Notwithstanding the second phase saw a healthy 80.43 per cent polling by 5 pm with Nandigram witnessing 80.79 per cent casting their votes.

With long queues of voters still shown in many areas the polling percentage could go up by another 5-6 per cent, officials said.

A district-wise breakup of polling saw 81.23 per cent polling for East Midnapore while neighbouring West Midnapore witnessed 78.02 per cent. In South 24 Parganas 79.65 cast their votes while Bankura saw 82.92 per cent polling.

Meanwhile, the BJP had lodged a complaint with the EC alleging how the Chief Minister blocked polling at Boyal booth in Nandigram for more than two hours. "We have drawn the attention of the Commission on how the Chief Minister stopped the voters from coming to the booth ... she also broke prohibitory orders by taking along with her more than 20 people inside the booth," BJP leader Sisir Bajoria said.

Govt withdraws order to cut interest rate on small savings schemes

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The steepest fall of 1.1 per cent was effected in the one-year term deposit. The new rate was brought down to 4.4 per cent as compared to 5.5 per cent.

The Congress hit out at the Finance Minister and asked whether the U-turn was an "oversight" or an "election-driven hindsight". Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that the small saving rates would be reduced soon after elections.

"There was already loot on petrol and diesel and soon after the elections end, the small saving rates will be reduced and there will be a loot on the savings of the middle-class. This Government is of jumbas (rhetoric) and the loot of common people," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi using the hashtag "oversight".

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "Really Nirmala Sitharaman 'oversight' in issuing the order to decrease interest rates on GOI schemes or election driven 'hindsight' in withdrawing it?"

Party general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala hit out at Sitharaman and said she has no right to continue as the Finance Minister.

"Madam FM, Are u running a 'Circus' or a 'Government,'" Surjewala asked.

"You have no moral right to continue as FM," he said.

"One can imagine the functioning of economy when such duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an 'oversight'. Who is the competent authority referred in order," he said on Twitter.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram said when inflation is at about 6 per cent and expected to rise, the BJP Government is offering interest rates below 6 per cent hitting the savers and the middle class below the belt.

"The BJP Government had decided to launch another assault on the middle class by slashing the interest rates and profiting itself. When caught, the FM is putting forward the lame excuse of 'inadvertent error,'" he said on Twitter.

SDMC starts six new online applications for services

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Thursday started six new online applications for all three municipal Corporations in Delhi under Digital India's 'Single Window System.

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In order to ensure hassle free delivery of services, the civic agency has launched applications which are related to property tax return, registration of birth and death, general trade, health trade licenses, factory trade licenses and mobile attendance, a senior SDMC official said.

Delhi schools...

From Page 1

"It is reiterated that the students of classes 9 to 12 (session 2020-21) may be called to school only for providing the academic guidance and support to the students for mid-term exams, pre-board exams/annual exams/ board examinations, practical exams, project work, internal assessment following the Standard Operating Procedure for COVID safety and with the consent of the parents," the DoE added.

Dadasaheb...

From Page 1

His films may sometimes receive a lukewarm reception from critics, but the 'Rajini' phenomenon ensures the numbers at the box office, and has done so for close to five decades.

Born Shivaji Rao Gaekwad in Bengaluru, Mysore State (present day Karnataka) in a Marathi family, Rajinikanth was the youngest of four siblings - two brothers and a sister - and grew up speaking Marathi and Kannada.

A sports enthusiast since his school days, Rajinikanth participated in plays at the Ramakrishna Math in Bengaluru.

Following his father's retirement in 1956, the family moved to the suburb of Hanumantha Nagar in Bengaluru. That he got a job as a coolie and then a bus conductor with the Bangalore Transport Service (BTS) before deciding to take up an acting course at the Madras Film Institute at the encouragement of friend and co-worker Raj Bahadur is part of the legend, a fabled story much told.

On the advice of noted Tamil director K Balachander, Rajinikanth quickly took to learning Tamil and made his debut in the filmmaker's 1975 movie 'Apoorva Raagangal'.

The real breakthrough came with next year's 'Moondru Mudichu', another film directed by Balachander, with whom the actor went on to forge a longstanding and successful relationship.

After a brief phase of portraying antagonistic characters, he starred in positive roles in 'Kavikkuyil', 'Sahodarara Savaal' (Kannada) and 'Chilakamma Cheppindi' (Telugu), in which he played the protagonist for the first time in his career.

By the end of 1980, he had worked in all south Indian languages and established a career in Tamil cinema.

The actor also flirted with Bollywood in 'Hum' and 'Andha Kanoon', co-starring his inspiration Amitabh Bachchan. There was also 'ChaalBaaz', 'Bhagwaan Dada' and 'Bulandi'.

From flipping his cigarette or sunglasses, walking in slow motion to

flashing that cheeky smile with a glint in his eye, Rajinikanth has also been an inimitable style icon.

Throughout his acting career, his acting style could best be summed by his famous line in the film 'Padayappa' - "En vazhi, thani vazhi" (My way is entirely my own).

His big films include 'Billa', a Tamil remake of Bachchan-starrer 'Don', sci-fi fantasy movie franchise 'Enthiran' ('Robot'), and triple roles in 'Moondru Mugam' and the action-adventure 'Kochadaiyaan', the first film in India to be shot with motion capture technology but a rare box-office dud for the man.

He reprised his 'Enthiran' role as the android Chitti in Shah Rukh's sci-fi actioner 'Ra.One', much to the surprise of his fans in Bollywood.

Rajinikanth is also a producer and writer. He worked on the 2002 fantasy thriller 'Baba', which also incurred heavy losses but was a surprise hit in Japan.

However, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Thalaivar always comes back.

And so he did after a three-year sabbatical, when he came up with the blockbuster comedy-horror film 'Chandramukhi' in 2005.

Over the years, new-age directors like S Shankar, K S Ravikumar, Pa Ranjith, and AR Murugadoss have interpreted the charm of Rajinikanth in their own manner in films like 'Sivaji: The Boss', 'Lingaa', 'Kaala', and 'Darbar'.

The 'demigod' ventured into politics but unlike his courageous on-screen self, retreated due to frail health.

After months of speculation on 'will he, won't he', the actor in December 2020 announced he will not float his own party. He, however, said he will serve people in whatever ways he can without entering electoral politics.

Rajinikanth is currently filming 'Annaatthe'.

He is married to Latha Rajinikanth and is father to two daughters -- Aishwarya R Dhanush and Soundarya Rajinikanth. The actor never behaves like a superstar, Aishwarya wrote in a book 'Standing on an Apple Box' about her life as a celebrity child.

Meerut just...

From Page 1

The NHAI has set speed limits for commuters using the expressway. In phase 1, which is in Delhi, the maximum permissible speed limit is 70 kmph. In the remaining

three phases, all in Uttar Pradesh, the maximum permissible speed limit is 100 kmph.

The phase thrown opened for public on Thursday are the second and fourth phases of the Expressway. The first phase i.e. Akshardham to UP Gate of 14 kms, and 22-km-long phase 3 from Dasna to Hapur are already operational. The phase 2 of 19 kms links UP Gate and Dasna and phase 4 of 32 km link Dasna and Meerut.

The project has been developed at the cost of Rs 8,346 crore. The expressway connecting the cities has 60 km of expressway drive and remaining national highway. Twenty-four small and big bridges, 10 flyovers, three railway bridges, 95 underpasses and several pedestrian bridges have been constructed on the expressway besides highway amenities.

More than 4,500 lights and cameras have been installed on the entire road. Over 2.5 meters cycle corridor and 2 meters wide footpath have been drawn alongside the roads on phase 1 and phase 2 of the expressway for the safety of the pedestrians and cyclists. In order to make the corridor a smart expressway, weather, travel and other details about the expressway will be provided to the commuters during their transit.

The expressway will also be using the automatic number plate reader technology, with high definition high speed cameras to tax tolls without the need of the vehicles to stop, thus avoiding unnecessary traffic and saving fuel. The expressway will also reduce the time to travel from the national Capital to Uttarakhand and much visited places like Haridwar and Dehradun.

77% turnout...

From Page 1

He has been asked to respond to the notice by 5 pm on April 2.

The EC data shows that Assembly constituencies Sipajhar recorded 83.30 per cent voter turnout, Nalbari 86.69 per cent, Marigaon 81.24 per cent, Laharighat 87.29 per cent, Katicheera 80 per cent, Kalaigaon 80.87 per cent, Jagiroad 83.72 per cent and Dalgao 81.70 per cent.

Reacting to the EC's notice, the AIUDF leader Maulana Badruddin Ajmal tweeted that Sarma scared of losing election, that's why using NIA as a threat. His statement came as a reaction to the EC's notice against Sarma over allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front.

The second phase of elections were conducted for 39 Assembly Constituencies in Assam. More than 73 lakh electorates across 10,592 polling Stations are registered to exercise their franchise in this phase. The election and police officials said that no incident of violence was reported so far from the 13 districts.

There were reports of EVM glitches from some polling stations and upon their immediate replacement voting continued uninterrupted, an election official said.

A significant number of women voters were seen turning up early to exercise their franchise. At most places, voters were found wearing masks and maintaining social distancing as they stood inside the rings drawn at six-ft distance outside the polling stations.

According to the EC, a total number of 1,306 cases of Model Code of Conduct violations were reported through the cVIGIL app from Assam out of which 927 were disposed as on 4.30 pm.

Around 31,000 Central Armed Police Force personnel, along with thousands of State security force personnel, have been deployed to maintain law and order during this phase in which 42,368 polling personnel are engaged.

Among the prominent candidates who have voted are Karimganj (North) MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purakayastha of Congress and his BJP opponent Manash Das, BJP's Nalbari candidate Jayanta Malla Baruah, UPPL's Gobinda Chandra Basumatary, and former Asam Sahitya Sabha president and BJP candidate from Sipajhar Paramanda Rajbongshi.

In its notice to Sarma, the EC said "...the Commission is, prima facie, of the view that that Sarma has violated the above said provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

Now, therefore, the Commission gives you an opportunity to explain your position in making above statement on or before 5 pm of April 2, failing which the Commission shall take a decision without any further reference to you".

The notice was issued by the EC following a complaint filed by the Congress party against Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front. The Bodoland People's Front is an ally of the Congress in Assam.

and participate in the vaccination drive. "We were told there are 20,000 private vaccination centres in the country. But less than 6,000 vaccination centres are being run by the private sector in India. We request the private sector to make the remaining vaccination centres functional and increase their number," he said.

Pak rejects Min's plan to resume...

From Page 1

There was no official word on the decision of the Cabinet. Ahead of the Cabinet meeting, Khan's close aide and Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari said that all ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet and only then they can be seen as "approved" by the Government.

"Just for the record -- All ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet & only then they can be seen as 'approved by govt'! So today in Cabinet there will be discussion on ECC decisions incl trade with India & then govt decision will be taken! Media shd be aware of this atleast!" Mazari, known for her hawkish stand on Kashmir, tweeted.

Azhar's announcement on Wednesday to import cotton and sugar from India had raised hopes of a partial revival of bilateral trade relations, which were suspended after the August 5, 2019 decision of New Delhi to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August, 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack in 2019 in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed. India's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August, 2019 angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India and expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad. Pakistan also snapped all air and land links with India and suspended trade and railway services. PTI

ond biggest sugar manufacturer.

In May 2020, Pakistan had lifted the ban on import of medicines and raw material of essential drugs from India amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a terror attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by terrorist groups based in Pakistan. Subsequent attacks, including one on an Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship.

The ties strained further after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp deep inside Pakistan on February 26, 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack in 2019 in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed. India's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August, 2019 angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India and expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad. Pakistan also snapped all air and land links with India and suspended trade and railway services. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Mr. Gurneet Singh Suri and Mrs. Harbhajan Kaur had purchased Entire First Floor of Freehold built-up Property No. BE-404, measuring 100 Sq.Yards, part of Kharsa No. 1921, situated in area of Village Tinar, Colony known as Hari Nagar, in Block-BE, New Delhi from Mrs. Sunamra Bhatia who is the registered owner of the said property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 01.06.2011 and Entire Original Documents pertaining to the said property has been lost/misplaced and our client is mortgaging the above First Floor of the said property to LIC HFL. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall also inform within 15 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, then our client shall procure that title of the said flat is unencumbered and clear.

Karnail Singh, (Advocate)
K-9, Basement, Jungpura Extension New Delhi.
Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, Raghuvir Singh S/o Soman Singh & Veena Singh W/o Raghuvir Singh, have lost original Power of attorney executed on 01/06/2013 by Raghuvir Singh in favour of Veena Singh for registration of sub-lease deed of Flat no. S3-803, Eldeco Aamantran, Sector-119, Noida, UP. The lost report has been informed to Police through LR No. 264458/2021 on 24/03/2021. If anyone has any concern, please contact 9871961691 within 15 days of publication of this notice.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

नाम परिवर्तन

मेरा नाम जावेद अली पुत्र रमजान है। मेरे पासपोर्ट नंबर 2906074, में मेरा नाम जावेद गलत दर्ज हो गया है। जबकि मेरे आधार कार्ड नंबर 437787324840, में मेरा सही नाम जावेद अली दर्ज है। यद्यपि मैं मुझे जावेद अली के नाम से जाना जाए। जावेद अली पुत्र रमजान तहसील बड़ोत (बागपत)

PD(8971)C

New strain...

From Page 1

According to reports, the State has confirmed the new variant in five different samples. The doctors are yet to discover the effect of the new variant on the patients. It is feared that the new variant, N-440, is likely to weaken the body's

immune system.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Punjab cumulatively accounted for 78.9 per cent of the total active cases in the country. Maharashtra alone accounts for more than 61 per cent of the active caseload of the country.

A total of 459 deaths were

reported in a day, the highest so far this year, with six States accounting for 83.01 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (227) followed by Punjab at 55 daily deaths. However, in a major relief, at least 14 States reported zero deaths.

India is facing an increasingly severe and intensive sit-

uation in some districts, but the entire country is potentially at risk, the Centre said on Tuesday.

Dr Paul, who heads the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 and is a core member of the Centre's COVID-19 response team, exhorted the private sector to come forward

and participate in the vaccination drive. "We were told there are 20,000 private vaccination centres in the country. But less than 6,000 vaccination centres are being run by the private sector in India. We request the private sector to make the remaining vaccination centres functional and increase their number," he said.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made by me that accused Arjun Talo Yadav@Suresh S/o Talo Yadav, R/o Village Patthar Gaddha, Post office Dahar, PS Choparan, Distt. Hazari Bagh, Jharkhand has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 156/16 U/s 363/376D/328/109/34 IPC & 4/6 Pocco Act at PS Jafrabad, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Arjun Talo Yadav@Suresh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Arjun Talo Yadav@Suresh has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Arjun Talo Yadav@Suresh of FIR No. 156/16 U/s 363/376D/328/109/34 IPC & 4/6 Pocco Act at PS Jafrabad, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.05.2021.

By Order
Shri Devendra Kumar Sharma
DP/695/NE/2021 ASJ Karkardoua Courts, Shahadra, Delhi

CM calls emergency Covid meeting today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of the rising Covid-19 cases in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has called an emergency meeting on Friday at his residence to review an action plan to deal with rising number of coronavirus cases in the national Capital.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain along with his department officials will be a part of the meeting. Owing to the surge in cases, Kejriwal shall deliberate on preparing an



action plan to fight the pandemic, including issues like containment zones, vaccination drive, and maintaining avail-



ability of hospital beds. The departmental officials have also been instructed to prepare and present an action plan to tackle the pandemic.

The Health Department has increased its vigilance measures and has taken a number of monumental steps to combat Covid-19. After the orders given by Kejriwal, beds in 33 private hospitals have been increased by 25 per cent for ICU and 25 per cent for normal ward beds respectively.

The CM has announced that stringent action will be

taken against those found without masks in public. At the district level, the surveillance teams are overseeing that the people follow Covid appropriate behaviour, the most important one being that they wear masks.

The Delhi Government is making the vaccination drive reachable to those who have been unable to register for the jabs due to personal reasons. Such people can directly walk into the vaccine centre and get injected with the vaccine between 3 pm and 9 pm.

G'gram reports 381 Covid cases; 1 die

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The rapid increase of coronavirus cases in Gurugram continued on Thursday with 381 fresh cases coming to light. The Covid-19 tally in Gurugram has now risen to 63,394 according to the official daily health bulletin.

One more patients infected with coronavirus died on Thursday in the city. With this, a total of 365 persons have lost their lives in Gurugram.

The figures of Covid active patients are 2,148. A total of 60,881 have been cured and discharged including 175 on Thursday.

The health department said out of 365 deaths 281 died due to co-morbidities and the remaining 84 without co-morbidities.

As per the data of the health department the Covid-19 infection increased again in the last two weeks.

"We are registering more than 200 plus cases from the last one month. It is a concern for us. We are working hard to contain spread in limited places. People need to follow Covid guidelines and maintain social distancing rules," said Virender Yadav, CMO Gurugram.

A Gurugram Health department official said that a majority of corona cases are coming from containment zones where the situation remains precarious. The district has now 27 containment zones.

Covid testing has been increased in the district to prevent the spread of corona infection. Also an intensive testing campaign is being con-



ducted in Gurugram to control the corona virus infection. Soon Covid testing will be conducted at Malls, Market, and other public places," Yadav added.

Apart from this, To curb Covid infections in the city a private organisations 'AlphaCorp' had organised a Covid-19 vaccination camp in its residential society GurgaonOne sector 84 with the help of Fortis Hospital. The focus was to facilitate and give precautionary care to the residents throughout their covid-19 vaccination journey.

At the camp around 150 people aged 45 years and above can be vaccinated in a day. AlphaCorp received 100 registrations out of which 70 residents got vaccinated. Another camp will be set up by Artemis Hospitals in GurgaonOne 22, on 5th April.

"We were able to facilitate covid-19 vaccination of 70 people above 45 years of age, and there was no adverse reaction on anyone during or after the vaccination drive. We thank Fortis Gurugram and their staff for their selfless service and courteous demeanour with our residents" said Col. Sanjay Sehgal, General Manager (Operations), Alpha Facility team.

Sisodia meets DU's acting V-C to resolve pending issues

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to discuss resolution of pending issues and collaboration for quality education, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia called on Delhi University's acting Vice Chancellor PC Joshi on Thursday.

Delhi University colleges, fully funded by the Delhi Government, have been at loggerheads for a few months over grants for payments of salaries.

"Had a fruitful meeting with the Vice Chancellor of @UnivofDelhi, to resolve all pending issues, and to plan how Delhi Govt and @UnivofDelhi can collaborate to provide innovative and high-quality Higher Education to the students of Delhi," Sisodia tweeted.

Expedite clean Yamuna projects: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday reviewed the major projects pertaining to the cleaning of the Yamuna River and stressed upon completion of projects before the scheduled timeline.

Kejriwal directed the officials to ensure that no untreated wastewater flows into the river noting that water of four major drains are falling into the river. The DJB officials represented a detailed plan to clean four major drains such as Najafgarh, supplementary, Shahdara, and Barapulla in the meeting.

The Chief Minister expressed concerns and unhappiness over the delays in the timelines of each Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) project. He instructed the officials to have a detailed plan ready by next week, wherein every project is scrutinised as per the revised timelines.

While directing the officials to expedite the Yamuna

cleaning project, Kejriwal said, "The Clean Yamuna project is one of the most ambitious projects of the Delhi Government. We must ensure that there is no laxity at any phase of the project. We should work towards expediting the Yamuna cleaning process; every sub-project should be completed within the stipulated time frame."

The DJB officials apprised Kejriwal that various low-cost technological interventions are being done to expedite the work before scheduled timelines.

"Out of the four drains, the work on interception of two major drains i.e. supplementary and Shahdara is almost complete. The untreated water from the supplementary drain will be completely tapped and treated by December 2021. The untreated water from the Shahdara drain will be completely tapped in the next few months. The remaining two major drains such as Najafgarh and Barapulla will be completed within the stipulated

deadline," they said.

