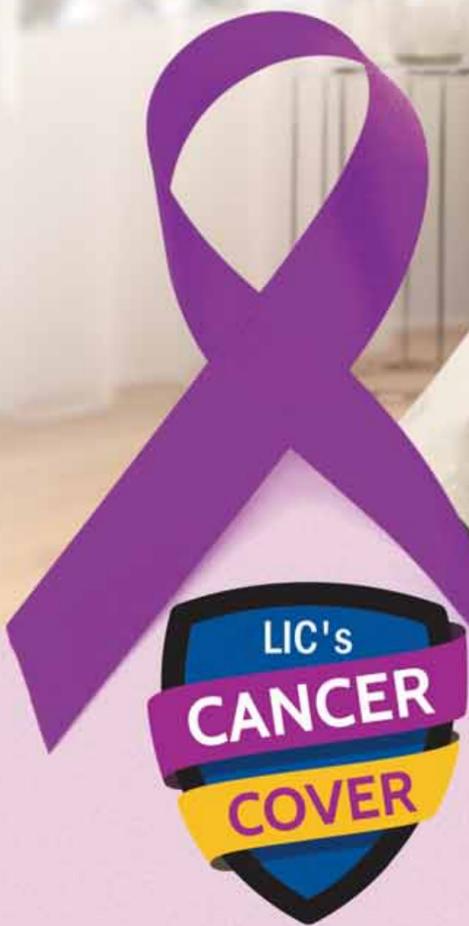




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**Non-linked, Non-participating, Individual, Health Insurance Plan**  
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  - **Premium Waiver Benefit** - Premiums for the next three policy years or balance policy term whichever is lower, shall be waived.
- On first diagnosis of the specified Major Stage Cancer:
  - **Lump Sum Benefit** - 100% of Sum Insured, less any previously paid claims in respect of Early Stage Cancer, shall be payable.
- **Income Benefit** - In addition, Income benefit of 1% of Sum Insured per month for a fixed period of next ten years, shall be payable.
- **Premium Waiver Benefit** - All future premiums shall be waived.
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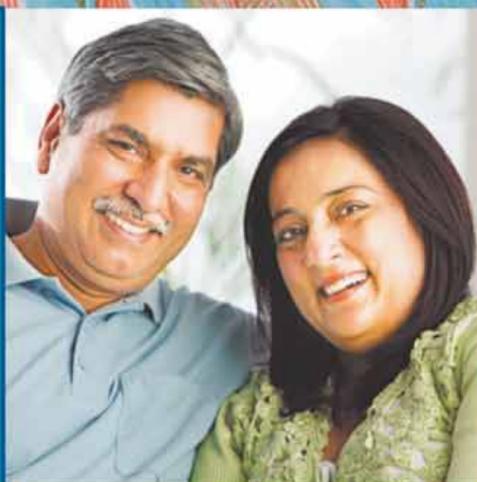
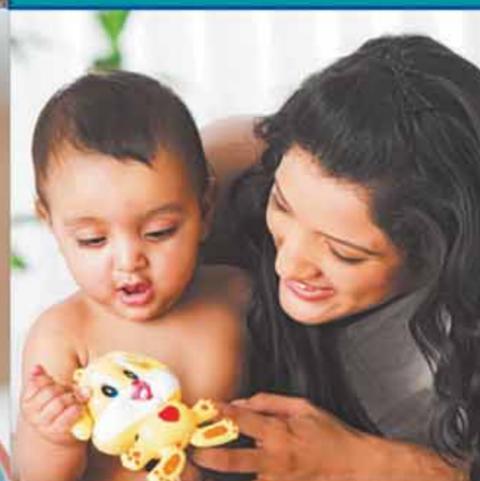
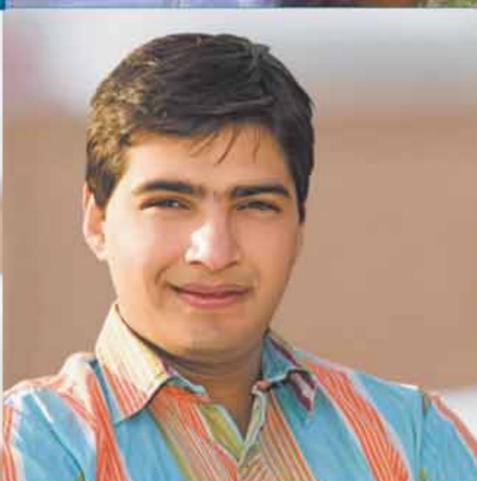
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LIC/AR/20-21/13/Eng

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04 फरवरी, 2021-04 फरवरी, 2022



भारतीय स्वतंत्रता संग्राम की प्रेरणादायी जनक्रान्ति  
'चौरी चौरा आन्दोलन' के 100वें वर्ष में प्रवेश  
के अवसर पर आयोजित



## चौरी चौरा शताब्दी महोत्सव

का

## शुभारम्भ

एवं

## चौरी चौरा शताब्दी वर्ष पर डाक टिकट का विमोचन

मुख्य आकर्षण

- वर्ष भर स्वतंत्रता संग्राम की तिथियों में शहीद स्थलों/स्मारकों पर कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन।
- शहीद स्थलों/स्मारकों पर प्रति सप्ताह पुलिस बैण्ड द्वारा राष्ट्रध्वज की प्रस्तुति।
- शहीद स्थलों/स्मारकों पर दीप प्रज्वलन।
- वंदे मातरम् गायन।
- देशभक्ति पर आधारित कवि सम्मेलन एवं नाट्य समारोह।
- स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के साहित्य एवं पुस्तकों की प्रदर्शनी।
- चौरी चौरा के साथ ही बिठूर, मेरठ, वाराणसी, प्रयागराज, झांसी व काकोरी (लखनऊ) में ध्वनि एवं प्रकाश कार्यक्रम।
- भारतीय स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के राष्ट्रीय नायकों/जननायकों/स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानियों की फोटो प्रदर्शनी व अभिलेख प्रदर्शनी।
- स्वतंत्रता संग्राम की घटनाओं का शिलापट्टों एवं म्यूरल के माध्यम से प्रस्तुतिकरण।
- आजादी के ज्ञात-अज्ञात शहीदों एवं घटनाओं पर सर्वेक्षण, शोध एवं प्रकाशन।

## नरेन्द्र मोदी

### प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा

(वीडियो कॉन्फ्रेंसिंग के माध्यम से)

— गरिमामयी उपस्थिति —

## आनंदीबेन पटेल

राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश

## योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

एवं अन्य गणमान्य महानुभाव

दिनांक : 4 फरवरी, 2021 | समय : पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे | स्थान : चौरी चौरा स्मारक, गोरखपुर



# CM assures proper flood prevention measures

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked people not to worry about floods, saying gone are the governments whose flood prevention projects started just before the rains and proposals used to wash away by the floods.

The CM, who dedicated 146 projects to the public and laid the foundation stone of 170 projects of Irrigation and Water Resources department through a virtual programme at his official residence on Wednesday, said the present government is working in a planned manner to get rid of the problems of floods permanently.

"Continuous efforts are being made to ensure that lives are not lost during floods. It will also increase the irrigation potential. It is because of our commitment that the projects that were started in January will be completed by May, before the rainy season sets in," he said. The chief minister said that 24 districts of the state used to be "very sensitive" in terms of flood disaster while 16 districts were in the "sensitive" category in 2017. Despite that, there was no systematic action plan for the prevention of floods, he said. "However, our government, after assessing the local needs, prepared a detailed action plan, imple-



mented them after fixing the accountability," he said.

"For the first time in the history of the state, some innovative experiments were also carried out. Dredging and channelisation of rivers was done by creating a systematic action plan. Encouraged by the good results, many public representatives have implemented these works in their areas as well," the CM said.

Yogi has also directed the district magistrates to invite tenders for the silt and sand

taken out after dredging and cleaning of rivers and canals.

"The amount received from this should be deposited in the mining fund and used for public interest work. If money is needed for any work in the sensitive areas, the department should be informed and the government will provide all assistance," he added. During the programme, the CM sought feedback from local representatives and interacted with locals to collect information regarding the

flood relief works.

Villagers of Balrampur, Gorakhpur, Mathura, Siddharth Nagar, Deoria, Kushinagar and other districts informed the CM that the dredging works, repair of embankments, boulder works are being carried out satisfactorily. The CM also asked the public representatives and locals to monitor the developmental works and if there are any anomalies, the departments and officials concerned should be informed. Jal Shakti

Minister Mahendra Singh said that in 2013, around 15 lakh hectares land was affected by floods but because of the government's continuous efforts, only 12,000 hectares of land was affected this time.

"The department completed 74 projects in 2017-18, 111 projects in 2018-19 and 151 projects in 2019-20. The department worked continuously during the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result, 146 projects have been dedicated to the public," Singh said.

# Couple meet watery grave

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A couple taking a cow to their relative's house drowned while crossing a river in Azamgarh, police said on Wednesday. However, the cow reached home after which the family members launched a search for the couple. Later, the bodies of the couple were recovered from the river.

The incident took place in Tadwa hamlet in Azamgarh. Reports said that 45-year-old Patiraj Maurya and his 42-year-old wife Vidya Devi took their cow to leave it to their kin's house so that they could take care of her. To take a short cut, the couple decided to cross Besi river at Bangoan hamlet but when they were in the middle of the river, they drowned. The bodies were fished out and sent for autopsy. The couple are survived by five daughters and a son, Pramod, who is settled overseas.

Meanwhile, three persons were killed and six others injured in a road mishap on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Kannauj on Wednesday. A truck which was trying to speed off after running over two employees of UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority and rammed into a bus. The truck driver died on the spot. The truck was coming from Rajasthan and headed to Bihar.

The bus then collided with a car (Innova) belonging to the

UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority, parked nearby.

In another incident, a couple were battered to death by their son over plucking two cabbages. The incident took place in the Dulhapur Hanumantnagar hamlet of Dehat Kotwali in Balrampur on Tuesday. Reports said that Mayaram (62), a resident of Dulhapur Hanumantnagar, had two sons — Sohanlal and Rammurti. Both are married to women who are real sisters. While Sohanlal lives separately with his family, Rammurti lives with his in-laws. On Tuesday afternoon, Rammurti, along

with his wife, reached his father's house. He went to see the fields when Rammurti's wife saw Sohanlal's wife plucking two cabbages from the field. She started hurling abuses over which Sohanlal warned her. Mayaram and his wife Munni Devi (57) also reached there and tried to silence both. However, Sohanlal suddenly picked up a stick and attacked his father. When Munni Devi tried to save her husband, Sohanlal attacked her too. They were taken to hospital but both succumbed on the way. Police registered a case and sent the bodies for autopsy. Efforts were on to nab Sohanlal, who is said to have absconded.

