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# Disengagement at Pangong accomplished

Military commanders of India, China to meet today to focus on other friction points: Hot Springs, Gogra, Depsang valley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Honouring the pact to defuse tension, India and China have carried out pull back of their troops from the stand-off sites at the Pangong Tso (lake) in Eastern Ladakh. The military commanders of the two Armies will meet on Saturday to focus on the other friction points, including Hot Springs, Gogra and the Depsang valley.

The upcoming meeting of the Corps Commanders is part of the agreement that stipulates that the two officials will meet 48 hours after the complete withdrawal of troops from the southern and northern banks of the Pangong lake. This will be the tenth round of such meeting since the face-offs between the two Armies at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) started over ten months ago.

The upcoming round will start at 10 am at the Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side in the Chushul sector, sources said here on Friday.

Confirming that the two sides abided by the agreement to completely withdraw their troops and tanks from the Pangong lake, officials said the process, which began on February 10, was over on Thursday. It is the first step in the long process to restore peace at the LAC in Ladakh,



File photo

they said, adding local commanders of the two armies verified the withdrawal.

Also, the Chinese pullback was constantly monitored via drones and satellite imagery by India round-the-clock, official said. The disengagement will also be reviewed by the Corps Commanders on Saturday.

As regards the agenda for the upcoming talks, officials said India is likely to press for faster disengagement of troops from both the sides at the remaining stand-off sites. At present, more than one lakh troops besides tanks and heavy guns are deployed in forward areas at the LAC in Ladakh since the stand-offs began in

May last year.

On February 11, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told Parliament about an agreement between India and China on disengagement in the north and south banks of Pangong lake.

The agreement mandated both sides to "cease" forward deployment of troops in a "phased, coordinated and verifiable" manner.

Under the agreement, he said, China will pull back its troops to east of "Finger 8" areas in the northern bank of Pangong lake while the Indian troops will be based at their permanent base at Dhan Singh Thapa Post near "Finger 3" in

the region.

Similar action would take place on the south bank of the lake, he said. Sources on Friday confirmed that troops from both the sides had gone back to their respective positions agreed upon by India and China.

The Indian delegation at Saturday's talks will be led by Lt Gen PGK Menon, the Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps while the Chinese side is expected to be headed by Maj Gen Liu Lin, the commander of the South Xinjiang military district of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

In his statement in Parliament, the Defence

Minister also said it was agreed to convene the next meeting of senior commanders of both sides within 48 hours of completion of the disengagement in the Pangong lake areas so as to resolve all other remaining issues.

He also said talks were on at the diplomatic and military levels to bring down temperature. Rajnath, however, reiterated that India did not concede anything during the talks and subsequent agreement.

The Chinese military built several bunkers and other structures in the areas between Finger 4 and 8 and had blocked all Indian patrols beyond Finger 4, triggering strong reaction from the Indian Army.

In the nine rounds of military talks, India had specifically insisted on withdrawal of Chinese troops from Finger 4 to Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Lake. The mountain spurs in the area are referred to as Fingers.

The Chinese insisted during the talks that the Indian troops should pull back from some strategic hilltops on the southern bank of the lake.

In August last year, Indian troops occupied a number of strategic heights in the Mukhpari, Rechin La and Magar hill areas around the southern bank after the Chinese PLA attempted to intimidate them in the area.

## 4 PLA soldiers died in Galwan clash, admits China for first time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time, China has officially admitted that its soldiers were killed in the bloody brawl with the Indian troops on June 15 last year in the Galwan valley in Ladakh. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) put the number of its casualties to four.

The fierce hand-to-hand fight, in which the Chinese used iron rods and sticks studded with nails, claimed lives of 20 Indian Army personnel, including the commanding officer.

Acknowledging the casualties on its side, China on Friday said four officers and soldiers stationed in the Karakoram Mountains have been recognised by the Central Military Commission of China (CMC) for their sacrifice in the border confrontation with India. This admission was published in the PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese military.

Incidentally, the Chinese admission comes at a time when Armies of the two coun-

tries are disengaging from the friction points in Ladakh.

As regards the casualties, the CMC, the overall high command of the PLA headed by President Xi Jinping, has awarded Qi Fabao, the regimental commander from the PLA Xinjiang Military Command, the title of "Hero regimental commander for defending the border," Chen Hongjun with "Hero to defend the border," and awarded first-class merit to Chen Xiangrong, Xiao Siyuan and Wang Zhuoran, state-run Global Times quoted the PLA Daily report as saying.

According to the report, three PLA soldiers were killed in the combat while another soldier died while crossing the river when he went to support the others. Qi Fabao, the regimental commander of the Chinese military, sustained a serious head injury, it said.

The PLA Daily report claimed the Indian soldiers attacked the Chinese military personnel with steel tubes and cudgels and threw stones.

This is the first time China

has acknowledged casualties and details of these officers and soldiers' sacrifice, four of whom died when dealing with the Indian military's "illegal trespassing" of the Galwan Valley Line of Actual Control (LAC), the report said.

While India has announced the casualties immediately after the incident, China did not officially acknowledge the casualties until Friday.

The Russian official news agency TASS reported on February 10 that 45 Chinese servicemen were killed in the Galwan Valley clash. According to an American intelligence report last year, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

"It is noticeable that the PLA Daily report used 'foreign military' to refer to the Indian military, a move that showed China's kindness of not inciting sentiments of the people against the background of the current disengagement of troops from China and India along the border areas," the Global Times report said.

## Terrorists shoot cops standing at shop

Another J&K cop too martyred; 3 ultras neutralised

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The fortified central Kashmir districts of Budgam and Srinagar on Friday witnessed two back to back terror strikes in which three Jammu & Kashmir policemen attained martyrdom while another received injuries.

Three local terrorists belonging to Al-Badr terrorist outfit were also gunned down by the joint team of the security forces soon after they rescued the family members from inside the house in which these three terrorists were hiding in Badigam area of South Kashmir's Shopian district.

These three incidents of terrorist violence came close on the heels of the visit of foreign diplomats from 24 countries to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The most daring strike of the day was reported from Baghat Barzulla area at the outskirts of Srinagar where a pheran-clad terrorist fired indis-



Security personnel conduct a Cordon and Search Operation at Baghat Chowk in Srinagar after three unidentified terrorists were killed and three policemen were martyred in three separate encounters in Srinagar, Budgam and Shopian districts on Friday

criminally upon policemen with an automatic weapon concealed inside his Pheran.

The attack took place steps away from the local police station in the busy market area.

The gory images of the terror attack, recorded in the CCTV footage, went viral immediately. The unarmed policemen were targeted from behind while they were seen standing in front of a local shop.

In this terror incident, two policemen namely SgCT Mohammad Yousof of

Zurhama Kupwara and Ct Suhail Ahmad of Logripora Aishmuqam received critical gunshot injuries. They were shifted to hospital for treatment where they succumbed to their injuries and attained martyrdom.

Suhail Ahmad, residence of Logripora Aishmuqam, was an orphan. He left behind his widow mother, wife and two small kids. A Special Police office (SPO) martyred in the Beerwah area of Budgam has been identified as Mohammad

Altaf while SgCT Manzoor Ahmad received injuries and is undergoing treatment in a local hospital.

Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha paid tributes to the J&K policemen who attained martyrdom in the terrorist attack. He said such cowardly attacks are being carried out to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere & assured that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

Briefing media persons after attending the wreath laying ceremony at DPL, Srinagar for the second time during the day, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir range Vijay Kumar said that two Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists, including a local resident, carried out the attack in which two policemen were killed in Baghat area of Barzulla in Srinagar on Friday and that both attackers have been identified.

The IGP said that two Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorists including a foreign terrorist and a local who has been identified as Saqib, carried out the Baghat attack. The two policemen were on routine duty and were at a shop to buy something. They were fired from the back.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Crime rate in Capital drops by 15%, rape cases by 22%

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After several years, the National Capital has registered substantial decrease in all types of crimes — including crime against women. Total 2,66,070 cases were registered in 2020, marking a drop of over 15 per cent as against 2019 crime data, said Police Commissioner SN Srivastava on Friday.

The Delhi Police chief claimed effective policing and measures taken by them for the reduction in the graph as the year also witnessed complete lockdown, due to Covid-19 outbreak, in the city.

The Delhi Police registered 472 cases of murder in 2020, which is 9.40 per cent less than in 2019.

"There were nine cases of dacoity registered in 2020 while 2019 had seen 15 cases of dacoity. The dacoity cases were reduced to 40 per cent," stated the data.

Rape cases came down by 21.63 per cent, molestation cases by 25.16 per cent and insult to modesty of women

dropped to 12.32 per cent.

Addressing the Press conference at the Delhi Police headquarters, the CP said, "Around 2,66,070 Indian Penal Code (IPC) cases were registered in 2020 as against 3,16,261 cases in 2019, showing a decline of 15.87 per cent. The percentage of arrest increased to 15.43."

A total of 38.19 per cent fewer PCR calls were received in 2020 as compared to the previous year. In 2020, a total of 18,08,384 calls were received as compare to 29,25,531 in 2019.

The murder cases have gone down by 9.40 per cent as 472 murders including 53 of North-East Delhi riots were registered in 2020 whereas 521 murder cases were registered across city in 2019. Cases of kidnapping for ransom too have reduced by 26.67 per cent, burglary by 27.33 per cent, motor vehicle theft by 24.23 per cent and other theft by 30.52 per cent, as per data.

"However, the numbers of robbery case have shown a marginal hike of 0.35 per cent. The police registered 1,963

cases previous year as compare to 1,956 in 2019. However, the number of snatching cases has gone up by 27.11 per cent to 7,965 cases.

Meanwhile, the CP also said 2020 was challenging for the Delhi Police, but the force has risen up to the challenge. He also released a book "Rising to the Challenges-2020" showcasing various initiatives undertaken by the force to maintain law and order in the national Capital.

The CP also praised his men and officers for the use of technology in solving cases. "A total of 755 FIRs were registered in connection with the North-East Delhi riots. Investigating teams extensively used technology to solve the cases and around 231 accused were arrested on the basis of CCTV footage analysis.

"Of them, 137 were identified through FRS (Facial Recognition System) when matched with criminal records and the remaining 94 were through driving licence photographs," said the police chief. *Continued on Page 2*

## CAPSULE

### GADKARI FOR CONVERTING GOVT VEHICLES INTO EVS

**New Delhi:** Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday pledged to convert all vehicles in his Ministry to EVs and urged other departments to follow suit in a bid to cut India's oil import dependence.

### WHATSAPP: COMMITTED TO PROTECT PRIVACY

**New Delhi:** Hours after announcing the decision to go ahead with its controversial privacy policy update, WhatsApp on Friday said it has conveyed to the Indian Government that it remains committed to protection of privacy of personal conversations across the country.

### 'GHERAO DELHI COPS IF THEY COME FOR ARREST'

**Chandigarh:** Haryana BKU chief Gurnam Singh Chaduri on Friday asked farmers to 'gherao' Delhi Police personnel if they come to their villages to make an arrest and not let them leave till the district administration assures that they will not be allowed again. In a veiled reference to BKU leader Rakesh Tikait, who has been addressing a series of 'mahapanchayats' in Punjab and Haryana, Chaduri said there was no need for such events in the two States.

## Madras HC notice to Centre, ICMR, SII on Covishield side effects

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The Madras High court on Friday issued a notice to the Centre and five other respondents, including India's drug regulatory body, ICMR, Serum Institute of India, AstraZeneca and Sri Ramachandra Higher Education and Research, Chennai, asking their response on a writ petition it accepted, filed by a Covishield's trial volunteer, who claimed to suffer from severe adverse reaction after receiving the vaccine.

The court has listed it for next hearing on March 26. The 41-year-old petitioner, Asif Riaz, has demanded an interim injunction on the administration of Covishield to the public and a compensation of ₹5 crore for the damages he incurred after undergoing the

vaccine trial. The grievances Riaz mentioned in the petition stated that he suffered from acute neuro encephalopathy days after taking the vaccine shot and his health deteriorated, but the manufacturer dismissed it as a side-effect of the vaccine. *Continued on Page 2*

### Coronil gets Ayush nod under WHO scheme

**New Delhi:** Haridwar-based Patanjali Ayurved on Friday said Coronil has now received certification from Ayush Ministry as per World Health Organization (WHO) certification scheme. The company claimed that it is the first evidence-based medicine to fight Covid-19.

## 2 Bengal BJP leaders held on drug peddling allegation

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In what threatens to become a big political issue ahead of Bengal elections, two BJP State level leaders on Friday were arrested on charges of drug peddling.

Pamela Goswami, a BJP State youth wing general secretary, and her party colleague Prabir Kumar Dutta were arrested "red-handed" with pouches of cocaine outside a cafe near New Alipore Police Station. They tried to flee in a car after handling over drug packets to some motor bike-borne youth, the police said.

The accused were encircled by a designated police team — which was keeping a watch on the duo activities for past one month — and arrested. *Continued on Page 2*

## Felt 'loneliest' in depression, says Kohli

India captain bats for professionals to deal with mental health

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India captain Virat Kohli has revealed that he battled depression during a harrowing tour of England in 2014 where he felt like the "loneliest guy in the world" after a string of failures with the bat.

In a conversation with former England player Mark Nicholas on his "Not Just Cricket" podcast, Kohli conceded that went through a tough phase during the particularly difficult tour.

"Yes, I did," was his response when asked whether he had suffered from depression at the time.

"...It's not a great feeling to wake up knowing that you won't be able to score runs and I think all batsmen have felt



that at some stage that you are not in control of anything at all," he recalled.

Kohli had a disastrous tour of England in 2014, registering scores of 1, 8, 25, 0, 39, 28, 0, 7, 6 and 20 in five Tests, averaging 13.50 in his 10 innings. He roared back to form in the tour of Australia after that, accumulating 692 runs in the Test series.

"You just don't understand how to get over it. That was a

phase when I literally couldn't do anything to overturn things...I felt like I was the loneliest guy in the world," he said of the England tour.

Kohli remembered feeling alone despite the fact that there were supportive people in his life. He said professional help was what he needed.

"Personally, for me that was a revelation that you could feel that lonely even though you a part of a big group. I won't say

I didn't have people who I could speak to but not having a professional to speak to who could understand what I am going through completely, I think is a huge factor.

"I think I would like to see it change."

The India captain, considered one of the best batsmen in modern cricket, believes mental health issues cannot be overlooked as they can destroy a person's career.

"Someone whom you can go to at any stage, have a conversation around and say 'Listen this is what I am feeling, I am finding it hard to even go to sleep, I feel like I don't want to wake up in the morning, I have no confidence in myself, what do I do?'"

"Lot of people suffer with that feeling for longer periods of time, it carries on for months, it carries on for a whole cricket season, people are not able to get out of it," Kohli said.

"I strongly feel the need for professional help there to be very honest," he added.

Kohli is currently in Ahmedabad for ongoing home Test series against England. The two teams have won a game each and will compete in the third Test from February 24.

Fondly remembering his growing up days, Kohli said the Indian team of '90s had really inspired him to take up the sport.

"The Indian team of the '90s really opened up my imagination about what could be done with the sport because it is so different from anything else I had seen before. It just instilled a lot of faith and belief in me that magical things can be done if an individual believes or decides," he said.

"That's where the spark started...The dream of wanting to play for the country really started." *Continued on Page 2*

# No new Covid strain found in Maha

**IN A big relief to the people across the State, the Maharashtra Health department clarified on Friday that no new foreign strain had been found in any of the diagnosed samples of Covid-19 cases reported from the districts of Amravati, Yavatmal and Satara.**

Dismissing apprehension in certain about the detection of new foreign strains in the diagnosed samples in some parts of the State, the State health department said: "We had sent four samples each from Amravati, Yavatmal and Satara to the Pune-based BJ Medical College for an analysis. As per the test report, no new strain similar to the strains

detected in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil has been found in these three districts".

The State health department officials are currently examining if there is any change in the genomic sequencing in the Covid-19 virus that has triggered a pandemic across the State.

"We had sent 12 samples from Pune for a chemical analysis at the BJ Medical College. But, we have not found any change in the genomic sequencing in any of the tested samples.

In a related development, the State health department has sent more samples from Akola, Amravati and Yavatmal to the National Institute of Virology

(NIV), National Influenza Centres (NICs) for the examination of genomic sequencing in the Covid-19 virus. "We expect the test reports some time next week," a State health department official said.

Meanwhile, amid the increase in the number of Covid-19 fatalities and fresh cases, the number of Covid-19 deaths in Maharashtra rose to 44, while the infections went up to 6,112 on Friday. A day after Covid-19 claimed 38 lives and infected 5,427 others, the daily death tally climbed to 44, while the infections dropped to 6,112.

With fresh deaths, the total pandemic deaths climbed from 51,669 to 51,713 on Friday. Similarly, with 6,112 new infected cases, total infections in the

State climbed from 20,81,520 to 20,87,632. As 2,159 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 19,89,963. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 95.50 per cent to 95.32 per cent. With five fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 11,432 to 11,437, while the infected cases went up by 823 to trigger a jump in the infections from 3,16,487 to 3,17,310.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state dropped from 40,858 to 44,765. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.48 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,97,402 to 398,407, while the total number of deaths in Pune went up from 8010 to 8020.

Thane district remained in the third spot — after Pune and Mumbai — after the total number of infections rose from 2,74,264 to 2,74,762 while the total deaths climbed from 5,772 to 5,774. Of the 1,55,21,198 samples sent to laboratories, 20,81,520 have tested positive (13.41 per cent) for Covid-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 2,16,908 people are in home quarantine while 1,743 people are in institutional quarantine.

# IISc develops software tool to diagnose Covid severity in lungs

**New Delhi:** The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru and the Oslo University Hospital and University of Adger, Norway have developed a software tool that can scan the severity of lung infections in Covid-19 patients. The software tool, AnamNet, is embedded with artificial intelligence and can look for abnormalities and classify areas of the lung scan as either infected or not and by comparing the extent of infected area with healthy area.

This work in part was supported by the WIPRO GE-CDS Collaborative Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare and Medical Imaging as well as Indo-Norwegian Collaboration in

Autonomous Cyber-Physical Systems (INCAPS), INTPART Programme, Research Council of Norway.

"Now this is the first-of-its-kind software tool that can natively run on mobile phone in a standalone mode without utilising any cloud computing. Oslo University Hospital team provided the annotation data required for AI algorithm. Those from University of Adger enabled the implementation on other embedded systems like Raspberry Pi and NVIDIA Jetson," Phaneendra Yalavarthy, Associate Professor, Department of Computational and Data Sciences, IISc said.

It is developed with clinicians from Oslo University Hospital radiologists. It is not

for diagnostic purpose as of now as it has to get regulatory approvals. We started working on it in March 2020 and the full development took about 6 months, he added. The findings have also been published in the journal IEEE Transactions on Neural Networks and Learning Systems.

"AnamNet employs deep learning and other image processing techniques, which have now become integral to biomedical research and applications. The software can identify infected areas in a chest CT scan with a high degree of accuracy referred to as anomorphic image processing," said Naveen Paluru, first author and PhD student in the lab of Phaneendra Yalavarthy, CDS. **PNS**

# India, Russia ties strong enough to navigate complexities of present world, says Shringla

**Moscow:** India's strategic ties with Russia has very deep historic roots which provide stability and trust strong enough to navigate the complexities of the current world, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has said, as he sought to allay concerns that New Delhi is under pressure from the US to abandon military-technical cooperation with Moscow.

Shringla's remarks came during an interview with the Russian daily Kommersant during which he was asked whether India would bow to the US pressure and give up the S-400 air defence missile systems deal with Russia.

In October 2018, India had signed a USD 5 billion deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems, despite a warning from the previous Trump adminis-

tration that going ahead with the contract may invite US sanctions. Responding to a question, Shringla said, India's relations with the US and Russia stand on their own merits and all the major powers recognise fully India's tradition of an independent foreign policy.

"Our Strategic Partnership with Russia has very deep historic roots which provide stability, trust and confidence strong enough to navigate the complexities of the current world. We have a global strategic partnership with the US," he said.

"I do not want to comment on the specific defence contracts, but let me state clearly that all the contracts concluded with Russia are being implemented according to schedule. These are consistent with India's defence and security needs and interests," he said. **PTI**

# Speed detector cameras to identify accident prone areas in Gurugram

**PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM**

The Gurugram district administration has decided to install speed detector CCTV cameras for identifying accident prone areas across Gurugram. This decision was taken in a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Dr. Yash Garg on Friday.

The deputy commissioner directed the officials concerned to prepare a list of 20 places where speed detector cameras need to be installed. These cameras will be fixed under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.

"It is very important to install speed detector cameras to make the roads safe so that the vehicles are operated within the prescribed speed limit," Garg said in the meeting.

A GMDA official said that there are plans to install 1,200 CCTV cameras at 222 locations in Gurugram, out of which 800 CCTV cameras are operational at 167 locations and installation of cameras at 55 locations are in progress.

He said that due to the construction work going on in many places in the district, this work is not running at the required speed. Probably this work will be completed by the end of March.

The officials in the meeting discussed Rajiv Chowk and other Chowk on the Delhi-Jaipur expressway (NH-48) which has been categorized as Black Spot (where road accidents are more frequent).

"The team of concerned officials will take a serious trial and prepare a plan to prevent road accidents on these black spots. The officers should closely study all the facts in

coordination and try to make any changes which need to be done and complete it and submit its report till the next meeting," the DC said.

During the meeting the officials also revealed that the timing of providing first aid to the injured persons has been reduced by 13 minutes from 20 minutes and efforts are being made to reduce this time further.

Regional Transport Authority (RTO) Secretary, Bhawna Yadav informed that a coordination is also being established with private hospitals to prepare the data of persons injured in road accidents in the district.

According to police records, a total of 194 road accidents had taken place on the Delhi-Jaipur expressway in 2020. Of which 116 people have died. While 105 people were seriously injured.

# 2 Bengal BJP leaders held on drug peddling allegation

**From Page 1**

The frisking yielded 100 gram of "suspicious powder" from Goswami's bag, the police said, adding some pouches were also found from under the seat of the car.

"The seized materials were subsequently confirmed to be cocaine by the officials at Lal Bazar police headquarters," a senior police officer said adding the duo had been booked under charges of drug peddling and would be produced before a court on Saturday.

Apart from being State secretary of the BJP's youth wing, Goswami is also the party's observer for Hooghly district, sources said adding she is actively involved in politics and is seen in the front row of many movements launched by the saffron party.

State party spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya, however, would not rule out "conspiracy" in the whole matter. "Law should be

allowed to take its own course, but a conspiracy may not be ruled in the entire matter. One will have to see whether the seized items were planted inside the car or not," she said.

Former State Minister and BJP leader Rajib Banerjee too said if it was not a conspiracy then the police should take action according to the law without considering who belongs to which party. "But before that it will have to be seen whether the materials were planted in the car," he said. Bengal Minister Chandrima Bhattacharjee said earlier some BJP leaders were also found involved in child racket, so we cannot rule out similar kind of things here. Here they will indulge in illegal acts and there they will cry conspiracy, he said.