Kejriwal also reviewed the flagship project of septic tank cleaning in unauthorised colonies of Delhi. The project is expected to be completed within the next few months.

The DJB officials also

apprised the chief minister that various low-cost technological interventions are being done to expedite the work before scheduled timelines which include in situ treatment of wastewater, tapping of complete drains and

conveyance to STPs for treatment, installation of advanced filters, incineration for sludge volume reduction, quality improvement of effluent parameters of existing STPs, capacity augmentation of STPs through aeration system.



EDMC fined ₹40 lakh over Ghazipur landfill fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued a penalty of Rs 40 lakh to the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) following the orders of Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai.

The Environment Minister said that the Ghazipur landfill fire incident has extensively contributed to the pollution in the area. "I directed the DPCC clearly to show that the EDMC was extremely careless. Based on the probe, the DPCC has issued a penalty of Rs.40 lakh. The enquiry of DPCC revealed that it was carelessness that directly contributed to this fire."

"The DPCC report also shows that the MCD had no proper arrangements to douse the fire. It is very unfortunate

that such carelessness has been noted in the functioning of MCD," he said.

"The EDMC's carelessness was the major cause behind the incident and has been a major contributor to the area's air pollution. The DPCC noted that there have been fires at Ghazipur landfill in the past too which indicates the lack of measures taken and vigilance observed by the EDMC to prevent such fire incidents," he said.

In the notice issued by the DPCC, it was noted that there have been fires at Ghazipur landfill in the past, indicating a lack of vigilance by authorities and measures taken by the EDMC to prevent such fire incidents. It was also noted that the fire at the Ghazipur land site took place at around 4:30 PM on 22nd March at the far

end of the landfill, the statement issued by the minister office said.

As per the DPCC the civic body has not only ignored the Environment Protection Act of 1986 but also violated the directions of the National Green Tribunal on the matters of solid waste management or garbage management. The Commissioner of EDMC was directed to take immediate and necessary action for the prevention of fire at the Ghazipur plant site.

The DPCC has also asked EDMC to ensure that such fire incidents do not occur in the future. In DPCC's notice, EDMC has been asked to submit a detailed report to the department regarding all steps they have taken after getting this notice.

NMC collects ₹645 cr as property tax, 18% rise

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) has collected approx Rs 645 crore as property tax this financial year. The amount is approx 100 crore more than that collected last year.

Mayor of North Delhi Jai Prakash on Thursday said that the corporation has collected almost 645 crore rupees which is almost 100 crore more than the last year's figure of Rs 548 crore.

"Due to efforts taken by the civic body, the number of taxpayers has also been increased by 5000 as 4, 23,000 taxpayers paid tax in comparison to 4,18,000 taxpayers last year," he said.

The mayor also informed that about 48000 taxpayers

availed the benefit of the amnesty scheme which was launched on January 27, 2021 by the north Corporation.

A total of about Rs 230 crore has been collected in the scheme. The amount deposited by taxpayers who availed the benefit of the scheme may be Rs 230 crore but the relief extended to the taxpayers in form of waiver of interest and penalty who came in line of paying property tax is not less than 500 crore rupees.

Jai Prakash also thanked the efforts of the Municipal Commissioner Sanjay Goel and his team of property tax department for achieving the milestone.



Chandni Chowk redeveloped to promote tourism in Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will inaugurate the main area under the Chandni Chowk redevelopment project on April 17. The Chandni Chowk redevelopment, an estimated Rs 99 crore project has revamped the path from Red Fort to Fatehpuri Masjid.

The redevelopment work on the project had begun on 1st December 2018 and was targeted to be completed by November 2020 but due to the Covid, it got delayed by a year.

The Chandni Chowk area is developed by the Delhi Government in a modern way to promote tourism in Delhi. There will be a ban on the movement of motorized vehi-

cles on this road from 9 AM to 9 PM so that people coming to Chandani Chowk do not have to face problems including traffic jams.

The Chief Minister said that the main road of Chandani Chowk has been redeveloped. "It is a historical heritage site and the entire area has been made very beautiful, seeking to bring back the glory of this old historical place. After the beautification of Chandani Chowk, tourism would get a major boost, and people coming to Delhi would be attracted to pay a visit to Chandani Chowk."

The Govt had decided to renovate and beautify the main road of Chandani Chowk, which is right opposite the Red Fort, in light of its historic importance. Chandani Chowk

has its own identity. However, due to its dilapidated condition, people here had to face a lot of trouble. In addition to this, due to the tourist crowds and traffic jams, India's international image was adversely affected. Therefore, the Kejriwal government started to enhance the beauty of Chandani Chowk from Red Fort to Fatehpuri Mosque, so that the visiting tourists could admire its beauty.

During the renovation and beautification process, the provision of various facilities to the tourists has been taken care of. No stone was left unturned in order to enhance the beauty of Chandani Chowk and granite tiles have been used for the same, a senior government official said.

2 IM terrorists get life term in blast cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The two terrorists of Rajasthan module of Indian Mujahidin (IM) busted by the Special Cell of Delhi Police has been sentenced to life imprisonment by Jaipur court.

The duo was nabbed under the supervision of the then Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, SN Shrivastava, who is now Delhi Police Commissioner.

In March 2014, the Special Cell in its endeavour to contain terrorism being sponsored from across the border, arrested Zia Ur Rehman, a Pakistani national, commonly known to anti-terrorist agencies in India by his alias 'Waqas'.

This dreaded terrorist, exported by Pakistan based ISI and its protégé called Indian Mujahidin, was wanted in a series of bombings carried out all over India along with his absconding associates.

Pursuant to the arrest of Waqas, three more terrorists, members of Rajasthan module of Indian Mujahidin identified as Mohammad Mahruf, Mohammad Waqar Azhar and Shaquib Ansari were arrested.

The police team made huge recoveries including suspected explosive materials, det-

The duo was nabbed under the supervision of the then Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, S N Shrivastava, who is now Delhi Police Commissioner

onators, electronic circuits and timers from their possession in Jaipur and Jodhpur. With this, a spectacular terrorist strike was averted. The Special Cell got registered cases under the Explosive Substances Act at Jaipur and Jodhpur regarding the recoveries made from the terrorists of the Rajasthan module of IM.

The initial arrests of founding members of Rajasthan Module of Indian Mujahidin by Special Cell led to the arrest of ten more terrorists by Rajasthan ATS. The busting of Rajasthan module of IM was done under the leadership and close supervision of S N Shrivastava, the CP and the then Special CP, Special Cell.

On March 31, a Jaipur Court concluded the trial of the case involving the Rajasthan Module of Indian Mujahidin involving thirteen accused persons and sentenced all the accused persons except one to life imprisonment.

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Opp links interest rate cut freeze to State polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of withdrawal of the interest rate-slashing order, the Opposition on Thursday hit out at her asking whether the U-turn was an "oversight" or an "election-driven hindsight" and even sought her resignation.

The Congress asked the Finance Minister to clarify if the interest rates would not be reduced after the ongoing Assembly elections and demanded a guarantee on that. It also asked whether the ruling BJP was running a "circus" or a Government on the manner in which the order was issued by "oversight" and later withdrawn.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that the small saving rates would be reduced soon after the elections in four States and a Union Territory. "There was already a loot on petrol and diesel and soon after the elections end, the small saving rates will be reduced and there will be a loot on the savings of the middle-class. This Government is of jumla (rhetoric) and the loot of common people," he said in a tweet using the hashtag "oversight".

"Really Nirmala Sitharaman 'oversight' in issuing the order to decrease interest rates on GOI schemes or election driven 'hindsight' in



withdrawing it?" Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi wrote on Twitter.

Addressing a press conference here, party leader Rajeev Shukla said Sitharaman should clarify whether the order has been withdrawn, postponed or would be re-implemented later.

Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said Sitharaman has no right to continue as the Finance Minister. "Madam FM, Are u running a 'Circus' or a 'Government'? You have no moral right to continue as FM," he wrote on Twitter.

"One can imagine the functioning of economy when such duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an 'oversight'. Who is the competent authority referred in order," Surjewala added.

Senior Congress leader and former Finance Minister P Chidambaram said when inflation is at about six per cent and expected to rise, the BJP

Government is offering interest rates below six per cent, hitting the savers and the middle class below the belt.

"The BJP Government had decided to launch another assault on the middle class by slashing the interest rates and profiting itself. When caught, the FM is putting forward the lame excuse of 'inadvertent error,'" he tweeted.

The Trinamool Congress took a dig at the Modi Government with its MPs While Derek O'Brien and Mahua Moitra calling it an April's Fool joke even as the new entrant in the party and former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha tweeted, "Roll back Modi".

"What is the biggest April Fool's joke here? That a now rolled back small savings rate cut was issued by 'oversight'? Or that Nirmala Sitharaman is Fin Min of this country?" Moitra tweeted. O'Brien said it was egg on face again. "Because MO-SHA too busy throwing petals from trucks and cracking April Fool jokes of false promises at election rallies," he mocked at the BJP leadership.

Sinha made a tongue-in-cheek remark. "I am very sad today. I thought I alone had the monopoly of roll backs. This govt has outdone even me. Labour laws, small savings interest rates are a couple of examples. Roll Back Modi," he tweeted.

DRDO develops light bulletproof jacket for Army



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of achieving self-reliance in the defence sector, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a light-weight bulletproof jacket which meets the qualitative requirements of the Indian Army.

Giving the details here on Thursday, officials said the DRDO laboratory, Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur has developed the light weight Bullet Proof Jacket weighing 9.0 kilograms.

The Front Hard Armour Panel (FHAP) jacket was tested at Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh and met relevant BIS standards.

The importance of this vital development lies in the fact that each gram of jacket weight reduction is crucial in

enhancing soldier comfort while ensuring the survivability. This technology reduces the weight of the medium sized jacket from 10.4 to 9.0 kilograms. Very specific materials and processing technologies have been developed in the laboratories for the purpose.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO scientists and Industry for developing the light weight bullet proof jacket to make the soldiers more comfortable. Secretary Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO G Satheesh Reddy congratulated the DMSRDE team for the development.

The infantry soldiers guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and the Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan besides troops deployed in counter-terrorist operations need these jackets.

The jacket has to be light yet able to stop the bullet as the soldier carries lot of other

CDS Rawat launches third Joint Logistics Node for better synergy among 3 Services

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



In order to fast-track synergy amongst the three Services and cut down costs, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Thursday operationalised the third Joint Logistics Node in Mumbai. This node will supply ammunition rations and fuel besides other items to the Army. Navy and IAF. Earlier, the services used to have their own set-ups to cater to these needs thereby enhancing expenses and duplication.

With the rapidly changing nature of war fighting and operational preparedness, all future conflicts will be conducted by Tri-Service in an integrated manner. Keeping this objective in focus and to enable the Indian Armed Forces to conduct successful operations, it is essential that they be provided with sound logistics support during all stages of the war, officials said here on the need for such nodes.

The third node in Mumbai was operationalized by Rawat from New Delhi through video conferencing. These nodes will provide integrated logistics cover to the Armed Forces for their small arms ammunition, rations, fuel, general stores, civil hired transport, aviation clothing, spares and also engineering support in an effort to synergise their operational efforts.

Speaking on the occasion, Rawat said establishment and operationalisation of joint nodes is a very important first step in the direction of logistics integration of our three Services. Acceptance of each other's limitations and learning from each other's strengths and best practices is essential to help improve the functioning and efficacy of

these nodes.

This initiative will accrue advantages in terms of saving of manpower, economise utilisation of resources, besides financial savings. Successful functioning of these three nodes will prove to be important stepping stones for opening of more such centres in different parts of the country.

The nodes would enhance joint inter-operability between the Services and go a long way in improving the logistics processes of the Armed Forces in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directions to enhance the jointness among the three Services.

The CDS also emphasised on the need to work towards greater logistics integration with national logistics, which has been provided renewed impetus in the recent past by saying it would help the Armed Forces to take benefit from the infra-structural and logistics improvements taking place at the national level.

Raja barred from campaigning for 48 hrs, no longer on DMK star campaigners' list



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday barred former Union Minister and DMK leader A Raja from campaigning for 48 hours with immediate effect and dropped him from the list of DMK's star campaigners in poll-bound Tamil Nadu, over his "derogatory" and "obscene" remarks against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E K Palaniswami.

The EC also advised Raja "to be watchful and not to make interpretate indecent, derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in future during the election campaign".

The order did not specify the exact time the ban would end, but if the communication was received by Raja this afternoon, he cannot campaign till the afternoon of April 3. The 48-hour ban means that Raja would not be



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

able to address any public meetings, rallies, press conferences or even give media interviews until April 3. If a leader is a "star campaigner", his campaigning expenditure are borne by the party and not by the candidate himself.

"The Commission also advises you to be watchful and not to make intemperate, indecent, derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in future during election campaign," the order read. There have been instances where the EC has mentioned the exact time when the ban would end.

In his reply to the EC, Raja had defended his statement saying that in Tamil oratory, simile is a well-accepted norm. In my speech, evolution of the political heights and their means of MK Stalin and Edappadi K Palaniswami were compared through a simile as new born babies for the easy understanding of the

EC seizes liquor, cash, narcotics worth crores during Assam, WB polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has seized liquor, unaccounted cash, narcotics, freebies worth ₹366.09 crore till the second phase of polling in Assam and West Bengal. The total seizure is over six times higher than the total combined seizure of ₹60.91 crore during the assembly polls in 2016. "Till date ₹112.54 crore has been seized in Assam (as against a total seizure of ₹16.58 crore in 2016) and a total of 253.55 crores for West Bengal (as against a total seizure of ₹44.33 crore in 2016)," the EC said.

This was in response to the CM's repeated allegations that MK Stalin has never worked hard to become a leader. Hence, if the full text is considered by the committee, I'm hopeful that it will wipe out the insult and consequent injury inflicted on me," the former Union minister added.

Assam Poll: EC issues showcause notice to Himanta Biswa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday issued a show-cause notice to Assam Minister and BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front.

He has been asked to respond to the notice by 5 pm on April 2. "The Commission is, prima facie, of the view that that Sarma has violated the above said provisions of the Model Code of Conduct. Now, therefore, the Commission gives you an opportunity to explain your position in making above statement on or before 5 pm of April 2, failing which the Commission shall take a decision without any further reference to you," the notice read.

The notice was issued by the EC following a complaint filed by the Congress party against opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front. The Bodoland People's Front is an ally of the Congress in Assam. Assembly elections in Assam are being held in three phases. While the first phase was on March 27, voting in the second phase is underway on Thursday. The last phase is on April 6.

against Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front. The Bodoland People's Front is an ally of the Congress in Assam.

The notice to Sarma cited various provisions of the model code, including the one dealing with refraining from making unverified allegations against political rivals and, avoiding "corrupt practices" and offences under the election law, such as bribing of voters, intimidation of voters, impersonation of voters.

It also quoted a transcript of the speech provided by the state election machinery.

Health experts call for inoculation of every adult over 18

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Covid-19 vaccination for all those above 45 began on Thursday, health experts have called for inoculating every adult above 18 citing studies that the new Covid variants are more threatening to younger people.

However, the Government is presently more keen on vaccinating those 45 years since this age group is reporting high mortalities.

"Those above 45 years are considered to be at highest risk -- 90 per cent of Covid-19 deaths in India have been in the category of those above the age of 45."

"This step has been taken after detailed deliberations with the states and Union Territories on March 31 to optimally utilise all COVID-19 Vaccination Centres across the public and private sectors to ensure rapid increase in the pace and coverage of Covid vaccination," the Union Health Ministry said.

"This decision is in line with the graded and pro-active approach employed by the government of India along with the states and UTs for Covid-19 vac-

ination," it said in a statement.

However, health experts feel that it's time to cover the entire population as the country is witnessing the second wave. "Today we've got a crisis upon us with infections and deaths registering new high every passing day. We should vaccinate the entire adult population and provide them with a walk-in option to get the job at any vaccination centre. Our vaccination pace is not so impressive given the huge population we have," said Dr Rahul Bhargava, senior hematologist from Fortis Hospital, Gurugram.

He agreed with AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria's view that more kids and younger people are getting infected during the second wave as compared to the first wave reported in August and November last year. The morbidity and mortality due to the deadly virus is higher in elderly people.

"At a time when the Government has itself warned that the situation is going from bad to worse, our efforts should be to scale up vaccination pace and cover maximum people.

Govt proposes fund to patients in Rare Disease Policy draft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Establishment of alternate funding through voluntary crowd and corporate funding, and increase in assistance for patients needing one-time treatment from ₹15 lakh to ₹20 lakh and identifying centre for excellence are some of the key features proposed by the Union Health Ministry in the newly-drafted Rare Disease Policy.

As per the policy, rare diseases have been earmarked under three categories based on the nature of treatment. They are disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment, diseases requiring long term or lifelong treatment having relatively lower cost of treatment and diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, very high cost and lifelong therapy, like Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSD) like Gaucher Disease, Hunter Syndrome and Fabry Disease.

The policy comes on the last day of the deadline given by the Delhi High Court which has asked for the government's entire unspent budget allocated to rare diseases for the past three years to be immediately moved into the rare diseases fund. However, the policy is silent on this aspect.

Instead, the policy proposes the formulation of an alternative form of funding to help patients of rare diseases. This includes voluntary crowd-funding treatment by setting up a digital platform for voluntary individual contribution and corporate donors to voluntarily contribute to the treatment cost of patients of rare diseases.

Noting that India has close to 50-100 million people affected by rare diseases or disorders, the policy report said almost 80 per cent of these rare condition patients are children and a leading cause for most of them not reaching adulthood is due to the high morbidity and mortality rates of these life-threatening diseases.

It also seeks to provide assistance for patients needing one-time treatment for rare diseases increased to ₹20 lakh from ₹15 lakh.

"Assistance to be provided under the Rashtriya Arogya Yojana," the policy said adding that the beneficiaries of the assistance are not limited to the BPL families but extended to almost 40 per cent of population eligible under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. The policy also notes that as the number of persons suffering from individual rare diseases is small, they do not constitute a significant market for drug manufacturers to develop and bring to market drugs for them.

Ministry of Education, UGC take step to cut compliance burden on higher edu sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To streamline the forms and processes in reducing the compliance burden on the higher education sector, the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) have started interactions with all the stakeholders to further ease out the system.

Certain areas including governance and regulatory reforms, and reengineering of processes and increased use of technology to ease students, faculty and staff have been identified for streamlin-

ing processes and reducing compliance burden. The interactions have begun online amongst the stakeholders.

A senior education ministry official said repeat demand for information by regulatory bodies leads to a lot of repetitive work and therefore only information that provides value addition should be insisted on from HEIs.

The first such online workshop organised in the series was chaired by Amit Khare, Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Education. Apart from the

Higher Education Secretary, Professor DP Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission and Professor Anil D Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was also present.

During the online interaction, representatives from Industry Associations such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, and Vice Chancellors from several central, state, deemed, private universities and technical universities shared their views on reducing compliance burden in Higher Education Institution.

78,392 tonnes wheat procured in first fortnight of fresh procurement season

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has procured 78,392 tonnes of wheat in the first fortnight of the fresh procurement season which began on March 15, 2021 as compared to the 60 metric tons last year during the same period.

According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the procurement has started only in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. It is likely to pick up pace as it takes off in Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand from April 1. The procure-

ment of Punjab has been delayed to April 10 due to a spike in Covid-19 cases in the state.

Last year also, Punjab had delayed procurement for 10 days due to the pandemic. The procurement estimate for wheat has been fixed as 427.36 LMT for the year 2021-22.

During previous year 2020-21, a quantity of 390 LMT procured in the central pool and benefitting 43.36 lakh farmers. The harvesting exercise will pick up in a couple of days with procurement.

NIA raids 31 locations in Munchingput Maoist case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has conducted searches at 31 locations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in Munchingput Maoist case of Hyderabad relating to furtherance of the ultra-Left agenda.

On Wednesday, the NIA conducted searches at 31 locations spread across eight districts of Andhra Pradesh--Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Prakasam, Srikakulam, Kurnool, Krishna, East Godavari and Kadapa besides four districts of Telangana

namely Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Medak.