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Notification No. 28/2021**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR RAIL PASSENGERS**

It is notified for information of general public that following Festival Special train will be extended as per schedule given as under :-

Train No.	From	To	Frequency	Period of Special Train	Trips
02107	Lokmanya Tilak T	Lucknow Jn.	Tri-Weekly (Monday, Wednesday, Saturday)	06.02.2021 to 31.03.2021	24
02108	Lucknow Jn.	Lokmanya Tilak T	Tri-Weekly (Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday)	07.02.2021 to 01.04.2021	24

**Rake Composition :** Power Car Cum Luggage Van - 2, General 2nd Class-3, Sleeper-12, AC 3 Tier -4, AC 2 Tier -1 = 22 Coaches.

**Please Note:** (1) These trains will run with full reserved accommodation. (2) It is mandatory for the passengers to follow the guidelines issued for prevention and safety from Covid-19.

**CPROT-115 Chief Passenger Trains, Manager, Gorakhpur**

About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 99794845955

**"Never travel on roof and foot boards"**

# Govt set to expand Ganga Expressway

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to expand India's biggest Ganga Expressway, linking Meerut with Prayagraj. The government is planning to extend the expressway from Prayagraj to Varanasi and from Meerut to Haridwar. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has already directed the UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) to prepare a detailed proposal for the extended project. In view of the Central government's plan to expand highways and expressways as envisaged in the Union budget, Yogi directed senior officials to start preparing the proposal.

If approved, the length of the expressway will increase by 150 kms. Presently, the length of the expressway is 596 kms, which is proposed to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 36,402 crore. The expansion proposal aims at linking several cities with the expressway, including Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Shahjahanpur, HarDOI, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj. With the extension of the expressway from Prayagraj to Varanasi, several places in eastern UP will get connected through it, including Varanasi, Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Sonbhadra and Chandauli, which will pave way for development of industries and tourism in the state.

UPEIDA is implementing the expressway projects in the state. Initially, it will be a six-lane expressway, with the option of expansion to eight lanes in future. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi having set his goal to make Varanasi an export hub and in view of the emphasis on road infrastructure in the Union budget, the CM has come with the expansion plan for Ganga Expressway, which would enhance eastern UP's connectivity with New Delhi as well as with other parts of the country.

The Yogi government also plans to extend Purvanchal Expressway up to Ballia and has directed UPEIDA to prepare a detailed proposal for the same.

# Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations to kick off today

Lucknow (PNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations in Gorakhpur on Thursday. The landmark incident marks the country's fight for independence. The prime minister will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura centenary. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion. The centenary celebrations and various other events planned by the government will kick off in all 75 districts of the state on Thursday (February 4) and continue till February 4 next year. "The government has decided to celebrate the centenary of Chauri Chaura uprising with a view to sensitising the young generation about the sacrifices of unsung heroes in the

freedom struggle," the chief minister said.

The Chauri Chaura uprising played a decisive role in giving a new direction to the freedom movement as it became an important reason behind the Revolt of 1857, however, it still failed to gain the recognition it deserved by the historians and writers as no literature gave a detailed record of the incident, he said.

"The government has planned a series of events throughout the year to mark Chauri Chaura centenary. It will be celebrated in a grand way to commemorate all the freedom fighters. Officials have been asked to make detailed history of the incident accessible to youth," he said.

In the first phase, students of 400 government and government-aided

high schools of Gorakhpur division will be taken to a tour of the Chauri Chaura revolt and martyrdom sites. The first phase will cover 87 government schools and 333 aided schools in Deoria, Maharajganj, Kushinagar and Gorakhpur. Private schools will also be included in the initiative.

The incident took place on February 4, 1922, at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur, when a group of freedom fighters set a police station ablaze in reaction to the high-handedness of then British regime. The incident had claimed the lives of 22 policemen and three freedom fighters. The CM said that the Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations will be held in all schools across the state throughout the year from February 4.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

It is to inform to all general public that I am known by my both names (ARUSHI or ARUSHI KUMAR) as entered in my ID/ Educational documents, Arushi / Arushi Kumar D/o Dr. Ashok Kumar resident of 13/94, near Sector 14 RLB, Sector-13 Vikas Nagar Lucknow-UP.

**NOTICE**

My name has wrongly been mentioned as PRIYANKA in defence service records of my husband. My correct name is PRIYANKA DHAKA W/o Army No- IC 80983 L Capt, SHASHI KUMAR, R/o-201 Sata Batry, 56 APO, Prayagraj -926201. This should be read, written and speak in future.

**NOTICE**

I, Service No - JC 701354 F SUB. DEEPAK KUMAR TRIPATHI declare that my wife's DOB 12.10.1977 is registered in my service record which is wrong. As per High School certificate and Aadhar card her correct DOB is 26.02.1977. This should be read & written in future. Deepak Kumar Tripathi, Atta Nagar, Kunda, Pratapgarh.

# Govt to impose fines on spitters, litterbugs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an attempt to enforce sanitation and make Uttar Pradesh clean on the lines of Singapore, the UP government has planned to impose fines on people littering the roads and spitting from moving vehicles. The offenders will have to shell out a fine of Rs 1,000 for such offences. The state government is likely to bring new rules under "Uttar Pradesh Solid Waste (Management, Functioning and Cleaning) Guidelines, 2021". The proposal is likely to be placed before the cabinet soon.

The Urban Development department has sought suggestions from the common man and people's representatives. Under the proposed rules, people caught spitting or littering the roads from moving cars will have to cough up a fine of Rs 1,000. The government said it launched various schemes for the clean-up of urban areas like keeping garbage

bins to dump dry and wet waste.

Similarly, door-to-door facilities have also been provided to collect garbage. The government said that organisers of a gathering of more than 100 people are required to get the place cleaned or face hefty fines. The fine will be collected based on the size of the place and amount of garbage.

The proposed rules are also expected to provide for imposing fines on vendors for dumping garbage on the road. They are required to keep boxes for disposing of waste and hand it over to the municipal waste collection vehicle.

In view of the deteriorating air quality in various parts of the state, Yogi also directed officials to encourage production of electric vehicles in the state. The government has also decided to set up a centre of excellence for research, development, testing and certification to help the electric vehicles industry.

# Power employees boycott work

Lucknow (PNS): The power employees on Wednesday boycotted work to protest the privatisation of power distribution. The demands of the power employees also include restoration of the state electricity boards and old pension for the employees. Convener of Power Employees' Joint Action Committee Shailendra Dube said that 15 lakh power employees across the country boycotted work on Wednesday. He said that the power employees boycotted work and staged demonstration in all major power installations across the

state. The privatisation of power distribution in Agra and Odisha has failed to give desired results, he pointed out.

He said both the Union and UP governments have not learnt from the fiasco and the Union Energy Ministry has issued standard bidding document for the privatisation of power distribution network across UP and other states. He said that on the direction of the Union government, the work for privatisation of power distribution at Chandigarh and Puducherry is moving at a fast pace.

**Bank of Baroda E-AUCTION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)**

**RO Stressed Assets Recovery Branch Saketpuri Awasiya Yojna, Deokali Bypass Regional Office, 2nd Floor, Distt. Ayodhya-224123 Mob.:9517599985 Email: sarfai@bankofbaroda.com**

**Sale Notice For Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A [see Proviso Rule 6(2) & 8(6)]**

**E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 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), Mortgagor (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s) /Mortgagor (s)/ Guarantor (s)/Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

**Date & Time of Auction: 24.02.2021, 02:00 PM to 06:00 PM** **Status of Possession- Constructive**

Sr/ No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/ Guarantors & Date of Demand & Possession Notice/Amount of Debt	Description of the Property	Reserve Price (RP)/ Earnest Money (EM)(Rs.) Bid Increase Amount.	Date & Time of Property Inspection & Deposit of EMD
1-	<b>Borrowers:</b> (1) Ram Kumari W/o Babban Yadav (2) Babban Yadav S/o Ram Lal Yadav <b>Address of 1 and 2 Borrowers:</b> Vill Ganeshpur Besaura, PO Ankaripur, Tahsil Sadar, Distt Ayodhya <b>Guarantor:</b> Sunil Kumar S/o Kashi Naresh <b>Address:</b> Vill Gaddopur, Hardaaspur, PO Gosaiganj, Tahsil Sadar, Distt Ayodhya <b>Date of Demand Notice:</b> :08.11.2017 <b>Date of Possession Notice:</b> :07.02.2018 <b>Outstanding Amount:</b> 220215.86/-+Interest thereon & other charges w.e.f.03.02.2021 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	Equitable mortgage of Residential Property consisting of plot no. 480 situated at Vill Dandapur, Pergana & Tahsil Akbarpur Distt Ambedkar Nagar in the name of Ram Kumari W/o Babban Yadav Total Area 70.00 sq. mtr <b>Bounded as under (as per sale deed):</b> East: Remaining land of Ram Milan, West: Akbarpur to Mahara Bazar Pakki Road, North: Land of Shamsuddin South: Landed property of Foolkali	<b>Reserve Price Rs. 604297/- (EM) Rs. 60430/-</b> <b>Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-</b>	04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b> 04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b>
2-	<b>Borrowers:</b> M/s MB Industries <b>Address:</b> Village Veershapur, Post Amsin, Distt Ayodhya through Its Proprietor Sandhya Singh W/o Rakesh Kumar Singh, <b>Present Address:</b> House No. 49, Vill Maihar Kabirpur, Post Kera Lal Khan, Tehsil Bikapur, Distt Ayodhya <b>Permanent Address:</b> Village Jagui, PO Ainwa, Iltfaatganj, District Ambedkar Nagar <b>Date of Demand Notice:</b> :03.07.2019 <b>Date of Possession Notice:</b> :09.09.2019 <b>Outstanding Amount:</b> Rs.6059294.98/- +Interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 29.08.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All that part of parcel of the property consisting of Plot/Gata No. 310 and building situated at Village Veershapur, Pargana Amsin, Tehsil Sadar, Distt Ayodhya owned by Sandhya Singh w/o Rakesh Kumar Singh. Total Area of 0.203 Hectare <b>Bounded as under:</b> East: Landed Property of Ram Milan Verma, West: Landed Property of Sandhya Singh, North: 12 Ft wide Road, South: Landed Property of Sandhya Singh	<b>PROPERTY NO. (1)</b> <b>Reserve Price Rs. 14,32,718/- (EM) Rs. 1,43,272/-</b> <b>Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-</b>	04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b> 04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b>
		All that part and parcel of the property consisting of plot/gata no. 310 and building constructed over the said plot situated in Village Veershapur, Pargana Amsin, Tehsil Sadar, Distt Ayodhya owned by Sandhya Singh w/o Rakesh Kumar Singh. Total Area 0.203 hectare <b>Bounded as under:</b> East: Landed Property of Ram Milan Verma, West: Landed Property of Babu Ram Verma, North: 12 Ft wide Road, South: Agriculture Land of Pankaj	<b>PROPERTY NO. (2)</b> <b>Reserve Price Rs. 32,82,913/- (EM) Rs. 3,28,292/-</b> <b>Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-</b>	04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b> 04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b>
3-	<b>Borrowers:</b> M/s Modern Building Material through its proprietor Lalji Yadav S/o Ram Baran Yadav <b>Address:-</b> Vill & PO Jalalpur Bhaggu, Faizabad <b>Guarantors:-</b> (1.)Jsrta Devi W/o Late Ram Baran Yadav As legal heir of deceased guarantor Ram baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal (2.)Shitla Prasad S/o Late Ram Baran Yadav As legal heir of deceased guarantor Ram baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal (3.) Maniram Yadav S/o Late Ram Baran Yadav As legal heir of deceased guarantor Ram baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal (4.) Lalji Yadav S/o Late Ram Baran Yadav As legal heir of deceased guarantor Ram baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal (5.) Ramji Yadav S/o Late Ram Baran Yadav As legal heir of deceased guarantor Ram baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal <b>Address of 1,2,3,4 and 5 :</b> Vill Sonbarsa, Musalmeen, PO Jalalpur Bhaggu Faizabad. (6.) Kali Prasad S/o Ram Lochan <b>Address:</b> Village Kodra, Musalmeen, Post. Jalalpur Bhaggu, Faizabad. <b>Date of Demand Notice:</b> :11.01.2017 <b>Date of Possession Notice:</b> :05.05.2017 <b>Outstanding Amount:</b> Rs.1085671.18 +Interest thereon & other charges w.e.f.17.12.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of the property consisting of Equitable mortgage of Gata no. 791 min, 792 min, 793 min, 795 min, 796/1 min, 797 min, 798 min, situated at Village Jalalpur, Bhaggu, Pargana Paschimrath & Tehsil Bikapur & Distt. Faizabad in the name of late Ram Baran Yadav S/o Brij Lal total area 0.312 hectare. <b>Bounded by:</b> East: Agri land Laddan, West: Agri land Jaggi Paasi, North: Agri land Cheddi Yadav, South: Bhihtha	<b>Reserve Price Rs. 2,65,200/- (EM) Rs. 26,520/-</b> <b>Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-</b>	04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b> 04.02.2021 to 23.02.2021 <b>Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM</b>