"This is an immoral party. The police will have to find out whether there is a connection between drug trafficking and elections," he said.

connect my neurological setback to any of my earlier health condition, that is, to connect it to some factor other than the test vaccine that was administered on me on October 1st but they were unable to conclude or prove anything. The final discharge summary given to me on 26th October categorically shows that all the tests done on me were negative, confirming that the setback in my health was due to the test vaccine I was administered on 1st October 2020, and not because of any prior health condition," he claimed in the petition.

Later, Riaz sent a legal notice to the Serum asking a compensation of Rs 5 crore against the severe adverse reaction he suffered after taking the vaccine shot. However, in return, SII threatened him with a Rs 100 crore defamation suit.

The petitioner also mentioned that even after three months of experiencing the severe side effect, his health is still not stable, as he often experiences trembling of hands, fear, anxiety, trepidation, panic, mood swings, severe dent in self-confidence, and extreme problems in focusing on work. He claimed that he had no history of neurological or rheumatology issues till he underwent

# Ready for Kerala chief ministership if BJP wins development: Sreedharan

**New Delhi:** Set to enter the political fray by joining the BJP next week, technocrat E Sreedharan on Friday said his main aim is to help the party come to power in Kerala and that he will be open to chief ministership.

He also said that the focus will be on developing infrastructure in a big way and bring the state out of the debt trap if the BJP wins the assembly polls that are likely to be held in April-May this year.

Known as 'Metroman' as well as for the efficiency in completing big infrastructure projects, Sreedharan told PTI that he will contest the assembly elections if the party wants and will also be open to chief ministership if the party asks.

The 88-year-old technocrat also made it clear that he will not be interested in governorship, saying that it is purely a "constitutional position and no powers at all" and that he won't be able to make any

positive contribution to the state being in such a position.

"My main idea is to bring BJP to power in Kerala. If BJP comes to power in Kerala, there will be three to four major areas we want to focus. One is infrastructure development in a big way and another is to bring industry to the state," he said.

Speaking over phone from Ponnani in Kerala where he is based now, Sreedharan said that a finance commission could also be formed for the purpose of improving the finances of the state, which is in a "debt trap today."

"The state is in a debt trap today, so much of borrowings. And debt burden on each Malayalee is ₹1.2 lakh today... That means we are heading for bankruptcy and the government still continues to borrow. The state finances need to be propped up and for that, we need to find a solution," he said. **PTI**

# Felt 'loneliest' in depression...

**From Page 1**

Kohli lost his biggest supporter, his father Premchand, at the age of 18 and he considers it as the "most impactful" incident of his life. "...That incident really put things in proper perspective for me. My father did work very hard in initial days to make sure that I get the best cricket gear or I continue with my cricket practice. "From there on it made my belief even stronger that come what may, I am definitely going to realise my dream to play at the highest level and represent my country," he said. Kohli is seen as a tough, competitive and enigmatic character on the field and he revealed that in real life too he is no different. "...The disconnect for many years now is people don't seem to understand, don't seem to process, a lot of the times is that I have never worked towards creating a perception for myself which is perfect from a worldly point of view. "For me what matters is what I can do as an individual and how much I can provide on the cricket field as an individual," he said. "I cannot fabricate things to look good in front of certain set of people. That's just not who I am," he asserted. Another thing he hardly cares about is the expectations from him when he is on the field. "Expectation is honestly a burden when you start thinking about it too much."

# Crime rate in Capital drops by 15%, rape cases by 22%

**From Page 1**

He said the investigation team used video analytics and FRS to analyse CCTV footage to identify the accused, retrieved deleted data from electronic device, used geo-location to ascertain the presence of the accused and drone mapping for crime scene reconstruction.

"Use of DNA finger printing, e-Vahan database, facial recognition, fund flow analysis and forensic teams comprising physical, chemical, biological and ballistic analysis of videos and photographs through open sources were also used to investigate the cases," the CP added.

Meanwhile, police also claimed that over 400 of its personnel were placed under suspension and another 1,325 were punished for misconduct in 2020.

According to Delhi Police data, of the 250 vigilance enquiries, allegations in 49 enquiries were proved against 115 police officials and disciplinary action were taken against them.

It stated that 420 police

personnel were placed under suspension and 561 departmental enquiries were initiated against 707 of its personnel of which 525 were disposed off. It further added that 1,325 policemen were punished.

The Delhi Police chief said in the second phase of their pilot project Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) they will be installing more red light violation detection system (RVDS) cameras at 24 junctions and the over speed violation detection system (OSVDS) cameras at 50 spots across the city.

According to Taj Hassan, the Special Commissioner of Police, Traffic, technical specifications for this have been finalised. Hassan also claimed that there is 19 per cent decrease of fatal accidents in 2020 as compared to 2019 which were 1433 as compared to this year's 1163.

Maintaining flow of traffic in Delhi requires lot of effort and planning and Delhi Traffic Police has been making technological changes to meet the challenge, Hasan said.

# Madras HC notice to Centre, ICMR, SII on Covishield side effects

**From Page 1**

The man, a marketing consultant, said that he was diagnosed after multiple tests with the acute neuro encephalopathy, which alters brain function and causes personality change, memory loss, and declining ability to reason or concentrate.

As per his submission in the petition, Riaz was given a vaccine dose on October 1 after conducting an antigen and antibody test for Covid-19, whose reports came negative. However, on October 11, he woke up with a severe headache in the morning which later progressed to a disoriented mental state where he was not able to comprehend his surroundings or respond, coupled with extreme weakness. Later in the day, he was admitted to the emergency ward of Sri Ramachandra Medical college Hospital where he had received the vaccine. He was shifted to ICU the next day where he received treatment till October 20. He was then shifted to a normal ward the next day where he remained till October 26 before the discharge from the hospital.

"In the 16 days that I was in the hospital, almost all possible medical tests and investigations were done on me to

connect my neurological setback to any of my earlier health condition, that is, to connect it to some factor other than the test vaccine that was administered on me on October 1st but they were unable to conclude or prove anything. The final discharge summary given to me on 26th October categorically shows that all the tests done on me were negative, confirming that the setback in my health was due to the test vaccine I was administered on 1st October 2020, and not because of any prior health condition," he claimed in the petition.

Later, Riaz sent a legal notice to the Serum asking a compensation of Rs 5 crore against the severe adverse reaction he suffered after taking the vaccine shot. However, in return, SII threatened him with a Rs 100 crore defamation suit.

The petitioner also mentioned that even after three months of experiencing the severe side effect, his health is still not stable, as he often experiences trembling of hands, fear, anxiety, trepidation, panic, mood swings, severe dent in self-confidence, and extreme problems in focusing on work. He claimed that he had no history of neurological or rheumatology issues till he underwent

the vaccine trial.

Counting the economic repercussions, Riaz claimed that he lost all the projects he was working on post volunteering for the trial, which entails an annual earning of over USD 30,000.

Meanwhile, when the case came in public scrutiny, the Drug Controller General of India formed an independent committee to investigate the causal link of the petitioner's health. The committee report found no connection between the adverse reaction Riaz suffered and the vaccine.

However, Riaz said that he was not given the opportunity to present his case before the committee.

The petitioner also cited news reports about the coverage of deaths which have followed after taking the Covishield vaccine which was rolled out in the immunisation drive on January 16. He asserted that the vaccine is not safe and could produce severe adverse reactions among its beneficiaries.

However, the Centre has clarified so far that none of the deaths and severe adverse reactions following immunisation have been attributed to the vaccines as yet.

# Terrorists shoot cops standing at shop

**From Page 1**

On how the terrorist managed to target policemen in front of a police station and also ran away from the spot, IGP said, "We will go for a security review and plug the loopholes. Had the policemen with weapons, perhaps they would have retaliated?"

Sharing details of the Shopian encounter IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said, "late Thursday night at about 11.35 p.m based on specific input regarding presence of terrorists in village Badigam area of Shopian, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by Police, 44RR and 178Bn CRPF in the said area."

"During the search operation as the presence of terrorists got ascertained, repeated announcements were made to the hiding terrorists to lay down their illegal weapons and surrender, instead the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately and also managed to keep some of the inmates as hostage," he said.

He went on to add that due

to darkness the operation was suspended, however, the cordon remained intact throughout night.

"On Friday morning with the first light, the joint party was able to evacuate the hostage. Repeated announcements were again made to terrorists to surrender, but the terrorists fired indiscriminately on security forces which was retaliated resulting in elimination of all the three hiding terrorists," he said.

According to a police spokesman, "The terrorists killed in the operation have been identified as Suhail Sheikh @Azeem son of Abdul Ghani Sheikh resident of Turkwangan, Shahid Ahmad Dar @Furkan son of Bashir Ahmad Dar resident of Samboor Awantipora and Muddasir Ahmad Wagay son of Fayaz Ahmad Wagay resident of Chak Sangren, affiliated with proscribed terror outfit Al-Badr."

"The bodies of all the three killed terrorists were retrieved from the site of encounter.

Arms & ammunition including 2 AK rifles, 5 AK magazines, 96 AK rounds, 1 pistol, 1 pistol magazine, 5 pistol rounds and other incriminating materials were recovered from the site of encounter," he said.

In another incident, Budgam police, 53RR and 79Bn CRPF launched a joint cordon and search operation in village Zanigan Beerwah of Budgam.

During the search operation, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party in which two J&K police personnel namely Mohammad Altaf 1444/SPO and SgCt Manzoor Ahmad 761/AP 13th Bn received gunshot injuries. However, one of the injured, Mohammad Altaf, succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom. Another injured policeman has been shifted to hospital.

"Taking advantage of the darkness, the terrorists managed to escape in an injured condition from the spot. Efforts were on to track the terrorists," the police spokesman said.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER TRANS. LINE MAINTN. DIV-IV, JKPTCL, AMBEDKAR CHOWK, JAMMU J&K.**  
Email: extlcl2@gmail.com/Ph/Fax: 0191-2453427

**SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

**E-NIT No: TLMD-IV/J/13 of 2020-21 Dated: 16/02/2021.**

The Executive Engineer Transmission Line Maintenance Division-IV, Ambedkar Chowk, Jammu on behalf of Managing Director, JKPTCL of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, invites online bids under two bid system i.e. Technical bid and Financial bid through J&K Govt. Website <https://jktenders.gov.in> from original manufacturers or their authorized representatives in India for the DESIGN, MANUFACTURING, TESTING AT MANUFACTURERS WORKS, SUPPLY AND DEMONSTRATION FOR ERECTION AT PURCHASER'S LOCATION OF EMERGENCY RESTORATION SYSTEM (ERS) for JKPTCL along with all requisite accessories, for 220 kV and 132 kV Double Circuit Transmission Lines in accordance with the terms and conditions and specifications described in the tender document.

**S. No. 1 Name of the Tender :- DESIGN, MANUFACTURING, TESTING AT MANUFACTURERS WORKS, SUPPLY AND DEMONSTRATION FOR ERECTION AT PURCHASER'S LOCATION OF EMERGENCY RESTORATION SYSTEM (ERS) for JKPTCL along with all requisite accessories, for 220 kV and 132 kV Double Circuit Transmission Lines.**

**Cost Of Tender Document :- Rs. 5000.00 (Five Thousand Only).** The cost of tender documents in form of DD in favour of Executive Engineer, TLMD-IV, Jammu.

**Earnest Money Deposit :-** In the shape of Bid security Declaration, **Class Of Contractor :-** original manufacturers or their authorized representatives in India.

The bidding documents consisting of quantities (B.O.Q.), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in)

**Other Relevant Information:**

**A. Date & Time of downloading of Standard Tender Document :-** The Standard Tender Document can be downloaded over <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 16-02-2021 (02.00 PM)

**B. Sale of Tender Document (Start) :-** 17-02-2021

**C. Sale of Tender Document (End) :-** 15-03-2021(12:00 Noon)

**D. Clarifications start date :-** 22-02-2021

**E. Pre-Bid Conference :-** 24-02-2021

**F. Clarifications end date :-** 01-03-2021

**G. Replies to Clarifications :-** 06-03-2021

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Trans Line Maintn. Division-IV,  
JKPTCL Jammu

**PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS DUE TO TRACK RENEWAL WORK**

**In order to further strengthen the existing infrastructure, North Western Railway have decided to undertake the track renewal work on Degana-Ren and Degana-Gachhi Pura sections. To execute this work suitable traffic blocks will be taken from 21.02.2021 to 21.05.2021. Consequently the following trains will temporarily be affected as under :-**

Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date (from the Originating Station)
02443 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Jodhpur SF Special	at Churu Jn.	Churu Jn.-Jodhpur Jn.	21.02.2021 to 21.05.2021
02444 Jodhpur - Delhi Sarai Rohilla- SF Special	From Churu Jn.	Jodhpur Jn.-Churu Jn.	21.02.2021 to 21.05.2021

**For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or the NTES App.**

**All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must 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](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in)

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# Panel formed to tackle dust pollution

## Gopal Rai asks officers to prepare action plans and to work on a long-term policy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has constituted a seven-member committee to formulate a long-term action plan to control dust pollution. Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai has asked the officers of the environment department to prepare action plans and also to work on a long-term policy to keep environmental pollution in check.



The Minister conveyed a review meeting on Friday with the officials of the environment department and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to curb pollution levels in the city.

Rai said that direct action will now be taken against the officials who are negligent in the timely disposal of complaints of pollution in the green-war room. He said that a close monitoring team has been set up to monitor the smog tower project being set up at Connaught Place, which will be completed by June. Public Works Department

(PWD) and Municipal Corporations of Delhi have been instructed to expedite water spraying to reduce the current pollution in Delhi.

On March 4, a round table conference will be held to consult experts and various organisations will be consulted to formulate an action plan for how to implement the anti-pollution campaign from March to September.

Rai said, "We have ordered the MCD and PWD to increase the number of anti-smog guns and sprinkling tankers to prevent dust particles. The monitoring of the Green-War room needs to be strengthened and if the concerned complaint is not disposed off within the stipulated deadline, action will be taken against the concerned authorities."

called for setting up a seven member committee to prepare an action plan to check pollution from dust particles in the air. "The members of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, IIT and members of the DMRC and other concerned departments related to construction are a part of the committee. Based on the suggestions of the Committee, the Government is going to prepare a long-term

action plan to curb pollution from dust particles," he added. "From October to February, there are several activities that people think about pollution and also cooperate in the decisions taken by the Government. On 4th March, a meeting will be held in the Delhi Secretariat with various environment-related organisations and voluntary institutions, environmental experts, and concerned officials and the government will work seriously throughout the year by preparing an action plan on the suggestions that come up in this meeting," he added.

Rai said that the smog tower which is being constructed at Connaught Place will be ready by June. "A committee has been constituted to complete and monitor the construction work within the stipulated time," he added.

He added that the problem of stubble burning is one of the root causes of pollution in Delhi, along with the internal sources of pollution.

"As we had successfully used a bio-decomposer technique to deal with stubble burning and the entire report was submitted to the Commission constituted by the Centre. Now, the Delhi government will endeavor to issue a guideline for its use to deal with the stubble burning, so that the technique can be implemented in the respective states since November," he said.

"An action plan will also be prepared on how to deal with pollution caused by thermal power plants around Delhi. We have taken several important steps such as anti-dust campaign, red light on, pollution off campaign, use of bio-composer, green-war room, Green Delhi app to deal with pollution in Delhi from November. Additionally, opinions will be taken from various experts for what we can do and then an action plan will be prepared and it will be implemented in Delhi throughout the year," he added.

# 76 intrepid frontline Covid-19 warriors honoured by Min



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain facilitated 76 frontline workers at Delhi Vidhan Sabha and applauded them for their effort and undeterred spirit.

Jain said that LNJP Hospital has put up a brave fight against the virus. "It is the only hospital that has treated over 11,000 patients. The pandemic affected many lives, however, Delhi successfully managed to sail through the tough times," he said.

bank started on the 2nd of July too was established at LNJP Hospital. This pandemic put us all in a fix when it came to finding a solution pertaining to its cure. However, the Delhi Government, the doctors and staff at all Delhi Government hospitals worked day and night to bring forth new solutions to fight this virus," he said.

Recalling the initial days, Jain said, "I remember, when the pandemic broke initially, we made a calculated move after reviewing the situation and decided to introduce the world's first home isolation system."

"People who were asymptomatic and showed minor symptoms were advised home isolation and were given regular check-ups including home visits from Delhi Government doctors. The pulse oximeter was given to every patient and they were advised to monitor their oxygen levels. It was ensured that both public and private Hospitals had an adequate capacity of beds. LNJP was India's first hospital fully dedicated to covid patients and the only hospital with 2,500 beds," he said.

The Minister further added, "I feel now that all the three waves of the coronavirus have hit the city, it will die down eventually. Now it is no more a pandemic but an endemic. The infection will not be eradicated much like other diseases but the surge is on the wane. I hope we won't see 8,600 cases in a day. I feel we are out of the danger zone but we still need to take proper precautions, masks and social distancing needs to be maintained."

Delhi Government made calculated and well-thought-of moves especially when it introduced the home isolation system which proved to be highly effective, he said.

"The Delhi Government was the first to take into consideration BiPAP and HFNC machines, and not stress on ventilators. The minister recalled all their efforts which ultimately led to the decline of the pandemic in Delhi," he said.

The Minister stressed that immunity is the most important and the most important immunity booster is happiness. He urged everyone to remain happy and at peace while following all the precautions.

Speaking at this occasion, he also said "LNJP Hospital put up a tough fight during the prevailing war against the coronavirus. The hospital successfully treated more than 11,000 patients. When the Delhi Government introduced plasma therapy, the first trial was conducted at LNJP Hospital under the supervision of its very proficient staff," he said.

"The very first plasma

# RAPES IN DELHI

## 44% offenders known to victims

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the accused involved in rape cases registered in the year 2020, were known to the victims. Commissioner of Police (CP) Delhi, SN Srivastava addressing the media during his annual Press meet said that 44 per cent of the rape accused were either from the family or a friend while strangers involved in the crime accounted for a mere 1.17 per cent.



Delhi Police Commissioner SN Srivastava speaks during the annual Press conference in New Delhi on Friday. *Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer*

Talking to *The Pioneer*, the Delhi Police Commissioner said that, "Controlling heinous crime, street crime, vulnerable sections of society, crime against women by infusing experts in the field of law, cyber crime and forensics is our top priority. In this pursuit all ranks of Delhi Police were involved. They were kept motivated in making Delhi Police as professional and tech savvy force."

According to the data of 2020, a total of 1,699 rape cases were reported as compared to 2,168 in 2019. Meanwhile, 2,186 cases of molestation of women were reported last year while in 2019, a total of 2,921 cases were reported.

"These 1,699 rape cases registered last year include 381 cases (22.42 per cent) in which accused were in live-in-relation or refused to marry. 44 per cent were family and family's friend while 14 per cent were relatives. Around 12 per cent were

neighbours while other known persons were 26 per cent," as per police data.

"Last year, 2,938 cases of abduction of women were reported while in 2019, there were 3,672 cases. A total of 434 cases of insult on women modesty were reported in 2020 while in 2019, there were 495 cases," as per the data.

"In order to curb crime against women, they have also identified hotspots across the city where there is continuous patrolling. We have also installed CCTV cameras at various hotspots. Police have also issued instructions to MNCs/BPOs to ensure transport for women to be dropped at home under escort of security guard(s). Additionally, any stranded women at night to be

dropped by PCR Vans," said the CP.

"There is 24x7 women's help-desk in all police stations across the city. Police officials are monitoring all complaints and even Police Control Room (PCR) calls every morning," said the CP.

"Police also have their app 'Himmat-Plus' for women while Sashakti, a self defence training for girls students is also providing training. Police also have anti staking helpline number 1096 and a Citizen Portal, where online complaints can be lodged," said the police chief.

"Police under safe city project have also inducted Prakhar vans at vulnerable places and there is special deployment of police teams near girls' school and colleges. Women beat offi-

cer and women PCR van have been deployed across the city to ensure safety of the women," said the CP.

"Special Unit for Women and Children (SPUWAC) is monitoring functions of women safety committees in police stations consisting of principles of schools and colleges, Resident Welfare Associations (RWA), women NGOs and other personalities," said the police chief.

"There are social service units in 20 police stations while 60 social workers or counselors and four Capacity Support Officers have been appointed under 'Nirbhaya Scheme'. There are periodic meetings with civil society groups and NGOs in the neighbourhood," he added.

# Dy CM inaugurates 34th Garden Tourism Festival at Garden of Five Senses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia inaugurated the 34th Garden Tourism Festival at Garden of Five Senses. The festival aims at spreading mass awareness about the environment and making Delhi a clean and green city.

Inaugurating the event, Sisodia said "Terrible times are slowly coming to an end. This is our time to enjoy the beauty of nature spend time with our loved ones and take selfies," he said.

For the last 33 years, this traditional festival has taken place in the spring season every year. While Delhi Tourism has organised this festival at different places, this year it is set to take place at



Garden of Five Senses, with the theme #ColoursofNature. The festival will take place from the 19th February to 13th March.

# Tech used to probe Delhi riots cases: Police chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Srivastava on Friday said police teams used technology to investigate over 750 First Information Reports (FIRs) related to the northeast Delhi riots that led to the arrest of over 200 people.

Addressing the annual Press conference at Delhi Police headquarters, Srivastava said that 755 FIRs were registered in connection with the riots and his force ensured a free and fair investigation.

"You are aware of the riots which led to 53 deaths and 581 injuries. Riots reached its peak on February 24 and 25 last year. A total of 755 FIRs were registered and we made it a point that no one had a grievance that their complaint was not acknowledged," he said.

Around 24 FIRs were registered in New Usmanpur police station, 10 in Shastri

Nagar, 118 in Gokulpuri, 76 in Dayalpur, 153 FIRs in Khajuri Khas, 91 in Karawal Nagar, 5 in Sonia Vihar, 137 in Bhajanpura, 26 in Welcome and 79 FIRs in Jafrabad.

The CP said that three Special Investigation Teams (SITs) were formed under the Crime Branch to investigate the cases. "One of the cases was registered to unearth the conspiracy behind the riots, which was investigated by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police while the remaining cases were investigated by northeast district," said the CP. Elaborating on the use of technology, the Delhi Police chief said 231 accused were arrested on the basis of CCTV footage.

"Of them, 137 were identified through FRS (Facial Recognition System) when matched with criminal records and the remaining 94 were through driving license photographs. Some of them were also identified through their clothes," said the police chief. He said the investigation team used video analytics and FRS to analyse CCTV footage to identify the accused, retrieve deleted data from electronic devices, used geo-location to ascertain the presence of the accused and drone mapping for crime scene reconstruction. "Use of DNA finger printing, e-Vahan database, facial recognition, fund flow analysis and forensic teams comprising physical, chemical, biological and ballistic analysis of videos and photographs through open sources were also used to investigate the cases," the CP added. Overall 1818 persons have been arrested so far in 400 FIRs. Communal violence had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

# City records 158 new coronavirus cases, one death

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 158 fresh Covid-19 cases and one death on Friday, even as the positivity rate stood at 0.26 per cent. These new cases reported came out of 60,836 tests for Covid-19 conducted the previous day, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the city Government.