The case relates to furthering the activities of the proscribed organisation, CPI (Maoist) in Andhra Pradesh in the guise of frontal organizations.

The case pertains to seizure of revolutionary literature of CPI (Maoist), press notes, medicines, wire bundles and explosive substances from accused Pangi Naganna, who was intercepted by Munchingput Police during vehicle checking.

Novel technique for tracking eruptions from sun to be used in India's first solar mission

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists have developed a new technique to track the huge bubbles of gas, threaded with magnetic field lines, which are ejected from the sun disrupting space weather and causing geomagnetic storms, satellite failures, and power outages, the Department of Science and Technology said

Thursday. The new technique will be used in India's first solar mission Aditya-L1.

As the ejections from the sun, technically called Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), cause various disturbances of the space environment, forecasting their arrival time is very important. However, forecasting accuracy is hindered by

The new technique will be used in India's first solar mission Aditya-L1

limited CME observations in interplanetary space, the DST statement said.

A software named Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACuT) based on a computer vision algorithm was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona where these eruptions cease to show accelerations and propagate with a

nearly constant speed, it said. However, this algorithm could not be applied to the inner corona observations due to the vast acceleration experienced by these eruptions.

This severely limited the capability to track the eruptions as CMEs accelerate in the lower corona. Moreover, with the advancement in space technology, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of data obtained from spacecraft, according to the statement.

Identifying and tracking solar eruptions in huge number of images can become tedious if done manually, the statement said.

M.P. HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Notice Inviting e-tender

Online percentage rate bids for the following work are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling registration criteria:-

S. No.	System Tender No.	Name of work	Probable amount of contract (Rs. Lakh)	1. Amount of E.M. & 2. Cost of bid Form	Completion period (Months)	Date of Submission of bids (Last Date)	Date of opening of tenders
1.	2021_MPHIDB_TENDER NO. 137282 (1st Call)	Construction of Boundary wall Gate and Other work at IT Park Badwai Bhopal (M.P.)	478.830 Lakhs	4,78,830/- 17,700/-	15	15.04.2021	20.04.21 (Financial Bid)

1. Interested bidders can view the detailed NIT on website www.mphousing.in and <https://www.mpeproc.gov.in>

2. The bid documents can be purchased online only as per schedule S.No.(1) 02.04.2021 at 12.00 hrs. to 15.04.2021 at 15.30 hrs.

3. Amendments to NIT if any would be published on website only, and in newspapers.

(Anurag Shrivastav)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Dn. 4, Ayodhya Nagar, Bhopal
Ph. No. 0755-2689106, Mob.- 8458857699

Website - www.mphousing.in
E-mail - eedn4hbpt@mp.gov.in
M.P. Madhyam/100490/2021

Modi raises Hindutva pitch at WB hustings

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ HALDIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday made a strong Hindutva pitch at the hustings attacking Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for deriding those who wear saffron robes, and sport tilak or chotis (ponytails).

Modi who was addressing a rally at Joy Nagar in South 24 Parganas constituency --- with a healthy population of minority Muslims --- roundly invoked Hindutva saying, "Earlier she was irritated by chants of Jai Shri Ram and was loath to allow immersion of idols during Durga Pujas ... but now she has become so intolerant towards those who wear saffron attire or sport tilak and ponytail that she even call them rakshasas ... the people are watching this."

Referring to the Chief Minister's criticism of his recent

visit to Jasoreshwari Kali Temple in Jessore and Matua headquarters at Orakandiin Bangladesh he said "is visiting a Kali Temple or the temple of Harichand Thakur a crime ... but here the Chief Minister is abusing me for visiting these temples too?"

Speaking about her repeated personal attacks and even use of slangs while referring to him the Prime Minister said, "I understand that she has a grudge against me which is why she keeps on abusing me repeatedly ... I don't mind that but I will not allow her to insult the heritage of Bengal ... I will not allow her to denigrate the basic values upheld by the likes of Baba Saheb Ambedkar and enshrined in the Constitution of India."

The Prime Minister was apparently referring to the repeated attack by Chief Minister of outsiders particularly the anti-social elements from Bihar and

UP who she alleged had infiltrated Bengal to vitiate the electoral process. "After taking oath and sitting on a constitutional post you cannot abuse the citizens of any other state ... it is unconstitutional," he said.

Even on Thursday she told the media at Nandigram how "hundreds of criminals have been brought in by the BJP from UP and Bihar and other States to rig the elections and do crime here."

Reiterating that the BJP would win more than 200 seats Modi said that initial trends of polling showed that TMC was going out of power. "Didi you are losing the elections ... TMC is gone."

Taking a dig at the Chief Minister he said "Didi always says cool, cool, cool, but Trinamool is not cool ... it is a shool (trident) because she has killed the State's democracy with shool".

Inspector General of Police

LeT targets BJP leader's house in Srinagar

Family members escape unhurt, one of security guards martyred

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A burqa clad Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist along with three other gun-toting associates on Thursday targeted the house of a local BJP leader in Nowgam area of Srinagar in which one of the security guards deployed on guard duty attained martyrdom while all the family members including minor son of the BJP leader escaped unhurt.

The BJP leader identified as Mohd Anwar Khan was not present inside the house at the time of the attack. The security guard martyred in the attack has been identified as Constable Rameez Ahmad Itoo of Anantnag.

Inspector General of Police

Kashmir range Vijay Kumar Thursday said, "four Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists including two from Srinagar carried out the attack on the guard post of the house of senior BJP leader in Nowgam area". The IGP said two of the four terrorists involved in the act have been identified as Shahid Khurshed and Obaid Shafi. "Both belong to Lashkar-e-Toiba. The identity of two others is being ascertained who are also believed to be from Lashkar," he said.

"This is the second terrorist attack on me, Anwar Khan told reporters in Jammu". He said as BJP is gaining popularity in different parts of Kashmir attempts are being made to create a sense of insecurity among the party leaders".

Last year, over half a dozen BJP leaders, sarpanches, corporators were targeted by the terrorists to discourage them from participating in the grass-roots politics aimed at strengthening all three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Anwar Khan told



reporters, "he left his home early in the morning as he was scheduled to travel to Jammu. Anwar Khan said, "I have seen the CCTV footage and it is clearly visible when the terrorists, one of them clad in a burqa, knocked at the main door and the security guard opened the door. While he was seen opening the door two other terrorists opened indiscriminate firing and his service weapon was taken away by another member of the group

before escaping. Anwar Khan said, his minor son was also present near the front gate of his house when terrorists targeted the security personnel. With the grace of God almighty he escaped unhurt, he added.

In Jammu, Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha strongly condemned the terror attack on a BJP leader's house in Nowgam, Srinagar. In a condolence message Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha said, "We lost our brave jawan of

J&K Police. My prayers for the departed soul and sympathies with his family. Such cowardly acts are against humanity & perpetrators shall be brought to justice".

Condemning the attack, several senior BJP leaders said that the killers of humanity cannot be heroes for anyone.

National General Secretary, BJP & Prabhari J&K, Tarun Chugh expressed anguish over this highly deplorable incident and stressed that exemplary punishment will be ensured to killers. He said that these repeated terror attacks cannot weaken democracy in the region.

J&K BJP President, Ravinder Raina strongly condemned the attack and said that the whole humanity is feeling shocked and ashamed of these repeated attacks. He said that being soldiers of democracy the social and political activists work tirelessly in strengthening the democracy, but terrorists, their bosses and their sympathizers absolutely do not want people to prosper.

Kerala Opp appeals HC to freeze fake names in electoral rolls

KOCHI: Poll pundits and political analysts in Kerala were flabbergasted as Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala late Wednesday night uploaded the names of 4.3 lakh bogus voters and multiple entries on a website.

Chennithala had filed an appeal in the Kerala High Court seeking deletion or freezing the fake and counterfeit names in the electoral rolls. Earlier in the day, a Division Bench consisting of Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chaly directed the Election Commission to permit voters to leave the polling booths only after the indelible ink is dried.

Kerala goes to the polls on April 6 to elect the 140 member Legislative Assembly in a single phase polling. Though Chennithala said there were only 4.3 lakh fake voters in the rolls, Prof Stanly Sebastian, an educational entrepreneur-cum-social activist claims there are more than 20 lakh fake voters in the State's electoral rolls.

The CPI(M) which has gone on the defensive following the disclosures by the Leader of the Opposition said the party would initiate criminal action against Chennithala for disclosing State Secrets in the public domain.

M A Baby, polit bureau member, who is the chief ideologist of the party, said that Chennithala would have to face legal action for uploading the names of 4.3 lakh fake voters in a website by name operationtwins.com. "Who authorised Chennithala to upload the names of such voters in a portal? Has he taken the permission from the voters before disclosing the names through the portal?" asked Baby, a Marxist leader held in high reverence by the party cadre.

N Gopalaswamy, former Chief Election Commissioner, told The Pioneer that there was no chance of the court intervening in the issue at this juncture. "The Chief Electoral Officer has to reply to this charge. How this many names were included in the electoral rolls? What was the CEO doing all these months?" asked the former CEC.

G Rajagopal, counsel for the ECI said the situation was very grave but one the poll process begins nothing could be done to stop it. "The only option is to ensure that the fake voters who managed to get into the rolls do not cast the votes," said Rajagopal.

The view was echoed by K Ramkumar, senior advocate, Kerala High Court. He was of the view that it was not possible to hold fair election based on the rolls prepared by the CEO.

"I am shocked at the indifference shown by the officials while preparing the electoral rolls. There is widespread irregularities in this list but at this juncture, it is too late to go for any legal recourse. There is a political party in the State, the cadre of which are past masters in casting fake votes," said Ramkumar, State's leading civil rights activist. There are 2.67 crore voters in the State, out of which 1.37 are females and 1.29 males.

Tikka Ram Meena, CEO, who is known for his close contacts with the chief minister, feigned ignorance about how this many names found their way to the rolls. Prof Sebastian said he has been alerting all concerned, including the Chief Election Commissioner, PMO, home minister, chief minister of Kerala and all political parties about this discrepancy since 2018.

PNS

Covid patient on protest against denial of hospital admission dies

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a tragic incident that caused a major stir in the north Maharashtra city, a 38-year-old Covid-19 patient -- with plummeting Oxygen levels -- died in the small hours of Thursday, hours after he staged a protest along with an Oxygen cylinder near the main entrance of the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) for allegedly not getting admission in district civil, municipal hospital and private hospitals.

After making unsuccessful rounds to various private and municipal hospitals seeking admission, one Babasaheb Kole -- a resident of Kamatewade locality of Nashik's CIDCO area who had tested positive on Tuesday and was finding it dif-

icult to breathe -- was on Wednesday evening taken to a government hospital where the officials provided him an Oxygen mask and cylinder. However, he did not get admission even in the government hospital.

In his effort to draw the attention of the civic authorities, Kole -- sporting a yellow T-shirt, blue jeans and wearing the oxygen mask connected to a cylinder, sat in a chair near the entrance of the NMC building on Wednesday evening to protest against the lack of a Covid bed for him in the civic and other hospitals at Nashik.

Before long, a crowd gathered around him and the message reached NMC Commissioner Kailash Jadhav, who rushed Additional Municipal Commissioner Dr

Pravin Ashitkar to meet him. Minutes later, Kole was taken to a civic hospital, where he died in the small hours of Thursday.

Kole's Oxygen levels had come down to 37 per cent against the normal 95-96 per cent, when he was rushed to the NMC hospital. He was finding it very difficult to breathe. He breathed his last after the efforts by doctors at the NMC Hospital to revive him failed.

Meanwhile, the Nashik Municipal Commissioner has asked the Nashik Police to investigate and identify the persons who 'instigated' the patient to go on a protest in front of NMC headquarters and what their "ulterior motives".

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In a landmark decision aimed at boosting the pilgrim traffic to Jammu and Kashmir the Administrative Council (AC) Thursday approved the proposal to allot 496 Kanal 17 Marla to the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams (TTD) for building of Temple and its allied infrastructures.

The decision was taken during an Administrative Council (AC) meeting held in Jammu under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

According to a press statement issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations, "the piece of land would be made available on lease basis for a period of 40

years to construct pilgrim amenities Complex, V e d a p a t a s a l a , Spiritual/Meditation Centre, Office, Residential Quarters and Parking". "In future, there would be medical and educational facilities also on the campus", the statement added.

The DIPR statement further read, "TTD, a board established by Government under

the TTD Act, 1932 is a charitable organization of international repute with a proven track record of activities in the spiritual, cultural, social, and educational sphere".

"Its arrival in J&K will tap the tourism potential particularly pilgrim tourism in Jammu, the City of Temples, besides enhancing economic activities".

"Once developed, the TTD infrastructure will be an attraction for the pilgrims and tourists in addition to the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and Amarnathi Shrine. It will enable tourists to come and stay longer in Jammu city. The future development on the campus will also contribute to economic growth of the region", the statement added.

'The work must go on: Digital India envisions empowerment of people'

MoS Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria reviews official work through digital platform while being hospitalised, expressed his pleasure on Jal Jeevan Mission crossing 4 crore new piped water connections

New Delhi: Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria expressed his pleasure and congratulated the officials as Jal Jeevan Mission crossed the 4 crore mark in providing new functional household tap connections to rural households. As on date, 57 districts, 709 blocks, 44,409 Panchayat, 86,886 villages have ensured 100% coverage of FHTC. Kataria, who tested positive for Covid-19 last week, is admitted in a hospital at Gurugram. He shared his pics on Social Media yesterday where he can be seen discharging important work through the Digital platform.

Mr Kataria was apprised about the successful Pilot project for effective monitoring of water supply in villages, exe-

cuted in 5 states using the Internet of things (IoT) technology. This has been done in collaboration with Tata Community Initiatives Trust (TCIT) & Tata trusts. The villages spread across 5 states n a m e l y Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra & H.P, covering various Agro-climatic zones, were identified for this pilot.

The IoT shall provide real time information to public health officials, members of Village water supply committee (VWSC), general public regarding the quantity and quality of water supplied to users. It shall make use of sensors to observe flow, pressure level, chlorine analyzer as well as the level of ground water. It shall help prevent supply of



unfit water, arrest leakages and provide valuable info to VWSC to plan for source development and augmentation.

The success of Pilot project has motivated states to actively deploy this technology.



Gujarat, Bihar, Haryana & Arunachal Pradesh have floated tenders and other states are in state of initiating this process

Mr Kataria acknowledged the importance of technology in improving public service

delivery. He cited that even at the time of following strict quarantine protocols for social iso-

lation, technology enables virtual connect with the social world and helps one to work and contribute.

43K Covid cases, 249 more deaths in 24 hrs in Maharashtra



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 turned into a crisis in Maharashtra on Thursday, as the daily infections touched an all-time high of 43,183 cases and 249 more people died of the pandemic in various parts of the state.

A day after the state recorded a staggering 39,544 infections were recorded, the Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra worsened on Thursday, as the daily caseload rose to an alarming 43,183 and the death toll increased to 249 as against 239 fatalities registered on Wednesday.

With 43,183 fresh cases, the total infections in Maharashtra climbed from 28,12,980 to 2,85,61,63. Similarly, with 249 new deaths, the total Covid-19 toll rose from 56,649 to 54,898.

As 23,600 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 24,33,368. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 85.34 per cent to 85.20 per cent.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state increased from

3,56,243 to 3,66,533. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 1.94 per cent to 1.92 per cent.

There are a maximum of 64,599 "active" cases in Pune, followed by Mumbai (54,807) Nagpur (48,806), Thane (42,151), Nashik (36,292), Aurangabad (14,482), Jalgaon (6959), Amravati (2983) and Akola (4054).

With 18 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 11,690 to 11,708, while the infected cases went up by 8646 to trigger a jump in the infections from 4,14,773 to 4,23,419.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 5,36,262 to 5,44,287, while the total number of deaths in Pune rose from 8325 to 8343.

Thane district remained in the third spot -- after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 3,39,590 to 3,44,385 while the total deaths climbed from 5970 to 5970.

Of the 1,99,75,341, samples sent to laboratories, 28,56,163 have tested positive (14.3 per cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday.

Currently, 19,09,498 people are in home quarantine while 18,432 people are in institutional quarantine.

Cong MLA tears copy of 'love jihad' Bill in Gujarat Assembly

Gandhinagar: Sparks flew in the Gujarat Assembly on the concluding day of the Budget session on Thursday with Congress legislator Imran Khedawala tearing a copy of the Bill proposed to amend the 'Dharma Swatantrya' (Freedom of Religion) Act, 2003 aimed to combat forceful religious conversions, better known as 'love jihad', that was tabled in the House by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

While speaking on the provisions of the amendment Bill, Khedawala said, "Home Minister Pradeepsinh Jadeja

has only mentioned that the daughters of the Hindu community are targeted by men from a specific community. Daughters, be it from any religious community, will always be our daughters. I too have over hundred testimonies of Muslim girls marrying into other religion. I am deeply hurt by the words of the minister."

On hearing this, the Speaker of the House, Rajendra Trivedi, interrupted the Congress legislator but Khedawala stuck to his words. "Nobody can force anybody to marry into a specific

religion and in no religion it is written to forcibly convert anyone to accept that. In this Bill, only one community is specifically targeted with words like 'jihadi'. I opposite this Bill and I'm tearing down its copy," Khedawala said as tore the copy of the Bill which he had in his hand.

The gesture was followed by an uproar from the BJP members in the House.

The proposed amendment seeks to prohibit and punish religious conversions promising better lifestyle, divine blessings and impersonation. IANS

UP don Mukhtar Ansari's ambulance raises storm

Lucknow: Controversies, one after another, seem to be chasing mafia don and BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari. Now it is the ambulance that took the jailed don to Punjab's Mohali court that has raised a storm.

The vehicle had a registration number belonging to Uttar Pradesh.

The registration number of the ambulance, UP41 AT 7171, belongs to Barabanki district and had expired in 2017. It has not been renewed since then. Also, the name of the hospital in which the ambulance was registered is dubious.

Barabanki RTO officials, who did not wish to be named, said that apart from the registration, the fitness of the vehicle had also expired in 2017.

What is intriguing is why was an ambulance from Uttar Pradesh used to take Mukhtar Ansari to a court in Punjab from Ropar jail.

The Punjab Police, on Wednesday, had produced Ansari before the court in connection with an alleged 2019 extortion matter.

Meanwhile, BJP MLA Alka Rai, said, "Who provided the

so-called ambulance Mukhtar Ansari in which Mukhtar Ansari was presented in court? It should be investigated.

Whether it was an ambulance or the luxury vehicle of the mafia don should also be investigated.

Under what circumstances did the vehicle of UP registration number reach Punjab and how is the mafia don roaming in this car?"

Mukhtar Ansari is charged with the murder of Alka Rai's husband Krishnanand Rai who was shot dead in 2005. IANS

Cricket betting syndicates used to give 'protection money' to Vaze

New Delhi/Mumbai: Cricket betting syndicates linked with underworld gangs operating primarily in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka allegedly paid "protection money" to disgraced Mumbai crime branch officer, Sachin Vaze, presently being interrogated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) at its Mumbai office. Vaze's aide Naresh Gor, a well known bookie in Mumbai, identified betting syndicates and extort-

ed 'protection money' during cricket season at the behest of former crime branch officer, highly placed sources revealed to IANS.

Commenting on the Vaze's multi-crore extortion racket, reportedly patronised by key people in Maharashtra government, the BJP spokesperson Ram Kadam said that besides extorting large amount of money from dance bars and clubs, Vaze's men were minting money by sheltering betting

cartels." Naresh Gor, a big time bookie, was Vaze's pointsman who targeted illegal betting rings operating in the state, and collected huge amounts from them. The extortion racket requires a thorough probe to unmask the real faces behind this hafta vasooli," Ram Kadam, three times MLA from Mumbai told IANS.

31-year-old Naresh Gor, who hails from Kutch, was associated with top cricket betting syndicates spread across

located in posh south Mumbai area of Mumbai.