**For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. www.bankofbaroda.in/ e-auction.htm & https://ibapi.in. Also prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 9517599985**

**Date: 04.02.2021 : Place: Ayodhya Authorised officer, Bank of Baroda**

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**YAMI GAUTAM  
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13 VIVACITY**

## 22% Indians carry coronavirus

30 crore people infected, as per ICMR survey; 1.08 crore cases officially; some cities reaching herd immunity against Covid-19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About one in four of India's 135 crore people may have been infected with the coronavirus as per a new ICMR survey, said sources in the Union Health Ministry suggesting that at least 30 crore people were infected with the pathogen. The Government has officially confirmed 1.08 crore Covid cases.

"The infection figures are much higher in many cities, strengthening the epidemiological theory that some cities in the country may be approaching herd immunity as evident in the falling daily numbers of new cases," said an official from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) which had conducted the survey.

"Like the previous two surveys, the seropositivity has been found to be way higher particularly in urban slums and generally in urban areas as compared to rural areas".

In addition, samples from 100 healthcare workers from both Government and private facilities in each of these 70 districts were also collected for the antibody tests. Unlike the previous surveys that only looked for antibodies against the viral nucleocapsid, researchers in the third survey also tested for spike protein antibodies, which last longer in the bloodstream.



A medic inoculates first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to a health worker at a Government hospital in Kolkata on Wednesday. PTI

Following another survey done in August and September using blood samples of more than 29,000 people older than 10, the ICMR had concluded that one in 15 Indians had Covid-19 antibodies. The figure jumped to one in six in densely-populated urban slums.

The first serosurvey round conducted in 70 districts estimated 64 lakh infections in May-June 2020. By the second round conducted in August, the estimate was up to 7.4 crore.

The third serosurvey country-wide study outcome by the ICMR came a day after Delhi's

fifth serosurvey report which pointed out that one in two residents in the national Capital has been exposed to the coronavirus and developed antibodies for the infection.

Separate tests done on more than seven lakh people across India by diagnostics company Thyrocare Technologies showed 55 per cent of the population may have already been infected, its chief told a news agency last week, as per the reports.

On Wednesday, the country reported 11,039 new cases to touch the tally of 1.07 crore

while deaths rose by 110 to 1,54,596. Maharashtra reported maximum casualties with 30 new fatalities. It is followed by Kerala with 16 new daily deaths.

The Government data said that 14,225 new recoveries were registered in the last 24 hours on Wednesday which has led to a net decline of 3,296 cases from the total active caseload.

The total recovered cases are 1,04,62,631. The national recovery rate (97.08%) continues to be one of the highest globally. The gap between active cases and recovered cases

### RENEWED HOPE

Like the previous two surveys, the seropositivity has been found to be way higher particularly in urban slums and generally in urban areas as compared to rural areas

Following another survey done in August and September using blood samples of more than 29,000 people older than 10, the ICMR had concluded that one in 15 Indians had Covid-19 antibodies

The first serosurvey round conducted in 70 districts estimated 64 lakh infections in May-June, 2020. By the second round conducted in August, the estimate was up to 7.4 crores.

The third serosurvey country-wide study outcome by the ICMR came a day after Delhi's fifth serosurvey report which pointed out that one in two residents in the national Capital has been exposed to the coronavirus and developed antibodies for the infection

The total recovered cases are 1,04,62,631. The national recovery rate (97.08%) continues to be one of the highest globally.

is continuously increasing and stands at 1,03,02,574. Thirty-one States and UTs have less than 5,000 active cases said the Ministry.

## Govt warns Twitter for unblocking #genocide

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday directed Twitter to comply with its order to remove contents/accounts related to farmer genocide hashtags, and warned that the microblogging platform may face "penal action" for non-compliance of its order.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) served notice to Twitter for ignoring its order and unblocking the handles after 24 hours. Ministry officials said that Twitter had unilaterally unblocked accounts and tweets despite specific orders for blocking them. Twitter is an 'intermediary' and is obliged to obey the direction of Government. They said that the platform may face penal action for not complying with Government orders. The Government notice quoted more than half a dozen Supreme Court judgments, including of constitutional benches as to what is public order and what the rights of authorities are.

In its notice IT Ministry asserted that Twitter cannot assume the role of court and justify non-compliance. The Ministry had recently directed Twitter to block around 250 tweets/Twitter accounts that were making "fake, intimidating and provocative tweets" on January 30 with hashtags accusing the Modi Government of planning farmers "genocide"

### Comply with order or face action, you can't act like courts: Ministry

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT recently directed Twitter to block around 250 tweets/Twitter accounts that made 'fake and provocative tweets' with hashtags accusing the Govt of planning farmers' 'genocide' without any substantiation
- Twitter is an 'intermediary' and is obliged to obey the direction of Government, says the Ministry
- Ministry officials said that Twitter had unilaterally unblocked accounts and tweets despite specific orders for blocking them



without any substantiation. The 18-page notice stated that the "impracticability or the disproportionality of the said measure cannot be decided (by) Twitter which is an intermediary bound by the orders of the Central Government."

Around 100 Twitter accounts and 150 tweets related to the farmers' protests went off the microblogging platform on Monday morning as the IT Ministry directed Twitter to remove these accounts under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act. However, the accounts

were unblocked late Monday night after a meeting with IT Ministry officials.

Rules under 69A of the IT Act are used often in Government-mandated Internet takedowns. The rules allow the government to block public access to information from a computer "in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above."

### CAPSULE

**JEFF BEZOS TO STEP DOWN AS AMAZON CEO**  
New York: Billionaire Jeff Bezos — who founded Amazon as an online bookseller nearly three decades ago — will step down as the CEO with Andy Jassy being named his successor.

**SC REFUSES PLEA AGAINST CONVERSION LAWS**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court refused to entertain a plea challenging the validity of laws enacted by States, including UP and Uttarakhand, which deal with religious conversion by marriage and others.

**PRAVEEN SINHA NAMED INTERIM CBI DIRECTOR**  
New Delhi: CBI Additional Director Praveen Sinha has been appointed acting chief of the agency till a decision on a new director is taken to succeed Rishi Kumar Shukla who retired on Wednesday.

**GIRL RAPED, KILLED WITH FATHER, NIECE**  
Korba: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped and smashed to death with stones in Korba district of Chhattisgarh, police said. The accused allegedly also killed the girl's father and his four-year-old granddaughter.

## ₹1L reward for info on Deep Sidhu

Delhi Police also announces ₹50K on others, advises netizens to avoid sharing fake news

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has announced a cash reward of ₹1 lakh each for information that can lead to the arrest of actor Deep Sidhu and three others — Jugraj Singh, Gurjot Singh and Gurjant Singh — who are accused of instigating the protesting farmers to storm the Red Fort on Republic Day.

Cash reward of ₹50,000 each was also announced for Bata Singh, Sukhdev Singh, Jagbir Singh and Iqbal Singh for allegedly instigating protesters, police said.

Police teams are looking for Sidhu and Jugraj Singh, Gurjant Singh, Gurjot Singh, Bata Singh, Sukhdev Singh, Jagbir Singh and Iqbal Singh for violence and hosting a religious flag at Red Fort on Republic Day.



Deep Sidhu

accused indulging in such activities have been identified and efforts are underway to arrest them.

"The Delhi Police is acting against the massive misinformation campaign on the social media those who are trying to create disturbance and incite violence in the name of ongoing farmers protest," said IPS, Chinmoy Biswal, the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of Delhi Police.

"Police teams have noticed several activities and misinformation of social media which includes, fake news about police firing against the protesters, despite the fact that over 500 police personnel got injured," said

"Fake news about resignation by 200 police personnel in support of farmers' protest was spread. Old images and videos of law & order action, that are unrelated to the current situation in Delhi, are being peddled to generate resentment against the administration," said Biswal.

"Citizens are advised to avoid sharing or posting any fake news and unverified contents on social media," Biswal added.

Meanwhile, the Cyber Crime unit (CyPAD) has also registered four FIRs against several social media accounts and sent requests for removal of offensive posts. Police arrested one accused for posting old video along with fake news of resignation by 200 police personnel, while one was apprehended from Bharatpur for sharing fake information on Twitter. According to a senior police official, several other

## Celebrities' pro-kisan comments inaccurate: MEA

Ministry calls Rihanna, Greta's tweets irresponsible, slams vested interests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking strong exception to some foreign celebrities, including top pop singer Rihanna, backing the ongoing farmers' protest here, India on Wednesday said only a "small section" of the farmers was agitating and talks were on to resolve the issue. New Delhi also said such comments by celebrities and others are "neither accurate nor responsible."

Rihanna, who has 100 million followers on Twitter and is among the most followed people on the microblogging site, on Tuesday tweeted protesting against the internet shutdown near the protest site. Later, Greta Thunberg also backed the agitation, tweeting, "We stand in solidarity with the #FarmersProtest in India."

"The temptation of sensationalist social media hashtags and comments, especially when resorted to by celebrities and others, is neither accurate nor responsible," the External Affairs Ministry said.