The total number of tests conducted on Friday consists of 39931 RT-PCR tests and 20,905 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin added. Delhi had recorded 96 coronavirus cases on January 27, the lowest in over nine months. It was also the first time the daily infection count stood below the 100-mark in that month.

The infection tally in the city now stands at 637603, the authorities said. The tally of active cases is 1,053. Besides fall in active cases, the count of home isolation cases have also registered a sustained fall, dropping to below 430-mark, indicating improvement in the Covid-19 situation, as per the bulletin. *SR*

SR

# Signal, speed violation detection systems to be installed at 74 spots

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to modernise the traffic system in national Capital, the Delhi Police said that they will be installing more red light violation detection system (RVDS) cameras at 24 junctions and the over speed violation detection system (OSVDS) cameras at 50 spots across the city.

According to Taj Hassan, the Special Commissioner of Police, Traffic, these will be installed in the pilot project phase-2 of Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) and technical specifications for this have been finalised.

Meanwhile, Hassan also claimed that there is 19 per cent decrease of fatal accidents in 2020 as compared to 2019 which were 1433 as compared to this year's 1163.

"This is the lowest in 30 years and this was possible through various strategies applied by the police to reduce accidents which included the deployment of police personnel, road engineering solutions and road safety awareness campaigns," said the Special CP. The Special CP said that they have two areas — congestion and accident — in the traffic where they work. "Police work on these two aspects. The first is congestion

Police had collected ₹124.16 crore last year as compared to ₹94.07 in 2019 amounting over ₹34 lakh per day

where we ensure that the traffic move without any obstruction. The second one is the accident where we ensure that people should obey the traffic rules to reduce the accidents on roads," said the Special CP.

"The focused areas for enforcement are triple riding, unauthorised parking, dangerous driving, without helmet etc," said the Special CP.

However, despite the stringent lockdown, during Covid-19 outbreak, the Delhi Police collected over 30 per cent higher from traffic violation challans last year as compared to in 2019. The amount was higher due to a hike in fines for traffic violations under the newly introduced Motor Vehicle Act.

Police had collected ₹124.16 crore last year as compared to ₹94.07 in 2019 amounting over ₹34 lakh per day. As per data shared by police, a total of 1,38,02,973 violations were reported last year as compared to 1,05,80,249 in 2019.

# R-Day violence not due to intelligence failure: Top cop

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Commissioner, SN Srivastava, on Friday said that the violence that broke out on Republic Day was not due to intelligence failure and alleged that the farmers protesting the three agri laws had betrayed their trust by not following pre-decided routes during the tractor parade.

The CP said that there were apprehensions which is why barricades were placed and the farmers were stopped. "Police have arrested 152 people so far in connection with the violence that took place in the national capital on Republic Day," he said.

Responding to a question during the annual press conference of the Delhi Police about the possibility of an intelligence failure on January 26, Srivastava said "there was no intelligence failure."

"Police had been holding talks with them (farmers). We had permitted them to take out the tractor rally. As per the agreement, certain terms and conditions were laid down and they were given designated routes to take out their tractor parade. But they betrayed the trust of Delhi Police and resort-



ed to violence. The police discharged its duties very well," said the police chief.

He further added that the farmer leaders have also responded to the notices served on them by the Delhi Police. Thousands of farmers protesting the Centre's new agriculture laws had clashed with the police during their tractor parade on January 26. Many of the protesters, driving tractors, reached the Red Fort and entered the monument. Some protesters even hoisted religious flags on its domes and a flagstaff at the ramparts, where the national flag is unfurled on Independence Day. Over 500 police personnel were injured and one protestor died on that day.

# Delhi Police arrested 32 ultras in 2020

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police, while releasing its annual data, said that they have arrested 32 terrorists last year, highest since 2016. The police have arrested 5 terrorists in 2019, 8 in 2018, 11 in 2017 and 16 in 2016, as per data shared by police.

In 2020, police busted ISIS Tamil Nadu module which brutally killed Hindu Munnani leader KP Suresh in 2014. Police said that Pakistan is the chief exporter of Jehadi terrorism, host of Al-Qaeda leadership and fake Indian currency notes. The Delhi Police also busted biggest ever narcotics haul. New drug route from Kandahar to Iran and then using Chahbahar Port to Mumbai exposed.

FOUNDATION CEREMONY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF  
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<b>Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai</b> Judge, Supreme Court of India	<b>Mr. Ashok Parija, Advocate General, Odisha</b> Chairman, Special Committee, Odisha State Bar Council
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	<b>Dr. Achyuta Samanta</b> Associate Managing Trustee, B.C.I.T.

**Programme:** Date: 20th February, 2021 Time: 11.00AM Venue: KIIT Auditorium, Campus 6 Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, Pin: 751024, Website: www.kiit.ac.in, Email: kiit@kiit.ac.in, Contact: +91 674 2725113

# ₹281.4 cr assets attached in G'gram land scam case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached properties worth ₹281.42 crore of various accused and their associates in connection with Gurgaon land scam.

The attached assets include 54 per cent portion of project in the name of Dove Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. pertaining to Atul Bansal/ Group companies at Faridabad amounting to ₹108.86 crore, 50 per cent of the portion of "Business Bay Project" in the name of company Seriatim Land & Housing Pvt. Ltd. pertaining to Atul Bansal/ Group companies amounting to ₹78.09 crore and flats and FDR pertaining to Anglique International Ltd. amounting to ₹3.39 crore.

Other attached assets are ₹25.53 crores refund from HSIIDC sanctioned to Guru Nanak Infrastructures Developers Pvt. Ltd., 13.77

acres and 5.65 acres of land valued at ₹29.48 crore pertaining to Frontier Home Developers Pvt. Ltd., 20 flats valued at ₹22.72 crore pertaining to Frontier Home Developers Pvt. Ltd. and 95.09 bighas of agricultural land at Behror and Neemrana (Both in Rajasthan) valued at ₹13.31 crore pertaining to Lalit Modi.

The ED had initiated investigation by recording ECIR on the basis of an FIR No. RCCHG2015A0019 dated September 15, 2015 registered by the CBI, ACB, Chandigarh under section IPC Section relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery among others besides provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act against unknown public servants of Government of Haryana and unknown private persons.

It was alleged in the FIR that the Government of Haryana had issued notification under section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 on

August 27, 2004 and had issued notification under section 6 of the said Act on August 25, 2005 for acquisition of land measuring about 912 acres for setting up an Industrial Model Township in villages Manesar, Naurangpur and Lakhnoulia of district, Gurugram.

A large number of land owners, in distress, had to sell about 400 acres of their land at throwaway prices to private builders and caused a wrongful loss to the land owners of these villages.

"PMLA investigation revealed that the land was later freed from compulsory acquisition by the State Government as a result of conspiracy by politicians, bureaucrats and private builders causing huge loss to the land owners and Government exchequer.

Further, investigation revealed that most of the land was purchased by ABWIL Group controlled by Atul Bansal and after obtaining licences, ABWIL had sold the licensed/ unlicensed land and licenses to other private persons/ developers, thus making profit worth crores of rupees.

The ED investigation revealed that the above properties worth ₹281.42 crores are Proceeds of Crime under PMLA, 2002.

Two Provisional Attachment orders amounting to ₹08.76 have already been issued and stand confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority.

# India second fastest to inoculate 1cr people



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a day its vaccination numbers crossed the one-crore mark making India the second-fastest country in the world after the US to reach the milestone, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday appealed to the healthcare and frontline workers to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

Vardhan further said that no severe adverse event post-immunisation has been recorded in the country and those reported are also 0.0004 per cent. "No death has been recorded due to COVID-19 vaccination. All state governments have been asked to vaccinate every healthcare and frontline worker," he said.

The cumulative number of Covid 19 vaccine doses administered to healthcare and frontline workers reached 1,04,49,942 through 2,20,877 sessions, as per the provisional report till 6 pm on

## Vardhan urges Covid frontline workers to get vaccinated against Covid-19

Friday.

These include 62,95,903 healthcare workers who have taken the 1st dose and 7,56,942 healthcare workers who have taken the 2nd dose, along with 33,97,097 frontline workers with 1st dose.

While the countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16, 2021, vaccination of the frontline workers was started from February 2, 2021.

A total of 6,58,674 vaccinations were administered on 18th February 2021. This constitutes the highest single day vaccinations during the on-going COVID-19 vaccination drive.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said that the vaccines were safe

and fill all the criteria of immunogenicity. "I want to appeal to all healthcare and frontline workers to get inoculated with COVID-19 vaccine doses as per schedule. The vaccines are safe. Don't believe any rumour and misinformation," he said.

Every state/union territory has been asked to schedule all healthcare workers for vaccination at least once before February 20 and immediately thereafter organise mop-up rounds for them.

The Minister also applauded the country for crossing the one crore mark in Covid vaccination saying: Congratulations India on crossing a major milestone!

According to the Union health ministry, India's vaccination coverage ranks third in the world, after the US with 55.2 million doses and the UK with 16.12 million doses. Both, the US and the UK have completed over 60 days of vaccination.

# Dr Reddy's seeks DCGI approval for emergency use authorisation for Sputnik V

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pharma major Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Friday said that it has initiated the process with the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for emergency use authorisation (EUA) of human adenoviral vector-based platform vaccine candidate Sputnik V.

As part of the review process, Dr Reddy's will present the safety profile of phase two study and interim data of phase three study which is expected to complete by February 21.

"The efficacy of Sputnik V was reported to be 91.6 per cent by the Lancet, which is an impressive development in the fight against Covid-19," said Co-chairman and Managing Director G V Prasad.

"The initiation of the emergency use authorisation process will be a critical step forward for us in ensuring speedy access to the Sputnik V vaccine in India," he said in a statement.

In September 2020, Dr Reddy's partnered with the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) to conduct clinical trials of Sputnik V and for its distribution rights in India.

Sputnik V has demonstrated an efficacy rate of 91.6

per cent in interim analysis of phase three clinical trial which included data on 19,866 volunteers in Russia, who received both the first and second doses of the vaccine.

Sputnik V maintained a consistent efficacy at 91.8 per cent even among the group of 2, 144 volunteers over 60 years old. The vaccine developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology was registered by the Ministry of Health of Russia on August 11 last year and became the world's first registered vaccine against Covid-19 based on the human adenoviral vector platform.

More than 250 clinical studies over two decades have proven the safety, efficacy and lack of negative long-term effects of adenoviral vaccines.

Sputnik V is one of only three vaccines in the world with an efficacy of 91.6 per cent and has most authorisations granted with 26 countries globally. The vaccine has already been administered to more than 20 lakh people worldwide.

# No plan to end arthiyas system in Punjab, Haryana: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid farmers' protests, the Modi Government on Friday reiterated that it has no intention to eliminate arthiyas (middlemen) in Punjab and Haryana and no directions have been issued to eliminate arthiyas from the mandi system and adding that both these States will compulsorily have to use electronic modes to pay crop price (MSP) to farmers. The ministry of consumer affairs and food said that ₹1,16,653.96 crore reflected in Public

Financial Management System (PFMS) towards Punjab and ₹2484.56 crore in respect of Haryana. The Government further said that it will release nearly ₹3 lakh crore more food subsidy in the remaining two months of the current fiscal as it looks to clear all previous backlogs.

The Government said that electronic mode of payment ensures that all participants including farmers, Arthiyas and mandis receive their payments directly online in order to ensure transparency and trail of pay-

ments. "This is not a replacement of the current APMC system. It only strengthens transparency and elimination of leakages," it added.

Stating that e-mode of MSP payment is already in force across India, the ministry said the Centre has been trying to ensure the same in Punjab and Haryana at least since 2015-16.

"The Government is regularly pursuing with Punjab and Haryana Governments for ensuring direct online pay-

ment into farmer's accounts since 2015-16. However, both the state Governments have been routinely approaching the Centre for granting exemption/seeking time for implementation of direct online payment initiative.

"The Government of India has therefore, directed State Government of Punjab and Haryana to ensure online payment to farmers through e-mode from upcoming season and that no further relaxation on this account will be accorded," the ministry said.

The ministry informed that e-mode of payment has already been adopted partially by Haryana and Punjab.

A part of payment for this paddy procurement was done through the e-mode only.

"Direct online payment to farmers predates the three farm laws. In Punjab, payment of MSP was paid to the farmers through Arthiyas and in Haryana, FCI made payment of MSP directly to farmer's bank accounts through online mode, whereas State agencies made pay-

ment of MSP to the farmers partly through Arthiya and partly directly to farmer's account through online mode as per option given by the farmers in e-Kharid portal," the statement said.

The three new farm Acts were enacted in September last year. Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting at Delhi borders from over two months now, seeking repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee of the MSP.

# Agri Ministry gets nod to use drone for remote sensing data collection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Agriculture Ministry has been permitted to use drones for remote sensing data collection under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). This will allow the agriculture ministry to use drones for remote sensing data collection in agricultural areas of 100 districts of the country for gram panchayat level yield estimation, under PMFBY.

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Directorate General of Civil Aviation have granted conditional exemption for Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) usage to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW)," an official statement said on Friday.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has earlier tweeted

that use of UAV data in the scheme will add new dimension to ensure timely settlement of claims in the scheme as well as for crop area estimation, losses due to localised calamities and to resolve yield dispute between different stakeholders under the scheme. "The use of high spatial resolution UAV data may also be explored in other agriculture-related schemes in India," stated the Minister.

The conditional exemption will be valid for one year from the date of issue of the permission letter or until the operationalisation of the Digital Sky Platform, whichever is earlier, the statement by the civil aviation ministry said. This exemption shall be valid only if all conditions and limitations are strictly adhered to, it said.

# Cong demands reduction in excise duty on petrol, diesel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the rising fuel prices, Congress on Friday called upon the Centre to reduce the excise duty on petrol and diesel to provide relief to 130 crore citizens. Lamenting how can the Modi Government pass the buck of rising fuel price to Congress Governments which was six years ago, the Opposition termed the BJP led government as nothing less than Indhan Tax Jivi Sarkar (Fuel Tax Government and is a Bhayankar Janloot Sarkar.

AICC chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala pointed that the Centre had increased the price of petrol and diesel per litre by ₹15.21 and ₹15.33 respectively after assuming power in May 2019.

# Calicut-bound flight makes emergency landing at Trivandrum airport

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Calicut-bound Air India Express flight with 104 passengers on board made a precautionary landing at the Trivandrum International Airport at noon on Friday due to a technical snag in the hydraulic system of the aircraft.

# CPI gets ₹19.69 crore donations in 2019-20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(Marxist) received over ₹19.69 crore from 239 donors as donations exceeding ₹20,000 in 2019-20. Agitating farmer union leader Hannan Mollah, DMK and CPI(M) leaders are among the contributors. The Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) party has shown 'nil' donations above ₹20,000 in the year 2019-20.

According to the Election Commission's website, the CPI(M) received a total of Rs 19,69,36,150 as donations from entities, individuals and the DMK. Mollah donated ₹4 lakh in eight installments of ₹40,000 each.

The DMK had contributed ₹10 crore to the Left party during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The party's contribution was reflected in its poll expenditure report submitted to the EC after the elections. However, this was not reflected in the last contribution report of the CPI(M). The Left party has now shown the contribution in its report for 2019-20. The contribution by the DMK was made in April 2019 in multiple installments. Senior CPI(M) leader and party general secretary Sitaram Yechury contributed ₹2.28 lakh, Mohammad Salim Rs 1 lakh, Brinda Karat ₹1.38 lakh, Elaram Karim ₹13.2 lakh and Suhasini Ali ₹1.44 lakh.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R, HISAR	UP-GRADATION BY WDG & STG THE EXISTING ADAMPUR HUDA BYPASS ROAD TO ADAMPUR SADALPUR ROAD RD 0.00 TO 1.125 IN HISAR DISTT (CM ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 17663 DATED 27.11.2016) + 1 OTHER WORK	24.02.2021 09.03.2021	189.17 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9812306111 pwd-eeepd1-hissar@hry.nic.in
2	PWD B&R, SONIPAT	SPECIAL REPAIR/RENOVATION OF SENIOR MESS IN MOTI LAL NEHRU SCHOOL OF SPORTS, RAI DISTT SONEPAT (RE-INVITE).	17.02.2021 09.03.2021	52.52 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2200575 pwd-eeepd2-sonapat@hry.nic.in
3	PANCHAYATI RAJ BHIWANI	LABOUR RATE CONTRACT TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF IPB STREET WITH DRAIN.	24.02.2021 02.03.2021	20.46 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01664-243929 prexeeng.bhw@hry.nic.in
4	FOREST DEPARTMENT YAMUNA NAGAR	CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT CONCRETE BLOCK (STUD) AT SOM NADI, GANAULI RF IN CHHACHHRAULI BLOCK IN CHHACHHRAULI RANGE + 10 OTHER WORKS	13.02.2021 22.02.2021	41.32 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	1732237821 dfo_tynr@rediffmail.com
5	DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BHIWANI	E-TENDER FOR OUTSOURCING OF MANPOWER UNDER THE JURISDICTIONS OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OFFICE BHIWANI	18.02.2021 01.03.2021	2 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in TENDER NO 2021_HBC_160237_1	01664-243333 ditsbhw@gmail.com
6	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, PANIPAT	RE-CONSTRUCTION OF D.R. BRIDGE AT RD 150133 OF MAIN DRAIN NO.2	CLOSING DATE 08.03.2021	335.98 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9466159501 xen23cpt@gmail.com
7	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, ROHTAK	CEMENT CONCRETE LINING (DESIGN MIX) BY PAVER FROM RD 0 TO 343100 OF JLN FEEDER (EXCEPT REACH RD 105000 TO 107000, 136000 TO 195600, 235100 TO 238800, 241000 TO 242900, 249500 TO 255000, 270000 TO 275000, 300000 TO 304000 & 339700 TO 340350).	01.03.2021 15.03.2021	137 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9812111077 xenfdrrtk@gmail.com
8	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ZILA PARISHAD FARIDABAD	WALL PAINTING (RURAL AREA DISTRICT FARIDABAD) 9'X6'=54'X119'4" = 25704 SQ.FT. TOTAL AREA PER VILLAGE = 4X54' = 216' SQ.FT.	19.02.2021 01.03.2021	8.74 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9991236555 fbdhssbm@gmail.com
9	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING, SIWANI	UP GRADATION OF SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT (STP) OF 4 MLD CAPACITY BASED ON MOVING BED BIO REACTOR (MBBR) TECHNOLOGY LOCATED AT TOSHAM ROAD SIWANI TOWN + 1 OTHER WORK	15.02.2021 24.02.2021	7.50 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01255-277066 eesiwani@phedharyana.gov.in
10	WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT, PANCHKULA	FOR PROCURING FOOD ITEMS REQUIRED UNDER ICDS IN PANCHKULA DISTRICT	15.02.2021 28.02.2021	23.51 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in TENDER NO 2021_HRY_159767_1	7888824770 popkl_wcd@gmail.com
11	HEALTH DEPARTMENT CIVIL SURGEON AMBALA	APPOINTMENT OF CONCURRENT AUDITOR FOR DISTRICT HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE SOCIETY, AMBALA FOR AUDIT OF ALL PROGRAMMES UNDER NHM AND NON NHM	22.02.2021 01.03.2021	TENDER FEE 500/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	712557473 dhs.csamb@hry.nic.in
12	PANCHAYATI RAJ, FATEHABAD	CONST OF GOBAR DHAN PROJECT AT VILLAGE KAJAL HERI BLOCK FATEHABAD DISTT. FATEHABAD.(RE-TENDER)	19.02.2021 05.03.2021	63.28 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01667230855 prexeeng.ftb@hry.nic.in
13	PANCHAYATI RAJ, SONIPAT	CONST OF BRICK ON EDGE RASTA WITH TOE-WALL AT VILLAGE BATANA ZAFRABAD AND OTHER 10 NO WORKS	22.02.2021 01.03.2021	1.05 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.sn@hry.nic.in
14	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK NILOKHERI	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
15	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGE OF BLOCK MUNK	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
16	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK NISSING	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
17	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK GHARAUNDA DISTT. KARNAL	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
18	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK KARNAL	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
19	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK INDRJI	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
20	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK KUNJUPURA	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
21	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	SUPPLY OF RAW AND BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK ASSANDH	15.02.2021 25.02.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO 1877

**Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender**  
No. SSA/Spl.Trang/Procurement/04/333/2020/4491 Date:18.02.2021

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from reputed manufacturer/authorised dealer of manufacturer of water purifier for supply of Supply and installation of water purifier.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Executive Director,  
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

# WB court summons Shah in Abhishek defamation case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as the battle for Bengal's masnad heated up, a Kolkata court on Friday issued summons to Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a defamation case lodged by Abhishek Banerjee, Trinamool Congress MP and nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Shah has been asked to appear before the court meant of MLAs and MPs at Mayukh Bhawan in Salt Lake personally or through a representative on February 22, lawyers of Banerjee said.

The case relates to some alleged "defamatory" speeches given by the Home Minister in August 2018 when he used the term "Bhaipo" (nephew in Bengali) to attack Banerjee.

Shah had allegedly said that Bhaipo was linked to Narada, Sharada and Rose Valley scams. He has also alleged that most central funds meant for public welfare were being siphoned off by Bhaipo's men who acted through syndicates.

Banerjee had subsequently slapped a libel suit against Shah and the case came up for hearing on Friday when the designated special court judge directed the

defendant to appear before him "in person/by pleader" at 10 am on February 22.

Meanwhile, Shah on Friday attended the "Shauryanjali" programme at the iconic National Library where he once again invoked Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose saying "his bravery and valour would be remembered by the country for ages."

He said that the people of the country should once again start looking up to Netaji for inspiration saying "the committee formed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will ensure that the people will pay their homage to the great leader generation after generation."

Shah who flagged off a cycle rally in three routes that will reach the homes of the crores of Indian freedom struggle said that the youth of the country should start reading about Bose a lot as "it will teach you a lot."

Elsewhere Bengal would soon start receiving central forces for the coming elections. The first 125 companies of the total 1000 companies would reach the state soon. Five companies were likely to reach the State and start patrolling duty from as early as February 25, sources said.

# Politicians panic as many top Maha leaders in Covid grip

Mumbai: Sending alarm bells ringing, several Maharashtra leaders across political parties have been infected by Covid-19, including two who have tested positive for the second time, officials said here on Friday.

The infected dignitaries include Nationalist Congress Party State President and Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil, Health Minister Rajesh Tope, Food & Drugs Administration Minister Dr. Rajendra Shingne, Minister of State for Labour and Prahar Janshakti leader Bachchu Kadu. Maharashtra Congress President Nana F. Patole has gone into isolation after two of his staffers tested positive and his test reports are awaited, said a party source.

Besides, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh is also in isolation at his Nagpur residence after testing positive earlier this week, and senior NCP leader Eknath Khadse is also infected.

Both Kadu and Khadse have tested positive for the second time, while the latter's daughter-in-law and BJP MP from Raver Raksha Khadse has also been infected.

Khadse had been infected in November last year which had led to

a delay in attending to the Enforcement Directorate summons, displayed Covid-19 symptoms again in December and first week of Feb, and has not tested positive.

The concerns are further compounded by the upcoming Maharashtra Legislature's Budget Session starting here on March 1 with the Budget likely to be presented on March 8. The Maharashtra Legislative Council Chairman Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar has urged the Centre and State governments to ensure priority vaccination drive for all legislators and Legislature staffers.