Sources said as the cricket betting racket operates in India through mobile phones and other similar gadgets, Naresh Gor was specialised in wiring SIM cards, phone sets, wifi routers and dongles in bulk on fake IDs. "On Vaze's instructions, Naresh 93 SIM cards, 14 mobile phones between March 3 to March 5, to execute the plan for killing Mansukh Hireen," said an offi-

cer of ATS, Mumbai adding, "In fact Vinayak Shinde, a tainted cop also involved in the murder had earlier introduced Gor to Vaze." Sources said through Vinayak Shinde, bookie Gor made connections in the underworld and started targeting top bookies to extort protection money on behalf of Vaze. Most of the online betting syndicates operate from Middle East countries and are further linked to the Dawood Ibrahim gang.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Plan B?

Is Mamata eyeing to vanquish the BJP, or is it a bid to position herself as the leader of an Oppn front?

Amid the heat and dust of the ongoing Assembly elections, TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has shot off a letter to all Opposition leaders asking them to unite against the BJP's "authoritarian rule". Some may term it "ill-timed" or "too late" with respect to the State elections but Mamata's attempt to bring together all major Opposition parties on a common platform definitely reflects her ambition to foray into national-level politics. Also, rather than being seen in isolation, the move is meant to send a message to public that she is the only leader taking on the BJP and any vote against the saffron party should therefore go to her outfit. The earlier elections — be it the Lok Sabha or State polls, barring a few — have shown that the BJP is too formidable for the Opposition, which must unite keeping aside all differences if it has to put up a serious contest. However, Mamata's aspirations to lead a united Opposition front against the BJP are easier said than achieved. Further, any such attempt would be futile if the Congress chooses to stay out of it. Even in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the 'Mahagathbandhan' among the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) in Uttar Pradesh failed to make a dent in the BJP's performance. Similarly, the grand alliance of the Opposition in Bihar failed



to yield the desired outcome.

The recent successive mandates in favour of the BJP prove that people want a stable Government at the Centre, led by a strong party, and not an amalgamation Government with several outfits fighting among themselves for power-sharing and plump Ministries. Such differences are also evident in seat-sharing among partners, as happened in Bihar. However, Mamata's outreach may also be seen as her nervousness and apprehension that she might lose her bastion to the BJP. If that happens, Mamata will have to look toward national politics to secure her own and the TMC's future. However, there is minimal possibility for any grouping to form a Government at the Centre without the Congress' help. So, the moot question is whether the 'Grand Old Party' will be part of such a coalition? If Mamata or other regional players lead it, which they shall try for in earnest, then what about the future of Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders? What will be their position in such a coalition? Mamata, in her enthusiasm or desperation, can write such letters hoping to unite the Opposition but for the regional players it won't be an easy task to shed their ideologies, rivalries and differences to stand together on the same podium. The TMC had better concentrate on the ongoing Assembly elections in Bengal and let the embryonic idea of the Opposition's unity develop in the womb of the future. As of now, the BJP seems a formidable opponent for the TMC and the rest of the Opposition, at least at the national level.

PICTALK



The runway at the Birsa Munda International Airport in Ranchi undergoing repairs

PTI

Yawning gap

The WEF's gender gap report should make us want to hang our heads in collective shame

Here's yet another proof, if ever one were needed, that the negative impact of Coronavirus continues to be felt across strata. Apart from the blindingly obvious truth that the virus has claimed lakhs of lives and crores of livelihoods, besides forcing several industrial establishments to shut down their operations and making migrant labourers trudge back to their native places to lead a life full of drudgery, it has also made the already-poor condition of women in the country more pitiable. The World Economic Forum's (WEF's) Global Gender Gap Report 2021 has underlined the appalling state of the 'fair sex' in India, thus removing any element of shock that might have emanated from the devastating fact that our country has fallen 28 places to the 140th spot among 156 countries since last year. To experience a clearer picture of the kind of life women in India face, just absorb these facts: India is the third worst performer in South Asia, better than only Pakistan and Afghanistan, while Bangladesh at position 65 is the region's best performer. The Nordic countries are among the best performers on the index, with Iceland being the most gender-equal country in the world for the 12th time.

Though there is no denying that the health emergency and the related economic downturn have impacted women more severely than men, partially re-opening gaps that had already been closed, the sad home truth is also that another generation of women will have to await their turn for gender parity. India has constantly been slipping in this sphere where, having had a female Prime Minister decades ago and a female President reaching the office even before than in the US, we should have had made significant gains, seeing the all-round progress India's women have made across fields: Astronomy, medical sciences, sports, entrepreneurship, politics and now even armed forces, among others. We are long past the time that, as a nation, we didn't overlook the situation and, rather than behaving like the proverbial ostrich, made all-round sincere efforts, individually and societally, to remedy the nagging problem. Don't give them more than what they deserve, perhaps, but don't hand it over as dole or benevolence. Let's just start giving them their due, honestly. Then the day will actually not be far when we, as a nation, can really mean it when we say: "Mhaari chhoriyan chhoron se kum hain ke!"

There is one thing that I have to get off my chest: The rapid adoption of electric three-wheelers, e-rickshaws as we call them, has been dramatic. Whenever an opportunity arises in India, companies emerge to take advantage of it. However, e-rickshaws while a brilliant mode of transport for last-mile connectivity are patently unsafe, which is particularly ironic since the Government is promoting vehicular safety by imposing new conditions on passenger vehicles and motorcycles while totally ignoring the e-rickshaw space.

That said, it would be silly to ignore how much e-rickshaws have changed the economic prospects of workers in many parts of India. In the part of Delhi where I live, e-rickshaws have given domestic workers the ability to travel to and from their homes for ₹10 each way, saving them a half-hour one-way walk, which not only saves them from the intense heat of the summer sun but the time saved allows many such workers to take on another job, an investment of ₹500 a month on transport allows them to earn much more. The push towards safety, no matter how well-intentioned, will increase the price of e-rickshaws and thus the amount that users will pay; however it will need to be done because e-rickshaws need to be reined in.

But there is no doubt that the success of e-rickshaws is proof that electric vehicles can be a success as they have almost completely replaced cycle-rickshaws across major urban centres.

The reason for this success was simple; there was a need for last-mile transportation, which is non-existent in India. Transportation from bus stops, Metro and railway stations using auto-rickshaws was expensive and while cycle-rickshaws cost the same amount per ride as an e-rickshaw, they took longer. As such, these e-rickshaws have not been a 'replacement' of a mode of transport, rather they have been additive. While there have been some legal wrangles around registration and sales, an estimated



4,00,000 e-rickshaws were sold in 2019-2020, with over a million on the roads across India.

It would be prudent for the Ministry of Road Transport to establish better norms for the next generation of e-rickshaws, from passenger safety to battery disposal. But the Ministry as well as cities and States should look at other viable opportunities in electrification. Buses are often spoken about as the next big opportunity; being large ladder-on-frame vehicles, systems such as battery swapping are being spoken about for additional range. But what about buses that get used a bit less? Airport buses, for example. At many airports across India, buses are still used to transport passengers and crew to and from planes. Why can't those and many other airport infrastructure vehicles such as baggage tractors and airline cars be electric? The additional costs of such equipment can be passed on to airline passengers, which amortised over millions of passengers will be a few rupees per ticket.

What about school buses and other transport for students? Most such transport is used only twice a day over a

limited distance, usually well under 100 km, and most educational institutions have enough parking area to build charging infrastructure. Start calculating the impact of putting children in electric buses as it will help them understand the economic and environmental benefits.

But the biggest near-term electrification opportunity lies in commercial deliveries. The fastest growing sector of the Indian commercial vehicle market over the past decade has been Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs). This has coincided almost perfectly with the rise of online commerce. While changing from the LCVs, colloquially known as "Chhota Hathi", will be difficult with charging infrastructure and uneven roads, the metropolitan areas can insist on a changeover to electrifying such vehicles. However, this cannot be abrupt and must not happen thanks to the fiat of a bureaucrat or Minister, let alone a judge in a court. But happen it must; a planned switchover in a couple of years will not only give the industry an opportunity to scale up manufacturing, it will also aid in the creation of

charging infrastructure.

An even greater and blindingly obvious opportunity is in food and local delivery using electric two-wheelers. It is heartening to see that some delivery boys and girls have switched over to electric two-wheelers and even electrified cycles such as Yulu, but still not enough. A large order by a food retailer or even an e-commerce operator for electric two-wheelers specifically oriented for delivery will also give a massive boost to the manufacture of such products in India.

The holy grail of electrification is of course a wide-scale changeover in passenger vehicles and public transportation. There are several technology issues that remain to be sorted out; should India look at hybrids as a middle step, for example, or should investments be made in hydrogen? There are also serious cost questions but, most importantly, the public has to be convinced of the utility of such vehicles.

This is the third part of a series on electric vehicle adoption and policy issues around the same in India.

(The author is Managing Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)



KUSHAN MITRA

Low-hanging fruit in electrification

The widespread adoption of electric three-wheelers indicates that India can move rapidly to a high degree of electrification

E-RICKSHAWS, WHILE A BRILLIANT MODE OF TRANSPORT FOR LAST-MILE CONNECTIVITY, ARE PATENTLY UNSAFE, WHICH IS IRONIC SINCE THE GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING VEHICULAR SAFETY BY IMPOSING NEW CONDITIONS WHILE TOTALLY IGNORING THE E-RICKSHAW SPACE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THIRD FRONT FEASIBLE OR NOT?

Sir — The BJP is going from strength to strength, and the Modi juggernaut is on a roll. Irrespective of the results in the five States that are undergoing polls, the Opposition has much work to do. The Congress is neither here nor there. Tall leaders are deserting the party one after another. At another level, the partners of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) appear disillusioned with a lethargic Congress.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, perhaps for the first time in her long stint, appears to be losing her grip on the coalition partners. Top UPA leaders have, at least internally, expressed their deep resentment with the way Sonia Gandhi has been persisting with her son Rahul Gandhi to take over from her. Against this backdrop, revival of the "third front" is being discussed in political corridors.

The "third front" can make some impact if it is able to guard itself from collapsing like a pack of cards due to disagreements and ambitions. Leaders have to rally behind a pivot; personal agendas should be left behind. Many experienced and able non-BJP and non-Congress leaders were looked upon with suspicion by the people because of their inability to stay united. The 2014 "third front" flattered to deceive: It was grounded even before it took off. One wonders whether some headstrong leaders, like Mamata Banerjee, can ever mingle with the rest when it comes to fighting the BJP. However, Sharad Pawar, fresh from his "king-making manoeuvres" in Maharashtra, may act as a fulcrum for the third front, if he can bring all non-Congress and non-BJP parties, that are unambiguous in their ideology and agree on a common minimum programme, on a single platform.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

PAKISTAN SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE U-TURN

Sir — The Pakistan Cabinet's latest decision against the earlier one, which had ratified the import of sugar and cotton from India after nearly two years, can hardly be termed a positive development for the relations

Second COVID wave is a reality



The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India is a reality as the numbers cannot lie. It shows that the virus is still very much around and raging. But many people are unaware of the reality. They are going to their offices, schools and businesses as usual, apparently unconcerned about the spread of the lethal strains of the virus.

Many people are not even wearing masks nor maintaining social distancing. The Government should make not wearing masks a

criminal offence with heavy penalty upto ₹5,000 and a jail term of two years. It is lamentable that the pandemic has not abated but some people still spit in public places. People are moving cheek-in-jowl and facilitating the transmission of the virus. COVID-19-appropriate behaviour is heard a lot more on TV discussions than practised on ground.

Experts are yet to find out if there is a correlation between the surge in new cases and the new variants. The second wave is at least partly attributed to people's irresponsible behaviour. It is important to flag the dangers of throwing caution to the winds and persuade people to follow measures to halt the spread of COVID-19. A key component of the pandemic response is what is commonly referred to as "testing, (contact) tracing and treating". We have to concede that it is not being adequately done to contain the pandemic. As for getting vaccinated, many people are still hesitant for the fear that it might cause side-effects. This necessitates convincing them that the vaccines are safe and efficacious to allay their unfounded fears.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

between the countries. The positive news had come amid a series of diplomatic overtures to thaw the bilateral ties. The earlier move had come in the wake of Pakistan's Premier Imran Khan writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and calling for the creation of an enabling environment for a "result-oriented dialogue" with India.

The reopening of trade at Wagah for cotton and sugar exports, had it come about, would have been among the first substantive relaxations in bilateral ties following the February 25 restoration of the ceasefire at the Line of Control. One was hoping to see a new beginning in the bilateral relations, which can improve through bilateral talks only; the use of force and third-party involvement is not a viable option.

Devendra Khurana | Bhopal

DROP VACCINE HESITANCY

Sir — It refers to the editorial 'All hands on

deck' (April 1). Having a district action plan is indeed a good idea by the Government to avoid bigger lockdowns like last year. During the second surge, we need to be proactive and use the lessons learnt last year.

A better coordination between States and the Centre will decide our fate. Three key elements of success are — Tracing, Testing and Vaccinating, and more vaccines should be rolled out at the earliest to have a wider range for such a vast population as ours. Also, there is no substitute to taking precautions like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing.

All eligible people must come out and vaccinate themselves without further delay. Exporting vaccines to other countries can take a back seat for some time now.

Bal Govind | Noida

SOUNDBITE

People of Assam showed the red card to the Congress-led 'Mahajot' (grand alliance) and gave their 'mohar' (stamp) for the double-engine Government for a second time.

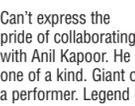


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



The country will adopt a "vaccine passport" this month to verify people's COVID-19 vaccination status via smartphone application.

South Korean Prime Minister — Chung Sye-kyun



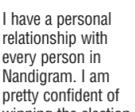
Can't express the pride of collaborating with Anil Kapoor. He is one of a kind. Giant of a performer. Legend of an artist.

Actor — Ranveer Singh



It's exciting that Smithy has said he wants the job again. I think over the last couple of years, he's learned a lot about himself, but also about his captaincy as well.

Australian cricketer — Nathan Lyon



I have a personal relationship with every person in Nandigram. I am pretty confident of winning the election.

BJP leader — Suwendu Adhikari

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

LOOK EAST WITH BANGLADESH

Half a century of shared history between India and Bangladesh should not be lost



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his first international trip to Bangladesh post COVID-19-imposed international travel restrictions. In more ways than one it was a well thought out trip, aiming to address many issues at domestic as well as international level. The trip culminated into a lengthy joint statement issued by both the Governments addressing (in some points without specific targets) key topics of the bilateral cooperation.

First, let us look at the trade-related announcements and their significance in the deep economic ties between the neighbours. It would be worth mentioning that the first trade agreement with Bangladesh was signed in 1972 just a year after its creation. Since then the relationship has grown to a healthy \$9.5 billion of bilateral trade in 2019-20 nurtured on shared culture, history and principles. Against this backdrop, one of the thorny issues like non-tariff trade barriers (those not directly related to higher tariffs but more on regulatory compliance side leading to delay in shipments) was the first item discussed. Of late, India has been facing multiple levels of dissent on these year-old restrictions imposed on the imports based on the 'country of origin' and also shar-



ing land borders with India. Fears are that Bangladesh's ports may be used by other countries to get past Indian Customs without significant delays. However, India has conveyed that in the event of a conflict the provisions of 'rules of origin' of the trade agreement shall prevail along with a promise to bring predictability in trade policies, regulations and procedures. However, India too complained to remove restrictions on the Indian companies from participating in Government tenders in Bangladesh, which was denied by the hosts. Mutual trust and cooperation in trade agreements could be a win-win situation for both. Towards bringing a synchronisation in product compliance standards, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) should engage closely to jointly develop testing and lab facilities. Mutual cooperation on recognising each other's standards for various products would facilitate faster clearance at ports and promote a common market in the region. Next, it was heartening to see a renewed focus on upgrading land Custom stations and land ports to facilitate trade between the nations. The two nations have had walk-in roads into each other's territories due to the interlocked nature of the terrain and the next phase of development has to be achieved through increased connectivity.

Bangladesh has articulated for India to provide a railway connection to the 'roof of the world', Bhutan, via the newly-opened Cilahati Haldibari route and additional road coverage with Nepal. Bangladesh's keen interest in being engaged with India on joint road development projects should be taken up on priority. Even though there is no denying the fact that Bangladesh forms the central piece of India's 'look east policy', it still is a part of China's eco-military Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI aims to provide economic aid primarily in developing infrastructure, thereby establishing dominance in the India Ocean and further into the Indo-Pacific region. The recently-concluded Quad summit, of which India is a critical member, also alluded to the growing military presence of China in the region while gaining economic advantages. It will be to India's benefit if it can push the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) to achieve critical measurable milestones in the next four years. The BIMSTEC is headquartered in Dhaka and could serve as New Delhi's enhanced engagement gateway with its South East Asian partners which it has not been able to achieve in nearly a quarter of a century of its existence.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Poverty alleviation: Rural India holds key

Industrialisation and tertiarisation in rural areas will generate high, productive employment which will lift a majority of families from poverty



SWAPNIL SONI RAMAKRISHNA MAJUMDER

The Coronavirus-induced lockdown, which left millions of workers unemployed, recently had its anniversary on March 25. Unfortunately, this coincides with the start of the second wave of the outbreak of the deadly virus. During the lockdown, economic activities came to a standstill and so did the income of millions. The pandemic has pushed millions of labourers and their families deep into poverty. Many labour-intensive industries were shut down during lockdown and even afterwards. The mass exodus of migrant workers from cities and industrial towns on foot and by other means reminds us of the pain that they and their family members have gone through. The Government aid, inoculation drives and policy stimuli certainly endeavoured to extend a helping hand; yet the damages to jobs, income and social equality are irreversible. Economists and multilateral agencies have expressed grave concerns on the rising levels of poverty and inequality. In the current scenario dominated by recession and uncertainty, it becomes vital to study the factors that can help alleviate poverty in India.

However, poverty and inequality are not new issues in our country. Rather, they have been the co-travellers with the journey of our economic growth and have started turning more severe recently due to the pandemic and subsequent uncertainty that looms large on the economy. At the international level also, the World Bank's Millennium Development Goals put the objective of 'poverty eradication' on priority. Eradication of poverty lifts the living standard of individuals in terms of education, health and social status, thus bringing equality in the society. Poverty is directly linked to employment which is a derivative of productive sectors which differ in States. Thus, the poverty levels in various States are also significantly different from one another. However, the common objective of all the States is 'poverty alleviation'.

The historical data from as many as 23 States were studied in terms of poverty reduction and associated factors, including unemployment and growth of productive sectors — agriculture, industry and services. An attempt was made to empirically fathom the relationship between poverty reduction and associated macro-economic factors. The latest State-wise data on poverty for 2004-05 and 2011-12 were sourced from the Reserve Bank of India's 'Handbook of Statistics on Indian States'. With the increasing levels of industrialisation, the States have managed to reduce poverty levels in a span of seven years. Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura and Uttarakhand witnessed highest poverty reduction of more than 65 per cent. In contrast, Assam, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh barely lifted their people from poverty, with less than 20 per cent reduction in it. The poverty ratio had declined from 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 22 per cent in 2011-12. Historically, rural areas witnessed a higher poverty ratio (26 per cent) as compared to urban (14 per cent).

Poverty reduction rate in States is found to be negatively correlated with growth in the rural unemployment in a significant manner, but was found not associated with the urban unemployment growth. This implies that the States with higher reduction in rural unemployment (Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Kerala and Punjab) excelled in poverty reduction. However, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh are exceptions to this. These States, despite exhibiting a higher growth in rural unemployment, managed to gain higher in poverty



INDIA, WHERE MORE THAN 65 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION LIVES IN VILLAGES, CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE THE ROLE OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION. TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY, EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN RURAL AREAS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT IN URBAN INDIA. THIS ALIGNS WITH THE FACT THAT RURAL INDIA EXHIBITS MORE POVERTY RATIO THAN URBAN AREAS. THE MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME IN RURAL AREAS IS BELIEVED TO BE AGRICULTURE AND THE ALLIED SERVICES

Swapnil is senior research scholar at IISc, Bengaluru, and Majumder is an independent researcher. The views expressed are personal.