By all accounts, this is seen as the recognition of the



Government's concerns that the farmers' protest is invoking sympathetic response in the international arena and harming the country's image abroad. The Ministry also said Parliament passed the reformist legislation relating to the agricultural sector, and noted that some of vested interest groups have tried to mobilise international support against India.

"We would like to emphasise that these protests must be seen in the context of India's democratic ethos and polity, and efforts of the Government and the concerned farmer

groups to resolve the impasse," the statement said.

The Government said Parliament after debate and discussion passed "reformist legislation relating to the agricultural sector, and provided greater flexibility to farmers."

Stating that a small section was agitating, the External Affairs Ministry said the Government, "respecting the sentiments of the protesters", has initiated talks.

"The Government has even offered to keep the laws

on hold, an offer iterated by no less than the Prime Minister of India," the MEA said.

"Yet, it is unfortunate to see vested interest groups trying to enforce their agenda on these protests. This was egregiously witnessed on January 26, India's Republic Day. A cherished national commemoration, the anniversary of the inauguration of the Constitution was besmirched, and violence and vandalism took place in the Capital.

"Some of these vested interest groups have also tried to mobilise international support against India. Instigated by such fringe elements, Mahatma Gandhi statues have been desecrated in parts of the world. This is extremely disturbing for India and for civilised society everywhere," the Ministry said.

The Government said the police had handled the protests with the utmost restraint.

"It may be noted that hundreds of men and women serving in the police have been physically attacked, and in some cases stabbed and wounded."

## Bengal Rath Yatra: Didi leaves it to dist admin; BJP adamant

Modi to visit State on Feb 7, BJP hardens stand

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

BJP's Rath Yatra politics seems to be facing a serious challenge in West Bengal ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February 7 rally in Haldia where he will launch a number of Central projects.

The State Government has passed the onus of permitting the four proposed Rath Yatras — each one to be flagged off by either Home Minister Amit Shah or party national president JP Nadda — beginning February 6 on district administrations.

The BJP leadership has hardened its stance saying, "We will go any length to ensure that the Rath Yatra takes place at any cost." Responding to an applica-



tion seeking permission for the four Rath Yatras, the State Government on Friday told the BJP that permission would be granted by the respective district administrations and not Nabanna (the State administrative headquarters), sources said. BJP State spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said, "The Government is trying to shift the onus on lesser authorities as

the process to spike the Yatra... but if they do so this time we will hit the streets and ensure that the Government is forced to give us permission... this police raj cannot go on for too long... Come what may the Yatra is on and we have made all preparations for it."

Bhattacharya's statement came hours after a Public Interest Litigation being filed in Calcutta High Court seeking a ban on the Yatra on grounds of law and order. The matter is likely to be heard on Thursday.

Earlier BJP State vice-president Pratap Banerjee, in a letter to Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay, wrote about five rallies crisscrossing the entire State. The BJP had decided to carry out a "peaceful political programme throughout Bengal in the form of 'yatra' in February and March 2021. There will be five segments — covering all the Assembly constituencies of West Bengal.

## India's reputation has taken massive hit with barricading at Delhi's borders: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of international celebrities lending support to the agitating farmers, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the "reputation of India has taken a massive hit" with barricading at Delhi's borders.

"Delhi is surrounded by farmers. They're the people who give us sustenance. Why is Delhi being converted into a fortress? Why are we threatening, beating, and killing them? Why is the Government not talking to them and not resolving this problem? This problem isn't good for the country," Rahul Gandhi said at AICC Press conference.

To a question if India's image at the international level has taken a beating with barricading at Delhi's borders with concertina wire and spikes, Rahul said, "Absolutely the reputation of India has taken a

massive hit. Not only on how we are treating our farmers, but on how we treat our people, how we treat journalists."

Rahul said that the Government should give into the demands of the protesting farmers and repeal the contentious farm laws.

"The PM said that the offer is still on the table to postpone laws for two years. What does it mean? Either you believe that you need to get rid of the laws or you don't. I feel this issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible and Government needs to listen as farmers aren't going away. Ultimately, the Government will have to bow down, it is better to do that right now," he asserted.

Reacting to Budget 2021-22 announcements, Rahul Gandhi accused the Government of putting money in the hands of just 5-10 people.

## In touch with better-linked allies India, Japan on Myanmar: US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Termining the military detention of civilian leaders in Myanmar a coup, a senior US State Department official on Tuesday said the US is in touch with like-minded allies like India and Japan on the latest developments in the Southeast Asian nation as they have better contact with the military there.

Myanmar's military on Monday staged a coup and detained top political figures, including de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi. It was also announced that the military had taken control of the country for one year.

"We have certainly been in frequent contact with our like-minded allies and partners in the region. You mentioned Japan and India. We're having daily ongoing conversations with them, and we certainly appreciate that some other countries have better contact

with Burmese military than we do, so we're continuing those conversations," a senior State Department official said during a conference call.

"After a careful review of the facts and circumstances, we have assessed that Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma's ruling party, and Win Myint, the duly elected head of Government, were deposed in a military coup on February 1," the official said.

"We continue to call on the Burmese military leadership to release them and all other detained civil society and political leaders immediately and unconditionally," the official said.

The US has denounced in the strongest possible terms Myanmar's military leaders for seeking to reject the will of the people of the country's as expressed in democratic elections on November 8th and for taking control of the Government.

"We continue to stand with the people of Burma, as we have done for decades, in their efforts to achieve democracy, freedom, peace, and development," said the official.

The Biden administration, the official said, rejects any attempt by the military to alter the outcome of the November 2020 election in Burma.

### China against UNSC resolution that may complicate matters

Beijing: China on Wednesday said it is opposed to any strong resolution by the UNSC condemning the military coup in Myanmar and insisted that any action by the international community should not escalate the tensions and complicate matters.

Detailed report on P12



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The Wuhan mystery

The WHO inspectors are visiting the secretive lab. Will they be able to find all the answers?

All eyes are on the team of World Health Organisation (WHO) investigators who are in China right now to inspect the research centre in Wuhan that has been the subject of speculation about the origin of the Coronavirus pandemic that was unleashed upon the world in 2019, destroying global economies and killing lakhs of people. The team's visit to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which conducts research on the world's most dangerous diseases, is meant for gathering data and searching for clues as to where the virus originated, how it jumped from animals to humans and how the pandemic spread. One of China's top virus research labs, the institute built an archive of genetic information about bat Coronaviruses after the 2003 outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. That led to allegations that it may have a link to the original outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan. However, this trip seems more like an exercise in futility as one wonders what the experts can find after more than a year since the outbreak of the worst pandemic in living memory. Plus, China, which has been subjected to global finger-pointing, accusations and isolation on the world stage amid sanction and lawsuit threats, has fought tooth and nail against allowing any global body into its highly guarded and secretive lab. The team also went to the market where one of the first reported clusters of infection had emerged. This is being considered a "critical" stop, as mankind struggles to get some definitive answers about the contagion.



Given that the media have been kept at bay from all the proceedings, how genuine the information coming out of Wuhan will be is anybody's guess. However, one can only hope that the WHO — which in the initial stages had been accused of colluding with Beijing to brush the news of the contagion under the carpet and being "partial" to China because of the major funding from there — will perform its duty with due diligence and integrity. Having been able to wipe the blot with a lot of difficulty, the WHO must ensure against accusations of being partisan or, worse, corrupt. On its part, Beijing would like to forget the past year and is determined to put the focus back on its recovery, if the WHO team's tour of a propaganda exhibition celebrating China's recovery in Wuhan is anything to go by. Though Beijing had to bear global outrage, hatred, economic repercussions and conspiracy theories after the outbreak, it maintained its "innocence". One wonders why it took so long for the country to allow global experts into the notorious Wuhan lab if it was indeed innocent. In fact, if it had nothing to hide, China should have voluntarily opened its doors to allow the inspectors in. However, whether it will turn out to be a fruitful exercise or "Mission Impossible" only time will tell.

### PICTALK



The Indian Air Force's aerobatics team, Sarang, flies past the Yelahanka air base during the 13th Aero India show. PTI

## Floodgates shut

Having plucked several leaders in Bengal, the BJP is suddenly and curiously concerned about a clean image

After seeking to make an impressive dent in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly by aggressively poaching a number of leaders belonging to the rival parties ahead of the State elections, the BJP has suddenly turned coy. Without assigning any cogent reason for the development, it has abruptly announced that it would henceforth not induct members of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) en masse. Though the officially assigned reason is that the BJP does "not want to become the B-team" of the ruling party and is sceptical of the new joiners having a tarnished image, there is ground to believe that the actualities are more deep-rooted. The BJP has certainly gained strength in the State; the proof is in the pudding: It has inducted since the 2019 Lok Sabha elections 18 MLAs and an MP belonging to the TMC, three MLAs each of the CPI(M) and the Congress and an MLA from the CPI. However, the new arrivals and the importance given to them have caused significant resentment and heartburn among the old guard and caused a divide in the saffron party.



Be that as it may, the development must have allowed the TMC — which was being squeezed in from several quarters in the State's electoral arena — to have a huge sigh of relief. It is a matter of record that the Mamata Banerjee-led unit has of late been a worried party; virtually in the throes of a crisis after successive desertions by senior office-bearers and influential community leaders. Another of her challenges in the forthcoming elections comes from AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, who is hoping to find favour with influential Muslim cleric Abbas Siddiqui, the 'Peerzada' of Furfura Sharif — a much-revered shrine in Bengal's Hooghly district. Bengal's Muslim population stood at 27.01 per cent in the 2011 census and is projected to have increased to around 30 per cent now. The community's population is substantially high in at least nine districts of the State but several clerics and imams close to the ruling dispensation discount the idea that Owaisi & Co will be acceptable to Bengal's voters. It is in this respect that Mamata's party is growing closer to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), whose leader Lalu Prasad she shares cordial relations with, with the apparent aim of letting that party contest a few constituencies on the inter-State border that have a sizeable number of Hindi-speaking voters.

# The curse of 'Made in China'

The country is ranked 49th in the 'Made-in-Country Index' of 50 nations and even the efficacy of its anti-COVID vaccines is being contested



BHOPINDER SINGH

The country of origin for the manufacture of a brand or the rendering of a service is of deep significance for the end consumer. In today's globalised and inter-connected world where the same brands are made across the globe, it is not uncommon to see the selective dialling up of the country of origin to insist on product superiority, for example "Swiss-made" in watches or "Made in Japan" for electronics. There is an automatic, subliminal and unsaid correlation that develops amid a brand's image, country image, quality perception and promised experience. Global research company Statista has developed a "Made-in-Country Index" to ascertain the value of sovereign labels in terms of connotations of value, efficacy and trust. Respondents ranked 50 major countries and, expectedly, the overall score of "Made in Germany" topped the perception index whereas "Made in China" lagged at the 49th place ("Made in India" was at 42).