"We have 287 MLAs, more than 60 MLCs Plus, around 700-800 people work in the Legislature complex, besides officials from Mantralaya and ministries set up camp offices here during the sessions," Naik-Nimbalkar pointed out.

In the past 11 months since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic havoc, around 15 state ministers have been infected, besides several MPs, MLAs, MLCs, senior leaders of different political parties, close aides or security personnel of various bigwigs including Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. IANS

# Why can't Modi Govt make Covid vaccine available to all citizens, asks Sena MP

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka S Chaturvedi on Friday wondered that since many countries had benefited from the "Vaccine Maitri" initiative by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), was it not high time for the Centre to make vaccine easily available for all the Indians, especially at a time when the Covid-19 vaccine supplies are under-utilised in the country.

In a letter shot off to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Priyanka said, "India is once again seeing an increase in Covid-19 cases and the various strains of the virus have also been detected. As per the Health Ministry data, Covid-19 vaccine supplies are under-utilised.... If this is the case then shouldn't we reconsider our policy of regulating the availability of vaccines?"

Substantiating the under-utilisation of Covid-19 vaccine supplies, the Sena MP said: "... the data of vaccine supplies shows that only 31.45 per cent

of Covishield and 11.75 per cent Covaxin have been administered to frontline workers".

Alluding to the shortfalls in the implementation of the first phase of vaccination across the country, Priyanka said: "The CoWin App has been facing glitches with data. Also, there are loopholes that exist for those who have access to networks and money to get vaccine shots on priority, while those who are from the weaker section of society suffer the consequences of such government regulation".

"Many countries have benefited from the Vaccine Maitri initiative by the Ministry of External Affairs, isn't it high time that Indians get the same benefits of having a vaccine easily available for them?" she asked.

Making a strong case for a rapid voluntary vaccination for senior citizens, citizens with co-morbidities and a mass-scale administration to rest of the population, Priyanka said: "All states are administering it to our frontline war-

riors and many have started the second round of dosage too; however our population is large and the fear of another wave that can have tremendous impact on our economy hence it becomes our responsibility to ensure rapid voluntary vaccination for senior citizens, citizens with co-morbidities and the rest on a mass scale so that life resumes to safety sooner than later".

The Sena MP urged the Union Health Minister to rope in private hospitals in the immunisation drive, consider opening up more mobile vaccination centres and plug the issues faced on CoWin App.

"I would request you to kindly consider de-regulating the sale of vaccines and capping the cost of the same to ensure that there is no heavy cost for the citizens to bear or the fear of hoarding. It would be unfair to the country that we do not use our own strength and leverage all our available resources to help the society rid itself of the virus," she stated.

# Arrest of 3 ultras in Krishna Dhaba attack exposes Pak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The sinister plot hatched by the Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terror outfit to disturb peace and the tourist related activities in the Kashmir valley has been exposed by the Jammu & Kashmir Police with the arrest of three terrorists involved behind the attack on Krishna Dhaba on February 17. Akash Mehra, son of an eatery owner, had received gunshot injuries on his chest during indiscriminate firing.

According to Jammu and Kashmir police the attack was aimed at terrorising the non locals living in the valley and to disrupt the tourist activity which has seen an upsurge from past two months as the food outlet was very famous and popular among the tourists visiting the valley.

Briefing media persons about the daring terror strike which coincided with the visit

of the foreign diplomats from 24 countries IGP, Kashmir Vijay Kumar on Friday said soon after the terror attack different police teams were set up to investigate the attack.

He said crucial leads were developed after screening CCTV footage and other crucial data based on human intelligence

The police teams from Srinagar, Pulwama and Anantnag were roped in and several raids were conducted which led to the arrest of Vilayat Aziz Mir son of Abdul Aziz Mir resident of Hanipora Wampora Pulwama.

Similarly, Suhail Ahmad Mir son of Fateh Mohd Mir and Owais Manzoor Sofi son of Manzoor Ahmad Sofi, both residents of Dangerpora were arrested during the raids by the police teams, IGP told reporters during the press conference.

IGP Kashmir also claimed, during the course of investigation, it was learnt that Vilayat

was in contact with one Ghazi, an active terrorist who had trained him locally a month before.

He performed the recce of Dalgate Durganag area along with other terrorist associates ten days prior to attack.

"On 17/2/2021 the trio on the bike of Suhail Ahmed Mir son of Fateh Mohd Mir resident of Dangerpora, at around 7:15 reached Krishna Dhaba and fired indiscriminately on the staff, injuring critically Akash Mehra S/O Ramesh Kumar Mehra".

According to the police records, "Owais Manzoor was previously involved in case FIR No 46/2018 under section 148, 149, 336, 152 RPC of PS Nowgam.

The case was challaned on 4/12/2018 at district & sessions judge Budgam.

According to a police spokesman, "The Pak based terrorist organisation have adopted new strategies by recruiting local youths who are in their

teens and allowing them to mix up with the family friends and live normally and training them for a day or so. They are given tasks by their masters and in case they get caught a public opinion is generated that they were not active militants and joined only on the day of the incident".

Police has also recovered weapon of crime (pistol) and grenade along with other incriminating material including bike used by terrorists'

According to IGP Kashmir, the trio during interrogation have confessed their involvement in the crime. A case has already been registered in this regard under relevant sections of law and further investigation is on.

IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar also complimented the Srinagar, Pulwama and Anantnag Police who speedily carried out the investigation jointly under the close supervision of DIG Central Kashmir range Amit Kumar.

# 7 Pakistani migrants granted Indian citizenship in Rajasthan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday laid a trap and caught an officer of Standard Chartered Bank red handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 3 lakh from the complainant.

The agency also conducted searches in Chennai at the premises of the accused officer of the private bank, Rajendran, Authorized Officer, Standard Chartered Bank, Group Special Assets Management, Rajaji Salai, Chennai and recovered Rs 18 lakh in cash, property documents and locker keys in a case related to bribery of Rs three lakh.

A case was registered against the accused officer on the allegations of demanding undue advantage of Rs 3,00,000 from the complainant (representative of borrower firm) to help and support for favourable settlement of the case pending in Debts Recovery Tribunal (DRT) in the matter of immovable properties offered as collateral securities in the loan availed from Standard Chartered Bank, the CBI said.

"It was further alleged that the complainant's firm had availed OD/Term Loan facilities from Standard Chartered Bank, D B Branch, Coimbatore for a total amount of Rs 27,70,00,000 during the period from 2005 to 2016 with sufficient collateral.

The bank accounts became NPA with the outstanding of Rs 26,37,12,444 as on 30.04.2017. It was also alleged that the Standard Chartered Bank initiated action Under SARFAESI Act, 2002, and the accused was the Authorized Officer to dispose of the immovable properties of the borrowers which were mortgaged as collateral," it said.

The properties were allegedly sold by auction for a total amount of Rs 22,11,00,000 in January 2021 against market value of Rs 61.5 crore as claimed by the borrower. Aggrieved by the sale, the borrower filed a case before the Debts Recovery Tribunal court, Coimbatore during February, 2021 and got a stay order against the sale. Since the matter was pending before the DRT, the accused demanded undue advantage of Rs 3,00,000 from the complainant to help and support the borrower.

The accused was produced before the court of Principal Special Judge for CBI Cases, Chennai and was remanded to judicial custody till March 3. IANS

# Standard Chartered Defence Estate Officer, 2 FCI officials held in bribery cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday arrested a Sub-Divisional Officer-I working in Defence Estates Office, Ahmedabad Cantonment (Gujarat), Hasmukh Parmar and two officials including a Manager of FCI, Ludhiana, Punjab in two separate cases of bribery.

The first case was registered against Parmar on the allegations of demanding a bribe of Rs 50,000 from the complainant towards releasing his three vehicles which were confiscated by the accused.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red handed while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000 from the complainant.

Searches were conducted at the premises of the accused which led to recovery of some incriminating documents, including property documents and details of bank accounts.

In another case, the agency has arrested Manager (Quality Control), Prem Kumar and a TA, Raj Karan, both of FCI in a bribery case of Rs 50,000. A case was registered on a complaint alleging therein that the Manager (Quality Control) was demanding a bribe of Rs 50,000 for checking and stacking of complainant's rice consignment at PSWC Godown, Kailpur, Ludhiana.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the Manager Karan Kumar while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000.

During investigation, it was revealed that the bribe amount was to be shared with TA, FCI, leading to his arrest. Searches were conducted at the residences of both the accused at Ludhiana.

The accused were produced in the Court of Special Judge, CBI Cases, Mohali (Punjab) and remanded to one-day police custody. IANS

# Shivaji preserved Hindu religion in Goa amid conversion: Sawant

Panaji: Maratha emperor Shivaji and his son Sambhaji helped preserve Hindu culture in Goa at the time of religious conversion, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said at a Shiv Jayanti function held here on Friday.

Sawant also said that like Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'Make in India' and 'Skill India', the Maratha king had also believed in a similar philosophy, especially when it came to locally manufacturing arms used to fight the brutal oppressive regimes.

"Not just in Maharashtra, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj took efforts to preserve Hindu dharma and the concept of Swadharna in Goa too. The biggest contribution to preserving Hindu religion and Swadharna (in Goa) was made by Shivaji Maharaj and Sambhaji maharaj. He (Shivaji) played a major role in preserving Hindu culture at a time of conversion," Sawant said.

Born in the 17th century, Shivaji's regime coincided with the colonial Portuguese rule in Goa, early part of which witnessed large-scale conversion of the native population.

Sawant in his speech said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's calls for an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in times of an adversity like Covid-19, as well as other missions like 'Make in India', 'Skill India' mirrored similar initiatives launched by Shivaji in his era.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocates 'Make in India', 'Skill India', concepts which Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had identified then. If you go back in history, during Shivaji's fight against injustices and brutal regimes of the time, the weapons used by his army were locally made. If the Make in India concept is in vogue now, its foundations were laid by Shivaji Maharaj," Sawant said. IANS

# Tejashwi claims Nitish unaware of Bihar question paper leak

Patna: Rashtriya Janatad Dald leader Tejashwi Yadav on Friday said the class 10 exam paper of the Bihar School Examination Board was leaked and Chief Minister and Education Minister of Bihar do not have any knowledge about it.

After the conclusion of day one of the budget session in the Bihar assembly, Yadav said it is a reflection on the NDA government in Bihar. "It is simply unimaginable that the Social Sciences question paper of class 10 leaked at several places and the Chief Minister and the education minister do not know about it. What kind of government is Nitish Kumar running in Bihar? If they were aware of it, why are they hiding it?" asked Yadav.

"When I informed the assembly about the paper leak, neither Chief Minister Nitish Kumar nor Education Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary clarify the matter in the House," Yadav further said.

"Papers of every examination in Bihar are leaking these days and the mentors of education are doing nothing. In fact they are playing with the lives of students," Yadav said. He further claimed that during his speech, Governor Phagu Chauhan said the state government is buying paddy on MSP but there is no buying on the ground. Farmers are selling paddy in Rs 700 to 800 in several districts.

"Over 260 farmers have died during the last three months during the agitation. When we asked to pay respects to the farmers in the house, our request was turned down. It that the BJP and Nitish Kumar are anti-farmer." IANS

# Cong loses more leaders to SP in UP

Lucknow: The Congress suffered a jolt in Uttar Pradesh on Friday when it lost another batch of senior leaders -- this time to the Samajwadi Party.

Two former ministers, R.K. Chaudhary (Lucknow) and Jai Narain Tiwari (Sultanpur) left the party to join the Samajwadi Party.

R.K. Chaudhary was a cabinet minister in the Bahujan Samaj Party government and had later joined the Congress.

Jai Narain Tiwari was a minister in the Kalyan Singh government and member of the breakaway BSP group called Jantantrik BSP.

Talking to reporters, the former ministers said that the Congress had become directionless and 'delusional'. They said they were feeling 'suffocated' in the party. IANS



Devotees participate in Brahma Rathotsava of Lord Venkataramana, in Mangaluru on Friday

PTI

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)**  
 क्रमांक/2368/अति.वि./न.वा.नि./2021 रायगढ़ दिनांक 18/02/2021  
 //निविदा सूचना//  
 कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम रायगढ़ द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यो के लिए अगिलेख निगम हेतु मुद्रण, एवं स्टेशनरी, सामग्री, फोटोकॉपी मोजन/नास्ता/वाय/पानी बॉटल प्रदाय विद्योद्योगी फलेक्स बेनर प्रिटींग कार्यो जारिक 2021-22 हेतु निविदा सूचना आमंत्रण पंजीकृत मुद्रणकार्यालय/फर्म/विकेताओं/प्रदायकर्ताओं से निविदा प्रपत्र "स" नगर पालिक निगम रायगढ़ की वेबसाईट [uad.cg.vog.in/www.nagarainigamraigarh.com](http://uad.cg.vog.in/www.nagarainigamraigarh.com) से निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड कर पूर्ण रूप से भरकर निविदा प्रपत्र के साथ निम्नलिखित प्रपत्र "सुल्क डी.डी. के माध्यम से दिनांक 15.03.2021 अगस्त 04.00 बजे तक स्वीड पोस्ट/रजिस्टर्ड डाक के माध्यम से निविदाएं त्रि-लिफाफा पद्धति स आमंत्रित की जाती है प्राय निविदाएं दिनांक 15.03.2021 अगस्त के साथ 04.00 बजे उपस्थित निविदाकारों अथवा उनके अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष खोली जायेगी। नोट: उपरोक्त कार्यो की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तों, परीहर शर्तों, विस्तृत विज्ञापि, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालय अवधि से कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

क्र. कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत राशि (लाख में)	परिहर राशि (रुपये में)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (रुपये में)
01 मुद्रण कार्य	14.90	44700/- रु.	750/- रु.
02 स्टेशनरी सामग्री	10.00	30000/- रु.	750/- रु.
03 फोटो कॉपी	3.00	9000/- रु.	750/- रु.
04 भोजन/नास्ता/वाय/पानी बॉटल प्रदाय	4.90	14700/- रु.	750/- रु.
05 विद्योद्योगी	1.00	3000/- रु.	750/- रु.
06 फलेक्स बेनर प्रिटींग	7.00	21000/- रु.	750/- रु.

हस्ता/-  
 अनाक  
 नगर पालिक निगम,  
 रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)

**U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED**  
**E-Tender Notice**  
 E-Tender No. SD-902 online e-Bids are invited for "Construction of 220/132/33kV Substation Kanduni, (Sitapur)" E-tender has been uploaded on 18/02/2021 on [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) Estimated Cost of work : Rs. 23.95 Crore only. Completion Period: 18 months E.M.D. cost Rs. 48.00 Lacs only. Last date of tender submission 18/03/2021 at 15:30 Hrs. Total Quantum of work, tender specification and other terms & conditions are as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Undersigned reserves the right to cancel the e-Bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.  
 Superintending Engineer, ESDC-I, UPPTCL  
 No. 79 Dt. 19.2.21 राष्ट्रिय में बिजली बचायें

**GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DIVISION No. 1 AMBIKAPUR**  
**e-Procurement Tender Notice**  
 Main Portal : <http://cgeprocurement.gov.in>  
 WRD Portal : <http://wrd.cgeprocurement.gov.in>  
**{Tender Cancellation Notice}**  
 No. 01/SAC/2020-21 Date:- 16-02-2021  
 The tender invited vide N.I.T, No. 08/SAC/20-21 Dated 13-01-2021 Group No.- 02 System Tender No. 70665 for NAME OF WORK:- CONSTRUCTION OF DIVERSION WEIR & EARTH WORK OF R.B.C. CANAL FROM R.D, 0 TO 3300M I/C 15 NOS. STRUCTURES OF JHINJHARI DIVERSION SCHEME. INCLUDING 10 YEARS MAINTENANCE. Whose "G" No. 86853 Date. 03-02-2021 is here by cancelled. Due to the error of Mentioning the amount of E/M desired for the tender.  
 Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer  
 Water Resources Division No.-1  
 Ambikapur  
 For- Chief Engineer  
 Hasdeo Ganga Basin, W.R. Deptt,  
 Ambikapur (C.G.)  
 Ro. No: 87166/10  
 Dated: 17/02/2021

**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE FOR SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE No.: NIT/14/21/7, Dated 16.02.2021.**  
 South East Central Railway has implemented an e-system. On the behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Material Manager, South East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items. Advertised tenders will be dealt through e-procurement system only. No manual offer will be entertained. These tenders can be accessed under the link [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Tender Closing/Opening Date	Qty.
1.	02214091A	Oil Cooling Radiator for Converter	03.03.2021	03 Nos.
2.	02203995A	Contact Filter	10.03.2021	04 Nos.
3.	03212637	Ball Joint Roll Link to Drg. No. CS3.973	11.03.2021	11230 Nos.
4.	03212687	Ball Joint Traction Lever	13.03.2021	1270 Nos.
5.	03213158	Breather Valve Assembly	15.03.2021	10300 Nos.
6.	02203894A	Master Controller	17.03.2021	21 Nos.

**Tender Closing/Opening Time: At 10.30 hours**  
 Railways reserves the right to issue any Corrigendum to the tenders. Corrigendum & Important Notice to vendors may be seen in the link [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) CPRI/10/449 For Principal Chief Materials Manager/Bilaspur.  
 f South East Central Railway @secrail



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## King Cong

Punjab civic poll results show that all other parties in the fray were losers, one way or the other

Indeed, the Congress has put up a spectacular show in the Punjab civic elections, the results of which were declared recently. The party bagged 1,373 of the 2,218 seats that went to the polls, followed by the Shiromani Aakali Dal (SAD) at 285, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) 60, BJP (49) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (five). Independents won 392 seats, almost the total number that all the registered parties — save for the Congress — could amass. Apart from these dry statistics, there are a few interesting takeaways from these results. First and foremost, despite having its own Government in the State and therefore battling the dreadful perception of anti-incumbency, the Congress has proved its unquestionable hold at the grassroots of democracy in Punjab. The win also strengthens Chief Minister (CM) Amarinder Singh's position vis-à-vis Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has been canvassing with the high command for the post of the party's State unit chief, as seen by the announcement of mission 'Captain for 2022'. Also, the party's resounding victory has nipped in the bud whatever little hopes of resurgence the AAP was carrying; the Congress' worst fears about the latter's renewed momentum (because of its involvement in the ongoing farmers' agitation) proved to be unfounded.



The AAP, the main Opposition party in Punjab, came a distant third, far behind the SAD, which is perceived to have lost ground because of its erstwhile partnership with the BJP at the Centre. Despite the AAP's good showing in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and the 2017 Assembly polls, its fortunes had been sliding in the State, but it seemed to have found the surefire formula for bouncing back by actively supporting the farmers' agitation. The AAP leaders, including party convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, have been quite vocal about the party's ambition of fielding candidates for the Assembly. The party, which was hoping to put up a much better performance by encashing its backing to the farmers' agitation, obviously needs to do a lot more if it wants to broaden its electoral footprint. This election was being watched closely since it was the first important election in the State since farmers began their agitation and after the SAD and the BJP parted ways following differences on the controversial farm laws. The results show that the break-up of the partnership resulted in electoral losses for both the parties. The results have made it clear that not just rural, even urban voters are angry with the BJP. While the saffron party has been vanquished in strongholds such as Gurdaspur, Pathankot and Hoshiarpur, the SAD fared poorly in its citadel Bathinda from where former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal is the MP. There was a lot of anger among farmers, especially the Sikh farmers, against the SAD in the State. They didn't want to vote for the party as it was in alliance with the BJP earlier and the voters still didn't see sufficient distance between the two. With this round of battle over, the stage is now set for an interesting Assembly election.



A snow-clearing operation in Huntington, West Virginia AP

## Chinese checkers

Beijing admits to casualties in the Galwan clash but pins the blame for the incident on India

China, in the midst of withdrawal of troops and armoury from both banks of the Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh, fired yet another diplomatic salvo aimed at embarrassing India. Eight months after a fierce and bloody hand-to-hand combat between the frontline troops of the two neighbours in Galwan valley (Pangong Tso lies well south of Galwan), Beijing has for the first time officially acknowledged casualties and named four officers and soldiers that it claims were killed in the clash. The four have been honoured posthumously, and an officer seriously wounded in the skirmish has also been awarded, by the Chinese leadership. And now comes the twist in the tale. Citing the "bravery" of its Army officers and men, China has conveniently sought to pin the blame for the occurrence of the incident on India by saying that they lost their lives in a clash with "trespassing foreign military personnel wielding steel tubes, cudgels and stones". India has consistently denied the allegation and maintained that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops, armed with medieval-style weapons like spiked maces, had trespassed across the Line of Actual Control into Indian territory.



Then there were reports, accompanied by satellite images taken by a third party, that China has built a village comprising 120 houses five kms inside the disputed territory in Arunachal Pradesh. So, that gets us to the moot point: Who's not telling the truth in the instant case? For the record, India had confirmed the loss of 20 Indian soldiers and injuries to 76 others shortly after the clash on June 15, 2020, and installed the names of the martyrs who were honoured for their bravery at memorials. Indian intercepts also revealed that the Chinese side had suffered 43 casualties. But so far, Beijing had never acknowledged Chinese casualties. Lies and deceit are ingrained in the Chinese Communist Party and PLA's psyche. The admission from China comes days after India's Northern Army Commander referred to the figure of 45 Chinese casualties as reported by Russian news agency TASS. Also, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson could offer nothing better than an obscure reply when pointedly asked why Beijing chose to reveal the casualties after over eight months. Meanwhile, with the troop disengagement at the Pangong Tso now complete, the 10th round of the Corps Commander-level talks are scheduled for Saturday. The disengagement from Gogra, Hot Springs and the strategically-located Depsang Plains is likely to come up in the high-level meeting.

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# The Generals in their labyrinth

The world's democracies should make it clear that the Generals along with families will pay a heavy price for any savage crackdown on the protesters



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The coup by Myanmar's rogue military, officially called Tatmadaw, has clearly triggered a growing confrontation between it and almost the entire people of the country. Except large-scale killing of civilians, in which it has a record not many uniformed forces can match, it has resorted to almost every repressive measure in the book for stamping out mass upsurges. It has proclaimed a state of emergency which is to last for a year and amended the penal code prescribing 20 years' imprisonment for inciting hatred for the Government or the Army or hindering efforts of the security forces to ensure State stability. Seven years in prison is the punishment for preventing the security forces from performing their duties, and three years for spreading fear, "fake news" or agitating against Government employees. All this was besides the power given to the Tatmadaw to detain people indefinitely and/or search private property, besides revalidating a law requiring people to report overnight visitors to their homes.

The steps on the ground include the deployment of troops and armoured vehicles on the roads of Yangon, Myitkyina (capital of Karen State) and Sittwe (the capital of Rakine State), firing of rubber bullets, the use of water cannons against demonstrators, arrests during night curfew hours and detention of a wide range of people including political leaders, Government officials, activists, journalists, student leaders and medical personnel. According to the Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, the number of people arrested since the coup reached 495 on February 17 and was growing. Further, the Tatmadaw has announced that it had issued warrants for the arrest of six celebrities, including a film director, actors and a singer, under an anti-incitement law for instigating civil servants to join the protests. Gatherings of five or more persons have been banned.