In contrast, the States that exhibited a high growth in rural unemployment (Assam, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh) had to pay the cost of slender poverty alleviation. It concludes that the rural employment in the States holds the key to eradication of poverty.

India, where more than 65 per cent of population lives in villages, cannot afford to ignore the role of rural employment and income generation. To alleviate poverty, employment generation in rural areas is more important than that in urban India. This aligns with the fact that rural India exhibits more poverty ratio than urban areas. The major source of income in rural areas is believed to be agriculture and the allied services.

Further, the association of poverty reductions with growth of productive sectors — agriculture, industry and services — in different States is analysed. As expected, the correlation between poverty reduction and the growth rates of all productive sectors is significant with varying magnitudes and directions. The productive sectors, with their varying productivities, serve employment as well as generate income which helps people lift from poverty. Interestingly, growth in agriculture is not sufficient to absorb the increasing job requirements in rural India and hence is alone not capable of poverty reduction. The States with a higher growth in the agriculture sector (Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh), exhibited lowest gains in poverty reduction. Notably, these States could not thrive in a higher growth of industry and services sectors. In contrast, the States with

the lowest growth in agriculture but highest growth in industry and services (Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh) outperformed the other States in attaining the poverty alleviation objective. In other words, it is not agriculture but industry and services sector that buttress poverty alleviation across States in India. Between industry and services, services turned out to be more influential in poverty reduction.

This finding echoes the theory of economic growth and structural change presented by Nobel laureate and American economist Simon Kuznets. According to the theory, a developing economy shifts from agriculture (primary) to industry (secondary) and then to services (tertiary) sector — a process of 'structural change'. In this process, employment shifts from the lower to higher productive sector, yielding an overall productivity and income gain in the economy. India, being a developing economy, treaded this path of structural change, however, bypassing industrialisation and tertiarisation.

At present, even if industrialisation is promoted with the primary objective of poverty reduction, India may not gain much in terms of employment. This is due to the capital intensification facilitated by higher fixed-capital investment in industries, making them capital intensive. Collectively, this issue of disproportionate growth in employment as compared to output growth is termed as 'jobless growth' in industries. In contrast, the services sector, being more productive and labour-intensive as

compared to agriculture and industry, guarantees a higher level of income and contributes significantly in poverty eradication. This is substantiated by the findings of the instant study: The top six States in poverty reduction — Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tripura and Kerala — are the ones with the highest growth and share of services in State GDP.

Conclusion: State-wise poverty reduction is quite heterogeneous due to differences in the employment scenario and sectoral growth of States. While some States outperformed the others in poverty alleviation, others are still struggling to lift their people up from poverty line. It is important to understand the factors impacting poverty reduction in the States of India from historical evidences. In terms of employment, it is the rural employment that drives poverty alleviation. Whereas, in terms of productive sectors, it is the services sector that is the major source of employment generation and hence poverty reduction.

The key of poverty alleviation lies with employment generation in the rural India that houses two-third of India's population. More than agriculture, industry and services sectors development — industrialisation and tertiarisation — must be promoted in rural India. The current wave of privatisation and production-linked incentive schemes must consider the inclusion of rural areas. At the same time, skill development in rural areas is the need of the hour to enable the rural population to join the workforce in higher productive sectors.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

MAMATA, DUE TO THE FEAR OF LOSING POLLS, HAS TOLD HER GOTRA. IS SANDILYA ALSO THE GOTRA OF ROHINGYAS AND INFILTRATORS?

— BJP LEADER GIRIRAJ SINGH



GIRIRAJ SAYS MAMATA IS FROM THE ROHINGYA CLAN. PROUD OF IT. FAR BETTER THAN BEING FROM CHOTIWALA RAKSHASA CLAN.

—TMC MP MOHUA MOITRA

Plugging the loopholes in the way of India's skilful future

Employment generation is definitely not a cinch and requires relevant and adequate industry linkages to make the workers skilled and meet global benchmarks

The initial bootless skilling setup in India was nothing but a notion of a lopsided skill development. The potential of India's demographic dividend was realised with the launch of Skill India Mission by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on July 15, 2015.

The Government focused on developing a comprehensive programme, which would provide an aid in removing the stumbling blocks to the mission. The main focus of the programme has been to create convergence across the sectors and the States in terms of skill training activities.

Recognising the potential of the India's youth, a flagship programme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), was



VAISHALI CHHABRA

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launched with its six key components aiming to skill one crore youth by 2020. Various studies suggested that the respondents were satisfied with the skills trainings imparted to them, which further helped them in attaining gainful employment.

The scheme, however, suffered from various loopholes in terms of training infrastructure, limited participation by the private sector, lack of compliance to international standards and a considerable gap between the industries' demands and skills supply. A sequel of this scheme, PMKVY 2.0, was launched the following year with an aim to overcome all the drawbacks of PMKVY.

The scheme was aimed at skilling 10 million youth during 2015-16 and acquired

a budget of ₹12,000 crore. However, it could achieve only approximately 50 per cent of its set target by 2019 and thus failed to stop the mass migration triggered by the pandemic. The case could have been less intense had the scheme been successful in providing employment to people in their areas only.

Apart from this, a requirement of skilled workforce as reported by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was estimated at 347 million, to be achieved by 2022, which seems a distant dream as India has been facing a shortage of skilled manpower for more than a decade now.

The training capacity stands approximately at 4.3 million, in contrast to 12 million people which are expect-



ed to join the workforce every year for training, thus depriving them of effective skill training modules. This makes the scenario worse and is a major obstacle in India's growth. This pattern of escalated numbers has been witnessed to drain the funds of the State, resulting in a shortfall of funds for other imperative areas.

A realistic estimation of targets along with the flexibility for the usage of allocated cash reserve is the need of

the hour. Another factor which serves as a major gap in the skill development framework is the ignorance of quality by the training institutes, which further hampers the trust of the trainees. A Government-appointed committee highlighted this issue.

A sincere resolution to this problem can be achieved by regular audit of the training centres, which the Government has already been doing for some time now. In addition, the trainers can be encouraged to upgrade their knowledge and rewarded for their achievements based on the students' feedback. This would undoubtedly enhance the quality of the trainers hired and the subsequent trainings provided by them to the candidates.

Nevertheless, the private

sector, too, plays a crucial role in the vocational training framework. Initially, the private sector was quite alien to this Government initiative; however, it did not remain secluded for long. The Government realised that industry linkages serve as a *sine qua non*, for the effective training and employment of youth. With almost 90 per cent of the population below 60 years of age, and 35 per cent of it below 19 years, employment generation is definitely not a cinch and requires relevant and adequate industry linkages, so as to make the workers trained and meet the international benchmarks. This would contribute to enhancing their skill set, making them globally competent and creating new opportunities for them.

Despite the Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

models adopted by the State, there seems to be a lot of untapped potential for the same, which called for another initiative, called the PMKVY 3.0, introduced by the Government on January 15, 2021, in 600 districts.

Launched with a target of skilling 8 lakh youth with 300 courses over 2020-21, the scheme focuses on imparting more demand-driven skills and revolves around digital technology and Industry 4.0 skills. The scheme is vested with a total of ₹948.90 crores and emphasises upon the role of District Skill Committees (DSCs) and State Skill Development Missions (SSDM) in analysing the skill-demand gaps at a district levels. This scheme looks promising as it excludes any of the drawbacks of the previous schemes.

Myanmar remains mired in violence

AP ■ YANGON

Protesters in Myanmar on Thursday marked two months since the military seized power by once more defying the threat of lethal violence and publicly demonstrating against the toppling of the democratically elected government.

The February 1 coup has been met with massive public resistance that security forces have been unable to crush through escalating levels of violence, including now routinely shooting protesters. Outside efforts including sanctions imposed by Western nations on the military regime have failed to help restore peace.

In Yangon, the country's biggest city, a group of young people shortly after sunrise Thursday sang solemn songs honoring the more than 500 protesters killed so far. They then marched through the streets chanting slogans calling



Anti-coup demonstrators prepare to confront police during a protest in Tarmwe township, Yangon, Myanmar on Thursday AP

for the fall of the junta, the release of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the return of democracy. Protests were also held in

Mandalay and elsewhere. The demonstrations followed a night of violence including police raids and several fires. In Yangon, several

retail shops owned in whole or part by Myanma Economic Holdings Limited, which is an investment arm of the military, went up in flames. The shops are the targets of boycotts by the protest movement.

Junta's foes woo ethnic allies with new constitution

AP ■ YANGON

Opponents of Myanmar's military government declared the country's 2008 constitution void and put forward an interim replacement charter late Wednesday in a major political challenge to the ruling junta.

The moves, while more symbolic than practical, could help woo the country's armed ethnic militias to ally themselves with the mass protest movement against the military's seizure of power in February.

The actions were taken by the CRPH, an underground, self-styled alternative government established by elected lawmakers who were not allowed to take their seats when the military staged the coup and ousted and detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The Committee Representing Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw, the national Parliament, made the announcements on social media.

The 2008 constitution, implemented under army rule, ensured the military maintained its dominance during the country's decade of progress toward democracy, such as by reserving it a quarter of the seats in Parliament and retaining responsibility for state security. The junta that seized power from the civilian government February 1 cites emergency provisions in the charter as giving its takeover constitutional legitimacy.

The CRPH also presented a Federal Democracy Charter as an interim constitution. It aims to end Myanmar's long history of military dictatorship as well as meeting the long-standing demands of its myriad ethnic minority groups for greater autonomy in their regions.

Prez Biden lets Trump era H-1B visa bans expire

Indian IT professionals to benefit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden on Thursday let the ban on foreign workers visa, in particular H-1B, lapse as the notification issued by his predecessor Donald Trump expired, a move which is likely to benefit thousands of Indian IT professionals.

Amidst a national lockdown and the Covid-19 crisis, Trump in June last year issued a proclamation that suspended entry to the US of applicants for several temporary or "non-immigrant" visa categories, including H-1B, arguing that these visas presented a risk to the US labour market during the economic recovery.

On December 31, Trump extended the order to March 31, 2021, noting that an exten-

sion was warranted as the pandemic continued to disrupt American's lives, and high levels of unemployment and job loss were still presenting serious economic challenges to workers across the US.

Biden did not issue a fresh proclamation for the ban on H-1B visas to continue after March 31.

He had promised to lift the suspension on H-1B visas, saying Trump's immigration policies were cruel.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

Influx of Myanmarese at Indian, Thai borders likely just the beginning: UNSG's special envoy

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The influx of refugees from Myanmar at the Indian and Thai borders and elsewhere is "ominous" and likely just the beginning, UN Secretary General's special envoy on Myanmar has told the Security Council, warning that regional security could deteriorate further and no country in the region would want a "failed state" as their neighbour.

Myanmar's military toppled the country's government on February 1 and seized power for one year, detaining top political figures, including

de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint. The coup sparked protests and other acts of civil disobedience, leading to the deaths of hundreds in military crackdowns.

The 15-nation Council held closed consultations on Myanmar on Wednesday, days after the country witnessed the bloodiest day since the demonstrations against the February 1 coup began, with security forces killing at least 107 individuals — including seven children, on March 27.

In her remarks to the closed meeting of the Council,

obtained by PTI, Special Envoy of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener said that a robust international response requires a unified regional position, especially with the neighbouring countries leveraging their influence towards stability in Myanmar.

"The regional security and economic consequences are getting worse and could deteriorate further. The influx of refugees at the Indian and Thai borders and elsewhere is ominous and likely just the beginning," she said.

Black adviser quits UK Govt in wake of racism report

London: The most senior Black adviser to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has resigned, the government said Thursday, the day after a report on racial disparities concluded that Britain does not have a systemic problem with racism.

The government denied any link between the departure of Samuel Kasumu and the much-criticized report, which has been accused of ignoring the experiences of ethnic-minority Britons.

The prime minister's office said Kasumu would leave his

job as a special adviser for civil society and communities in May, as had "been his plan for several months."

It denied the resignation was related to Wednesday's publication of a report by the government-appointed Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which concluded that Britain is not an institutionally racist country.

But Simon Woolley, a former government equalities adviser and a member of the U.K. House of Lords, said Kasumu's exit was connected to the "grubby" and

"divisive" report.

"(There is a) crisis at No. 10 when it comes to acknowledging and dealing with persistent race inequality," Woolley said.

Kasumu had considered quitting in February. He wrote a resignation letter, obtained by the BBC, that accused Johnson's Conservative Party of pursuing "a politics steeped in division." He was persuaded to stay in his job temporarily to work on a campaign encouraging people from ethnic minorities to get vaccinated against the coronavirus. AP

Child among 4 dead in shooting at California office building

AP ■ ORANGE (CALIFORNIA)

A shooting at a Southern California office building on Wednesday killed four people, including a child, and injured a fifth person before police shot the suspect, police said.

Shots were being fired as officers arrived at a two-story office building on Lincoln Avenue in Orange, southeast of Los Angeles, at about 5.30 pm, Lt. Jennifer Amat said.

"An officer-involved shooting occurred" and the suspect was taken to a hospital, Amat said, but she didn't immediately know his condition.

The shooting was on the second floor of the building, Amat said. Media reports said bodies could be seen on the

building's second-floor walkway and in a courtyard.

Amat had no details about the confrontation, what may have sparked the attack or why a child may have been at the building at 202 W. Lincoln Ave. Signs outside indicated a handful of businesses were located there, including an insurance office, a financial consulting firm, a legal services business and a phone repair store.

By 7. pm, the situation had been stabilised and there wasn't any threat to the public, police said. In a tweet, Gov. Gavin Newsom called the killings "horrifying and heart-breaking." "Our hearts are with the families impacted by this terrible tragedy tonight," he wrote.

SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely **Sohel Khan S/o Iraj Khan R/o B-153, Budh Nagar, JJ Colony, Inderpuri, New Delhi Aged-19 Years** has been reported missing since 21.02.2020 from his residence vide **DD No.47A Dated 21.10.2020** registered at Police Station Inderpuri, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-



Sohel Khan

Complexion: Shallow, **Height:** 5'6", **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **Eyes:** Black, **Clothing:** Black coloured pant, Checked shirt and slipper in feet. Any person having any information/Clue about this missing male, may inform SHO, Inderpuri, New Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Tel. No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 Sd/-
FAX No. : 011-24368639 SHO, Inderpuri, New Delhi
DP/380/WD/2021 Tel.: 011-25832201, 25832202

7 convicted in Hong Kong over 2019 pro-democracy protests

AP ■ HONG KONG

Seven Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates were convicted Thursday on charges of organizing and participating in an unlawful assembly during massive anti-government protests in 2019 that triggered a crackdown on dissent.

The seven include media tycoon and founder of the Apple Daily tabloid Jimmy Lai, as well as 82-year-old Martin Lee, a veteran of the city's democracy movement. Lai had already been held without bail

on other charges related to his pro-democracy activities.

They were convicted for their involvement in a protest held on Aug. 18, 2019. Organizers said that 1.7 million people marched that day in opposition to a proposed bill that would have allowed suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial.

The activists, apart from those who have been remanded in custody on other charges, were granted bail on condition they do not leave Hong Kong and must hand in all their travel documents.

US state refuses to lift yoga ban in schools after objection from conservatives

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US state of Alabama has blocked a yoga bill that would have lifted a decades-old ban on the popular age-old Indian practice in public schools after objections from conservative groups who feared that followers of Hinduism could engage in conversion, according to a media report.

Pushed by conservative groups, the Alabama Board of Education in 1993 had voted to prohibit yoga, along with hypnosis and meditation in public schools in the southeastern state. Last year in March, the Alabama House of Representatives voted 84-17 to pass the "Yoga Bill" which was moved by state legislator Jeremy Gray from the Democratic Party.

Europe's vax campaign is 'unacceptably slow': WHO

AP ■ LONDON

European nations' immunization campaigns against Covid-19 are "unacceptably slow" and risk prolonging the pandemic, a senior World Health Organization official said Thursday.

Dr Hans Kluge, WHO's regional director for Europe, said vaccines "present our best way out of this pandemic," but noted that to date, only 10% of Europe's population has received one dose and that only 4% have been fully protected with two doses.

"As long as coverage remains low, we need to apply the same public health and social measures as we have in the past, to compensate for delayed schedules," Kluge said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)	
1. Name of work with its location	Hiring of vehicle for mobility of supervision, staff, T&P in the Dy.CE/BLTKU unit. (2 Nos MUV period (2MUx24 month) for the unit of SSE/BRM/SSB & SSE/BR/SPL/SSB.
2. Approx. cost of work.	Rs. 20,70,703/-
3. Completion period of the work	(24) Twenty Four Months
4. Date & time for submission of tender & opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 26.04.2021 Opening of tender after 15.00 hrs on same day
5. Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e www.ireps.gov.in
Tender Notice No. 32-W-Hire/1-MT/MUV/DLI Date: 01.04.2021 761/21	

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I. AJAY, S/O LATE SH. OM PRAKASH, R/O 3955/67, GALI LALLU MISHAR, QUTUB ROAD, SADAR BAZAR, DELHI-110006, has applied for conversion from lease hold to free hold in respect of PROPERTY BEARING KH. NO. 295/1/1, MEASURING 116 SQ. YARDS, SITUATED AT, GALI LALLU MISHAR, QUTUB ROAD, SADAR BAZAR, DELHI-110006, vide application No. 201405 dated 12/04/2017 the original document i.e. Original Perpetual Lease Deed, Original Registry & other relevant documents of the above property have been lost. An FIR to this effect has lodged in Police Station Crime Branch, Delhi/New Delhi, vide NCR/LR No. 281877/2021.

Braj Veer Singh, Advocate M.A. LL.B. C-21, U.G.F. Lane No-05, New Govind Pura, Delhi-110051, En. No:- D-2415/12

"Public at large is hereby informed that my client Smt. Anju Pathraja W/o Late Shri Kanwal Nihal Pathraja R/o House No. 127, First Floor, Block-C-2, Ashok Vihar, Phase-II, Delhi-110052 intends to purchase an immovable property i.e. Third Floor of the property bearing No. G-3/37, (property No. 37 in Block No. G-3) measuring 126.15 sq. mtr. situated at Model Town, Delhi-110009 against consideration from Shri Nirmal Singh S/o S. Sampuran Singh R/o C-2/37, Model Town-III, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110009. As informed by the owner Shri Nirmal Singh, the said property is free from all sorts of encumbrances, charges etc. Any person or persons who has/have got any right interest, title, claim encumbrances, charge of any nature, whatsoever, in respect of the aforesaid property or any part thereof can send his/her/their objections with his/her/their documentary evidence at below given address within a period of 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it shall be presumed that the said property in entirety is free from all kinds of encumbrances, claims, interests, loan, mortgage, charges etc.

S.D. KUSHWAHA (Advocate) C.No. 629, Lawyers Chamber, Rohini Courts, Delhi-110085

PUBLIC NOTICE

STAR Health Insurance
INSURANCE IS THE SUBJECT MATTER OF SOLICITATION

We are happy to inform that our new Branch Office has opened at Shastri Nagar location with effect from 01.03.2021 and started functioning from the following address:

Star Health and Allied Insurance Co Ltd.
E 2/257, Ground Floor, Near Metro Pillar no 163, Shastri Nagar, New Delhi - 110052. Phone No. 011 - 61300366, 67, 68
Mail ID - shalimbarbogh.bo@starhealth.in

GLOBE TROTTER

SERVING SCOTLAND YARD OFFICER FOUND GUILTY

London: A serving Scotland Yard police constable was found guilty on Thursday of being a member of a banned far-right organisation and possessing documents that could have been of use to a terrorist after an investigation by the police force's Counter Terrorism Command.

OVER 55K ANIMALS DEAD IN FIRE AT GERMAN PIG FARM

Berlin: A fire at a pig-breeding facility in northeastern Germany is believed to have killed more than 55,000 animals, the operator said Thursday. The fire broke out on Tuesday at the facility in Alt Tellen, in Germany's northeastern corner. It spread quickly, in part through ventilation shafts. The cause of the blaze remains unclear.