Despite flooding global markets with the cheapest products that are churned out of hyper factories, that are State-supported with subsidised wherewithal as also controlled labour market — the parameter of affordability notwithstanding, the quality of "Made in China" is perennially suspect. This wariness of the sovereign tag extends to the global vaccine rush where the "Made in China" offerings of Sinovac and Sinopharm (CanSino Biologics and Anhui Zhifei are also being developed in China) compete with others. The public hesitation notwithstanding, the ever-opportunistic Chinese have upped the ante on vaccine diplomacy to make the most of a desperate situation, to bank commercial and diplomatic wins. The cash-rich Chinese have already pledged "friendly" loans of \$2 billion to Africa and up to \$1 billion to the Latin/Caribbean countries to buy the Chinese vaccines — which, interestingly and contrary to the usual "Made in China" narrative, are not the cheapest vaccines in the global market. The move reeks of yet another patented 'debt trap' that Beijing routinely deploys



to ensnare cash-strapped and desperate countries.

The Chinese order book for the vaccines has client countries that will source its wares owing to geopolitical stakes, such as Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia and Philippines; some others like the United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Brazil have shown interest. Pursuant to the "all-weather friendship", Pakistan became the first foreign recipient of the vaccines. Similarly, the mercurial quasi-dictator of Hungary, Viktor Orban, sent a loaded message to the pro-democracy West when he became the sole European Union country to repose faith in Chinese vaccines. Though, like most offerings from China, the manufacturing processes, test findings and efficacy rates remain mired in hotly contested discrepancies. Brazil had initially reported a still-reasonable figure of 78 per cent effectiveness in clinical trials though, subsequently and embarrassingly for the Chinese, the nation revised it to 50.4 per cent after supposedly reworking the base data. Such damning revelations will willy-nilly lead to some heartburn in countries that had pre-ordered these vaccines.

However, it is the conundrum in Pakistan which exemplifies the queasy situation

vis-à-vis the Chinese vaccines. Recently the Special Assistant to the Pakistan Prime Minister on Health, Dr Faisal Sultan, announced that besides the "gift" of half a million Chinese vaccines, Pakistan had secured nearly seven million doses of AstraZeneca, adding sheepishly: "Though AstraZeneca is being prepared in India, it will come through Covax, an international alliance." The fact that the Pakistanis have not yet ordered the full quantity of the planned purchase, and are actively scouting for alternative sources even though the Chinese could service the total requirement, suggests inherent issues with "Made in China". Brazil's incorrigible President Jair Bolsonaro taunted the Chinese vaccine: "Is that 50 per cent good?" The other pre-booked procurers of the Chinese vaccines in Singapore, Indonesia and Philippines are having a difficult time selling it to its unsure citizenry.

The saga of "Made in China" has played out through the pandemic with the Chinese authorities coming in for an initial rap for having downplayed its consequences (besides former US President Donald Trump's insistence on the "Chinese virus"); thereafter the shoddy quality of Chinese-sup-

plied Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across the globe made unsavoury headlines for the Chinese. Now the vaccines' questionable efficacy points towards fears of quality when it comes to "Made in China". For a global industrial powerhouse, Huawei is the only Chinese brand to make it to the "Best Global Brands 2020" list — and this brand too has run into serious concerns of having dangerous backdoors in its technology! The US is pressuring its allies to desist from Huawei as it fears the possible misuse of the platform, another speciality that accompanies "Made in China". These diminishing perceptions will impact the ambitious industrial plan introduced in 2015, "Made in China 2025", that seeks to assert China's dominance in the global manufacturing value chain (biopharma and high-tech medical devices were identified among the focus 10 sectors). The recent pandemic has yet again exposed the yawning gap between Chinese claims on technology and the actual delivery, with the curse of "Made in China" only worsening.

(The writer, a military veteran, is former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Pudukcherry. The views expressed are personal.)



PUBLIC HESITATION NOTWITHSTANDING, THE EVER-OPPORTUNISTIC CHINESE HAVE UPPED THE ANTE ON VACCINE DIPLOMACY TO MAKE THE MOST OF A DESPERATE SITUATION, TO BANK THEIR COMMERCIAL AND DIPLOMATIC WINS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FIND AN AMICABLE SOLUTION

Sir— This refers to the editorial 'Stranglehold?' (February 3). After the unacceptable violence and vandalism on Republic Day, the majority of protesters were demoralised. But the efforts by the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government to clear the Ghazipur border last week, and farm leader Rakesh Tikait's passionate appeal to continue the protest, changed the situation on the ground. It led to a revival of the protest's momentum which was almost lost.

It has now created a real political challenge for the Government. As long as it was largely confined to the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, the Government's political calculus was that this would not lead to a major electoral backlash against the BJP in its strongholds. But the developments in western UP changed the scenario. With State elections a year away, the party is worried about alienating this large demography in a crucial State.

But no side should think it has the upper hand in this constantly shifting dynamic. It would be best for farm groups to take the Government's offer of an 18-month suspension of the laws and join a consultative exercise to come up with a revised framework. The R-Day violence and Ghazipur developments are neither good for the State nor for the protesters.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

### MILITARY RULE IS NOT ALIEN TO BURMA

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Democracy's dilemma' (February 3). Ironically, military rule is not alien to Myanmar, given that the run of democracy in Burma has been short-lived and that, prior to the establishment of democracy in erstwhile Burma in 2011, the Burmese had already undergone the hardships of a long spell of military regime. Hence, the overthrow of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi-led Government in Myanmar in the wee hours of Monday does not pass for a surprise, particularly when two of the world's most powerful democracies — the US and India — have also had body blows not-in-the-too-distant past,

## 'Aatmanirbharta' does India proud



It's really delightful to know that the word 'Aatmanirbharta' has been chosen and declared as the Hindi word of the year 2020 by an advisory panel of Oxford Languages, which publishes the Oxford English Dictionary. The word, which means self-reliance, came into prominence after Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a call for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)' — an important initiative in the backdrop of the Novel

Coronavirus pandemic. It gave the much-needed hope, encouragement and motivation to the nation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Aatmanirbharta' found resonance with a wide cross-section of people as it is seen as an answer for the revival of a COVID-impacted economy. The word stands for the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of the pandemic. It reflects the PM's vision of new India aimed at making the nation strong, self-reliant and a big global economy. It is also an encouragement to the youth, inspiring them to launch start-ups and become entrepreneurs rather than job seekers. The nation surged ahead during the crisis, and the achievements of our nation in health-care, manufacturing of health gear, building healthcare infrastructure and its great contribution in the manufacturing of vaccines clearly show that 'aatmanirbharta' worked as a mantra in the mind of each and every Indian.

M Pradyu | Kannur

from the Capitol Hill and the Red Fort incidents, respectively.

However, this bodes well that US President Joe Biden has, while threatening Myanmar with the re-imposition of sanctions, called for a concerted international response — perhaps in a futile bid to prevail upon the military leaders to step down and in turn put back on rails the democracy in Myanmar. The editorial view, that India needs to tread with caution given that the military leadership of Myanmar may join hands with Beijing for support in the UN Security Council which is expected to take up resolutions for the restoration of the democratic process and peace in the region, holds good and merits serious deliberation.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### MAINTAIN DIGNITY OF THE HOUSE

Sir — It is a matter of grave concern that Rajya Sabha Chairperson M Venkaiah Naidu has warned members against using mobile phones within the House.

He mentioned that there is a restriction on the use of cellular phones within the Rajya Sabha's chambers. It has been noticed that some members use their mobile phones to record proceedings of the House while sitting in the chambers and such conduct is against parliamentary etiquette.

The session of the House is held for a short time and incurs an expenditure of crores of rupees on the public exchequer. In the past also, many of our representatives have acted irresponsibly. Some members of a Legislative Assembly were spotted even watching porn clips during a session. We have also seen MPs and MLAs breaking the microphones and throwing chairs at each other. Parliament or the State Assemblies are the temples of democracy and those who are their members must maintain their dignity.

Amit Singh Kushwaha | Satna

## SOUND BITE

We have taken many steps to strengthen our security apparatus. India plans to spend 130 billion dollars on military modernisation in the next seven-eight years.



Defence Minister — Rajnath Singh

Pakistan is a peace-loving country that had rendered great sacrifices for regional and global peace. Pakistan and India should resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue in a dignified manner.



Pakistan Army chief — General Qamar Javed Bajwa

As an actor, we didn't know what was going to happen in the next one year. I felt I started loving my profession all over again during lockdown because I have started giving value to things.



Actor — Ali Asgar

It is a good opportunity for a young captain when the full squad is available. Shakib's batting and bowling are going to help me lead the side with a better combination.



Bangladesh cricketer — Mominul Haque

Few hookah bars operate as part of restaurants while some are standalone in cities. Youngsters through these places. We are seriously thinking of banning hookah bars.



Karnataka Home Minister — Basavaraj Bommai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## BUDGET DOES NOT ADDRESS KEY ISSUE

For India to prosper, we must raise the purchasing power of the masses. This has not been dealt with



MARKANDEY KATJU

The Union Budget is disappointing, directionless and unrealistic, even though the Government claims that it will make India "atmanirbhar" (self-reliant). It lays emphasis on healthcare, building some highways and Metros (especially in States where elections will be held shortly) and disinvestment of Public Sector Undertakings. But what will all these measures accomplish if people don't have jobs, money and food? The ongoing farmers' agitation reveals the terrible crisis in the agricultural sector of our economy. Thousands of farmers committed suicide because they were not getting adequate remuneration for their produce and were deep in debt. In almost all countries agriculture is subsidised — even in the most advanced and prosperous country like the US. One can survive without a car, a TV set, air conditioner or other industrial products but food, like air and water, is essential for life. Hence, agriculture is very different from other industries as people's survival depends on it. Cultivation has to be done and since modern farming cannot be done without subsidy, the State must ensure that farmers get an adequate remuneration for their produce. For this, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) must be given to all farmers (not just a select few), but this has not been addressed either by the three laws against which the farmers are agitating, nor in the Union Budget.



In recent months, the Indian economy has tanked, with a sharp downturn in both manufacturing and sales. The automobile industry, the real estate sector and so on, are in the dumps. Massive lay-offs have taken place even as unemployment has reached record heights.

What, then, is the real way out of this economic crisis? The way out is not only giving MSP to farmers but also rapid industrialisation of the country, as that alone can create the millions of jobs needed to wipe out unemployment and generate the wealth required for the welfare of the people. However, there is a basic hurdle to rapid industrialisation: While there is no difficulty in increasing production, the goods will not be sold because the people have little purchasing power.

India today is not the India of 1947. At that time we had few industries and few engineers because the policy of the British was broadly to keep us feudal and unindustrialised. After Independence, however, there was a limited degree of industrialisation and today we have thousands of engineers, technicians and scientists alongside immense natural resources. With these, we can easily step up production.