All this notwithstanding, the civil disobedience movement continues to swell. Yangon wit-



nessed on February 17 hundreds of thousands of people attend the largest single rally since the beginning of the protest movement. The movement has united nearly 7,50,000 doctors, lawyers, civil servants, railway workers, electricity providers and others, including Government employees working in tax offices and the general administration. Both train services and power supply have been disrupted. Business interests of the Tatmadaw and the Government functions essential to military rule have been targeted.

Meanwhile, Hannah Beech points out in a report in *The New York Times* of February 17 that the atmosphere in the daily protest rallies in Myanmar's major cities is that of a cultural carnival. "Graffiti artists," she adds, "have spray-painted messages mocking Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the Army chief who staged the coup. Poets have declaimed in angry verse. A cartoonists' union marched holding hand-drawn figures. Street dancers twirled with abandon."

The Tatmadaw, however, refuses to concede the civil disobedience movement's demand to undo the coup, release Aung San Suu Kyi and others arrested and allow her



THE TATMADAW REFUSES TO CONCEDE THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT'S DEMAND TO UNDO THE COUP, RELEASE AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND OTHERS ARRESTED AND ALLOW HER PARTY, THE NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY, TO FORM A GOVERNMENT

party, the National League for Democracy, which swept the November 2019 parliamentary election, to form a Government. On the other hand, it seems set on pursuing a course of keeping her under detention by levelling utterly spurious charges of illegally importing and possessing six walkie talkies and violating the country's natural disaster laws. Also, it continues trying to crush the civil disobedience movement with repression, though it has not yet resorted to the kind of savage violence it used to crush pro-democracy protesters in 1988 and Buddhist monks, pro-democracy activist and others who, in August and September of 2007, peacefully demonstrated against the Junta's nearly two decades of dictatorial rule and economic bungling. Three questions arise here. Why has the Tatmadaw unleashed that kind of murderous violence this time? Is it likely to do so? How can the rest of the world prevent such an eventuality? As to the first, it clearly did not anticipate the kind of nationwide upsurge their coup has provoked. Second, it is worried about the economic consequences of such a bid. The Generals have extensive involvement in eco-

nomical ventures which will be affected if the economy falters as a result of domestic disorder and sabotage, and sanctions specifically targeting them. The Tatmadaw may resort to a savage crackdown if it feels that it could afford the costs. Hence the democracies must disabuse it of any such idea, and make it clear that the Generals and their families will pay a very heavy price for any such misadventure. The US has slapped sanctions on 10 current and former Generals who led the coup and three economic ventures. It has also taken steps to prevent the Generals from improperly accessing more than one billion dollars in Burmese Government funds held in the US, and immediate action to limit exports of sensitive goods to the Burmese military and other entities associated with the recent coup. This is a good beginning. While condemning the coup and proposing resolutions critical of it, and supportive of democracy and Suu Kyi, the European countries have not taken comparable measures. They must put their money where their mouth is. (The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### HANG THE CULPRITS AT THE EARLIEST

Sir—This refers to the editorial 'Ignominious record' (February 19). We must understand that a crime is a crime, whether committed by a man or woman. Both men and women deserve the same quantum of punishment for committing similar crimes. Such judgments strengthen our faith in the judiciary and constitutional institutions. Shabnam was convicted along with her lover Salim of axing seven of her family members to death in 2008. The Amroha district court had sentenced them both to death. The convicts appealed their sentence first at the Allahabad High Court and then took their plea to the Supreme Court, but both courts refused to reduce their sentence. They then sent a mercy petition to the President but it too was rejected.

A woman cannot be pardoned for such heinous crime just because of her gender, nor the quantum of punishment should be made lesser for her. It is only under extraordinary circumstances, like when she is pregnant or have a deadly disease that the question of pardoning arises. The hanging will be justice for those who have been slain by the psycho duo. We must also keep in mind that being educated doesn't mean that a person will likely not commit a brutal crime. Shabnam holds Masters degrees in two subjects and taught at the village primary school. She initially pretended that her house was attacked by unidentified assailants. However, she later confessed that she had abetted Salim in the crime and made her family members drink milk laced with sedatives and thereafter throttled her little nephew. What a shame!

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### FACEBOOK LEAVES AUSTRALIANS FUMING

Sir—Facebook has blocked many sources of news for its users in Australia, leaving them in a tizzy. Many people get all of their news from Facebook and are now feeling uninformed by this step. The Australian Government is enacting a legislation that would require digital companies, including Facebook and Google, to pay for news content. Although most of these news sto-

## Akbar deserves to be punished



This refers to the editorial 'Landmark verdict' (February 19). The acquittal of journalist Priya Ramani in a defamation case filed by former Union Minister MJ Akbar is a tight slap on the face of those who sexually molest or abuse a woman and then try to get away with the heinous crime. Many habitual offenders who cannot control their lust often blame the victim of being addicted to sex. The verdict will defi-

nately empower working women and give them the courage to stand up against sexual predators. The silence on the part of most of the victims, who choose to keep mum rather than raise their voice against the offender, gives the culprit the audacity to commit the crime repeatedly.

The court should not have ended the matter by just acquitting Ramani, but should have summoned Akbar and punished him for filing the bogus suit. The likes of Akbar must be taught a lesson. Meanwhile, the matter has given fresh impetus to the #MeToo movement, which seemed to have lost its momentum of late. The court's observation that a woman has the right to put forward her grievances before any platform of her choice even after decades is also of great importance. It's the fear of infamy, besides retaliation from the offender, that forces many victims to keep suffering quietly.

N Sathasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

ries can be obtained from their home sites, the blocking of any media and news reporting by anyone is worrying. It could be that this is Facebook's way of saying that if you want us to pay for your journalism, we are not going to play the game at all.

It is a matter of concern that Facebook pages that have been blocked include State Police, health sites and even the Bureau of Meteorology. The spread seems overly broad at this stage, with commercial and charity pages blocked from new postings, perhaps any area they says "News." Facebook should have thought twice before taking the action. It is not that only Australia will suffer but it adds no feathers to the Facebook's reputation either.

Dennis Fitzgerald | Australia

### COMMON MAN IS SUFFERING A LOT

Sir—Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole has rightly admonished Bollywood actors Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar for not speaking out against the Centre even when the price of petrol has

touched ₹100 in the country. He has warned that he would stop the shooting of their films. Actors like Bachchan and Kumar are just flatterers who toe the line of the BJP, which rules the Centre, for their selfish gains. They are not concerned with the Mumbaikars at all and are only worried about their films. They live in luxury bungalows and commute in high-end cars and the spike in fuel prices is hardly a cause of concern for them. They have more than dozen cars and some of them are imported. Amitabh Bachchan must have received a huge sum for the advertisement in which he can be seen teaching others to wear a mask and sanitise their hand, or he must have done it for popularity. But the common man continues to reel under the rising petrol and diesel prices.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

## SOUND BITE

Success and failure do not determine our present and future. You may not get results you thought after taking a decision, but you should not be afraid to take a decision.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

Facebook's actions to unfriend Australia, cutting off essential information on health and emergency services, were as arrogant as they were disappointing.

Australian Prime Minister —Scott Morrison

I am someone who wants to explore every genre possible in my career. I also want to undertake as many risks as possible.



Actor —Vaani Kapoor

There's no clarity as of now regarding the venue of the IPL. The BCCI will weigh various options, and do whatever is best.

Sunrisers Hyderabad mentor —VVS Laxman

Not just in Maharashtra, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj took efforts to preserve Hindu dharma and the concept of Swadharma in Goa too.



Goa CM —Pramod Sawant

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### STOP MILKING THE COMMON MAN

Petrol and diesel prices were deregulated in 2010 and 2014 respectively, but in reality this is on paper only



SHSHANK SAURAV

The price of premium petrol in India has crossed the ₹100 per litre mark in a few cities and a litre of normal petrol now costs over ₹90. Though the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rate is within the mandated rate, the rise in fuel prices has started pinching the common man. This is because a rise in petroleum prices has a cascading effect on the economy but if there is a downward revision in prices, we hardly witness a corresponding price adjustment by suppliers or service providers. Petrol and diesel prices were deregulated in 2010 and 2014 respectively, but in reality it is a case of deregulation on paper only. Deregulation means that the retail value of commodities should move in tandem (though not in exact proportion) with the changes in global prices. However, both the Centre and State Governments take the southward movement in crude prices as an opportunity to hike taxes. In other words, consumers are asked to bear the burden when there is hike in crude prices but taxes are levied when there is fall in prices. In Delhi, the overall tax incidence on petrol was ₹22 in 2014 which touched ₹53 in February 2020. The Central Government has replaced the excise duty component with various cess (Road and Infra Cess, Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess and AID) resulting in lesser devolution to States from the consolidated fund of India, even though collection has increased.



Out of the total tax of ₹53, the Centre's net share is ₹28 and ₹25 goes to the States, including ₹5.1 revenue devolution from the Centre. Tax on petroleum has become a cash cow for governments and discussions about bringing this under the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is just an eyewash because no Government would like to do so.

The above facts are reinforced by the Budget data released by the Government which shows that the central excise collection for 2020-21 has increased from ₹2,67,000 crore of the Budget Estimate (BE) to ₹3,61,000 crore in the Revised Estimates (RE). An increase of ₹94,000 crore in tax collection as compared to the BE shows the immorality of our policymakers, given the fact that tax incidence is to be borne by consumers whose livelihoods were impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Time and again social media posts are circulated citing repayment of loans by the NDA Government as a reason behind high fuel prices. As a matter of fact, oil bonds worth just ₹3,500 crore have been redeemed so far and that, too, in 2015. There can be another argument that the rupee has depreciated and, therefore, importers have to pay a higher amount in rupee terms. All these arguments look good when they come from the Government or functionaries of the ruling party but appear puerile when given by analysts. There is no denying that the Government needs resources to run welfare schemes and create infrastructure facilities. However, it is the job of the Government to maintain a balance between different classes of taxpayers. Sadly, this balance is missing and it can be vouched by the fact that the corporate sector has received major benefits like tax rate reduction, abolition of dividend distribution tax (DDT) and so on. But various tax incentives available to the middle class were withdrawn gradually. Abolishing DDT for corporates but taxing dividend, capital gains and now even interest on Provident Fund of salaried persons shows that the decision-makers are least concerned about the pains of the middle class.

Policymakers and economic advisors in governments should be sceptical of their choices. A Government is for the people and if ruling parties at the Centre and in the States lose touch with the masses then they will meet the same fate as the Congress Party. There are laws to check profiteering by business entities but there is nothing except a moral compass to stop governments from profiteering at the expense of citizens.

(The writer is a chartered accountant and public policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

## A move in the right direction

The virtual recording of testimonies of child trafficking survivors and prosecution witnesses will be a giant leap forward in ensuring that survivors obtain justice

The recent Supreme Court directive ordering virtual recording of testimonies of child trafficking survivors and prosecution witnesses, who are required to depose in courts which are far from their place of residence, will be a giant leap forward in ensuring that survivors obtain justice. Despite being illegal in India, the malaise of forced and bonded labour is widespread and commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking persist, often with impunity for the perpetrators of the crime and limited legal recourse for the survivors. Children, both girls and boys from marginalised families in the country, are trafficked to engage in various exploitative situations. While minor boys are subject to child labour, forced labour, bonded labour, most of the girls end up serving as domestic help and sex slaves, where they are commercially exploited for sex. Sadly, child trafficking is a demand-driven problem. There is a demand for children in the labour and commercial sex market, so there is a supply. In fact, there are industries which primarily run on the nimble fingers of children such as bangle-making, zari-making, firecracker production and also cotton farming. Children are engaged in cotton farms because of their short height that enables faster plucking of cotton.

Shockingly, the crime of human trafficking through Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was codified post the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape-cum-murder incident, although it has been termed unconstitutional in the country from the time the Constitution of India became effective. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figures released in 2018, there were 1,830 reported cases of human trafficking in the nation. However, activists say that the actual figure could be much higher as many victims do not register cases with the police, largely because they do not know the law or fear the traffickers.

In the same year, the Government completed prosecution in 545 cases, convicted 322 traffickers in 95 cases and acquitted 1,124 suspects in 450 cases. The acquittal rate in trafficking cases touched 83 per cent in 2018. Poverty, involvement of huge money and an extremely low rate of conviction contribute to child trafficking becoming a huge problem in the country.

After victims are rescued and a criminal case is lodged, often the subsequent police investigation and prosecution does not result in a conviction as a majority of cases are inter-State and there is a weak mechanism for coordination among the States to deal with such crimes. Survivors or witnesses are either taken to the court by the traffickers to speak in their favour or the victims fail to appear in the court because they do not have time, money and the energy to pursue the case. Consequently, the traffickers often get away with the crime with impunity. On the other hand, survivors are often harassed, intimidated and become vulnerable to social stigma, on top of poor investigations and slow trials resulting in the victim feeling further victimised.

Cases of intimidation of the witnesses and their families are very high. A perfect example of this is the Raushan case (not his real name). Raushan along with four other children, all natives of Gaya, Bihar, was rescued from one of the bangle-making factories of Jaipur, Rajasthan, in 2016.



THE TRAFFICKERS ARE ALWAYS IN A POSITION TO INFLUENCE SURVIVORS OR THEIR FAMILIES WHO USUALLY HAIL FROM MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES. HENCE, THEY ARE RESOURCELESS AND POWERLESS AND IF THEY ARE NOT PROVIDED PROPER CARE UNDER THE WITNESS PROTECTION SCHEME, THE WHOLE EXERCISE WILL PROVE FUTILE

The writer is Executive Director, Centre DIRECT. The views expressed are personal.



Afterwards they appeared in the Jaipur court and recorded their testimonies against the alleged trafficker. They had to face severe threats and intimidation upon arrival in their home State. After three months, Raushan, his mother and the mother of another child labourer who had also testified against the trafficker, were kidnapped. They were being taken to Jaipur by a train to turn hostile in the court case against the traffickers when they were rescued just 110 kms away from Gaya. This was done through the swift intervention of the ADG-CID who was approached for help by social workers. Consequently, a second FIR of kidnapping of three persons was lodged against the same trafficker and his accomplices in Gaya. In the absence of a strong protection mechanism, re-trafficking is another major challenge in the fight against child trafficking. This is because trafficked children become skilled over a period of time and become assets for establishments that require their services. That's why they become subject to re-trafficking upon being rescued or soon after reintegration with their families.

For instance, during the lockdown necessitated by the Coronavirus pandemic, a 12-year-old boy Shailendra (not his real name) was rescued from a bangle-making factory in Jaipur along with other children. However, his 13-year-old elder brother Narendra (not his real name), was hidden by the traffickers during the rescue

operation. After Shailendra was re-united with his family in Gaya, he revealed the shocking nature of the torture that he along with other children had been going through at the hands of the factory owners.

"If we did not do the work properly, or accidentally broke a bangle, we were thrashed mercilessly. After long working hours when we dozed off late in the night chilli powder was sprinkled into our eyes as punishment for sleeping. They had a music system in the room and whenever they would beat us they would play the music at full volume to drown out our cries, so that no one could know what was happening in the factory," Shailendra told his parents.

However, within a week of the rescue, the trafficker arrived at their home asking for Shailendra to be taken back to the factory in Jaipur. This was vehemently opposed by the parents and they insisted that their older son, Narendra be sent home, too. But the trafficker kept mounting pressure on them to allow the child to go back to Jaipur with him. He told the parents that if they did not comply with his wishes their elder child would be killed. The mother spoke with Vijay Kewat, a social worker associated with a non-governmental organisation fighting against child trafficking, who took her to a nearby police station to lodge an FIR against the trafficker. The FIR was registered and Narendra was finally brought back home by Gaya police in December 2020. A witness

protection application with the support of an NGO has been moved to the competent authority in the district in this regard.

Given the grim scenario surrounding child trafficking, recording of testimonies through video-conferencing will have a huge impact on the thriving racket in the country. There are around 12 to 15 child traffickers in a few cities of Bihar who have been active for a long time and are still involved in aiding and abetting of trafficking of children. Over the last three years, 922 children, all natives of Bihar, have been rescued from Jaipur.

After the apex court's order, two cases have been identified on a pilot basis for the recording of the testimonies virtually. One is to be done between the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Court-2, Jaipur, and the POCSO Court, Gaya in Bihar and the other which has already been put in motion, is between the Additional Sessions Court, Karkardooma, Delhi, and the POCSO Court, Sitamarhi in Bihar.

The traffickers often belong to the neighbouring or same village as the survivors, and are well-off and politically well-connected. The traffickers are always in a position to influence survivors or their families who usually hail from marginalised communities. Hence, they are resourceless and powerless and if they are not provided proper care under the witness protection scheme, the whole exercise will prove futile.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD SENT RELIEF FUNDS AFTER THE AMPHAN CYCLONE, BUT THE MONEY WAS SIPHONED OFF BY TMC LEADERS.

—UNION HOME MINISTER

AMIT SHAH



THE BJP DIDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR WEST BENGAL. EVEN DURING AMPHAN, THEY DIDN'T GIVE PROPER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE

## Govt indifference plaguing the solar energy sector

The Budget left the renewable energy sector feeling let down as not only have its requirements not been met but some existing benefits have been taken away, too

In a country where the Sun is worshipped, solar power is justly considered the energy of the future. Solar power's abundant availability in India not only ensures scalability but also bolsters our energy security. India can generate 748 GW of solar energy provided three per cent of the waste land is covered with solar photovoltaic (PV) modules. Pursuing this goal is the Government's National Solar Mission (NSM) which is mandated to develop India as a global solar energy leader. The NSM's purpose is to install 100 GW grid-connected solar power plants by 2022 and assist India to realise the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) target of achieving 40 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources and to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by



KOTA SRIRAJ

The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.

35 per cent by 2030.

But these lofty ambitions do not match the developments on the ground and the slowdown in capacity addition in recent years is a proof of the same. The cause of this sluggishness is the presence of a variety of unaddressed hurdles that have been allowed to grow by a lethargic Government policy regime. This is further evident by the state of PV cell production which is yet to become truly competitive. Adding to these challenges are the transmission losses at approximately 40 per cent, which make solar power generation highly unfeasible. These conditions are further made worse by the scarcity of per capita land availability in India, especially near substations for exclusive installation of solar cells.

On the other hand project costs are increasing, debt is mounting while nearly a third

of the 23,600 MW renewable power projects, won by various players after quoting the lowest rates in reverse auctions conducted by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) for the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS), are staring at an uncertain future as the agency has not yet found buyers for power from these solar/wind energy generation units.

There are systemic issues as well. For instance, on the supply side the main grouse for solar power suppliers are the rock bottom tariffs which are among the world's lowest. On top of this, State governments insist that companies sell power to discoms at cheap prices which hurts these firms' profit margins and negatively affects focus on quality and innovation. Low tariffs combined with chronic delay in payments mean that even the banks become reluctant to lend to



these firms, because they are unsure of profit sustainability. The lack of Government intervention in these conditions is disturbing enough but what makes it even more concerning is when State Governments renege on the terms of Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) and demand tariff renegotiation at the time of payment. These unhealthy practices must be curtailed by the Centre if the solar power sector is to flourish. The recently-announced Budget was a fantastic oppor-

tunity to address these concerns and put the sector firmly back on track, but somehow that did not happen.

The Budget left the renewable energy sector feeling let down as not only have its requirements not been met but some of the existing benefits have been taken away, too. An unwelcome change in this regard relates to the custom duty for machinery, instruments, appliances, components or auxiliary equipment, including those required for testing and quality control of solar power generation projects, which was capped at five per cent previously. This exemption has been taken away. Developers would now be burdened by the increased costs of import and this would also lead to litigation under the PPAs for change in law claims.

Instead of a lacklustre attempt to support the solar

power industry, the Government would have done well to address the challenges. The complexity of the subsidy structure and involvement of too many agencies, electricity boards and the electricity regulatory commission makes the development of solar PV projects difficult. The Budget should have demolished all these complex structures and focused on critical issues such as financing, which is a major issue for PV manufacturers.

The Government should have installed a robust financing infrastructure, models and arrangements to spur the PV industry and consumption of PV products, besides training and development of human resources to drive industry growth and PV adoption.

This would have had a positive cascading effect and improved intra-industry cooperation for expanding the PV

supply chain as well, which would have contributed in lowering costs.

Additionally, the Centre could have focused on the need to build consumer awareness about the technology, economics and right usage of PV products and modules. At the manufacturer end, the awareness could have been driven by sharing technical information through conferences and workshops, in collaborating with balance of systems manufacturers and in gathering and publishing accurate market data, trends and projections. Finally, the Government should have linked the solar energy targets with 'Make in India', the 'Smart City Mission' and 'Digital India'. This would have given this promising sector a fresh perspective and ensured the development and transformation of the entire renewable power system in the country.

# Bill to give work permit to H-1B workers' dependents

Washington: A bicameral US Congress Act of 2021 proposing a pathway to citizenship to 11 million undocumented workers, elimination of per country quota for employment-based green cards and work authorization for dependents of H-1B foreign workers, was introduced in the Congress.

The bill, if passed by both the chambers of the Congress — House of Representatives and the Senate — and signed into law by President Joe Biden would bring citizenship to millions of foreign nationals, including undocumented and those who came to the country legally.

The legislation would also benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian IT professionals and their families.

Authors of the bill — Senator Bob Menendez and Congresswoman Linda Sánchez — told reporters that the US Citizenship Act of 2021 establishes a moral and economic imperative and a vision of immigration reform that is expansive and inclusive.

It grows the economy by making changes to the employment-based immigration system, eliminating per-country

caps, making it easier for STEM advanced degree holders from US universities to stay, improving access to green cards for workers in lower-wage industries, giving dependents of H-1B holders work authorization, and preventing children of H-1B holders from aging out of the system.

"I am the daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico. I have dedicated my career to building an immigration system that lets people live without fear, and a system that gives immigrants — like my parents — who sought a better life and contribute to our nation a fair opportunity to thrive," Sanchez said.

"Immigrants contribute greatly to our country and society. They own businesses, pay taxes and teach our children. They are our coworkers, neighbors and friends," said Menendez.

"We have a historic opportunity to finally enact bold immigration reform that leaves no one behind, addresses root causes of migration, and safeguards our country's national security. We have a moral and economic imperative to get

this done once and for all," he said.

The ruling Democrats have a majority in both the House and Senate. However, in the upper chamber, they need support of 10 Republicans to get the legislation through the Congress before it can be signed into law.

The Democratic leadership and the White House hope that they will get the necessary support in the interest of millions of non-citizens living in the country.

Supported by the White House, the bill creates an earned roadmap to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants, with an expedited three-year path to citizenship, and giving all other undocumented immigrants who pass background checks and pay taxes with an eight-year path to citizenship without fear of deportation.

It reforms family-based immigration system to keep families together by recapturing visas from previous years to clear backlogs, including spouses and children of green card holders as immediate family members. **PTI**

# US ends Trump policy, lets in asylum-seekers stuck in Mexico

San Diego: After waiting months and sometimes years in Mexico, people seeking asylum in the United States are being allowed into the country starting Friday as they wait for courts to decide on their cases, unwinding one of the Trump administration's signature immigration policies that President Joe Biden vowed to end.