ANCIENT COINS MAY SOLVE MYSTERY OF MURDEROUS

Warwick (Rhode Island): A handful of coins unearthed from a pick-your-own-fruit orchard in rural Rhode Island and other random corners of New England may help solve one of the planet's oldest cold cases. The villain in this tale: a murderous English pirate who became the world's most-wanted criminal after plundering a ship carrying Muslim pilgrims home to India from Mecca, then eluded capture by posing as a slave trader. "It's a new history of a nearly perfect crime," said Jim Bailey, an amateur historian and metal detectorist who found the first intact 17th-century Arabian coin in a meadow in Middletown.

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No.88/2021 Dt.01.04.2021

SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS e-Procurement Tender Notice

The following tenders have been floated online. Tenderers are requested to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in and submit their offers online. The Tender Description, Qty, EMD, SD may be seen in website. Offers submitted manually will not be accepted. Offers by post will not be entertained. Tender Closing time is 14.30 hrs of the Due date of the Tender. "For all indigenous offers, EMD will be accepted only via online system as available on www.ireps.gov.in"

Tender No.	BRIEF DESC.
90.21.1014	M. S. Channel MC (100x50x6)
45.20.1005	110V/200AH LEAD ACID BATTERY SET
45.21.1110	Railway Carriage Fan 100V
52.21.5002	All in One Computer Systems
29.21.1043	TOH Kit for ELGI Compressor

Due dates of Tender Opening:
Sl.No.01 on dt.12.04.2021; Sl.No.02 to 04 on dt.19.04.2021; Sl.No.05 on 05.05.2021;

Beside above mentioned tenders there are other tenders having value below Rs.25 lakhs. For details, please visit Railway website above.

Principal Chief Materials Officer/Secunderabad

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Special Trains as per the schedule given below:-

02438/02437 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Secunderabad - Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Superfast Special (Weekly)					
TRAIN No.	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
02438	—	15:35	Hazrat Nizamuddin	10:30	—
02437	13:35	—	Secunderabad	—	12:50

Days of Run : 02438 Ex Hazrat Nizamuddin on Every Sunday from 04.04.2021 to till further advice and 02437 Ex Secunderabad on Every Wednesday from 07.04.2021 to till further advice
Accommodation : First AC, AC 2 Tier & AC 3 Tier.
Stoppages: Jhansi, Bhopal Jn., Nagpur, Balharshah & Kazipet Jn. stations.

06787/06788 Tirunelveli Jn. - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Tirunelveli Jn. Special Express (Weekly)					
TRAIN No.	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
06787	—	16:45	Tirunelveli Jn.	19:00	—
06788	10:35	—	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	—	22:30

Days of Run : 06787 Ex Tirunelveli Jn. on every Monday from 12.04.2021 to till further advice and 06788 Ex Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on every Thursday from 15.04.2021 to till further advice
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Vanchi Maniyachchi Jn., Kovilpatti, Satur, Virudunagar Jn., Madurai Jn., Kodakanal Road, Dindigul Jn., Tiruchirappalli Jn., Karur Jn., Erode Jn., Salem Jn., Jolarpettai Jn., Katpadi Jn., Chittoor, Tirupati, Renigunta Jn., Nellore, Ongole, Tenali Jn., Vijayawada Jn., Khammam, Warangal, Ramagundam, Balharshah, Chandrapur, Sewagram, Nagpur, Itarsi Jn., Bhopal Jn., Jhansi, Gwalior Jn., Dhaulpur Jn., Agra Cantt., Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Shakurbasti, Bahadurgarh, Rohtak Jn., Julana, Jind Jn., Barsola, Uchana, Narwana Jn., Tohana, Jakhai Jn., Lehra Gaga, Sunam Udhm Singh Wala, Sangrur, Dhuri Jn., Malerkotla, Ahmadgarh, Ludhiana Jn., Phagwara Jn., Jalandhar Cantt. Jn., Mukerian, Pathankot Cantt., Kathua, Jammu Tawi & Udhampur stations.

06167/06168 Thiruvananthapuram Central - Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Superfast Special Express (Weekly)					
TRAIN No.	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
06167	—	14:15	Thiruvananthapuram Central	07:05	—
06168	17:50	—	Hazrat Nizamuddin	—	05:10

Days of Run : 06167 Ex Thiruvananthapuram Central on every Tuesday from 13.04.2021 to till further advice and 06168 Ex Hazrat Nizamuddin on every Friday from 16.04.2021 to till further advice
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Kollam, Kayankulam Jn., Alappuzha, Emakulam Jn., Aluva, Thrissur, Palghat, Coimbatore Jn., Truppur, Erode Jn., Salem Jn., Katpadi Jn., Chittoor, Tirupati, Renigunta Jn., Gudur Jn., Ongole, Vijayawada Jn., Warangal, Balharshah, Nagpur, Amia Jn., Betul, Itarsi Jn., Bhopal Jn., Bina Jn., Jhansi, Gwalior Jn., Agra Cantt. & Mathura Jn. stations.

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

RailMadad Helpline No. 139	Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
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Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GST mop-up at all-time high of ₹1.23L cr in Mar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 GST collections remained above the ₹1-lakh-crore mark for the sixth month in a row in March, rising 27 per cent annually to record ₹1.23 lakh crore, the finance ministry said on Thursday.
 The Ministry said the steep increasing trend in goods and services tax is a clear indication of rapid economic recovery post pandemic.
 Closer monitoring against fake-billing, deep data analytics using data from multiple sources including GST, income tax and customs IT systems and effective tax administration have also contributed to the steady increase in tax revenue over past few months, it added.
 The gross GST revenue collected in March 2021 stood at ₹1,23,902 crore. Of this, central GST stood at ₹22,973 crore, state GST at ₹29,329 crore, integrated GST at ₹62,842 crore (including ₹31,097 crore collected on import of

goods) and Cess at ₹8,757 crore (including ₹935 crore collected on import of goods).
 GST revenue in March 2020 was ₹97,590 crore.
 "GST revenues during March 2021 are the highest since the introduction of GST."
 "In line with the trend of recovery in the GST revenues over past five months, the revenues for the month of March 2021 are 27 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year," the ministry said in a statement.
 During the month, revenues from import of goods were 70 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transaction were 17 per cent more than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.
 The GST revenues declined 41 per cent and 8 per cent in the June and September quarters, respectively. However, with economic recovery, the mop-up grew 8 per cent and 14 per cent in December and

March quarters of this financial year.
 GST collections, which directly reflect the state of economic activity, had plummeted to a record low of Rs 32,172 crore in April 2020, after the government imposed a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus.
 The lockdown, categorised by several agencies as one of the strictest in the world, pummeled the economy, as demand dried up and non-essential businesses were shuttered. In the April-June quarter, the economy contracted by the steepest ever 24.4 per cent, and 7.3 per cent in September quarter. However, in October-December it came back in positive territory with 0.4 per cent growth.
 As restrictions were gradually lifted, many sectors of the economy were able to spring back into action although output remains well below the pre-pandemic levels.
 Deloitte India Senior

Tops ₹1 lakh crore for 6th month in a row

PTI ■ MUMBAI
 Indian equities started the new fiscal on a strong note on Thursday, with the BSE Sensex surging over 520 points to settle above the 50,000-level on across-the-board buying by participants amid positive global cues.
 At the closing bell, the 30-share BSE index quoted 520.68 points or 1.05 per cent higher at 50,029.83, driven by gains in banking, IT and energy stocks. Of the Sensex stocks, 25 closed in the green.
 Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 176.65 points or 1.2 per cent to settle at 14,867.35. IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finance and Ultratech Cement were prominent gainers. State-run SBI rose 1.7 per cent amid a rally in public sector banks.
 On the other hand, HUL, Nestle, HDFC Bank, TCS, Titan and Tech Mahindra suffered losses.
 Director M S Mani said, "In addition to the trend of higher overall GST collections over the past six months, all major states have shown a significant increase compared to the previous year."
 He added that the increase in collections on imports accompanied by the increase in domestic transactions would indicate that the overall production and consumption cycle is back to normal.
 ICRA Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said the healthy GST collections in March 2021, along with the additional devolution of Rs 45,000 crore to the state governments for the just-concluded fiscal, confirm the rating agency's view that the tax revenues in FY2021 have exceeded the Revised Estimates.
 "We continue to expect the GoI's fiscal deficit to undershoot the FY2021 RE of Rs 18.5 lakh crore, suggesting ample cash balances at the start of FY2022."

Stocks begin new fiscal on a high, Sensex reclaims 50,000 level

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Gold rallied by ₹881 to ₹44,701 per 10 gram in the national capital on Thursday following a sharp recovery in global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.
 In the previous trade, it had closed at Rs 43,820 per 10 gram. Silver also gained Rs 1,071 to Rs 63,256 per kilogram from Rs 62,185 per kilogram in the previous trade.
 "Domestic equities shrugged-off COVID-19 spikes on favourable global cues and recovered sharply mainly led by strong buying in financials and automobile stocks. Strong monthly volume for March helped auto stocks attract investors' interest," Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities, said.

BRIEFS

IMPOSITION OF FINE ON METRO PASSENGERS SANS MASKS
Kolkata: Metro Authorities have been running awareness campaigns 'No Mask, No Metro' for educating the commuters about the importance of wearing masks in order to battle Corona Virus and to stop the spread of the deadly disease. Regular announcements are being made and RPF and other Metro staff have also been interacting with passengers in stations and trains over the past few weeks. In accordance with the provisions laid down in the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and under instructions from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), guidelines have been issued for containment of COVID-19 in the country.

48,000 PROPERTY TAXPAYERS AVAIL AMNESTY PLAN
North DMC extended relief of about 500 crore rupees to the those who availed the benefit of Amnesty Scheme. Mayor of North Delhi Mr Jai Prakash today said that North DMC has collected almost 645 crore rupees which is almost 100 crore more than the last year's figure of Rs 548 crore. The number of taxpayers has also been increased by 5000 as 4,23,000 taxpayers paid tax in comparison to 4,18,000 taxpayers last year.

NEW DEFINED CONTRIBUTION BASED PENSION SCHEME
 The New Defined Contribution based Pension Scheme was introduced vide Department of Economic Affairs Notification No. 5/7/2003-ECB & PR dated 22nd December, 2003. Thereafter the activities under the National Pension System viz. registration, contribution, investment, fund management, withdrawals, annuity, etc. are regulated by the PFRDA Act, 2013. However, there were several service matters pertaining the NPS employees which were not covered by the PFRDA Act. In order to streamline the implementation of NPS, DoPPW initiated the proposal for framing of separate service rules for NPS employees.

PFC PAYS INTERIM DIVIDEND OF ₹1,182.63 CR TO GOVT OF INDIA FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-21
New Delhi: Power Finance Corporation, a Schedule - A Navratna CPSE and India's leading NBFC for the Power Sector, has paid an interim dividend of Rs 1,182.63 crore to Government of India for the financial year 2020-21 on March 31st, 2021 on 1,47,82,91,778 number of equity shares (56% held by the government. The interim dividend RTGS intimation bank advice was presented to RK Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) Power and New & Renewable Energy & Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship by Shri Ravinder Singh Dhillon, CMD, PFC in the presence of Shri Alok Kumar, Secretary (Power), Shri Ashish Upadhyaya, Additional Secretary (Power) & FA, Government of India, PK Singh, Director (Commercial) PFC and Smt. Parminder Chopra, Director (Finance) PFC.



The interim dividend RTGS intimation bank advice was presented to RK Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) Power and New & Renewable Energy & Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship by Shri Ravinder Singh Dhillon, CMD, PFC in the presence of Shri Alok Kumar, Secretary (Power), Shri Ashish Upadhyaya, Additional Secretary (Power) & FA, Government of India, PK Singh, Director (Commercial) PFC and Smt. Parminder Chopra, Director (Finance) PFC.

FOOD FORTIFICATION TO FIGHT HIDDEN HUNGER
Mumbai: A worldwide shift to combat hidden hunger needs to be launched by processing food in a way that micronutrient shortages are adequately addressed, opined experts in a webinar. "Food fortification is seen as a viable, scientifically proven, WHO approved & cost-effective strategy to address the problem of malnutrition," said Vivek Chandra, CEO, LT Foods & Co-Chair, National Food Processing Council, ASSOCHAM. While, Vikram Kelkar, Group Managing Director, Hexagon Nutrition, said, "The inclusion of exercise, healthy diet, use of over-the-counter medications, and dietary supplements is becoming a way of life."

MORE THAN 50% OF DELHI WORRIES ABOUT INSOMNIA
New Delhi: Over 50 per cent of Delhiites reported being anxious about suffering from insomnia, according to the findings of Great Indian Sleep Scorecard 2021. "This year, while all of India has been working from home and adapting to a very different lifestyle altogether, we noticed a rather sizable increase in the number of Delhiites working night shifts, recording increases in screen time, sleeping late at night due to work, and also having the fear of insomnia," said Chaitanya Ramalingegowda, co-founder and director, Wakefit.co, which conducted the study.

Salary income of Indian workers in Gulf exempt from I-T, says Nirmala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said salary income earned by non-resident Indians in Gulf countries would continue to be exempt from tax in India.
 Quoting a tweet of TMC MP Mahua Moitra, Sitharaman clarified that the Finance Act 2021 has not brought in any new or additional tax on Indian workers in Saudi/UAE/Oman/Qatar.
 The minister said the said amendment in the Finance Act, 2021, has merely incorporated general definition of the term "liable to tax" in the Income Tax Act to provide clarity.
 "This amendment has not altered the taxability of salary income earned by non-resident Indian citizens in Gulf countries. Their salary income

earned in Gulf countries would continue to be exempt in India," the Office of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted.
 Earlier in the day, Moitra had tweeted a picture of an amendment in Finance Bill, 2021, saying the "complicated words" in the amendment is "in reality a Special Gulf workers tax."
 "FM going back on her words. Hardworking Indian workers in Saudi/UAE/Oman/Qatar to be taxed EXTRA," Moitra tweeted. Sitharaman's office tweeted: "No going back on words. The Finance Act, 2021 hasn't brought in any additional or new tax on hardworking Indian workers in Saudi/UAE/Oman/Qatar."
 The minister also said that drawing conclusions without comprehending the facts is worrying.

I-T refunds of over ₹2.62 lakh cr issued in FY21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 The Income Tax Department has issued refunds worth over ₹2.62 lakh crore to more than 2.38 crore taxpayers in 2020-21.
 This include ₹87,749 crore personal income tax refunds to 2.34 crore taxpayers and ₹1.74 lakh crore worth corporate tax refunds in 3.46 lakh cases.
 The refunds issued in 2020-21 marks an increase of almost 43.2 per cent, the I-T department said in a statement.
 "Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has issued refunds of more than ₹2.62 lakh crore to more than 2.38 crore taxpayers from 1st April, 2020 to 31st March, 2021," the statement said.
 The total refunds issued in 2019-20 were worth Rs 1.83 lakh crore.

IL&FS sells stake in Chinese road asset to address ₹2,600 cr debt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 In a major step towards resolving its overall debt, IL&FS on Thursday announced completion of its 49 per cent stake sale in Chinese road asset, Chongqing Yuhe Expressway Co Ltd (CYEC), which would help the company to address debt of about Rs 2,600 crore.
 It sold the stake to China Merchants & PingAn Infrastructure Phase 1 Equity Investment Fund (Tianjin) Co Ltd (PingAn), a fund jointly owned by PingAn Insurance and China Merchants.
 This is the largest transaction for IL&FS since the sale of its wind energy assets to Orix, IL&FS said in a statement.
 IL&FS has duly received Rs 1,035 crore (\$141.3 million) in Singapore as part of this transaction.
 The consideration will be

used to pay around \$88 million of Bank of Baroda loans and the balance to meet IIPL liabilities, including the bondholders under IOPL.
 IL&FS Group held 49 per cent stake in CYEC through its step down Singapore-based subsidiary, ITNL International Pte Ltd (IIPL).
 The balance 51 per cent stake in CYEC is held by Chongqing Expressway Group (CEG).
 PingAn had bid at an aggregate equity valuation of \$281 million for 100 per cent stake. This valued IIPL's 49 per cent stake at around \$140 million and PingAn had agreed to take over the Rs 1,600 crore debt (as of December 2018) in the CYEC. The transaction was completed post receipt of approval from retired Supreme Court Justice D.K. Jain and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

CIL's additional supply reduces coal imports by 90 MT in FY21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 State-owned CIL on Thursday said it provided additional coal supply in the country during 2020-21, which prompted customers to opt 90 million tonnes of domestic coal instead of importing it from abroad. At the end of COVID-19-hit 2020-21, Coal India Ltd's (CIL) silver lining, amid output and offtake challenges, came in the form of curbing coal imports to the tune of 90 million tonnes (MT), the public sector undertaking said in a statement. Also, beating the previous estimates, the state-owned coal major booked an all-time high of 124 MT in its e-auctions. Sustaining its growth trajectory throughout the fiscal, over burden removal (OBR) logged 17 per cent growth easing the way for faster future production, the statement said.

PSUs face potential irrelevance in an increasingly disrupted world: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 The Government's privatisation policy for PSUs fails to address their potential irrelevance in an increasingly complex and disrupted world, as per a report by Kotak Institutional Equities.
 The report said PSU companies have already become

irrelevant in most B2C sectors such as aviation, telecommunications or are steadily losing market shares to their private sector competitors in financials.
 The market certainly does not have a favourable view of the future prospects of the PSUs given the large erosion in market capitalisation of most

PSUs over time, it added.
 "We see large existential issues for PSUs given their presence in challenged and challenging industries.
 The government's privatisation policy may not achieve strategic (value maximisation) and financial (asset monetisation) objectives either," it said.

Labour Min forms panels to review standards under OSH&WC Code

New Delhi: The labour ministry has set up expert committees to review the standards under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH&WC) Code, 2020. The Code has amalgamated thirteen different labour legislations and is aimed at simplifying the laws regulating the occupational safety, health and working conditions in establishments. "The central

government has constituted expert committees comprising industry and subject experts from both public and private sector across the country to review the existing rules and regulations on safety, health and working conditions standards, pertaining to factories, docks and construction work," the ministry said in a statement on Thursday.
PTI

DELHI JAL BOARD
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WEST-III
NANGLOI PH-III: NEAR BARAT GHAR: NEW DELHI-110041
STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"
N.I.T. No. 47 WEST-III (2020-2021)

S. No.	Description	Amount put to tender	Tender Fee	Earnest Money	Date of release of Tender in procurement solution	Last date/time for tender download through procurement solution
1.	Improvement of water supply system by replacement of old damaged 100 mm dia CI water line in D Block Bhagwati Vihar Binsapur Matiyala Road and adjoining area in Uttam Nagar AC-32 under EE(West) III.	Rs. 39.97,77/-	Rs. 500/-	NIL (Declaration to be filled)	31.03.2021 I.D. No. 2021 DUB 202051 1	19.04.2021 at 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)
 ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 14 (2021-22) Sd/ EX. ENGINEER (WEST-III)

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a male namely **Ravinder Marwah, S/o Late Sh. Kewal Kishan Marwah, R/o 87A Zamrudpur Village, New Delhi** has been missing from his house since 05.03.2020 at 10:00 AM. In this regard a **DD No. 16A** dated **07.03.2020** has been registered at PS, Mehrauli, New Delhi.