The problem, however, is not how to increase production but how to raise the purchasing power of the masses. In 1914, Henry Ford raised the wages of his workers from \$2.25 to \$5 per day. That was done to stabilise his workforce, but it did raise the purchasing power of the masses as other US manufacturers were compelled to do the same. In the Soviet Union, the Government fixed the prices of all commodities and every two years or so lowered them by 5-10 per cent, and sometimes wages were also increased by 5-10 per cent. Even with the same wage, the worker could now buy more goods, as prices were reduced regularly. This way, the purchasing power of the Russian masses was increased by State action. Simultaneously, production was also stepped up and more goods could be sold as people had more purchasing power. This process went on steadily after 1928, resulting in the rapid expansion of the Soviet economy and the creation of millions of jobs, wiping out unemployment. I am not saying we must adopt the Soviet model, but for India to prosper we must raise the purchasing power of the masses. This has not been seriously addressed in the Budget.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.)

## Peace a distant dream unless we change

India's strategic response to Beijing has to be two-pronged if we desire lasting peace. We need a strong military and a political will to be proactive to exploit Chinese vulnerabilities



ANIL GUPTA

Despite the ongoing talks to resolve the military impasse in Eastern Ladakh, incursions and aggressiveness by China continue on the borders. Close on the heels of the revelation of construction of a village in the disputed territory in the Upper Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh came the news of Chinese incursion in Naku La in North Sikkim. Consequently, relations between the two nations are deteriorating by the day, with chances of a confrontation on the border likely once the snow melts. India needs to prepare herself militarily, politically and diplomatically to halt Chinese expansionism, a product of its "Middle Kingdom Complex" that is being pursued vigorously by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under the garb of the "China Dream" of its paramount leader Xi Jinping.

Ever since the emergence of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Indian leadership beginning with Pandit Nehru desired to have friendly ties with Beijing in the hope that it would contribute towards world peace, oppose colonialism and form the pillars of a Pan-Asian order. India was among the first few nations to establish diplomatic ties with the PRC on April 1, 1950. Nehru had introduced China for the first time in the global arena during the first-ever multinational Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955. India was instrumental in getting China the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Unfortunately, Nehru failed to read Chairman Mao's mind which was filled with Sinocentrism and Chinese nationalism focused on a modern powerful Chinese nation. Mao's ideology manifested itself in the form of China emerging on the world scene as a "Revisionist" power aiming to change the existing *status quo*. It resulted in annexation of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet. Subsequently, India also became a victim of Chinese expansionism.

Chinese greed showed no signs of subsiding. Apart from its adventurism in the South and East China Seas, it has been steadily extending its claim lines across Ladakh to include Indian territories, while repudiating India's sovereignty over Arunachal. Of late, it has included Sikkim also in its growing lists of disputes with India.

New Delhi has decided to contest Chinese revisionism and expansionism. It has refused to give in to Xi's machinations, for which it has received considerable global support. India needs to strategise to exploit China's many vulnerabilities. The CCP is, however, very sensitive to the two "Ts" namely Taiwan and Tibet. As a consequence of civil war in China, the nation was divided into two parts in 1949 two years after India attained Independence. Mao's communist Government retained control of mainland China forcing the Republic of China (ROC) Government to relocate to Taiwan. Since then, the ROC has continued to exercise effective jurisdiction over the main island of Taiwan and a number of outlying islands while the PRC continues to claim it as its 23rd province.

China's official position on Taiwan is uncompromising. It claims that Taiwan is, was and always has been an inseparable part of China, and that international law supports Beijing's claim. The CCP wants outright reunification, the sooner the better, seeing the recovery of the island as the final chapter in the civil war and end of past humiliations when China was forced to cede territory to foreigners.



WHILE TAIWAN AND TIBET SHOULD FORM TWO MAIN PILLARS OF INDIA'S STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO THE DRAGON'S TREACHERY, XINJIANG, HONG KONG AND INNER MONGOLIA SHOULD ALSO REMAIN ON ITS RADAR. TIBET AND XINJIANG ARE CHINA'S TWO LARGEST PROVINCES. WITHOUT THEM, THE TOTAL LAND AREA OF CHINA WOULD BE REDUCED BY OVER 30 PER CENT

The writer is a Jammu-based veteran, political commentator, columnist, security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are personal.



On the other hand, there is a growing global support for Taiwan as it is viewed as a victim of growing Chinese expansionism that wants to impose the communist ideology on a democratic nation.

The other Achilles heel of CCP is Tibet, the region that shares border with India and has had historic ties with India. With the end of the Chinese Civil War, the newly-established communist regime openly stated its intention of "liberating" Tibet, but India paid no heed.

To maintain control over Tibet, the PLA entered Tibet on October 7, 1950, and subsequently annexed it, thus eliminating the traditional buffer between India and China. India committed a big folly in 1954 when, under the Panchsheel Agreement, we surrendered in Tibet all our military and other facilities to China. Chinese responded with attacking an Assam Rifles outpost in Longju in the Central Frontier of erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal) and building a road through Indian territory of Aksai Chin in Ladakh. Nehru still did not realise the gravity of the situation till China backstabbed India in 1962.

Had Tibet not been forcibly annexed by PRC there would have been no boundary dispute on our northern borders.

The PRC on assuming power renounced all earlier foreign agreements as unequal treaties imposed on it during the 'century of humiliation' and demanded renegotiation of all borders.

Chinese obsession with Tibet

stems from many reasons, one of them being to fulfil Mao's revisionist dream of Five Fingers. Mao believes Tibet to be the palm of China's right hand, with Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal as its five fingers which also need to be "liberated" contrary to Indian claims.

Tibet is Beijing's fundamental vulnerability *vis-a-vis* India and a mechanism available to the latter to restrain China. New Delhi made the cardinal mistake of accepting the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as part of China, thus permitting the Dragon to share a border with India. China time and again defied India's hopes of a peaceful co-existence through its acts of treachery by showing scant respect for mutual treaties and international conventions. The time has come to junk the One Nation policy of China by paying it back in the same coin. India needs to derecognise Tibet as part of China and recognise Taiwan as an independent nation. To begin with, India needs to enhance commerce and cultural relations with Taiwan and increase military cooperation.

To ensure Hans supremacy, the CCP has been subjecting the other ethnic minorities to suppression and subjugation. There is growing unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang against increased Chinese atrocities. China also plans to change the demographics along the Sino-Indian border through the establishment of Hans populated villages. To counter this, India should give up its timid Tibet policy, assist the resistance

movement within Tibet and give a free hand to the Dalai Lama and his Government to espouse the cause of freedom from Indian soil. It should also draw global attention to increased human right violations inside Tibet.

In all fairness, the mistake committed by India during the NDA regime under Atal Bihari Vajpayee should be corrected by the Narendra Modi-led NDA before it is too late. India should shed all apprehensions and play its trump card: Tibet, against China.

While Taiwan and Tibet should form two main pillars of India's strategic response to the Dragon's treachery, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia should also remain on its radar. Tibet and Xinjiang are China's two largest provinces. Without them, the total land area of China would be reduced by over 30 per cent. India should also invest heavily in improving and maintaining good relations with peripheral nations of SCS as well as the nations in Indo-Pacific region. Strengthening the Quad into an alliance has become a strategic necessity to checkmate Xi's ambition to become the world's most powerful leader. Our strategic response to Beijing has to be two-pronged if we desire lasting peace with China. In keeping with the maxim, "If you want peace, be prepared for war," a strong military to defend ourselves is the foremost change needed, coupled with a political will to be proactive to exploit Chinese vulnerabilities and let Beijing respond to our moves rather than the other way round.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING! WHY AREN'T WE TALKING ABOUT THIS? #FARMERSPROTEST (IN INDIA). —SINGER AND ACTOR RIHANNA



NO ONE IS TALKING ABOUT IT BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT FARMERS. THEY ARE TERRORISTS WHO ARE TRYING TO DIVIDE INDIA. SIT DOWN YOU FOOL. —ACTOR KANGANA RANAUT

## Innovation must for survival of NGOs in a post-virus world

The world is going to be a different place for social organisations where getting support is concerned. The need for them to innovate has never been greater

The initial months of the COVID-induced lockdown — when the world was in the grip of the unprecedented health crisis and job losses were massive — witnessed Indians loosening their purse strings quite generously to donate to those who were in need. Be it the PM CARES (Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations) Fund or the World Health Organisations (WHO's) COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, donations by private individuals in India recorded a significant uptick.

The troubled times brought the nation under one umbrella and redefined the age-old adage "united we stand." The outpouring of aid made it clear that Indians do not lag behind when it comes to reaching out to the less fortunate. India's everyday givers are motivated by four triggers: Convenience, urgency,



ANURADHA PRASAD

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community and impact. Last year, the "urgency" factor largely drove donations.

However, the post COVID-19 world is going to be a different ball game for social purpose organisations (SPOs). Hence, the need for SPOs to innovate in order to ensure that their mission and services are protected, has never been greater. As fundraising is the lifeblood of SPOs, it is imperative for such organisations to understand new-age challenges.

The key concerns for the organisations include public loss of faith in the fundraising sector, highly publicised examples of malpractices, dip in donations by high net-worth individuals or companies due to the pandemic's impact, lower Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) targets in the wake of the global pandemic and an increased demand for transparency from donors, among

others. Diving straight into the measures required to steer clear of the aforementioned issues, here are some ways to keep SPOs flush with funds:

**Earn the trust:** The erosion of public trust is becoming a worldwide reality and is undermining the ability of social organisations to work in public interest. The causes exacerbating this trust deficit are: Public and private sector corruption, income inequality, lack of civic engagements, volatile media and social media rhetoric, among others. The most fundamental proactive action for institutions and organisations to keep the trust of donors intact is to deliver real value to people. Efficient day-to-day execution of tasks may not be headline-grabbing but it is what ultimately matters the most. The other prerequisites to maintain trust include strengthening accountability and transparency. To



this end, citizens can also be roped in to help in tackling community and societal challenges.

**Finding new donors and retaining old ones:** Individuals or companies may donate once but getting them to give for charity again is possible only when they are ensured value for their donations. In fact, the idea should be to empower the donors in a way that they also encourage others to follow suit.

Meanwhile, to get new donors into the fold, the cause should be presented in a relatable manner and the work done previously should be highlighted across all platforms. The campaign designed by SPOs should have a universal appeal. Other successful ways to grab the attention of donors are email campaigns, community events, and video campaigns.

**Storytelling for fundraising:** A social organisation is identified with the cause it works for. If people are not aware of your work, funds may dry sooner than expected. Hence, it is extremely crucial for SPOs to make the masses aware of their initiatives and the relevance of their efforts. For businesses, marketing products or services is *sine qua non* to reach out to customers. For non-profits as well, marketing holds great significance. It's just that the cause of the social organi-

sation becomes the product and the donors take the spot of customers. To tell its story in the simplest way possible and yet make the desired impact, an organisation must have a clear idea as to what differentiates it from other SPOs. Perhaps, including a seasoned content writer in the team or having a journalist as a consultant may help in projecting the cause of the firm in an impactful manner to the people.