The number of asylum-seekers coming in initially will be very limited, beginning Friday at a border crossing in San Diego and expanding to Brownsville, Texas, on Monday and El Paso, Texas, next Friday.

US officials are warning people not to come to the US-Mexico border, saying an estimated 25,000 people with active cases in the "Remain in Mexico" program and several hundred who are appealing decisions should register on a website that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is launching early next week.

The International Organisation for Migration, the UN migration agency, plans to test asylum-seekers for COVID-19 and will quarantine anyone who tests positive for 10 days before they enter the United States.

Friday marks a key milestone in unraveling one of former President Donald Trump's cornerstone policies to deter people from seeking protection from persecution and returns the US asylum system to the way it worked for decades.

But there are unanswered questions, including how Central Americans who returned home will get back to the US-Mexico border.

It's also unclear how long it will take to work through more than 25,000 active Remain in Mexico cases, with the oldest going first. US officials say two of the border crossings can each handle up to 300 people a day and a smaller crossing can take fewer, but they will start well below those numbers. The officials didn't specify the crossings.

Biden is quickly making good on a campaign promise to end the policy known officially as "Migrant Protection Protocols," which Trump said was critical to reversing a surge of asylum-seekers that peaked in 2019. **AP**

# US says ready for talks with Iran and other nations on nuke deal

Washington: The Biden administration has said it is willing to sit down with talks with Iran and world powers to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Tehran's atomic programme, in the first major step aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal that was close to falling apart after the previous Trump regime withdrew from it.

Former president Donald Trump pulled the US out of the deal in 2018.

Under the deal, Iran had agreed to greatly limit its nuclear programme through 2025. However, Trump argued that this gave the Iranians a pathway to nuclear weapons.

President Joe Biden and his advisors have said that they will rejoin the deal if Iran returns to compliance with the agreement.

"The United States would accept an invitation from the European Union High Representative to attend a meeting of the P5+1 and Iran to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Iran's nuclear programme," State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said on Thursday. P5+1 include the five per-

manent members of the Security Council — namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — plus Germany, who during the Obama administration had entered into an agreement with Iran.

The announcement on Iran came after Secretary of State Antony Blinken met virtually with his counterparts from the three European co-signers (E3) of the deal.

A senior administration official told reporters that President Biden is committed to resuming an American multilateral diplomatic role in trying to resolve the issues that they have with Iran.

The US wants "to see whether we could get to a situation where Iran is back in compliance with the JCPOA and the US is back in compliance with the JCPOA, and use that as a platform to then negotiate a longer, stronger deal, and also to deal with some of the regional security concerns that the US and its partners in the region have," the official said.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran

nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the P5+1 together with the European Union.

In a joint statement, the US and E3 expressed their shared fundamental security interest in upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and ensuring that Iran can never develop a nuclear weapon.

In this context, the conclusion of the JCPOA was a key achievement of multilateral diplomacy.

"The E3 welcomed the United States' stated intention to return to diplomacy with Iran as well as the resumption of a confident and in-depth dialogue between the E3 and the United States," the joint statement said.

The ministers affirmed strong interest in continuing their consultations and coordination, including with China and Russia, on this key security issue, recognising the role of the High Representative of the European Union as Coordinator of the Joint Commission, it said. **PTI**

# World leaders applaud US formal return to Paris Climate Pact

Washington: The United States is back in the Paris climate accord, just 107 days after it left.

While Friday's return is heavily symbolic, world leaders say they expect America to prove its seriousness after four years of being pretty much absent.

They are especially anticipating an announcement from the US in coming months on its goal of cutting emissions of heat-trapping gases by 2030.

The US return to the Paris agreement became official Friday, almost a month after President Joe Biden told the United Nations that America

wants back in.

"A cry for survival comes from the planet itself," Biden said in his inaugural address. "A cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now."

Biden signed an executive order on his first day in office reversing the pullout ordered by his predecessor, President Donald Trump.

The Trump administration had announced its withdrawal from the Paris accord in 2019 but it didn't become effective until Nov. 4, 2020, the day after the election, because of provisions in the agreement. **AP**



Anti-coup protesters flash the three-fingered salute during a rally in downtown Yangon, Myanmar on Friday **AP**

# China steps up measures to increase birth rates amid looming demographic crisis

Beijing: As the spectre of ageing population coupled with declining birth rates continue to loom large despite relaxation of the one-child policy in 2016, a concerned China has approved three provinces to carry out full assessments and research into possible effects of further easing of birth policy.

After implementing decades old one-child policy, China is facing demographic crisis with rapidly ageing population over 60 years, which according to official figures has increased to 420 million in 2019.

The two-child policy failed to make impact on the low birth rates as the number of births dropped by two million in 2018.

China as a whole saw 580,000 fewer births in 2019 than in 2018, marking the third consecutive year of decline since the implementation of the universal two-child policy in the mainland, according to official data.

According to China's statistics bureau, the country had a population of 1.34 billion in 2010 with an annual growth rate of 0.57 per cent, down from 1.07 per cent a decade earlier. **PTI**

# Pak to register Himalayan pink salt as GI

Islamabad: Pakistan has decided to register Himalayan pink salt as Geographical Indications (GI) to prevent its unauthorised use by other countries.

A GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess origin-based qualities and reputation in the region.

The precious salt is extracted from the Salt Range in Punjab which extends along the south of the Potohar Plateau and the north of the Jhelum River.

The decision was taken in a meeting with the Intellectual Property Organisation (IPO) Pakistan chaired by Commerce Adviser Razak Dawood. **PTI**

# Israel starts Russian-brokered prisoner swap with Syria

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced early Friday that it had completed a Russian-mediated prisoner swap to bring home a young Israeli woman who crossed the border into Syria.

In a statement, Netanyahu's office said the woman was on her way home, hours after Israel announced it had returned to Syria two she-

pherds who crossed into Israeli territory in recent weeks. According to Israeli media reports, the 25-year-old woman was sent by Syria to Russia, where an Israeli plane was dispatched to retrieve her.

Netanyahu thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for helping engineer the deal, saying he had reached out to the leader for help. "I asked for his help, and he indeed

acted," Netanyahu said, calling the Russian leader "my friend."

Little is known about why the woman entered Syria. Israeli media have said she is a former resident of an ultra-Orthodox West Bank settlement, but she has not been publicly identified. Syrian media said she accidentally entered Syrian territory after crossing from the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights. **AP**

# Woman shot during protest against Myanmar coup dies

Yangon (Myanmar): A young woman who was shot in the head by police last week during a protest against the military coup in Myanmar died Friday, her family said.

It was the first confirmed death among thousands of

protesters who have faced off against security forces since the junta took power on February 1, detained the country's elected leaders and prevented Parliament from convening.

Mya Thwet Thwet Khine

was shot during a demonstration in the capital, Naypyitaw, on February 9, two days before her 20th birthday.

Video showed her sheltering from water cannons and suddenly dropping to the ground after a bullet penetrated the motorcycle helmet she was wearing.

She had been on life support in a hospital with what doctors said was no chance of recovery. **AP**

**DOON UNIVERSITY**  
Mothrowala Road Kedarpur, PO Defence Colony, Dehradun-248012 Phone No : 0135-2533105

**Recruitment on Teaching and non-Teaching Posts**  
Applications are invited from suitable candidates in the prescribed format for faculty positions of Professors, Associate Professor, Assistant Professors and Librarian in Doon University, Dehradun. For further details about the Application Form, Positions to be filled, Qualifications and Specializations, please access Doon University's website: [www.doonuniversity.org](http://www.doonuniversity.org). Application complete in all respects should reach office of the Registrar on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. **Registrar**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known that Mr. Gurvachan Singh who was owner of undivided share of Plot No-147 Old No.25 Kharsa No 39 Village Azad Pur, now presently colony is known as Rameshwar Nagar- Gali No 3, New Delhi-110033 REGISTERED A WILL dated 24/04/1984 in favour of S Kirpal Singh to transfer his half share of property. S Kirpal Singh passed away on 23rd May 2017 leaving his property to his legal heirs, who further sold upper ground floor without roof rights of the property to Satinder Kaur. And hereby informed that my Client Pritam Singh S/o Late Rajender Singh is buying this property. Any person claiming to be legal heir may lodge the objection, if any with the undersigned within 7 days of publication of this notice at the address hereinbefore.

**MANOJ YADAV (ADVOCATE)**  
Registration No. D/268/2010  
9-B, DIWAN STATE, DWARKA MOD METRO STATION NEW DELHI-110059  
Date: 20/02/2021  
Place: New Delhi  
Ph: 011-41122728 kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
DEVELOPMENT OF UDHNA NEW GOODS SHED AND MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Sr. Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Department, Ground Floor, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. Invites tenders from interested parties, Tender Notice No. WR-MMCTOCOM(CGGC)/29/2020 - Dated 18.02.2021. Type of Tender : Open Tender (Single Packet System). Name of work : Development of Udhna New Goods shed as a Common User facility with maintenance of existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure such as Warehouse, open stacking area, truck parking terminal etc, on a PPP model for a period of 10 years. EMD/Guarantee Amount : ₹4,50,800/- . Issuing of Tender Document : On all working days (10.00 hrs. upto 17.00 hrs.) Last date of issue of corrigendum, if any : Up to 16.03.2021 Date and time of closing of sale of Tender Document : At 17.00 hrs on 21.03.2021. Date and time of receipt of Tender Document : Up to 15.00 hrs on 22.03.2021. Date and time of opening of Tender Document : At 15.30 hrs on 22.03.2021. Tender Document available for download from website : Available on Western Railway's website [www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in) 673

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**RAJASTHAN SKILL & LIVELIHOODS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
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F (J) No: RSLDC/JA/AC/SANKALP/PPMCA/2021-22/29982 Dated: 19.02.2021

**CORRIGENDUM**  
Reference: - RFP No. RSLDC/ Services (SANKALP)/4Cr./OCB/2020/16 dated 3rd Feb, 2021

In the above referred RFP following provisions are amended based on the pre-bid queries:-

RFP Page No.	RFP Point No.	Current Provision	Revised Provision
15	Point no. 6	The bidder must have successfully completed at least two projects having similar scope/And Work order services (as per the Scope of Work) for any State/ Central Government Organization / PSU's in India, during the last three financial years i.e. 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20. The Project Value of each project shall not be less than INR 05 Cr. (Rupees Five Cr.)	Letter of Award/ Copy of Agreement or Sanction order along with Current Status of Work Certificate from the client.
31	Point no. 5	Letter of Award/ Copy of Agreement and successful completion certificate by client. RSLDC may choose to verify the claims of organization.	Letter of Award/ Copy of Agreement or Sanction order along with Current Status of Work Certificate from the client. RSLDC may choose to verify the claims of organization.

The interested bidders may submit the proposal as per the above amendments and all other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. **Raj.Samwadi/c20/10019 Managing Director, RSLDC**

**MADHYA PRADESH MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN COMPANY LTD.**  
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)  
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER (O & M CIRCLE) BETUL  
Tikari Link Road, Betul-460001, E-mail : [Sebetulcircle@gmail.com](mailto:Sebetulcircle@gmail.com)  
Ref. : GM/O&M/BTR/PUR/7943 Betul, Date : 18.02.2021

**TENDER NOTICE**  
General Manager (O & M), MPMKVCL, Betul, invites following bids from Service Provider through e-tendering :

Tender specification Number	Particulars	Tender Fee excluding GST (in Rs.)	Approximate Tender value (Rs. Cr.)	Date of opening of Tender
GM/O&M/BTR/PUR/7943 Betul, Date 18.02.21	Outsourcing of Manpower required for Miscellaneous Works in O & M, Betul under the Jurisdiction of MPMKVCL, Bhopal.	2000.00	28.81	04.03.2021 03:30 PM

Other details are available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & <https://mptenders.gov.in>.  
M.P. Madhyam/99982/2021 **GENERAL MANAGER (O & M)**

# UN: S Sudan's violence worse than civil war

Nairobi (Kenya): The scale of violence in South Sudan is "a lot worse" than during the country's five-year civil war, a United Nations commission announced on Friday, accusing senior officials of supporting armed groups that at times have included tens of thousands of fighters.

The new report by the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan was a sharp warning that civilians are as much at risk as ever for atroc-

ities including gang rapes, forced displacement and abductions.

The civil war that ended in 2018 killed an estimated nearly 4,00,000 people, and millions of people are still struggling to recover. "The violence is continuing because people know they can get away with it," commission chair Yasmin Sooka told reporters in Geneva. There is "no doubt that the coordination is really coming from the top." **AP**

# SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

General public is here by informed that one Person Namely: Dilip Yadav, S/o Subhash Yadav, R/o H. No. B-176, New Sanjay Amar Colony, Shahdara, Delhi. Age: 22 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Medium, Face: Long, Wearing: Grey Sweater, Light Brown Check Shirt, Maroon Lower and Black Shoes in feet. The Person is Mentally Unstable has been missing since 12.02.2021 from the area of P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi in this regard a DD No. 34A dated 13.02.2021 has been registered at P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this Person but no clue has come to light so far.

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

E-Mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) **SHO**  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi**  
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-21210833, 7065036028**  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **DP/361/SHD/2021**

**MADHYA PRADESH MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN COMPANY LTD.**  
(Wholly Owned Govt. of M.P.)  
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER (O&M), HOSHANGABAD  
Tel : (07574) - 255594, Fax : 07574-256180  
Ref. : GM/O&M/PUR/20-21/NIT-6/11167 Hoshangabad, Date : 18.02.2021

**TENDER NOTICE**  
General Manager (O & M), MPMKVCL, Hoshangabad, invites following bids from Service Provider through e-tendering :

Tender specification Number	Particulars	Tender Fee excluding GST (in Rs.)	Approximate Tender value (Rs. Cr.)	Date of opening of Tender
GM/O&M/PUR/20-21/NIT-6/11167 dt.18.02.21	Outsourcing of Manpower required for Miscellaneous Works in O&M, Hoshangabad under the Jurisdiction of MPMKVCL, Bhopal.	2000.00	43.46	04.03.2021 03:30 PM

Other details are available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & <https://mptenders.gov.in>.  
M.P. Madhyam/99984/2021 **GENERAL MANAGER (O & M)**

# SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

General public is here by informed that the one boy Namely: Ashish, S/o: Late Sh. Neelu, R/o: Jhuggi 106, Block No. 12, Kalyanpuri, Delhi. Age: 14 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Build: Thin, Wearing: Blue T-shirt, Hawai Slipper in feet, has been missing since 28.11.2019 from Pant Hospital, JLN Marg, Daryia Ganj in the area of P.S. Daryia Ganj, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 239/19, dated 28.11.2019, U/S 363 IPC has been lodged at P.S. Daryia Ganj, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far.

Any Person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) **SHO**  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **P.S. Daryia Ganj, Delhi.**  
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-23274683, 23279331**  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **DP/660/CD/2021**

# Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender

No. SSA/IE/Pre-Primary/Ka-sreni/224/2020/4495 Date : 18.02.2021

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from reputed manufacturer / supplier of play materials for supply of Play materials.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Executive Director,  
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

# Max 4 PSUs in strategic sectors: DPE Secretary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The new public sector enterprises policy envisages that the strategic sectors have limited number of players restricting it to maximum four public sector enterprises of the holding nature, a top official said on Friday.

Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) Secretary Sailesh said the remaining enterprises will be rationalised in terms of mergers, amalgamations and privatisation if feasible.

As part of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' package, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in May announced that there will be a maximum of four public sector companies in strategic sectors, and state-owned firms in other segments will eventu-

**'The new paradigm framework in which the government is working on will make PSU a pivotal part and there is a strength towards asset monetisation in the brownfield project'**

ally be privatised. The DPE secretary was addressing a webinar organised by PHDCCI.

Sailesh said, "We need to build our capabilities and emphasise our domestic production for global and domestic outreach at a globally competitive cost."

The new paradigm framework in which the govern-

ment is working on will make PSU a pivotal part and there is a strength towards asset monetisation in the brownfield project, he added. "We need to ensure that the desired results are achieved in the collaborative effect of the private sector to enhance wealth, improve R&D, and growth of the economy."

"The secretary also said that with the announcements of the new PSU policy, the govt wishes to have a strong and impactful public sector in a strategic sector. "MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) have the potential in the sectors such as defence, infrastructure, manufacturing, power, petroleum, coal, mining, ports, airports, and many more, which will help to create better running of government assets," he said.

# SC directs RBI to lay down regulations in 6 months for locker facility management in banks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Holding that banks cannot wash off their hands towards their customers for the operation of lockers, the Supreme Court Friday directed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to lay down regulations within six months mandating the steps to be taken by banks with respect to locker facility management.

A bench comprising Justices M M Shantanagoudar and Vineet Saran said with the advent of globalization, banking institutions have acquired a very significant role in the life of the common man as both domestic and international economic transactions within the country have increased multiple folds.

The top court said people are hesitant to keep their liquid assets at home as "we are steadily moving towards a cash-less economy."

"Thus, as is evident from the rising demand for such services, lockers have become an essential service provided by every banking institution. Such services may be availed of by citizens as well as by foreign nationals," the bench said.

Moreover, due to rapid gains in technology, "we are now transitioning from dual key-operated lockers to electronically operated lockers," the top court said. In the electronically operated lockers, though the customer may have partial access to the locker through passwords or ATM pin, etc., they are unlikely to possess the technological know-how to control the operation of such lockers, the bench said. "On the other hand, there is the possibility that miscreants may manipulate the technologies used in these systems to gain access to the lockers without the customers' knowledge or consent," it said.

# Govt allows drone deployment to collect agri data

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has given regulatory approval for drone deployment for remote sensing data collection in agricultural areas of 100 districts of the country.

The move will be beneficial for Gram Panchayat level yield estimation, under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has granted conditional exemption for Remotely Piloted Aircraft System usage to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

"The exemption shall be valid from the one year from the date of issue of the permission letter or until the operationalisation of the 'Digital Sky Platform', whichever is earlier," the ministry said in a statement.

# Markets extend losses for 4th day as profit-booking takes hold

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex tumbled 435 points while the Nifty slumped below the 15,000 mark on Friday as markets buckled under selling pressure for the fourth session on the trot amid a lacklustre trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 434.93 points or 0.85 per cent lower at 50,889.76, pressured by robust selling in banking and auto counters. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty gave up the 15,000 level, dropping 137.20 points or 0.91 per cent to 14,981.75. A day after topping the Sensex gainer's chart, ONGC emerged as the biggest laggard in Friday's session, tumbling 5.06 per cent.

It was followed by SBI, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Auto, Maruti and M&M, which shed up to 3.77 per cent. On the other hand, IndusInd Bank,

**During the week, the Sensex declined 654.54 points or 1.26%, and Nifty fell 181.55 points or 1.19%**

HUL, Dr Reddy's, NTPC, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers, climbing up to 1.97%.

During the week, the Sensex declined 654.54 points or 1.26 per cent, and Nifty fell 181.55 points or 1.19 per cent. "The Nifty-50 and BSE Sensex declined by 1.2 per cent this week as market mood became cautious on rising global and local bond yields."

The broader markets that is NSE Mid Cap 100 Index and BSE Small Cap Index are both in the green this week. The US 10 Year Bond yields have risen from below 1 per cent to 1.29 per cent, building in economic impact of the USD 1.9 trillion stimulus package.

# Petrol crosses ₹90 mark in Delhi, diesel at ₹80.60

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

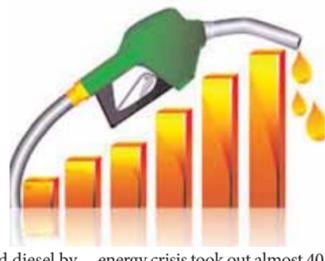
Petrol price on Friday crossed the ₹90-per-litre mark in the national capital, and diesel soared to ₹80.60 after rates for the 11th consecutive day in a row.

Petrol price on Friday was hiked by 31 paise per litre and diesel by 33 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

This pushed the petrol price to ₹90.19 a litre in Delhi and to ₹96.62 in Mumbai.

Diesel now comes for Rs 80.60 a litre in the national capital and for ₹87.62 in Mumbai.

The increase follows a spurt in prices of oil in the international market, on which India is 85 per cent dependent to meet its needs. Brent oil crossed USD 65 a barrel on Thursday as a worsening US



energy crisis took out almost 40 per cent of the nation's crude production.

In 11 days, retail petrol prices have risen by Rs 3.24 a litre, a record since the pricing was deregulated in 2010, and diesel rates have gone up by Rs 3.47.

Petrol price has already surged past the Rs 100-mark in some places in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, which levy the highest VAT on the fuel. Retail pump prices defer from state to state depending on the local taxes (VAT) and freight.

# FM interacts with top industry captains of Tamil Nadu

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday held an informal meeting with top industrialists of Tamil Nadu to elicit their views on the budget she presented on February 1.

TVS Motor Chairman Venu Srinivasan, MRF Ltd Chairman M Mammen, India Cements Ltd Vice Chairman N Srinivasan, former Ashok Leyland Chairman R Seshasayee and Apollo Hospitals MD Sunita Reddy were among those who took part in the meeting, sources said.

This is the first time she is meeting industry captains in Tamil Nadu after presenting the budget. However, the meeting was out of bounds for the media and the points discussed were not known. Industry sources said the FM listened to the views put forth by the industrialists during the interaction.

The India Cements Ltd Managing Director N

Srinivasan said he thanked the FM for presenting an 'outstanding' budget that would spur growth.

"The budget will spur growth. I told her that during this calendar year itself, all the industries, including manufacturing, will be running towards full capacity", Srinivasan told PTI.

The official twitter handle of the Minister interacting with the industrialists.

Earlier in the day, BJP Tamil Nadu unit President L Murugan received Sitharaman and presented a 'Vid' to her as part of welcoming her to the state.

# INBRIEF

## IRFC NET PROFIT GROWS BY 15.65%

**New Delhi:** Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited ("IRFC" or the "Company") the dedicated market borrowing arm of the Indian Railways posted profit growth of 15.65% to Rs.2934 Crore for the nine months ended 31st December, 2020 from Rs. 2,537 Crore for the corresponding nine months in the previous year. The total revenue from operation grew by 10.76% on YoY basis for the same period to stand at Rs. 11,315.51 crore. The Board of Directors of IRFC has declared an interim dividend of Rs 1,380 crore translating to Rs.1.05 per share for the financial year 2020-21, on a face value of Rs 10 per equity share.

## AMAZON INKS PACT TO HIRE EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

**New Delhi:** Amazon India on Friday said it has signed an agreement with the Directorate General Resettlement to provide ex-service personnel with work opportunities across its network in India. "Veterans will have access to various work opportunities including a mix of individual contribution and managerial roles across its Fulfillment Centres, Sort Centres, and Delivery Stations. This collaborative effort further expands Amazon India's existing Military Veterans Employment program," it said.