The description of missing male is as under:
Name: Ravinder Marwah **Father's Name :** Lt. Sh. Kewal Kishan Marwah, **Age :** 70 years, **Height :** 5 Feet 8 inch, **Complexion :** Shallow, **Face :** Long, **Built :** Thin, **Wearing :** Cream Color Kurta pajama and black shoes in feet.
 If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers. **SHO** Website : <http://cbi.nic.in> e-mail : cic@cbi.nic.in Fax : 011-23011334 Ph. : 011-23014046, 30115229, 23015218, Extn. 210 DP/471/SD/2021

P.S.: Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi Ph.: 011-29235815, 8750870829

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified female namely **Unknown, D/W/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown** was found on **26.03.2021** at **Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi**. She was admitted by **Safdarjung Hospital staff from near blood bank Safdarjung Hospital in Unconscious condition and declared dead by Doctor**. In this regard **DD No. 08A** dated **26.03.2021** has been lodged at **Police Station, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi**. Identification of unidentified dead body is as under:
Name: Unknown, **Age:** About 22 Years, **Height:** 157 cm, **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Yellow Light Suit and Maroon Salwar.
 If anyone has any information or clue about this female deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.
SHO Police Station, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi DP/591/SW/2021(UIDB) Ph: 011-24106246, 9896935958

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a boy namely **Anil, S/o Sh. Naval Rawat, R/o WZ-266, Madipur Village, Delhi, Age: 15 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Black, Built: Normal, Face: Long, Wearing: Red Colour Shirt, Black Colour Jacket, Blue Colour Jeans and Black Colour Cloth Shoes** in his feet has been missing from his home since **23.02.2021**. In this regard a **FIR No.157/21, u/s 363 IPC** dated **23.02.2021**, has been registered at **P.S. Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi**.
 Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this boy please inform undersigned.
SHO P.S. Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax : 011-24368639 Ph.: 011-25225616, 25224162, DP/383/WD/2021 8750871124, 9668971248

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one person **Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: Approx. 30-35 Yrs., Height: 5'6", Sex: Male, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, ID Marks: Tattoo "चन्द्रयाम", Wearing: Blue-White Checkdar Shirt and Blue Pant, Place of Recovery: Found injured condition on 27.03.2021 by train accident at K M Pole No. 9/37-38, Down Line Railway Track near Nariana Loha Mandi, admitted in Safdarjung Hospital, During treatment he died.**
 In this regard **DD No. 9A, U/s 174 Cr.Pc, Dated 30.03.2021** has been lodged at **Police Station, Delhi Cantt. Railway Station, Delhi**. Any clue come to notice please inform undersigned.
SHO P.S. Delhi Cantt. Railway Station, Delhi DP/98/RLY/2021 Ph.: 011-25688505, 8750871309

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited (RMSCL)
 D-Block, Swasthya Bhawan, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 Ph. No. 0141-2223887, Fax No. 0141-2228065 E-Mail : mdrmscl@nic.in, edep@rmscl-raj@nic.in Website: www.rmscl.health.rajasthan.gov.in
 No. F-8(1) RMSCL/EPM/SM-3/NIB-577/2020-21/511 Date: 22/03/2021
Notice Inviting Bid (NIB-577/2020-21)
 Sealed Single Stage Two-envelopes unconditional online Bids for Two Year Rate Contract, are invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan for the procurement of Goods as listed below, from Manufacturer/ Direct Importer only as per the Bidding Schedule given below:

S.No.	Detail	Information
1	NIB No.	578/2020-21
2	Name of goods	1-FETAL DOPPLER 2-FETAL MONITOR
3	Estimated Bid value	Rs. 3,48,00,000/-
4	Bid download start date and time	23.03.2021 ; 01:00 PM
5	Last date, time of receipt of bid	15.04.2021 ; 06:00 PM
6	UBN	MSC2021GLRC00141

Details of the bidding documents can be accessed or downloaded from the website sppp.raj.nic.in or www.dipronline.org or <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or www.rmscl.health.rajasthan.gov.in
 Raj Samwad/C/11735/2020-21 Executive Director (EPM) RMSCL, Jaipur

WESTERN RAILWAY
 Various Construction Works
 Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, 6th floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai-400 008 invites E-tender as per details given as follows : Executive : Sr. DEN (Co) BCT, Tender Notice No. & Date : BCT/20-21/398 dtd. 30-03-2021, Work and location : Mumbai Central (CFO Yard)-Replacement of existing old Sick Line Building and extension of sick line shed, Approx Cost of work : Rs. 20,86,45,026.01, EMD : NIL, Date & Time of submission : On 04.05.2021 till 15.00 hrs., Date & Time of opening : On 04.05.2021 at 15.30 hrs. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document, EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit www.ireps.gov.in. Manual offers will not be considered. 0770
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GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS
1	HARTRON	ONE TIME PROCUREMENT OF 103 NOS. PUBLIC ADDRESS EQUIPMENTS WITH FIVE YEARS WARRANTY AND RATE CONTRACT THEREOF FOR PERIOD OF 1 YEAR ON BEHALF OF PUNJAB & HARYANA HIGH COURT, CHANDIGARH	02.04.2021 04.05.2021	EMD 50000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2585877 dthardware.hartron@gmail.com
2	HVPNL	PAINTING OF 20 NOS. TOWER OF 132 KV MISSING-JALMANA TRANSMISSION LINE	31.03.2021 09.04.2021	1.70 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01722583789 pro@hvpn.org.in
3	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PANCHKULA	SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR ART PAINTINGS/BEAUTIFICATION WORKS UNDER SWACHH BHART MISSION IN MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, PANCHKULA JURISDICTION AS PER SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES, 2016.	31.03.2021 07.04.2021	EMD 1 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	xenmcpki@gmail.com
4	HVPNL	REPAIRING OF 14 NOS. RUSTY TOWER LEG OF 132 KV SAFFIDON-ASSANDH TRANSMISSION LINE	31.03.2021 09.04.2021	98000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01722583789 pro@hvpn.org.in
5	CADA HISAR	PROVIDING OUTSOURCING STAFF OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES	CLOSING DATE 22.04.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9728036300 xenhisarcad@gmail.com
6	DHBNV	SUPPLY INSTALLATION TESTING AND COMMISSIONING	26.03.2021 16.04.2021	6.08 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	805988680 semm@dhbvn.org.in
7	THE HARYANA STATE COOP. LABOUR & CONST. FED. LTD.	PROVIDING MAIN POWER SERVICE IN SKILLED, SEMI SKILLED AND UNSKILLED CATEGORIES	30.03.2021 15.04.2021	EMD 97000/-	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	hrylabourfed@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etendehry.nic.in RO NO. 2417



Bollywood
 'Without my fans, I would not have been able to survive.'
 —Rani Mukerji

LISTEN, VISUALISE AND LEARN

During the pandemic, screen time has skyrocketed. As a positive measure, people are turning to less captive formats of learning to save their time and health, says
DUSHYANTT KOHLI



duction or long hours of monotonous reading.

Another robust case can be made for learning languages, which understandably has considerable market potential. Whenever someone wants to learn a new language, the most crucial element in the process is to listen to the content in the language carefully. It will help people attain a knack for the language, develop better pronunciation and fluency, and eventually make learning much less complicated.

Let us also look beyond students or learners for developing life skills. There is another vast use case of learning through audio in corporate L&D for multiple industries like hospitality, travel, food delivery, e-commerce, taxi service, etc. All the mentioned industries are operations-intensive and have professional requirements to train their people on SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) many times over. With minimal infrastructure or device requirements, audio becomes the smartest choice for corporates to train their employees on SOPs without taking additional time from their work schedule or their lives. Audio helps to convert any activity time into learning time, unlike other mediums/formats, which require dedicated schedules to consume the content.

In the next three years, AI-based voice assistants will take learning to the next level. Further to this, voice assistants will seamlessly deliver quizzes, facts and interaction-based knowledge in such streamlined ways that people will start preferring them over traditional teaching methodologies. This can be attributed to the convenience and personalisation that these voice assistants are capable of providing.

With the extent of transformation brought to us every day by AI, machine-learning, data-analytics, and other technologies, it won't be surprising to see big leaps in human productivity. A lot of the developments will be linked to the consumption of content through audio as people are preferring to multitask and cater more time to learning. Rather than wasting precious time in transiting for work, moving physical things like books, tablets, and computers around, they would prefer to operate devices through voice-commands for a hassle and stress-free lifestyle. We are already witnessing disruption through fresh ideas like voice recognition, wherein, an AI and machine learning-based tech delivers customised content after recognising the owners' voice. The possibilities for the future are immense, and peoples' love for audio will be at the center of new learning experiences. The next generation of technology in audio will be embraced with open arms, just like radio, MP3 devices, and audio apps have been in recent years.

(The writer is the COO of Khabri.)



Want to awe people with my work: Pari

Parineeti Chopra is basking in the good reviews that she has got for her powerful and versatile performances in three back to back films — *The Girl On The Train (TGOTT)*, *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar (SAPF)* and the recently released *Saina*. Pari reveals that going forward she will only look to 'shock and awe' people with her film choices that will allow her to showcase her acting skills effectively.

Pari says, "I'm currently over the moon with the reviews that I have got for *TGOTT*, *SAPF* and *Saina* and I realised that what the audience and critics loved was my decision to pick versatile roles that helped me shine as a performer. Going forward too, my film choices will be instinctive, bold and hopefully I will be able to shock and awe people like I have done with these three back to back films."

For Pari, 2021 has started on a good note and she intends to capitalise on this positive momentum. She says, "They have been praising my work and saying things like Parineeti 2.0, return of Parineeti, the power packed hat-trick of Parineeti Chopra. It feels very special and rare as no actor has achieved this feat of releasing three films in one month and I cannot believe it. It's been a good start to my year because people have really liked what I have tried to do on screen."

She adds, "Their love is a big validation that I should always get out of my comfort zone and shake things up for myself. It's a big lesson that I have learnt and I'm going to ensure that I apply this when it comes to my film choices going forward."

Listening empowers you to see with your eyes closed. Yes, visualisation is what I am talking about. Since the beginning of humankind, whenever a person wanted to focus on something or listen carefully to remember or absorb knowledge, the first step was to close the eyes primarily to cut off the mind from the outer world (visuals) and remove every distraction. In earlier times, whether people used to travel to different parts of the country/world without any map service or understand a process, they used to close their eyes and listen carefully to create a mental image to remember the directions and memorise.

We have enough instances from our mythology or history about the importance of sound, especially in learning. Today, even though the ecosystem is dynamic and the invention of newer technologies like VR, 4D, AR, etc, are providing multiple means to consume content and learn, the importance of audio as the fundamental means of transferring knowledge cannot be discounted. Moreover, with so many formats of content, there is an increased



chance of facing distraction and ergonomic difficulties in learning through video/VR-based education. Even though these formats offer great entertainment and leisurely experiences, it does not suitably address the above concerns, especially considering the post-COVID scenario. During the pandemic, screen times have skyrocketed, and as a positive measure, people are turning to less captive formats to save their time and health.

Audio-based learning answers all these concerns so well that some of the subjects/topics are now made available in audio formats. These topics can be best learned on audio, hence, the term 'Audio First' was coined to describe it. For instance, if an individual has to study history by reading a book, the process itself is so long and monotonous that the student loses interest to consume the relevant pointers. If you try to learn the same subject through video, content production becomes unaffordable and time-consuming. However, the same can be taught in audio most effectively without worrying about the high cost of content pro-

Pleasure in feeding animals: Daisy

Actor Daisy Shah is an animal lover and often feeds strays. She says that she always carries food with her when she ventures out. The actor was recently seen feeding the stray dogs and cows in Andheri.

"I often feed the strays I come across, as and when I can. I actually have a box of dog biscuits in my car wherever I go. So, if I stop at a signal or if I am walking from my car to some place and I see these adorable animals, I always feed them. There is unmatched pleasure in doing so," she said.

She says that proper segregation of garbage needs to be done in order to make sure that animals don't consume the wrong things.

"One needs to understand that stray animals require to eat as well, so they try to fish out food from wherever possible. Many a time it lands up being from the big garbage bins that are around the city, which are provided by the BMC. The government has surely done its bit in keeping our city clean by providing us with these garbage bins, but people are yet unaware of segregating their garbage correctly."

She urges people to divide their garbage properly so that it can be disposed off in an appropriate manner.



What price for a smile?

The Audi S5 and the BMW M340i are expensive, one more than the other. But they are fun

Be honest now, are you a bit partial to Diet Cola? I am. As much as I like carbonated drinks, truth be told, they are quite sugary and since my body can't get rid of that sugar efficiently enough, the only way to fuel myself is the diet path. But being a diet cola does not mean that there has to be a sacrifice on the taste front. A good diet cola should give you the same satisfaction as the real thing. Now, you must be wondering why any discussion around 350-horsepower cars would have the word 'diet' in it. Both the Audi S5 and the BMW M340i are not the full-fat, fire-breathing ultra sports sedans. The six-cylinder turbocharged petrol-drinking RS4 and the M3 are no joke, but they are saner than their brethren.

So let us get a couple of things out of the way. The BMW M340i can be slotted in between the 330i sedan and the M3. The Audi RS5 is Audi's only performance sedan



KUSHAN MITRA



on the market right now. They both have almost 350 horsepower and they can both hit 0-100 in around 4.5 seconds. The Audi has a V6 and the BMW a straight-six. They have both been sprinkled with the fairy dust of each company's performance engineers, with suspension and engine tweaks. But the big difference is in price, the BMW has an ex-showroom price of ₹63 lakh and the Audi costs ₹79 lakhs. This huge difference is explained almost entirely by the fact that the BMW is locally assembled at BMW's plant near Chennai and the Audi is an import.

But there should be no presumption here that the BMW is superior to the Audi because, even though I have a



soft sport for BMW, I love the S5. I loved it in the previous generation and I love the current one. One of my most memorable automotive experiences was in the S5 and this latest iteration of the car is a lot of fun to drive. Get onto a piece of tarmac where you can let the car slide around a bit and it will put a smile on your face. It has before-you-know-it fast speed and I must admit, I have always been partial to the Sportback shape of the S5 which, in my opinion, is the perfect size for a Sportback. But you can't really ever



argue with the sticker price, an on-road price difference of 20 lakh is quite massive and make no mistakes the M340i is no slouch. BMW has given this car the manufacturer's XDrive

all-wheel-drive system which gives it massive amounts of grip no matter what the road conditions. Unlike a full-fat M car, and the M3 is on its way soon to be one, you cannot put

the car into rear-wheel-drive only mode. But given that this car is relatively affordable, that is not a bad thing. Too much power too soon is a recipe for disaster. The M340i has just the right amount of power and performance. It is not a full-fat M3, but it gives you a great experience of power and performance despite being a bit of a 'sleeper'.

But the Audi is possibly a nicer car to live with, and even though it feels a bit more dated on the inside, it is the car that I'd rather live with.

TRENDBLAZER



MY BIGGEST CRITIC IS MY MOM: SONAKSHI

Actor **SONAKSHI SINHA** says her mother Poonam Sinha is honest with her when it comes to feedback for her films. Sonakshi adds that her mother has always been genuine while discussing her performances.

"My biggest critic has to be my mom and she has always been bang-on. Her inputs always help me get better and they matter a lot to me. She is extremely honest when she praises or criticises me," she said.

Sonakshi is mostly happy with her performances.

fairtalk

KIRTI KULHARI



'A simple note to let everyone know that my husband Saahil and I have decided to separate. Not on papers, but in life. A decision that's probably harder than the decision of "being with somebody", because coming together is celebrated by everyone you love and care about. And the decision of "not being with somebody" brings along pain and hurt to the same people. It's not easy.'

dailytalk

KUNAL KAPOOR



'I think one of the interesting part is, no one — whoever watched my forthcoming film *Koi Jaane Na* in the special screening — managed to guess the end. And for a thriller-mystery, keeping the audience hooked till the end is important. We realised that the surprise element was working for our film.'

JODIE FOSTER MISSES BEING ON SETS

Actor **JODIE FOSTER**, who has taken a step back from films, says she misses the environment on the sets.

"The thing that I miss the most, strangely, is just being on sets, hanging out with all the people and making a movie together," she said. However, she adds that when it comes to acting, she is still keen only on doing roles that matter to her.

"I want to do acting only when it's something that really feels meaningful, where I feel like I can make a major contribution," added she.



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

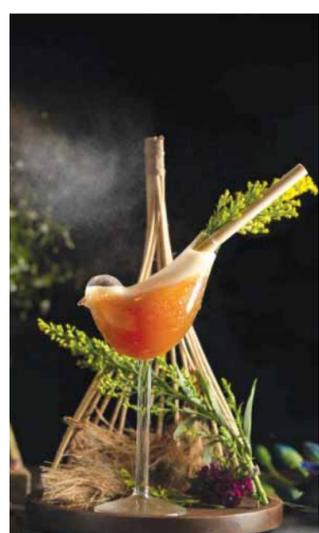
If not for the delectable bites, people must visit RYU at Gurugram's 32nd Milestone for its exceptional signature cocktails, says **AYUSHI SHARMA**

An American author, Mary Antin, once said, "Among the liveliest of my memories are those of eating and drinking..." Well, I won't deny it either. Recently, for instance, I, along with three of my friends, each distinct from the other, headed towards Gurugram's 32nd Milestone. Climbing up a white spiral staircase, we made our way into an Asian-themed bar and diner — RYU.

The dragon was the prime element of the bar that distinctly dominated the first floor's visuals as the concept creator of the restaurant believes that every dragon has a personality of its own, thus, inspiring people to delve deeper into their layers and exploring different versions of themselves as they relax comfortably at the restaurant.

Walking past the interiors, we moved towards the rooftop and found a comfortable spot — a corner table. But I was overcome with curiosity about the meaning of RYU? To find out the same, I googled the name and came to know that RYU is a fictional Japanese fighting character and the protagonist of Capcom's Street Fighter series. Sitting under the shade of an intricate Japanese umbrella, I, then, realised that the restaurant is inspired by the culture and tradition of Japan, China and Malaysia. The warm, dim yellow lights and soft music in the background set our mood for the night.

We started with Chilli garlic mushrooms. The tender button mushrooms were tossed in the rich flavour of garlic. The slight pungency could be traced to the vinegar and soya sauce. Though it tasted a little sweet due to the use of caramelised onions. Even though I am not a huge fan of mushrooms, I found



myself indulging and going for a second round.

Thai crispy vegetables which had broccoli, carrots, bell peppers, cabbage and cauliflower wok-tossed in lemon, chilli and a few other Thai herbs was served next. To ensure that these remained crunchy even after turning a bit cold, the executive chef Lekh Bhadur Khadga Magar used rice flour. This garlicky, super crunchy dish was certainly the star of the night, not only for me but for my pals as well.

Next up was the Classic veg spring rolls. Served with sweet chilli sauce, these vegetables stuffed crispy tangy rolls were fried to perfection and didn't have any trace of oil, which usually is the norm in other places. Not high on spices or any kind of excessive flavours, it was comfort food at its best.

I wanted to pair beer with the meal, however, one can't help but look at the menu when it has a wide range of cocktails to choose from. Taking suggestions from the mixologist Nikit Singh, we ordered around five drinks, each with a different base. While *Pandarama* was a sweet mixture of vermouth, passion fruit, orange juice, thyme & lime float with flamed absinthe (anise-flavoured spirit) and cinnamon, *Sex on the roof* had



malibu rum, Midori, banana puree, pineapple and lime. It reminded me of the beach while chilling on the rooftop. The third was *Smoked popcorn old-fashioned*. It was a twist of classic old fashioned incorporated with flavours of popcorn and grapefruit smoked with RYU's special osmanthus woodchip and Jameson. The fourth — *Junglebird*, with its strong flavours — made the best impact on my already impressed taste-buds. Another reason was the presenta-

tion. It came in a bird-shaped glass, which was surrounded by a nest-like arrangement, which justified its name. A twist to a Malaysian classic, this version infused jackfruit and thyme rum, tiramisu syrup, Campari, pineapple juice and lime. Last, the fifth was gin-based *Flower power*. It came in wine glasses, shaken with elderflower yuzu, thyme and lemon juice topped with in-house salted coconut foam.

But I was yet to be done with the



food, *Yasai tempura* made its way to my table. This was the vegetarian version of tempura which usually consists of seafood, meat and vegetables battered and deep-fried. But it also had elements of sushi. It had tempura fried asparagus, carrot wrapped with Japanese rice and seaweed flavoured with spicy Japanese mayonnaise. To say the least, sushi is often a disappointment for me but this particular one wasn't... for sure.