**Go digital:** Reaching out to potential donors isn't economical if a company goes the conventional marketing way. But social media platforms make for the perfect media to penetrate a large group of people while incurring minimal cost. Through digital marketing, NGOs can divert a considerable amount of traffic to their website and build a credible brand image. The numerous instruments

that digital marketing proffers SPOs are: Creating social profiles, circulating Press releases and newsletters, creating a blog, local directory listings, submitting articles, email marketing and so on. Digital marketing also cuts through geographical constraints. By integrating digital in day-to-day activities, a firm can achieve two goals at the same time — earning public trust and attracting more funds.

When *annus horribilis* bared its fangs, the focus of the world shifted towards surviving and enduring the pandemic. Now, with vaccines being rolled out across the globe, social organisations should again look forward to prevailing and achieving their objectives. Be it the West or a Third World nation, the COVID-19 outbreak has shown us all that a lot needs to be done in the social arena to be prepared for any forthcoming catastrophe.

# Mastermind of insurance scam lands in STF net

**Lucknow (PNS):** A team of the Special Task Force claimed to have nabbed the mastermind of the gang which had duped several retired officials and others to the tune of crores on the pretext of hefty profit against investment and lifetime health insurance.

The accused was identified as Ramendra Kumar Mishra of Chhinhat. He is a native of Bahraich. The police said the gang consisted of ten members who used to lure people, including retired official of STF, police department and other government departments, into investing in different companies to get insurance policies. The gang duped CB Chaurasia, who is a retired officer of medical department Rs 40 lakh, and others were defrauded of Rs 41 lakh. The STF kept a watch on Ramendra and nabbed him when he fell into the trap. The accused owned up his crime and disclosed the modus operandi. One member of the gang named Ved Prakash first used to get fake companies registered in fake names and addresses and later get accounts opened in different banks. He used to get cheque books and ATM cards which were later

handed over to another member, Abhinav Saxena, who in connivance with Neha, an employee of an insurance company, and her husband Ritesh, used to obtain data of the customers who were victims of the insurance schemes. The data was later given to women members Priya and Meenakshi who used to introduce themselves as insurance officials while calling the customers. The gang members used to target retired officials. After the gullible were trapped, Abhinav and Meenakshi used to visit their houses disguised as agents/employees of insurance companies the victims expressed desired to invest the money in. They used to ask the customers pay in cash but in case they were given cheques, they used to change the names of insurance companies, adding the names/prefixes. The gang would later deposit the cheques in the bank accounts of their fake companies and withdraw the money.

# 12,125 health workers expected to get Covid vaccine shots today

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A total of 12,125 health workers are scheduled to be vaccinated at 97 booths in 33 centres on Thursday, district immunisation officer MK Singh said. Some of the vaccination centres are Northern Railway Hospital, Apollo Medics, Awadh Hospital, Fatima Hospital, Vivekananda Polyclinic Institute of Medical Sciences, BKT Hospital, Ram Sagar Mishra, Chandan, St Joseph Hospital etc. Only Covishield vaccine shots will be given to beneficiaries. Covaxin may be used in the drive scheduled for February 10 & 11. Singh said the health workers would also be vaccinated on February 5. "The health workers have two last days (February 4 & 5) for getting vaccinated. It has yet to be decided if the mop-up session for them will take place on February 15," he said. He added that they are hoping for increase in the

turnout. On the possibility of a second wave, Singh said: "Lucknow witnessed major festivals like Diwali & Chhath Puja last year and there was no spike in the cases. The second wave may well be unlikely now." However, the containment activities will continue in the same manner as earlier, he added. Head of KGMU's Microbiology department Dr Amita Jain pointed out that the number of coronavirus samples that they are receiving now is less than 4,500. "We will wait for government directive before closing the Covid facility. It is the time to revert to academics because we have been actively involved in the Health department activities for quite some time," she said. Director of Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) Dr AK Singh said he will seek permission from the government to

restart the gynaecology ward in the Covid hospital as this section can be isolated from the Covid area and function separately. He said they are also planning to reduce the manpower in the Covid facility as the number of patients has come down to just seven. Meanwhile, 31 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Wednesday while 34 patients recovered. The death toll is 1,180 while there are 1,135 active cases in the district. The fresh cases included three each from Alambagh, Rae Bareilly road, Cantt & Madaoin. In the state, 197 persons tested positive, including five in Kanpur, four in Ghaziabad, eight in Gautam Buddha Nagar, six in Varanasi and 10 in Meerut, taking the tally to 6,00,837. There were six Covid deaths reported from the state, including one each from Gorakhpur, Ayodhya, Rae Bareilly, Chandauli, Baghat & Kaushambhi, taking the toll to

8,674. Besides, 431 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 5,87,398. There are 4,765 active cases in the state. Meanwhile, on the occasion of Balrampur Hospital's foundation day, director Dr Rajeev Lochan said on Wednesday that the 152-year-old hospital is scaling new heights in terms of facilities provided to patients and a new department (Microbiology) will be established under Ayushman Yojana in three months' time. "Since two of our microbiologists have been appointed by the National Health Mission, we want to have a full-fledged department so that we can do all the cultures without having to send the samples to other hospitals," he said. He said that looking into the pandemic situation, the department will also be looking into all kinds of viruses apart from bacteria, fungi and parasites.

# Depression forces two to end lives

**Lucknow (PNS):** Two persons ended their lives due to depression in different police station areas on Wednesday. In Thakurganj, a 28-year-old woman, identified as Pushpa of Vishwas Nagar, was found hanging inside her house in the morning. She was hanging from an iron rod with a dupatta tied around her neck. Her husband Rahul, who is a class IV employee in a bank, was present in house when she took the extreme step. He told police that Pushpa was depressed for the last few days. Pushpa had married Rahul in 2011 and the couple had two children. In Ghazipur police station area, a 35-year-old man, identified as Shyam was found hanging from the ceiling with a muffler tied around his neck in the morning. Police said Shyam earlier used to white-wash houses but quit after he had some mental illness. He had been under depression for the last few months.

**दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि**  
**अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना**  
 CINI.U31200UP2003SGC027460

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना - कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विद्युत के अनुसंधान कार्य हेतु अनुमती व सहाय निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

**क्रमांक 1. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 115/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21** विद्युत कार्यालय विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात एवं कार्यालय विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड-कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत स्थापित कम्प्यूटर प्रिन्टर एवं स्कैनर की मरम्मत एवं ए-4 रिम पेपर की आपूर्ति का कार्य।

**क्रमांक 2. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 116/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात के उपखण्ड-पुखरायों के अधीन आवंटित सरकारी एवं गैर सरकारी संयोजनों को ऊर्जाकृत करने का कार्य।

**क्रमांक 3. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 117/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-पुखरायों के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न संयोजनों के स्थापित स्थापित कम्प्यूटर प्रिन्टर एवं स्कैनर की मरम्मत का कार्य।

**क्रमांक 4. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 118/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-पुखरायों के अधीन 33/11 केवीडी विद्युत उपकेंद्रों में स्थापित पुराने वीपीसीबीपी के पैनलों के स्थान पर नये वीपीसीबीपी पैनलों को स्थापित करने का कार्य।

**क्रमांक 5. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 119/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-पुखरायों के उपखण्ड-पुखरायों के अधीन विभिन्न विद्युत लाइनों की आकस्मिक अनुसंधान एवं मरम्मत का कार्य।

अधी-अभिनो, विद्युत/मकाप, कानपुर देहात  
 3388/विद्युत/मकाप/2020-21 दिनांक: 02.02.2021

**राष्ट्र हित में विजली बचाय**

# Dharna by PM's brother gives police cold feet

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Younger brother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi sat on a dharna outside the Amausi airport building in Sarojininaraj police station area on Wednesday after he was told that his supporters had been detained by police. The police developed cold feet and they started persuading Prahlad Damodardas Modi to end the dharna. After strenuous efforts, Prahlad agreed to end the dharna as he was informed that his supporters had been set free. Later, he, along with his supporters, left for Sultanpur.



end the dharna only after his supporters were freed. Senior officers reached the scene to bring the situation under control. After much efforts, Prahlad agreed to end the dharna as the cops informed him that his supporters had been set free.

# 3 arrested on charges of mobile theft

**Lucknow (PNS):** Police claimed to have arrested three persons (all of Jharkhand) on the charges of stealing mobile phones and recovered 118 devices worth over Rs 23 lakh, in Ashiyana on Wednesday. Those arrested were identified as Devraj, Sunil and Rajat Noniya of Sahabganj in Jharkhand. They were staying in a rented house in Devi Kheda

locality of Ashiyana. As per reports, the police were conducting a routine checking when the suspects were seen passing by the LMC office. An informer passed the information to the police about their involvement in mobile phone theft incidents in the area in the past and the police team detained them. The police recovered the stolen mobile

phones kept in a polythene bags. The police said the accused had an organised gang and they stole mobile phones from people visiting markets and other public places. The police said that the gang members used to stay on rent in different localities and committed theft. Meanwhile, thieves dismantled the ATM of Punjab National Bank in Vibhuti

Khand police station area and managed to decamp with Rs 5,600 kept in the cassette inside the machine. They also stole the cassette. According to the senior branch manager Mohan Prasad, the incident came to light when a peon reached there on Wednesday morning. He said the peon found the ATM dismantled and the cassette missing.

# R-Day parade contingent awarded

**Lucknow (PNS):** An investiture ceremony was held at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday to welcome the UP State Republic Day Parade NCC Contingent-2021 on their return from Delhi. The Governor's gold and silver medals to NCC cadets and the coveted NCC Inter Group Banner were awarded on the occasion. The governor was the chief guest and she welcomed the contingent and congratulated the award winners for their performance. The governor stressed on the selfless contribution being made by the cadets in social service, community development and nation-building activities. A cultural show was also presented by the cadets.

A total of 34 NCC cadets from UP participated in the R-Day parade in New Delhi. Four senior division (boys) cadets and nine senior wing (girls) cadets from NCC Directorate, UP, had been selected for the NCC Rajpath Contingent. In addition, eight cadets were selected for the special NCC guard of honour. Cadets Basavaraj (Agra) and Kuldeep Kumar (Gorakhpur) were awarded DG NCC Commendation Card for the year 2020-21 for their sincerity, dedication and exemplary performance. Six senior division cadets and six senior wing cadets were awarded Governor's gold and silver medals for their performance in the R-Day Parade Camp. The ADG's banner for the best NCC group was presented to Agra group based on the performance in various training and other activities.