## VENTURE FOR SOLAR ENERGY SOLUTIONS

With an aim to consolidate and service its large and rapidly growing customer base, MYSUN's new venture will provide bespoke solar energy solutions to large corporate, industrial and commercial establishments on a built, own, operate and transfer or RESCO model.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Publicly notified that the Residential EWS Flat No. 181-B, Block-Y, Sector -12, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar U.P., allottee of Mr. Animesh Sinha S/o Sh. N.N. Prasad R/o Y-205-A, Sector-12, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar U.P., had sold on the basis of General Power of Attorney to the following persons. The General Power of Attorney was registered on dated 28.07.2003, in the name of Mrs. Anita Gupta W/o Sh. Manoj Kumar Gupta R/o Y-251-A, Sector-12, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar U.P., and agreement not executed. Because agreement to sell is not registered so it is publicly notified that the transfer of the property bearing Residential EWS Flat No. 181-B, Block-Y, Sector-12, Noida, Distt. G.B.Nagar U.P. is going to be transferred through G.P.A. in the name of Sh. Manoj Kumar Gupta S/o Sh. R.R. Gupta R/o Y-251-A, Sector-12, Noida, Distt. G.B.Nagar U.P., if some one has any objection/he/she file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Housing Department (H) of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Mrs. Anita Gupta

# Forex reserves down by USD 249 mn to USD 583.697 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves fell by USD 249 million to USD 583.697 billion in the week ended February 12, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week, the reserves had declined by USD 6.24 billion to stand at USD 583.945 billion. It had touched a record high of USD 590.185 billion in the week ended January 29, 2021.

In the reporting week, the decrease in reserves was mainly due to a fall in the foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCAs decreased by USD 1.387 billion to USD 540.951 billion, weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

**UJVN LIMITED**  
H.O. : 'UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun - 248006  
Tel.: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

**E-Tender Notice** Dated: 19.02.2021  
Ref. No.: 149

Office of the Executive Engineer (Maint.), Chibro Power Station, invites online bids from interested parties.

(1) Tender No: E-CH(Maint.)-32/2020-21 Procurement of Spares for 60 MW Francis Turbine of Chibro (2) E-CH(Maint.)-33/2020-21 Procurement of various Consumables items at Chibro

Estimated cost: (1) ₹ 5,46,700 (2) ₹ 5,67,487 (GST extra respectively)  
Date of availability of bid document on website: 22.02.2021, 15:30 hrs.  
Last date for submission of bid on website: 15.03.2021, 17:00 hrs.  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in" Executive Engineer (Maint., Chibro)

**"Avoid Wasteful Use of Electricity"**

**M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.**  
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)  
BANGANGA PARISAR SHIVPURI - 473551  
Phone : 07492-220793  
Ref. : GM/O & M/PUR/SPR/2020-21/NIT/03/7200 Date : 18.02.2021

**TENDER NOTICE**  
General Manager (O & M), MPMKVCL, Shivpuri, invites following bids from Service Provider through e-tendering.

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Tender Fee Excluding GST (in Rs.)	Approximate Tender Value (Rs. Cr.)	Date of Opening of Tender
03/7200	Outsourcing of Man-power required for Miscellaneous Works in O & M, Circle Shivpuri under the Jurisdiction of MPMKVCL, Bhopal	2000.00	32.77	4.3.2021 03:30 PM

Other details are available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & <https://mptenders.gov.in>.  
M.P. Madhyam/99990/2021 GENERAL MANAGER (O & M)

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED PERSON**

General public is hereby informed that this person namely Sonu S/o Ramesh Kumar R/o H.No. C-11, Gali No. 1, Vikrant Chowk, Mohan Garden, Delhi Age : 33 years, Height : 5'5", Complexion : Fair, Face : Oval, wearing blue colour shirt, black colour pant and black colour chappal in feet, has been missing/ kidnapped since 23.12.2020 from the area of P.S. Rahnola, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 63-A dated 27.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Rahnola, Delhi.

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

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

SHO : P.S. Rahnola, Delhi, Ph. : 011-28363001, 28363002

**SBFC**  
SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.  
(Erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd.) Corporate Identity Number: U67190MH2008PTC178270

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by SBFC Finance Pvt.Ltd. on 27th February 2021 at 10 AM at O - 7, 1st Floor, 'above Look Saloon, Lajpat Nagar 2, New Delhi - 110024, Faridabad branch D-2, First Floor, N.I.T., Near 1-2 Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana-121001 and Gurugram branch First Floor, Property No. 342/9, Subhash Nagar, 1st Floor, New Railway Road, Gurugram - 122001.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overdue Loan Accounts of our various Customers mentioned below with branch name.

Laxmi Nagar, PR00799586 PR00788043 PR00787571 PR00786973 Rohini, PR00821911

For more details, please contact  
**SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.**  
(Erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd.)  
Contact Number(s): Lajpat Nagar 1800-102-8012 / 011-40305228 / 207, Faridabad: 01294314725/4104450 and Gurugram Branch 0124-4276037.  
(SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. (erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd.) reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned & postpone / cancel the auction without any prior notice.)

**KARVY** FINANCE Retail is now SBFC

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**NIT FOR LEASING OF VPU IN TRAIN NO. 02951/52 AND 02955/56**

Divisional Commercial Manager (Commercial), Mumbai Division, DRM Office Building, Ground Floor, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. Invites tenders online through website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) from registered lease holders, for leasing of Parcel Van (VP) of 24 tonnes capacity on round trip basis on payment of lump sum rates for loading and unloading of parcels by the train 02951/52 and 02955/56 for a period of five years. Tender No. MMCTOCMM(CTV)/3/2021. Details of VPUs are as under:-

Sr. No.	Train No.	Name of Train	From To and back	Frequency	Reserve Price per round trip in (₹)	EMD in (₹)	Total Contract Value in (₹)
1.	02951/02952	NDLS Rajdhani Special	MMCT-NDLS- MMCT	Daily	2,47,464/-	14,00,000/-	47,98,70,604/-
2.	02955/02956	MMCT JP Special	MMCT-JP- MMCT	Daily	1,69,388/-	14,00,000/-	32,84,69,003/-

Note :- (1) Reserve price is exclusive of development charges and applicable Goods & Service Tax presently @ 2% and 5% respectively. The percentage of charges is subject to revision as advised by Railway Board from time to time. (2) Closing of Tender online at [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) on 06-03-2021 at 15:00 hrs. 674

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
Notice for sale of Immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
1.	(A) Rakesh Kumar Jain (Borrower), Shiroam Jain (Co-Borrower), LBDEL00001174328	(C) Flat No. D-180/C, Shyam Park Extn, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad Area 565 Sq Ft.	(D) Rs. 20,48,761.8/- (as on February 11, 2021.	(E) Rs. 7,12,000/- Rs. 71,200/-	(F) March 20, 2021 From 11 AM To 1 PM	(G) April 06, 2021 From 11 AM- 1 PM

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://disposalsub.com>) of our auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagee/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till April 5, 2021 before 05:00 P.M. else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005, and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before April 5, 2021 before 05:00 P.M. along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005 on or before April 5, 2021 before 05:00 P.M. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited on 9327230494 or M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933

Please note that Marketing agencies 1.M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited 2. Augoo Asset Management Pvt Ltd 3. Props AMC have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit [www.icicibank.com/n4ps](http://www.icicibank.com/n4ps)

Date: February 20, 2021 Place: Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI.**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR JEEVAN TARA BUILDING**  
**PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI - 110001.**

OA. No. 1012/19 DATE: 15.02.2021  
CANARA BANK APPLICANT  
VERSUS  
SMT. SHASHI BALA DOMARA & ORS. ...RESPONDENT  
To, DEFENDANT

1. SMT. SHASHI BALA DOMARA W/O MR. MANOJ DOOMRA R/O HOUSE NO A/4/13 RAIL VIHAR INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD UP-201011  
ALSO: ACTE PRESIDENT (FINANCE) AUTOMAT INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD.  
PLOT NO. 18-19 DILSHAD GARDEN G.T. ROAD NEW DELHI -92

2. MR. MANOJ DOOMRA R/O HOUSE NO A/4/13 RAIL VIHAR INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD UP-201011  
ALSO: FLAT NO 73A, GROUND FLOOR SHIPTA SUN CITY INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD - 201014  
ALSO: M/S TECHNOLOGIES 24\*7 (PROPRIETOR) B-99, SECT-63 NOIDA UP- 201301

3. SUPERCITY DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD.  
6, (BHARTI COLONY) 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR PREET VIHAR OPP. METRO PILLAR NO. 73 VIKAS MARG NEW DELHI - 92  
ALSO: AT MAY FARE RESIDENCY PLOT NO GH-07 B, SECT-TECH ZONE - IV GREATER NOIDA UP- 203201

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 62,19,897/- (RUPEE SIXTY TWO LAKH NINETEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY SEVEN ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 26. 04. 2021 At 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL,  
FOR REGISTRAR, DRT-II, DELHI

**Edelweiss EDDELWEISS ASSET RECONSTRUCTION CO. LTD.**  
CIN - U67100MH2007PLC174759  
Registered Office: Edelweiss House, Off CST Road, Kalina, Mumbai 400098 Tel + 9122 4088 6090/4009 4654  
Contact Centre No. 6th Floor, Akashdeep Building, at 26, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001 Website : [www.edelweissarc.in](http://www.edelweissarc.in)

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Secured Assets)

Whereas, The Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Limited under the provisions of Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) ("SARFAESI Act") read together with rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("the rules") issued a demand notice dated October 27, 2015 calling upon M/S URASUN METAL INDUSTRIES PVT LTD ("BORROWER") (Now In Liq.) And Mr. Jitendra Pal Marwaha Alias Jitenderpal Marwaha, Rahul Jitender Marwaha Alias Rahul Jitender Marwaha & Mrs. Usha Marwaha ("Guarantors") to repay the aggregate amount mentioned in the demand notice being Rs. 25,61,25,753/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crores Sixty One Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Three Only) together with interest at contractual rates and other charges thereon within 60 days from the date of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amounts, notice is hereby given to the Borrower, Mortgagee, Guarantor and the public in general that pursuant to the order dated 02.02.2021 passed by the Hon'ble District Magistrate, Faridabad in No. 440/SARFAESI ACT/24-12-2020 under the provisions of Section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, the Tehsildar, Faridabad has taken physical possession of the property described herein below, and has handed over the same to the undersigned. The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company Limited, acting in its capacity as Trustee of EARC Trust SC-233 (hereinafter referred to as "EARC") has taken possession of property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on February 18, 2021.

The Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the below mentioned secured assets and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the EARC for an amount of Rs. 25,61,25,753/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crores Sixty One Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Three Only) together with further interest at contractual rates and other charges thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Secured Assets:  
All that piece and parcel of Freehold Land measuring 2000 sq yards or 1672.24 sq. mtrs owned by Mr. Jitenderpal Marwaha and Mrs. Usha Marwaha located at Plot No. 125, DLF Industrial Estate No. 1, Mewala, Maharajpur, Faridabad, Haryana and bounded as: North: Road, South: Plot No. 128 and 130, East: Plot no. 123, West: Road Along with all that plant & machinery, movables, Civil Structures lying and being thereon.

Sd/-  
Date : February 18, 2021 Authorized Officer  
Place: Faridabad, Haryana Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company Limited



**Bollywood**  
 Dancing is the perfect antidote to lethargy, negativity, and accumulated unreleased emotions  
 —Ashley Lobo

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/>

**SHORTCIRCUITS**



**NEETI MOHAN**  
 Can't describe in words what a beautiful journey pregnancy is! It's a miracle that there is life growing inside of you. A small heart beating and tiny little feet kicking. And now that the baby can hear from the womb, I love singing all the more. Only when you experience you know what a privilege it is.



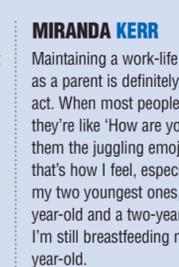
**EKTA KAPOOR**  
 I have told several stories of conservative women who have household issues, now it's time I tell stories of women who have other issues. Every woman in different stages of their life have choices and it's their choice. They don't become good or bad by any of their choices.



**SHILPA RAO**  
 For me, music is a broad term. I have always had music in my life. While singing, I don't label it as independent or playback. I give every song the same time and effort, which I would give to the next one. My involvement and commitment is to the song.



**TAHIR RAJ BHASIN**  
 The trick and challenge to get abs is commitment and consistency. Luckily, the lockdown proved instrumental. I've worked out rigorously for three months to make sure a fixed amount of exercise goes in every week and also controlled the protein to carbohydrate ratio.



**MIRANDA KERR**  
 Maintaining a work-life balance as a parent is definitely a juggling act. When most people text me, they're like 'How are you?' I send them the juggling emoji because that's how I feel, especially with my two youngest ones, a one-year-old and a two-year-old, and I'm still breastfeeding my one-year-old.

**CONVERSATION**

**THE BATTLE OF DAUNTLESS COURAGE**

Actor ANNUP SONII's series, *1962 The War In The Hills*, relates the story of 126 Indian soldiers who defended a strategic pass against 3,000 Chinese. By AYUSHI SHARMA

**What fascinated you to say yes to the series *1962 The War In The Hills*?**

There are two major reasons — one, it was a war story, based and inspired by a real incident which I had read and was absolutely aware of. Any kind of story that is related to Indian Army or defence, I get really excited. And the second reason was the director Mahesh Majrekar. I had worked with him earlier and I wanted to do so again.

**How was your experience of playing an Army Officer?**

I always love to work on films based on the Army or any defence service for that matter. I love wearing uniforms. I am very fortunate that very early in my life I have played a cop, an officer and a special commando in a series called *Testcase*. I find myself very lucky to play all these characters.

**What research went into it? Was it more mental than physical?**

See, when you play any character, there are always two kinds of research involved — physical and mental. The physical one is usually related to the profession of the character. So, since I am playing an Army officer, I made sure that I look like one. I wore the uniform properly and made sure that I appear fit enough and be able to do all those physical activities, which are required to be done to play my part. And I think mental research is always important for an actor. As far as that is concerned, it has to be the character's emotions, which can be of any kind. For instance, in this particular story, I am in a healthy competition with Abhay Deol's character, where I feel that I am more talented than him but he got the chance to lead the battle while I am on a standby. So I think these are the emotional points where you have to work as a character. In this series, the important aspect was that I should look apart and my body language should reflect my character. So that preparation was quite important.

**Any insight into the storyline...**

It's a very emotional story because this war happened when we were newly independent as a country. We were not equipped to handle a war. Somewhere down the line, I personally feel that it's more of an emotional inspiration. When you have less resources and facilities, but

even then you have to fight for your nation. So during that time your will and passion matter more. That is the reason that even when we had 3,000 opponents fighting 126 soldiers, we won. Just by imagining the numbers one gets goosebumps. I must say it was a battle of dauntless courage.



**Why do you think it's important to make shows on such subjects?**

As a creative person when you are making something, you tend to get inspired by stories. You might even get inspired by a crime, so that it reaches a larger audience and people get aware that, 'oh! It was a heinous crime and we should be careful to not get into a situation like this. We should be alert in life.' In a very similar manner, there are so many stories out there which are inspirational. Also, I was reading somewhere that in today's time, Indian Armed Forces — Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force — deliberately promotes a lot so that the youngsters feel motivated to join the services. So I think these kind of stories become very important. I feel it encourages people to understand the importance of these professions, especially the youngsters. Shows like these will help them realise

how important soldiers are for a country. I am sure a lot of youngsters will get encouraged.

**You've worked with Mahesh Manjrekar earlier in *Hathiyar*. And recently, in an interview you also mentioned that, "we're quite familiar with each other's style of working." Do you think that made your ride smooth here?**

I know how Maheshji works. Initially, I was a little apprehensive about my role because I thought there's no conflict in my character. But then deep down I knew that even if there's no conflict, I can trust the director with the effectiveness of my role. The visual journey is through the camera. If it captures you well, only then an actor's emotion reaches the audience perfectly. That's why I trusted him with my role, emotions and presentation. When you'll see the series, you'll realise that my character has that vulnerability and softness.

**Can you share a few anecdotes...**

I can recall a very interesting and highly emotional scene from the series. It is when I come to inform Shagun Singh

(Mahie Gill), who's playing Major Suraj Singh's (Abhay Deol) wife, about what happened in the battle. After hearing the news, his daughter gets hysterical. It was about how I control her emotions and calm her down. There were no dialogues in this particular scene. Maheshji had a conversation with the three of us — Mahi, the girl who's playing Suraj's daughter and me. He explained to us the crux of the scene and said, "This is what I want out of it. This is the emotion I want the audience to feel when you perform it." He then told us, "I am placing the camera in this direction and now everything is up to you guys... how you do it to create the perfect shot." So he gave us a lot of details of what we are supposed to deliver as actors. That scene took quite some time because it was a bit difficult as well as emotional since there was not a single dialogue. We just had to convey through our feelings and emotions. As they say, "Silence speaks louder than words." So we had to make the audience feel the moment by playing with our emotions.

(The series releases on February 26 on Hotstar.)

**Action unlimited**

ANUBHAV SINHA ropes in action director Stefan Richter for the Ayushmann-starrer *Anek*

Filmmaker Anubhav Sinha has roped in international action director Stefan Richter for the forthcoming Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer *Anek*.

Richter is known for his larger-than-life yet realistic action choreography, evident in action sequences he designed for Ryan Reynolds and Samuel L Jackson in the 2017 Hollywood thriller *The Hitman's Bodyguard*, and for Shah Rukh Khan in the 2011 Bollywood release *Don 2*.

"*Anek* is the biggest film of my career in terms of scale, and Anubhav Sinha is leaving no stone unturned to give the audience a huge big-screen experience with his vision. It is true that Stefan Richter has been roped in for our film. He comes in with a wealth of knowledge and has been an architect for big scale action movies around the world," said Ayushmann, disclosing the news of the collaboration along with an on-set image of Richter that he posted. He added that he would be doing something new in the film courtesy Richter.

"With his craft, the action sequences of *Anek* will match global standards and give the audience a thrilling visual experience. Anubhav sir and Stefan are making me do something that is extremely new for me. As an artiste, I relish doing different things and constantly explore myself. *Anek* is taking me on a new journey that I'm really enjoying," the actor added.



**Passion never fails**

RANVEER SINGH says that rapper Spitfire aka NITIN MISHRA is a big reason why people tuned into *Gully Boy*

Actor Ranveer Singh feels young hip-hop and rap artist Spitfire is a big reason why everybody tuned into his 2019 film *Gully Boy*.

Spitfire, whose real name is Nitin Mishra, was dubbed as a prodigy for the incredible lyrics of the song, *Asli Hip Hop*.

"Nitin AKA Spitfire is a lyrical prodigy. He is a large part of the reason everybody tuned into *Gully Boy* during its first promo when he wrote *Asli Hip Hop*. He is the one who wrote Murad's part in all of the rap battles," said Ranveer, referring to his character of Murad in the film, a youngster from the slums who goes on to become a hip-hop star.

Ranveer added, "When his matchless raw talent and pure passion revealed itself to me, it became a large part of the reason I even wanted to participate in the business in the first place."

He also spoke about his favourite



track in Spitfire's new EP titled *Partein*, which released on Friday.

"This new EP features one of my favourite tracks so far, *Zalzala* (a track

from the EP). When I am in the gym it gets me hyped and pumped up. When I hear *Sangeet* and *Afterparty* (other tracks from the EP) they trans-



port me into an elevated spiritual space and put me in a deep, thoughtful, reflective frame of mind," said the actor.

The EP speaks of the rapper's versatility, fearlessness and his beautiful spirit, said Ranveer. "*Partein* is a demonstration of skill and maturity. Tune in and hear your heart out. I can't wait for his next evolution," he added.

Ranveer has founded the independent record label InClnk with Navzar Eraneer. Spitfire is managed by the label. InClnk is his passion project that aims to give a platform to raw talents with no connection in the music industry from across the country to express their skills and present their talent to the global audience.

**Understood the value of *shunya*: Shradha**

Actor Shradha Kapoor describes the lockdown phase of last year as one of her crucial phases for self-realisation. It was a period when she could learn to unlearn and redefine the value of zero, the spiritual meaning of *shunya*, she says.

"I think every time we start a film, we start from zero, from *shunya*. Lockdown was a time for me to understand the value of several things, including self-love, the family and my emotional and spiritual health. I also think that it made me more independent, and things like the power of yoga to develop a focussed mind so that I can choose to be a part of any project — film or entrepreneurial venture — more fearlessly," Shradha said.

"As an actor, being a part of show business, we have to look in a certain way and that changes also with every film that we do, every character I play. Recently I invested in a beverage project in which I really do not have to count my calories while having my favourite drinks. In a way, during lockdown, I have understood and redefined the value of *shunya*, and now I know the brand of product or even brand of cinema I would like to associate

myself with. It is a learning that has happened through last year," she added.

Shradha has been around in Bollywood for around a decade, and she has faced success, failure, praise and criticism. Her debut film *Teen Patti* fared below expectation, her third film *Aashiqui 2* was a musical superhit, followed by *Ek Villain*. She has tried dance and action in various films including *ABCD 2*, *Baaghi*, *Street Dancer 3D*, and *Saaho*.

What has her decade in Bollywood taught her? "Firstly, whenever I get a new film, I receive it with a lot of gratitude because a producer is investing money to make the film and making me part of that journey. As an actor, I always put my 100 per cent, but result is certainly not in our hand. It is in the hands of the audience. Interestingly, the result plays a part on my next opportunity, because it is the nature of the business of cinema. I have learnt to look at things from a broader perspective," she summed up.

Shradha finished a portion of the shoot for director Luv Ranjan's untitled film co-starring Ranbir Kapoor in Delhi last month and is gearing up for her next schedule.



**IMMERSIVE 30 MINUTES**

# THE IDEAL VERSION

GARETH CORNICK's show, *Can Science Make Me Perfect?*, challenges everything you thought you knew about the perfect body. By TEAM VIVA

Anatomist Alice Roberts embarks on an audacious scientific stunt — to rebuild her own body, editing out errors left behind by evolution. With the help of one of the world's best virtual sculptors, Scott Eaton, and top SFX model maker Sangeet Prabhakar, Alice creates a life-size model of the perfect human body. She meets leading experts to find out what the body's biggest problems are, and how adaptations in the rest of the animal world could inspire her new, improved design. Ambitious, audacious and packed with cutting-edge science, *Can Science Make Me Perfect?* challenges everything you thought you knew about the perfect body. Producer Gareth Cornick talks about the show. Excerpts:

**Q Tell us about the show and how is it different?**

Well, it's the first time in my knowledge that anyone has tried to redesign a human body to make it better. And it came from the idea of the perfect body. One day, I was thinking in the office that 'what do we call the perfect body?' Is it, Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie? And that's kind of beauty. Then I thought, that we can actually design a perfect body. And what are the pieces of your body that are just not fit for purpose anymore? For a 21st century human? So that's how *Can Science Make Me Perfect* was conceptualised.

**Q What draws you to be a part of science shows?**

I always had a keen interest in science. I actually trained as a physics teacher to begin with, and just got the feeling that I wanted to make television shows because I'd get a wider audience. For many people 'Science' is an off-putting word. But the fact is science is everywhere in everything. So, I like to know things, I am always curious. And so, through the programmes I make, I try to break down that barrier, and show the audience that science is something that everyone should be interested in. You don't need to be a genius to understand it, you just need to



have a thirst for understanding things. So, I like to go far out on ideas, get people excited and get them to teach science — this is what really drives me crazy.