They say an Asian menu is incomplete without dim sums and momos. It's true! So we tried their Veg momos and Bok choy asparagus. The momos had minced vegetables as the stuffing and were steamed to perfection. The dim sums filling had steamed bok choy, asparagus and coriander. It was served with hot chilli sauce. You know the dim sum, if literally translated, means "touch the heart". And this one just did that.

We were pretty near saturation and we ordered a Veg kebab platter, which included oven-cooked *paneer tikka*, *malai broccoli* and *hara bhara kebab*. It was served along with mint chutney. While *paneer tikka* and *hara bhara kebab* were exactly how they are served everywhere, *malai broccoli* was the exception. As it is I am fond of broccoli and I have been a fan of cheese for as long as I can remember — it was a perfect fusion for me as it was flavoured with cream cheese.

I must say — if not for the delectable bites, people must visit RYU for its exceptional signature cocktails. In the words of Shyam Thakur, co-founder of the restaurant, "I have always been incredibly passionate about cocktails. The flavours, the skill, the kind of precision that goes inside creating one great cocktail — it's an art worthy of obsession."

R E C I P E S

CHICKPEA & WALNUT SALAD SANDWICH

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Mayonnaise: 1/3 cup
 - Lemon juice: 1/4 cup
 - Pure maple syrup: 2 tsp
 - Boiled chickpea: 420 gm
 - Celery, diced: 2/3 cup
 - California Walnuts, toasted: 1/2 cup
 - Dried cranberry: 1/2 cup
 - Italian parsley, chopped: 1/2 cup
 - Red onion, minced: 1/4 cup
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



- Bread: 16 slices
- Lettuce leaf, large-sized: 8

- Firm but ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and sliced: 2
- METHOD**
- Whisk together mayonnaise, lemon juice and syrup in a medium bowl.
- Place chickpeas in a food processor and pulse to chop.
- Add to bowl with dressing and stir in celery, walnuts, cranberries, parsley and onion and season with salt and pepper.
- Serve between bread slices with lettuce and avocado or you can also serve as a filling for a lettuce wrap.
- Courtesy: Chef Sabyasachi Gorai.

SOUTH KOREAN SUPER TANGY NOODLE SALAD — BIBIM GUKSU

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Dried buckwheat noodles (or soba noodles): 180 gm
- For salad:**
- Lettuce leaf, thinly sliced: 2
 - Red cabbage, thinly sliced: 140 gm
 - Cucumber, julienned: 60 gm
 - Carrot, julienned: 40g
 - Red radish, julienned (optional): 60 gm
 - Snow pea sprouts (optional)



- *Kimchi*, (thumbnail-sized): 2 tbsp
- *Gochujang* (Korean chili paste): 2 tbsp
- Rice vinegar: 2 tbsp
- Soy sauce: 1 tbsp (15 ml)
- Honey: 1 tbsp
- Brown sugar: 1 tbsp
- Sesame oil: 1 tbsp

- Roasted sesame seeds: 1 tbsp
- METHOD**
- Boil the noodles in rolling boiling water and drain them.
 - Run some cold water over the noodles to cool them down. Drain.
 - Place the noodles in a large serving bowl and mix all the salad ingredients with Korean sauce.
 - After all the ingredients are put in the bowl, serve.
 - While eating, mix all ingredients well with chopsticks and indulge.

CHURROS

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- For churro paste:**
- Water: 320 gm
 - Butter: 25 gm
 - Salt: 5 gm
 - Caster sugar: 20 gm
 - Flour: 260 gm
 - Egg: 100 gm
- For cinnamon sugar:**
- Castor sugar: 300 gm
 - Cinnamon: 5 gm
- For chocolate sauce:**
- Dark chocolate: 100 gm
 - Cream: 100 gm
- METHOD**
- In a saucepan, bring the water, milk, salt, sugar and butter to a boil.



- Once the mix comes to a boil, add flour and mix well till it forms a thin skin at the bottom of the pan.
 - Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl.
 - Gradually, add eggs, one at a time, till fully incorporated.
 - Pipe sticks on a tray and freeze.
 - On the other side, heat oil in a deep pan.
 - Fry the churros sticks in hot oil and then roll in cinnamon sugar.
 - Dip in chocolate sauce and enjoy!
- Courtesy: Ila Sarwate, Academy of Pastry and Culinary Arts, Mumbai.

GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI DEPARTMENT FOR WELFARE OF SC/ST/OBC B-BLOCK, 2ND FLOOR, VIKAS BHAWAN. NEW DELHI-110002

Extended Last date for submission of application upto: 30/04/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FROM THE STUDENTS BELONGING TO SC/ST/OBC CATEGORY OF DELHI FOR THE YEAR 2020-21

Online applications are invited through e-district portal of Government of NCT of Delhi i.e. www.edistrict.delhigovt.nic.in for the following scholarship schemes from the students belonging to SC/ST/OBC category of Delhi:-

- 1) Reimbursement of tuition fees to the SC/ST/OBC students of Class I to XII, studying in recognized public/private schools of Delhi.
- 2) Merit scholarship for students belonging to SC/ST/OBC category studying in Professional/ technical Colleges/ Institutions/ Universities.
- 3) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar State Award for Toppers amongst SC/ST/OBC Category Students
- 4) Financial assistance to SC students for pursuing higher studies abroad, (offline)
- 5) Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC Students
- 6) Post -Matric Scholarship for SC Students
- 7) Pre- Matric Scholarship for OBC Students
- 8) Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC Students

Details of these scholarship schemes, including instructions for applying online by students and verification of applications by educational institutes etc., are available on the official website of the department www.scstwelfare.delhigovt.nic.in

Appeal: All educational institutes are requested to take all possible measures for students' awareness and assist them in applying for the schemes.

Sd/-
K.K. SATIJA
 Deputy Director (pig)
 Govt. of NCT Of Delhi
 Department for Welfare of
 SCs, STs, OBCs & Minorites
 B-Block, 2nd Floor, Vikas Bhawan
 I.P. Estate, New Delhi

DIP/Shabdarth/0003/2021-22

IPL will benefit Eng during T20 WC: Stokes

Ben feels being constantly exposed to Indian conditions during cash-rich league will help his English teammates



Ben Stokes celebrates with England teammates Jos Buttler and Jason Roy after he takes wicket of Indian batsman during recently concluded ODI series. AP/File Photo

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The increased participation of English players in the IPL, where there is constant pressure to perform, will benefit them during the T20 World Cup to be held in India later this year, reckons star all-rounder Ben Stokes.

Over the years more and more English players have chosen to take part in the lucrative league. This year, there are 14 England cricketers contracted to play IPL, including white-ball skipper Eoin Morgan, Jos Buttler, Stokes, Jonny Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Liam Livingstone, Jason Roy, Chris Woakes and Dawid Malan.

English players in the IPL has probably grown in the last five or so years," Stokes, who will turn up for the Rajasthan Royals, told *Sky Sports*.

"Not only is that great for the individual but it is also great for the players involved in the England set-up; it gives them experience in the most high-profile competition in the world but not only that — you are under constant pressure to perform," the imposing all-rounder added.

India is set to host the T20 World Cup later this year and Stokes feels it is the perfect opportunity for English players, who were a part of the recently-concluded tour of India, to get more familiar with the Indian conditions.

"You've got billions of people watching you and

you've got the pressure of the franchise on you.

"Being constantly exposed to that is a huge benefit to us as a team, especially with the T20 World Cup coming up at the end of the year in India; it's a great chance for the English guys to get more experience in these conditions," Stokes said.

After being held in the United Arab Emirates last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the IPL returns to India and Stokes hopes fans would be allowed back in the stadiums soon.

"It's great for the competition that it's come back to its roots after taking place in Dubai last year, which was an achievement in itself.

"Fingers crossed that fans will be allowed back in at some point during this IPL because they are a huge part of this game and why we play.

"It was an amazing feeling to have fans back in the grounds on our (England's



Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli, left, and South African batsman AB de Villiers reach Chennai on Thursday to join RCB squad. Virat will undergo seven-day quarantine before he starts training. @RCBTweets

recent tour of India — even though 100 per cent of the crowd were against us! Being back in the thick of that atmosphere was amazing!"

The Royals had a disappointing campaign last year, finishing last. However, Stokes

is optimistic about the season ahead.

"Last year was obviously disappointing. Yes, we finished bottom of the table but I think it's not as simple as that. We ebbed and flowed with our performances throughout the

season: we had some great ones followed by some pretty poor performances.

"But every year is a clean slate and we are really excited about the prospects of what we are able to do on the field this year," he added.

Open to bat at any spot: Dube

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals' new recruit Shivam Dube says he is ready to bat at any position for his team and is looking to get some "extra tips" from Director Of Cricket Kumara Sangakkara to improve his batting during the IPL.

Dube, who has featured in one ODI and nine T20s for India, was brought by the Rajasthan Royals for a whopping ₹4.40 crores.

"I think, I have played at many positions, so I don't care much about what I can do, I care much about what teams needs from me," 27-year-old Dube said.

"So if they want me to bat up the order, I can bat at any



Shivam Dube poses for photo after he arrives to join Royals bubble ahead of the start of IPL. @rajasthanroyals

many formats, so I am really free about that."

After the IPL auctions, Sangakkara had said that Dube's batting will be the main focus and "if there is an opportunity for him to bowl, it would be very rarely and very few overs, if at all."

Dube said he is looking forward to getting some "extra-tips" from the Sri Lankan legend, with whom he will be working in the upcoming season.

"... He (Sangakkara) has played a lot of cricket and he is going to watch me and going to tell me what I need to add in my game to improve and to be a better left-handed batsman," he said.

"Many things would be there, but from a batting

perspective, it would be more from my side to get some extra tips from Sanga (Sangakkara), so I can perform well in the tournament."

Dube said he is solely focused on winning the trophy for his team.

"First of all ... If I am playing for any team, I just expect my team and myself to aim for the trophy. I don't expect (anything personally)... Because as a professional you know what you want and what teams will give you, what roles you have to play and that you will get from the coach..."

"The one thing I would always be grateful is that I will be playing for Rajasthan and they will be trusting me a lot."

Hazlewood pulls out of IPL Rana cleared to train NZ complete series clean sweep

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia and Chennai Super Kings fast bowler Josh Hazlewood has pulled out of the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League to take a small break from cricket and keep himself fresh for the Ashes and the T20 World Cup later this year.

Hazlewood was to depart with other Australia's IPL-bound players and join CSK but decided to skip the cash-rich league, which will start on April 9 and go on till May 30, and spend time at home for the next two months.

The 30-year-old played three games for CSK in the IPL last season.

"It's been a long 10 months in bubbles and quarantine at different times, so I decided to have a rest from cricket and spend some time at home and in



Australia in the next two months," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by *cricket.Com.Au*.

"We've got a big winter ahead. The West Indies is going to be a long tour, with Bangladesh (T20 tour) potentially thrown on the end of that.

Then potentially the T20 World Cup leading into the Ashes, so it's a big 12 months.

"As it always is with Australia, and I want to give myself the best chance to be mentally and physically ready for that," he added.

The right-arm fast bowler follows compatriots Josh Philippe (RCB) and Mitchell Marsh (SRH) in withdrawing from the IPL, while some other Australians may consider opting out also, according to the report.

With the pulling out of the IPL, Hazlewood is now available for the back end of the domestic season. He is expected to be available for NSW for the Sheffield Shield final if the qualify. "I haven't been bowling a great deal ... Workloads are a bit too low ... hopefully I can use the next two weeks to build up and if we're in the Shield final I can play that," the pacer said.

Kolkata: Kolkata Knight Riders batsman Nitish Rana was on Thursday cleared to train with his teammates after testing negative for Covid-19, more than a week after returning positive for the infectious disease.

The 27-year-old lefthander had tested positive a day after his arrival in Mumbai on March 21, following which he went into isolation in the team hotel.

"Nitish Rana had checked into the KKR team hotel in Mumbai, on March 21 with a negative Covid report which was done on March 19... He was tested on March 22, during his quarantine and the report showed that he was positive," KKR said in a statement.

"He has had no symptoms and has been completely asymptomatic since. He isolat-



ed himself and was tested again today. We are glad to report that he has tested negative. We expect him to start training with the team shortly and be fully fit well before the start of the season."

Rana had scored 352 runs in 14 matches during the IPL 2020 season.

It remains to be seen whether he will be fit to play for their season-opener against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Chennai on April 11. PTI

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 65 runs in a rain-shortened third T20I at Eden Park on Friday to claim a series clean sweep.

With their innings reduced to 10 overs due to bad weather, Bangladesh were all out for 76 with three balls to spare, well short of the 142 target set by New Zealand.

The Black Caps made 141 for four after losing the toss and being asked to bat, with Finn Allen hitting 71 from 29 balls.

Spinner Todd Astle was the standout bowler, taking four wickets for 13 runs in his two over spell.

Captain Tim Southee said it was satisfying for the New Zealanders to notch their seventh home series win of the season on all formats.

"It's been a great summer



New Zealand batsman Finn Allen plays shot during his 71 run innings. ©ICC

and we've played some good cricket and seen a lot of guys come into the environment and do well," he said.

Bangladesh captain Liton Das said mistakes cost his side, including a series of dropped catches that allowed Allen to

run away with the match.

"We're not playing good cricket in batting and fielding," he said.

"We've been very good bowling but that's cost us. We're a young team and we're learning."

Osaka's unbeaten run comes to end

AFP ■ MIAMI

Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka crashed out of Miami Open in the quarter-finals on a day of upsets that also saw top-seeded Daniil Medvedev ousted.

Seventh-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut beat Medvedev 6-4, 6-2, for his third win in as many meetings with the Russian who was runner-up to Novak Djokovic at the Australian Open and ascended to No 2 in the world with his victory at Marseille in March.

Bautista booked a semi-final showdown with 19-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner, the world No 31 who beat Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

Against Sinner, he'll be looking to avenge a three-set defeat in the third round at Dubai.

Women's world No 2 Osaka — seeded second behind top-ranked Ashleigh Barty in the prestigious ATP Masters and WTA hardcourt tournament — had bowed out hours earlier, the Japanese star's 23-match winning streak coming to a crashing halt with a 6-0, 6-4 loss to Greece's Maria Sakkari.



Osaka hadn't dropped a set at love since her last defeat, which came in February 2020 in a Fed Cup match.

"She has the most wins so far this year so she's in great form — it meant a lot to me," said Sakkari, who let loose a scream of delight after the final point.

Sakkari will face eighth-seeded Canadian Bianca Andreescu for a place in the women's final.

Andreescu, ranked ninth in the world, clawed out a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over tenacious 58th-ranked Spaniard Sara Sorribes Tormo.

North Macedonia stun Germany

2014 champion suffer first WC qualifying defeat in 20 years

AFP ■ DUISBURG

Germany fell to a humiliating 2-1 home loss to North Macedonia on Wednesday, handing the hosts their first World Cup qualifying defeat in 20 years and piling the pressure on coach Joachim Löw.

Napoli midfielder Eljif Elmas scored the winner five minutes from time, after Ilkay Gundogan's penalty had drawn Germany level following 37-year-old striker Goran Pandev's first-half opener.

The four-time world champions have never failed to qualify for football's biggest tournament, but did not enter the inaugural edition in 1930 and were banned in 1950.

However, Löw's men are already languishing third in the Group I table, three points adrift of leaders Armenia and behind the Macedonians on goal difference.

"That should not have been



allowed to happen," fumed Germany's stand-in captain Gundogan to *RTL* after the nation's first World Cup qualifying loss since the infamous 5-1 thrashing by England in 2001.

"It felt as though North Macedonia only got near our goal twice and scored twice — it was too easy."

The defeat was just the latest setback suffered by Germany, after their embarrassing 6-0 drubbing by Spain last November and the shock

group-stage exit at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

The loss, which ended an 18-match winning streak in World Cup qualifying, will pile more pressure on Löw, who will step down after Euro 2020 in July after 15 years in charge.

The result will also weigh on struggling Chelsea striker Timo Werner, who squandered a golden chance with the score 1-1 after coming off the bench in the second half.

The former RB Leipzig

striker has now scored only two goals in his last 31 appearances for club and country.

In other matches, Antoine Griezmann scored the only goal of the game in the second half as reigning world champions France ground out a 1-0 victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Griezmann headed in Adrien Rabiot's cross on the hour in Sarajevo to give the holders their second away win in four days.

At Wembley, Harry Maguire thundered home a late winner as England beat Poland 2-1 to seize control of their group with three wins from three.

Captain Harry Kane gave Gareth Southgate's men a first-half lead from the penalty spot but they faded at an empty Wembley and were punished when Jakub Moder struck after a defensive howler from John Stones.

England looked likely to drop their first points of the campaign before Manchester United defender Maguire saved Stones's blushes with five minutes remaining after an assist from the Manchester City man.

Also, Italy and Spain win against Lithuania (2-0) and Kosovo (3-1) respectively.



Pak will look to play modern day cricket in SA: Babar

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan will adopt a "modern day" approach in the upcoming ODI series against South Africa and look to put 300 plus totals by finishing with a flourish, captain Babar Azam said on Thursday.

Pakistan will play three ODIs and four T20Is against hosts South Africa, starting with the first one-dayer in Centurion on Friday.

"We are trying to play 'modern-day cricket' for the upcoming event. We will try to gain the necessary points through the series against South Africa. We will start strong. If our finishers fire, we can reach a total above 300," Babar, who leads Pakistan in all three formats, said during vir-

tual press conference.

"The key to getting 300 plus scores is finishing with a flurry in our innings. We haven't played a lot of ODIs since the World Cup so we are also making a fresh start with a modern day approach."

The Pakistan skipper also talked about maintaining momentum and said his team is working hard on improving its power hitting capability.

He promised to try to play fearless cricket and try out some combinations for longer periods to see which one works.

Babar said said the coaches had been working hard with the lower order batsmen and allrounders so that they could finish strong in ODIs and T20s as well with higher strike rates.

Shakib willing to play any role for KKR

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Returning to action after reserving a one-year ban, Bangladesh star all-rounder Shakib-Al-Hasan is ready to play any role that his IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders expects from him in the upcoming season.

The Bangladesh superstar, who was part of KKR title-winning campaigns in 2012 and 2014, played just three matches for Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2019 before the ban spelt his ouster from the game.

The ICC had banned him for two years, with one year of that sentence suspended, after he accepted three charges of breaching the ICC anti-corruption code.

Now in his second innings at KKR, Shakib is not averse to open the batting like Sunil Narine or play the role of a finisher, beside bowling those tidy left-arm spin — to seal his place.

"I'm open to anything to be honest," the 34-year-old, who was bought by his former franchise for ₹3.2 crore said.

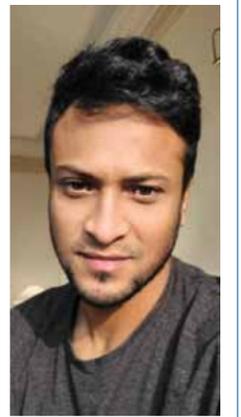
Since his ban ended in October last year, he has played only for his domestic side Khulna in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

"I'm very much confident, it's just that I need one good game to get it going. If I can start well, I think I can do well for the team."

In his last stint for SRH, he only played three matches, while at KKR too he may not be a regular as he's primarily seen as a back-up option for Sunil Narine.

Shakib said it indeed affects the overseas players to sit out in a game but with the options being limited he has to have an open-mind approach.

"There are 8-10 overseas players in each team and only four can play. You cannot blame the team selection.



You have to keep an open mind, keep training hard and need to make sure whenever you get a chance, you grab the opportunity with both hands."

In the post-Gautam Gambhir era, KKR have missed playoffs for two years in a row and Shakib hoped things would change this time round.

"From outside, you can see it in different ways. This team has grown in last two years. This is the year I think KKR will be able to deliver the performance that fans have been asking for. I'm very much optimistic, KKR will get the result."

KKR also have included veteran India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh to an already strong spin lineup featuring Sunil Narine, Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy among others.

"We got a very good spin department, having said that we have got a great pace bowling lineup too. All in all, we have got a very good bowling lineup," he concluded.

The two-time champions will kick-start their campaign against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Chennai on April 11.