**Q Which are the most striking discoveries revealed in the show?**

Well, I think as a part of the skeleton, one thing we really went for were the hips and knees. And in our research, we realised that virtually everyone, by the time they're 70, or 80's will have a problem with their hips, knees and back. So, we decided to create alternate designs of a human body, through the process of anatomy. We also looked at the animal kingdom because in terms of evolution, there is a lot of inspiration to be taken from other animals. An ostrich's legs are fantastic, they don't break down at all. A chimpanzee never has a backache, and so the lower spine of our skeleton was inspired from a chimpanzee. Did you know we have a blind spot in our retina? And if you were to redesign an eyeball, you wouldn't want to design it like the eye we have. In that sense, an octopus's eye is a better design and that's what we have used on the skeleton. That's fascinating to see how many times evolution has tried to overcome the same problems which

humans face in different environments.

**Q Can science make one perfect?**

The aim of the show is — can you make a person perfect to live in the 21st century? And that depends on what your idea of perfection is. If it is Brad Pitt's body or Angelina Jolie's body, then we haven't achieved that. And that's totally subjective. We have designed a body that won't let you down in 21st century human life, you won't get any age, you won't get back ache, your hips won't need to be replaced, your ears will last you'll be able to hear till the age of 80, a body that's fit for purpose, right into old days to 80 or 90 years old. And we've debased that by looking at animals in the animal kingdom, how they age and their systems work. It may look freaky, but we think we cracked it.

**Q What are the key takeaways for the audience from this show?**

The takeaway is to look at your own body, lifestyle and the modern world arena. It will inform and help inspire people to look after their health better or understand what's happening to their body they get older.

(The show will air on National Science Day i.e February 28 at 11 am on Sony BBC Earth.)

**CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES**



## Want to explore myself: Vaani

Actor Vaani Kapoor will see three films releasing on the big screen this year. With *Shamshera*, in which she has been paired opposite Ranbir Kapoor, *Bell-Bottom* opposite Akshay Kumar, and *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* with Ayushmann Khurrana, Vaani has an enviable line-up of films ready to release in 2021. The actor is keen to constantly explore and present herself in new avatars each time her film hits the theatres.

Vaani says, "As an actor, I want to try my hands at everything. I'm lucky that I have mass entertainers as well as high-concept content films this year that will enable me to present myself distinctly to audience and the industry. I'm someone who wants to explore every genre possible in my career and want to undertake as many risks as possible."

She adds, "I don't want to be bracketed as an actress who can do just a particular thing or look a certain way on screen. In fact, I want to take as many plunges as possible and explore myself to constantly discover and rediscover. I have always wanted to pick films that allow me to do something interesting and leave a mark onscreen."

Vaani dubs 2021 a huge moment in her cinematic career. She says, "I'm really excited about how 2021 is looking like. It's a watershed moment for me and I want to continue on this path of choosing interesting roles that enable me to express."

**WATCH OUT**

## Catch the best

Director TARANVEER SINGH's list of five films to watch out this year. By TEAM VIVA



**UNTITLED SHAKUN BATRA**  
 Shakun Batra is one of the most interesting filmmakers of our generation. After doing *Kapoor & Sons*, I can't wait to see what he does next, especially with a stellar cast like Deepika Padukone and Sidhant Chaturvedi.

**ROOHI**  
 I absolutely loved Hardik Mehta's directorial debut *Kamyaaab* starring Sanjay Mishra. And I really excited to see what he has made next.

**CHANDIGARH KARE AASHIQUI**  
 Ayushmann Khurrana is known for picking interesting scripts and his pairing with Vaani Kapoor seems quite intriguing. Add to that Abhishek Kapoor at the helm of things. It looks like a quirky love story to look forward to.

**TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS**  
 Talking of quirky love stories, how can I not mention the film I've made? (Wink). Quite understandably *Tuesdays & Fridays* is one of the films I am most excited about in 2021, for obvious reasons.

**STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES**



## Through her lens

Hosted by actor RADHIKA MADAN, the docu-series, *Postcards from Arunachal*, explores the rich history, vibrant culture and beautiful landscapes of the State. By TEAM VIVA

Arunachal Pradesh is known for its lush green hills, diverse tribes, and rich vibrant culture. Now National Geographic, along with actor Radhika Madan, will take the viewers through this spectacle and help people discover some unique experiences. The two-part documentary series titled *Postcards from Arunachal*, documents the spiritual and wondrous journey of Radhika while exploring the varied destinations spread across the state. With showtracing picture-perfect mountains and tranquil lakes; Radhika shares her experiences of feeling the peace and calmness at the monasteries, exploring the diverse handicraft tradition and understanding the rich culture of the harmonious tribes living in the state. From highlighting the exotic flora and fauna exclusive to the

state to bustling markets amidst the serene hills, extreme sports to adventurous camping in Ziro Valley; viewers will get a taste of the simplicity of the exquisite beauty of this state through this series. "We harness the power of storytelling, technology and visuals to explore and provide a deeper understanding of a place. With this documentary series, we have showcased the beauty, serenity and vibrancy that Arunachal Pradesh has to offer to give our viewers an opportunity to understand and appreciate the wonders of the state," said a National Geographic spokesperson. "The state is a veritable treasure house of nature, culture and has a lot to offer to tourists from all over the world. From serene monasteries to

beautiful mountains; deep-rooted traditions and tribes, the series is truly representative of the beauty of the state and we are happy to premiere it on a special day," said Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of AP. Talking about her experiences and association, Radhika said, "The journey means so much more to me than just travel. This is my first ever solo trip and that made this shoot even more special. The hills, the beautiful harmonic culture, the thriving and diverse wildlife made me fall in love with this place. I have always loved travelling but this time, I explored it through a different lens." (The docu-series will premiere on Arunachal Statehood Day — February 20 at 8 pm on National Geographic Channel India and Fox Life India.)

## Twists and turns

Actors GURMEET CHAUDHARY and SAYANI DATTA's horror film, *The Wife*, is a mix of action, romance and drama



While growing up, we often heard tales of supernatural entities lurking around where we lived, just waiting to nab us at the right time. Though many say they're just urban legends, some say 'She' won't let you go! Are you ready to be haunted by your dreams? Well, get ready to watch debutant writer-director Sarmad Khan's urban horror film, *The Wife*. The horror stars Gurmeet Choudhary and debutante Sayani Datta as a married couple who soon after moving into their new apartment find their idyllic life unraveling in the most horrific ways due to the presence of a malevolent spirit. When their relationship crumbles, they realise that they must stick together to not only save their marriage but also their lives. The film is produced by Zee Studios. It's poster features the lead cast and looks intriguing as it unveils both, romances as well as an ominous undertone running through it. Shariq Patel of Zee Studios says, "The urban setting and matter-of-fact approach in presenting supernatural events as never seen before

on screen makes the film unique. Horror as a genre is fairly untapped and I am sure this film will deliver the thrills it promises." Gurmeet says, "This is my first solo lead and you'll get to see me in a whole new and different avatar. The script is fresh and you'll find the film to be a perfect amalgamation of spine-chilling horror, action, romance, drama and so much more." Director Sarmad says, "I think the audience will find the unconventional nature of this film. Most horror stories tragically are quite predictable, especially for those who love this genre and can end up mostly guessing what's going to happen next. Yet, with this film, you can't know anything for sure till you've arrived at the end of it." Sayani says, "I am a huge fan of this genre and to be able to make my debut in one is the most exciting feeling ever. The entire experience of being a part of such a film has been a very fulfilling one indeed." (The film is streaming on Zee5.)

# MEDVEDEV'S STREAK AT 20

4th seed Daniil extends his unbeaten run, which includes three titles, with a dominant 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 win over fifth-seed Tsitsipas to set up final date against Djokovic

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Russia's Daniil Medvedev overpowered Stefanos Tsitsipas to make his first Australian Open final on Friday, where he will bid to stop world number one Novak Djokovic from clinching an unprecedented ninth title.

The fourth seed proved far too strong for Greece's Tsitsipas, crushing him 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 in front of more than 7,000 noisy fans at Rod Laver Arena to extend his win streak to 20.

The 25-year-old, ultra-confident on the back of his unbeaten run, which includes three titles, has been knocking on the door of Grand Slam success for some time, but has yet to win a title. To finally get over the line he must on Sunday beat top seed Djokovic, who has won all eight finals he has played at Melbourne Park.

But nobody on tour has more momentum than Medvedev, whose tricky game has stymied all opponents since November, and he has won three of his last four against the 17-time Grand Slam-winning Serb.

"It definitely wasn't easy," said Medvedev, only the third Russian after Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin to reach the Australian Open final.

"I got a little bit scared and tight (in the third set) because it's a semi-final of a Slam... but happy I was able to turn my game on, especially in some tight moments on my serve."

Medvedev came into the show-down boasting a 5-1 edge in their head-to-heads and a frosty relationship stemming from Shanghai in 2019, when the popular Greek blasted his slugfest playing style as "boring".

**FLAG-WAVING FANS**  
Fifth seed Tsitsipas was backing up from a stunning five-set upset of 20-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal, but it was an energy-sapping four-hour epic and he appeared to feel the effects.



Daniil Medvedev serves to Stefanos Tsitsipas during their semifinal match at Aus Open

In front of vocal, flag-waving Greek fans, the servers controlled the points as they moved to 2-2 in the opening set before the Russian, anchored to the baseline, drew first blood.

Until then, Tsitsipas had only faced eight break points in the entire tournament, but Medvedev earned two and converted on the second when the Greek sent a return long.

Medvedev, who also reached the

2019 US Open final, stayed focused and worked two set points at 5-4. But Tsitsipas defended both successfully with deep, aggressive returns as the crowd lifted their volume.

He sent down his first double-fault of the match on his third before blasting an ace and a winner to take a one-set lead.

Medvedev dominated the long rallies, with Tsitsipas needing to fight

## Mertens, Sabalenka combine for doubles trophy



Elise Mertens, left, and Aryna Sabalenka celebrate with their trophy after win

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Second seeded Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka swept past Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova to clinch their first Australian Open and second Grand Slam doubles title on Friday.

The Belgian-Belarusian combination proved too strong for the third-seeded Czech pair, winning 6-2, 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena after sealing the match on their fourth championship

point.

It was their second Grand Slam success as a team after the 2019 US Open and sixth title overall as they both bounced back from fourth-round defeats in singles at Melbourne Park.

They pair made their debut together at the 2019 Australian Open and have since established themselves as one of the tour's top teams, along with two-time Grand Slam winners Krejickova and Siniakova.

broken again, to love, on his next game as the Russian raced through the set in 36 minutes.

He was broken again early in the third set and appeared spent, but roared on by the crowd he found new reserves to break back for 3-3.

For the first time in the match, Medvedev was under pressure but held his nerve with a glorious passing shot giving him another break for 6-5 before he calmly served out to win.

Osaka is at the forefront of the young wave and credits a new-found mental maturity for being able to battle through matches under the highest pressure. And she had a warning for the 22nd-seeded American Brady ahead of the final.

Osaka is at the forefront of the young wave and credits a new-found mental maturity for being able to battle through matches under the highest pressure. And she had a warning for the 22nd-seeded American Brady ahead of the final.



Naomi Osaka hits a forehand return to Hsieh Su-wei during quarterfinal match

## I fight hardest in finals: Osaka

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Naomi Osaka says nobody remembers a loser — and she doesn't plan to be one when she tries to win a fourth Grand Slam crown against Jennifer Brady in the Australian Open final on Saturday.

"I have this mentality that people don't remember the runners-up," she said. "I think I fight the hardest in the finals. I think that's where you sort of set yourself apart."

Osaka is a hot favourite against Brady, who is making her Grand Slam final debut after being forced into a hard 14-day quarantine ahead of the Australian Open, where she was confined to her hotel room and unable to train.

The pair first clashed as juniors in Florida seven years ago when Brady won. Osaka has won both their matches since with their rivalry hitting new heights in the second of those, last year's epic US Open semi-final.

Osaka's defeat of Williams in the semi-final on Thursday ended the 39-year-old's latest attempt to win an elusive record-equalling 24th Slam title and reinforced the belief that a new generation is taking over from the American.

Eventual champion Osaka prevailed 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 6-3 in a nerve-jangling encounter, dubbed by some as the best match of the truncated 2020 season.

Osaka is at the forefront of the young wave and credits a new-found mental maturity for being able to battle through matches under the highest pressure. And she had a warning for the 22nd-seeded American Brady ahead of the final.

Osaka, who has never lost a Slam match after getting past the fourth round, is aiming to become the first woman's player since Monica Seles to win her first four Grand Slam finals.

## SINGLES

UMESH'S FITNESS TEST IN 2 DAYS

**AHMEDABAD:** Senior speedster Umesh Yadav's fitness test, which will be conducted in two days time, will determine if he can join Jasprit Bumrah and Ishant Sharma in a three-prong India pace attack for the upcoming Day/Night Test against England from February 24. It is learnt that the Indian team management wants to play to its strength and there could be a turner on offer with Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel ready to exploit the conditions to the fullest.

ATK MOHUN BAGAN CRUSH SC EAST BENGAL

**FATORDA:** Roy Krishna once again spelled his magic on the high profile Kolkata derby by scoring one and assisting in another two as ATK Mohun Bagan walked away with a one-sided 3-1 win over SC East Bengal in the ISL, here on Friday. In the 100th year of Kolkata derby, Roy Krishna drew first blood in the 15th minute in a dominating start by the Mariners but a blip saw Tiri accidentally head into his own net (41st) from a Raju Gaikwad throw-in as both teams headed into the break 1-1. But it was a powerhouse display by the Mariners in the second half with the Fijian star marksman all over the pitch.

INDIA'S WC QUALIFIERS NOW IN JUNE

**KUALA LUMPUR:** India's 2022 FIFA World Cup/2023 Asian Cup qualifying round matches, which were scheduled to be played next month, have been postponed to June due to coronavirus-related travel and quarantine restrictions. AFC announced on Friday that the majority of Asia's 2022 World Cup qualifying matches in March will be postponed to May and June. The Indian team is yet to play three matches — against Qatar and Afghanistan (at home), Bangladesh (away).

DHAMMIKA PRASAD QUITS INT'L CRICKET

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka fast bowler Dhammika Prasad has announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect. Prasad, 37, last played a Test match in October 2015 against the West Indies. He represented Sri Lanka in 25 Tests and 24 ODIs, bagging 75 and 32 wickets respectively. He also played lone T20I against Australia in 2011.

OLY QUALIFICATION PERIOD EXTENDED

**NEW DELHI:** The Tokyo Olympics badminton qualification period was on Friday extended by nearly two months to June 15 after the postponement of three important tournaments due to Covid-19 related restrictions. The world body said preparations for the Olympic qualifying tournaments will continue as international badminton is set to resume with the YONEX Swiss Open 2021 (March 2-7) and YONEX All England Open 2021 (March 17-21).

UNITED TO DISCUSS CAVANI'S FUTURE

**MANCHESTER:** Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says Manchester United will sit down with Edinson Cavani to discuss the veteran striker's future at Old Trafford. The 34-year-old Uruguay international has impressed on and off the pitch since joining on a free transfer from Paris Saint-Germain in October. Cavani, PSG's all-time top-scorer, signed a one-season deal with United with the option to extend by a further year. He has scored seven goals in 24 appearances for United and Solskjaer has made no secret of his hopes to keep him at Old Trafford.

BCB ALLOWS ITS PLAYERS TO PLAY IN IPL

**DHAKA:** The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has allowed its players to participate in the upcoming IPL even though the lucrative T20 league is likely to clash with their international assignments. The board has decided to give its players No Objection Certificates (NOC) for the cash-rich tournament. "We will give NOC to Mustafizur (Rahman) if he applies for it. We have given NOC to Shakib (Al Hasan) and it will be the same for Mustafizur," Akram Khan, chairman of BCB's cricket operations told reporters on Friday.

## Wood hopes D/N Test will swing series in Eng favour

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Fast bowler Mark Wood feels England, boasting one of the game's finest seamers in James Anderson, can fancy their chances in the upcoming day/night Test against India if the pink ball moves around.

The four-match Test series is level at 1-1 heading into the day-night Test at the new 110,000-capacity Sardar Patel Stadium here.

"As soon as the ball moves, we know how good our seam bowlers can be. We've got good depth there, good skills and two of the best-ever (James Anderson and Stuart Broad).

"Hopefully, if the ball does move and it is seamer-friendly we can be very confident going into the game," Wood said during a virtual interaction on Friday.

Along with Jonny Bairstow, Wood joined the England squad ahead of the third Test.

While the spinners have taken the bulk of wickets in the first two Tests of the ongoing series, Indian pacers took all 20 wickets to win their only previous day-night match on home soil, against Bangladesh in Kolkata.

"We've been bowling with them in the nets - they have swung quite a bit and they've lasted longer which was interesting to see," said Wood.

"With the ball, as soon as it moves, every one of the bowlers from the past couple of months is dying to get it in their hand. I'm not the only one who's trying to get hold of it. "The wickets in the nets have been a bit green and had good pace and carry too. I don't know if that's anything to go by or whether it's a bit of a trick."

## Iyer, Dhawan eye impactful show in Vijay Hazare

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Some established names such as Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer will be aiming to make an impression before the white-ball series against England when the Vijay Hazare 50-over competition gets underway in bio-secure bubbles across six venues on Saturday.

Shreyas Iyer, who missed the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as he was recovering from shoulder injury, along with others like Bhuvaneshwar Kumar and Dhawan will be keenly watched during the tournament.

While Tamil Nadu, winner of the recent Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, has a strong team and others like Karnataka, Mumbai and Delhi will also fancy their chances.

The tournament will give the players a chance to impress the national selectors, before the ODI and T20 series against England, which will begin in March. India is slated to play five T20s in Ahmedabad and three ODIs against England in Pune.

This is the second domestic tournament to be conducted by the BCCI in this curtailed season after the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy.

The focus will be firmly on Shreyas, who is back to lead Mumbai, the domestic giants, who also have a new coach in former India off-spinner Ramesh Powar.

He will be eager to make an impact and so will the prolific Suryakumar Yadav, who is close to making the Indian team.

Even Prithvi Shaw, who has been named Shreyas' deputy and has been short of runs, will want to bounce back stronger. Mumbai had an eminently forgettable outing in the Mushtaq Ali Trophy, failing to make it past the group stage and going down to minnows Puducherry.



lead Uttar Pradesh, will be raring to go as well and so will another white-ball specialist Shikhar Dhawan, who last played in the series against Australia. He will be playing under Pradeep Sangwan for Delhi. Baroda, after their impressive runners-up show in the Mushtaq Ali Trophy, will be bolstered by the return of skipper and all-rounder Krunal Pandya, who had to leave the national T20 championship, mid-way following his father's demise. Tamil Nadu, led by Dinesh Karthik, will be aiming to make it two out of two this sea-

## Ankita wins maiden WTA title

Raina will enter top-100 of doubles for first time

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's Ankita Raina on Friday claimed her maiden WTA title by lifting the Phillip Island Trophy along with Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova, a feat which will catapult her into the top-100 in the doubles for the first time in her career.

Ankita and Kamilla erased a one-set deficit to beat the Russian combination of Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6, 6-4, 10-7 in the summit clash here.

The 28-year-old Indian shared the \$8000 prize money with her partner and earned 280 ranking points, which will take her to 94 from the



India's Ankita Raina, right, and her doubles partner Kamilla Rakhimova from Russia pose with winner's trophy after win in Phillip Island Trophy final

current 115 when the WTA doubles chart is updated next week.

Ankita will become only the second player to crack the doubles top-100 since Sania

the Australian Open in the doubles, and also won a round in the main draw of a WTA singles tournament.

Elated at her performance and the result, Ankita says the singles top-100 is also just around the corner.

"It's been a great week. Kamilla and I played together for the first time. We signed up just 20 minutes before the draw because there was a lot of confusion with the entry list."

"Kamilla plays very aggressive, has good strokes and I just had to ask her to be aggressive at the net, which she did," Ankita said.

"It was not that draw was easy, we beat some good players who were tough not only in doubles but in singles, too. Kamilla has great fighting spirit. It's great... First WTA titles and doubles top-100, too. I am looking forward to crack singles top-100," she added.

## Man United, Spurs win big in relocated Europa games

AFP ■ BERLIN

Spurs wingers Gareth Bale and Son Heung-min after the Korean scores team's opening goal



Spurs wingers Gareth Bale and Son Heung-min after the Korean scores team's opening goal

They have the team to aim for a double. The squad, however, will be missing the services of yorker specialist T Natarajan after he was released following a request from BCCI, which wanted him to be fresh for the white ball series against England.

It won't be easy for Tamil Nadu, as they will face stiff competition from teams like Punjab and Karnataka, always a force to reckon with in national competitions.

Bengal will miss the services of experienced campaigner Manoj Tiwary and it will be a challenge for stand-in-skipper Anustup Majumdar after the team made a group exit in Mushtaq Ali.

Explosive left-handed opener Vivek Singh is in sublime form and will look to prove himself again after the IPL snub.

Abhimanyu Easwaran has been released from the India squad and is available and he will form the back-bone of their batting.

The teams have been divided into six groups — five Elite Groups, one Plate Group. The group stage will be followed by quarter-finals with the summit clash scheduled for March 14.

**Elite Group A:** Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Hyderabad, Tripura, Baroda, Goa (Surat)

**Group B:** Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Andhra (Indore)

Manchester United romped to a 4-0 victory over Real Sociedad in their Europa League last-32 first leg on Thursday, while Gareth Bale impressed for Tottenham Hotspur in a 4-1 thrashing of Austrian side Wolfsberg.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United are all but into the last 16, with four away goals to take into the return game in a week's time, after the first leg was played in Turin due to coronavirus travel restrictions.

The Premier League outfit grabbed the lead in the 27th minute when Fernandes pounced on a defensive mix-up to slot in from Marcus Rashford's clipped pass.

Solskjaer's men doubled their advantage 12 minutes into the second period as Fernandes stroked home his

21st goal of the season.

United continued to play at a pace Sociedad could not deal with and Rashford finally got his goal in the 65th minute following a blistering counter-attack started by goalkeeper Dean Henderson.

The tie was surely put to bed in the final minute of normal time as Daniel James raced clear and fired into the bottom corner.

**BALE STRIKES**

Wales winger Bale notched his first Tottenham assist since April 2013 to tee up Son Heung-min for the opening goal in Budapest against Wolfsberg, before drilling in the second before the half-hour mark.

A wonderful individual strike from Lucas Moura extended Spurs' first-half lead, and although Michael Liendl pulled one back for the Austrians with a second-half penalty, the English club have one foot in the next round after Carlos Vinicius' 88th-minute goal.

**MILAN, ARSENAL HELD**

AC Milan, who have not reached the quarter-finals of any European competition since the 2011-12 Champions League, had to settle for a 2-2 draw at Red Star Belgrade.

Arsenal youngster Bukayo Saka continued his excellent season as his sixth goal of the campaign cancelled out Pizzi's penalty in a 1-1 draw against Benfica at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.