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**MADHYANCHAL VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LTD HEAD OFFICE- 4 A, 975 Earnest Money (Rs.) Rs. 3,17,000.00 Tender Fee with GST (Rs.) Rs. 7,080.00 Last Date & Time of receiving Tender : 25.02.2021 upto 13:00 Hrs. Due date and time for opening Bid Part-I : 26.02.2021 at 16:00 Hrs. Bidders may quote for minimum 20% quantity with proportionate earnest money. For the above tenders the tender Fee shall be deposited in the form of NEFT/RTGS only and Earnest Money, as mentioned above, shall be deposited in the form of Bank Guarantee or RTGS/NEFT. The scanned copy of Tender Fee and Earnest Money details alongwith tender bid documents shall be uploaded on e-tender website: [etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) and MVVNL website: [www.mvnl.in](http://www.mvnl.in) in case of amendment and date extension, the information shall be made available on e-tender website: [etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) and MVVNL website: [www.mvnl.in](http://www.mvnl.in) upto 13:00 Hrs. Due date and time for opening Bid Part-I : 26.02.2021 at 15:00 Hrs. Bidders may quote for minimum 20% quantity with proportionate earnest money. 3. TENDER SPECIFICATION NO. MEDCO/2557/2021 Item Description Supply of 11 KV Combined CT Unit for Various CT Ratios. Quantity (Nos.) 1275 Earnest Money (Rs.) Rs. 2,86,000.00 Tender Fee with GST (Rs.) Rs. 5,900.00 Last Date & Time of receiving Tender : 25.02.2021 upto 13:00 Hrs. Due date and time for opening Bid Part-I : 26.02.2021 at 15:30 Hrs. Bidders may quote for minimum 50% quantity with proportionate earnest money. 3. TENDER SPECIFICATION NO. MEDCO/2557/2021 Item Description Supply of 11 KV Combined CT Unit for Various CT Ratios. Quantity (Nos.) 43 Earnest Money (Rs.) Rs. 26,000.00 Tender Fee with GST (Rs.) Rs. 5,900.00 Last Date & Time of receiving Tender : 25.02.2021 upto 13:00 Hrs. Due date and time for opening Bid Part-I : 26.02.2021 at 15:30 Hrs. Bidders may quote for minimum 50% quantity with proportionate earnest money. 3. 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# Tandon reviews progress of development projects

PNS ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh's Urban Development Minister and district in-charge Ashutosh Tandon reviewed the progress of various development works during a meeting with the officials of the district administration, nagar nigam, Jal Nigam, Jal Sansthan and others at the Circuit House here on Wednesday.

He directed the officials concerned to complete the sewer and drinking water projects soon.

Tandon said Varanasi is a city with unique character as people from across the world came here and from this place, the country sent out a message to the world.

"During the tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, funds amounting to more than Rs 26,000 crore

have come to the city for the overall improvement of Varanasi's infrastructure apart from providing social assistance to the people and carrying on the developmental process. A record development works have been carried out in the city," the minister said, adding that along with its popularity in the fields of spirituality and mythology, the city was also emerging as hubs of education, health, export and transportation.

During the meeting, the Jal Nigam managing director presented the details of the ongoing sewer and drinking water projects. The minister directed him to complete the Shahi Nullah project by May, adding that the sewer water going from Nagwa area to the river Ganga should be stopped by this month.

The Jal Nigam official

informed the minister that the sewer water coming to the river at Rajghat through Shahi Nullah would be pumped to the sewage treatment plant (STP) by April and the sewer coming from Ramnagar side would be stopped by the end of this month.

Under the funds of Rs 10.62 crore given by Nagar Nigam, various public utility works are being done. The minister instructed the Jal Nigam to start all the 32 water tanks prior to summer months as under the Jal Jeevan Mission, everyone would get water supply. Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, Minister Ravindra Jaiswal, MLC Laxman Acharya, MLA Saurabh Srivastava, District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma, Municipal Commissioner Gaurang Rathi and other officials were present in the meeting.

# 500 primary healthcare personnel Get vaccine shots at NCR Hosps

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

More than 500 primary healthcare personnel have been given COVID-19 vaccine in North Central Railway Hospitals at Prayagraj, Kanpur, Jhansi and Agra and health units participating in this biggest immunisation programme of the nation.

Since rollout on January 22 this year, COVID-19 vaccination programme is increasing steadily over North Central Railway. Railway Hospitals at Prayagraj, Kanpur, Jhansi and Agra and health units of Gwalior, Lalitpur and Orai have already started COVID-19 vaccination while other railway hospitals and health units have been kept ready to start this biggest immunisation programme of the nation as and when required.

So far 545 primary healthcare personnel of

North Central Railway, including 57 railway doctors, have been administered COVID-19 vaccine. Of total 545 frontline healthcare personnel vaccinated so far, 200 were vaccinated at Central Hospital, Prayagraj, 204 at Railway Hospital in Kanpur and 97 at Railway Hospital in Jhansi while rest 44 were vaccinated at Railway Hospital in Agra and health units at Gwalior, Lalitpur and Orai. All participants of the vaccination programme are being observed for a period of 30 minutes in the Railway Hospital and no adverse effect post-immunisation has been reported so far.

Large-scale participation of Railway doctors in COVID-19 vaccination, accounting for more than 10 per cent of total healthcare personnel vaccinated so far, has helped in confidence building and this important drive is gaining momentum with each passing day.

# 21 test positive in Prayagraj

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

As many as 21 new COVID-19 cases were found in the Prayagraj district in the last 24 hours, taking the tally of confirmed cases to 29,330. However, no COVID-19 death was reported.

Ten people beat the infection during the last 24 hours. According to Covid nodal officer Dr Rishi Sahay, on Tuesday, a total of 21 people positive for coronavirus infection. The health workers screened 7,359 people during the day.

According to the nodal officer, now only the level 3 SRN Hospital would admit COVID-19 patients in the city and the other Covid hospitals had been denotified in view of the dwindling number of patients and they would admit general patients.

The SRN Hospital has 20 COVID-19 patients. Two patients were discharged from the closed Kalindipur Covid centre. The city has 431 active cases and they are undergoing

treatment. The city has witnessed 378 COVID-19 deaths till Wednesday evening.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus infection has affected the Magh Mela area. Covid testing centres and general hospitals have not been established here. The risk of infection has increased after five home guards tested positive.

On Wednesday, the health workers screened jawans and home guards in the police line located in the Magh Mela area. Covid testing will continue in the police lines. The devotees will start coming to Magh Mela area from far flung areas to attend the third bathing on Mauni Amavasya on February 11. A large number of people, including devotees and Kalpavasis have already started pouring in the Mela Area.

Meanwhile, the Prayagraj police have intensified the drive against people leaving their homes without wearing masks. The men in khaki have launched a checking drive at all intersections, markets and

crowded places.

People caught without a mask give various excuses. Some say that they forgot the mask in the house while others say that they washed the mask and forgot to wear it.

However, the police are quite reluctant to listen to the excuses and impose fine on those without masks. The strictness of the police is giving results as on coming to know about the checking, people run to get a mask.

During the checking, police caught several people in cars without masks at Subhash intersection in Civil Lines.

The police are also checking people without masks in the vegetable markets. The cops have asked shopkeepers not to sell vegetables to people not wearing masks.

## FIVE TEST +VE IN SNS

Five more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Varanasi during the past 24 hours, taking the tally of confirmed cases to 21,927 on Wednesday evening.

# MoU signed to establish MoRTH professional Chair at IIT-BHU

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) and the Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Wednesday in New Delhi for establishment of MoRTH professional chair for 10 years focusing on research and development, teaching and training in the area of development of highway sector and technical upgradation, introduction of new technology in the field of road safety engineering, and development, maintenance and operation of highways.

The MoU was signed by the IIT-BHU Director Prof Pramod Kumar Jain and Director General, Road Development and Special Secretary Indresh Kumar Pandey, Union Minister of State Gen Vijay Kumar Singh presided over the MoU signing ceremony.

Giving details of the MoU, Prof Jain said that the IIT-BHU and MoRTH would join hands to focus on research and development, teaching and training in the area of development of highway sector.

He said this MoU would strengthen R&D activities and act as a centre of excellence in transport engineering.

The creation of MoRTH professional chair at IIT-BHU will act as a strategic advisor to the ministry in new areas relevant to road transport and highway.

Prof Jain said the IIT-BHU and Indian academia would simultaneously conduct studies related to road safety, environment and social impacts under the Highway Safety Development Project.

Besides, the institute will facilitate or undertake dissemination of technology upgrades in planning, design, construction and operation and maintenance for highway development through standards, guidelines, training etc., he added.

The IIT-BHU will provide input to development/amendment of standards to be adopted on safety/new materials/



IIT-BHU and Union Ministry of Road Transport exchanging MoU in New Delhi on Wednesday

# Reliance scholarships for IIT-BHU students

Varanasi (PNS): The Reliance Foundation has offered 40 scholarships to the students of the Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI) and computer science from academic session 2020-21 onwards.

The scholarship was launched by Reliance Industries Limited Chairman Mukesh Ambani and Reliance Foundation Chairperson Nita Ambani.

IIT-BHU Director Prof Pramod Kumar Jain said the main objective of this scholarship was to empower talented students of IIT-BHU and it sought to build a community of new scholars who would become India's global

leaders of tomorrow.

In future years, the intention is to expand the area covered by the scholarships to include students of other disciplines. Dean (Academic Affairs) Prof SB Dwivedi said for availing the scholarships, the students would have to enroll in their first year of pursuing a degree in computer science, information technology (IT) or AI.

The selected undergraduate scholars will receive up to Rs 4,00,000 at the rate of Rs 1,00,000 per year for a period of four years and the selected post-graduate scholars would receive up to Rs 6,00,000 at the rate of Rs 3,00,000 per year for a period of two years.

The students from the following

courses in the IIT-BHU will be eligible to apply providing they meet the scholarship eligibility criteria.

UG courses: BTech in Computer Science and Engineering (4-year), BTech and MTech in Computer Science and Engineering (5-year, dual degree), BTech and MTech in Mathematics and Computing (5-year, dual degree).

Prof Dwivedi said the selection would be purely on the individual merit of the applicants, as evaluated by the independent expert panels of Reliance Foundation.

There will be no fixed minimum and maximum number of candidates to be selected from each partner institution.

technology and support the preparation of the codes/manuals of IRC on behalf of the ministry.

He further said the institute would assist in evaluation and introduction of new technology viz. ITS & recycling,

equipment and materials for improving road safety and operational efficiencies, undertake PhD research programmes on the topics selected by MoRTH.

Apart from this, to undertake PhD research programmes on the topics

selected by the consulting ministry, the IIT-BHU will take 8-10 research scholars, including officers nominated by the ministry, in the field of highway engineering as per the norms of the PhD admission of the institute.

# BLW a strong pillar of Atmanirbhar Bharat: GM

PNS ■ VARANASI

Banaras Locomotive Works General Manager Anjali Goyal said BLW was a small but strong pillar of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-sufficient India) as its 98 per cent production was indigenous.

Addressing the 65th Railway Week award distribution function at Rangashala in BLW here on Tuesday, Goyal said BLW's contribution to the country's manufacturing GDP was about Rs 4,000 crore annually and by purchasing various materials worth Rs 1,400 crore from the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector, it had strengthened the feet of small industries.

During the function, the GM awarded 67 officers/employees for their outstanding work during the year 2019-20. Along with this, she also awarded eight sections/workshops of the electrical, mechanical and stores departments.

The awards were for the best housekeeping shop, (New Block Shop), best functioning (Truck Machine Shop), best safety performance (Loco Assembly Shop) and best ser-



GM Anjali Goyal awarding an employee at Railway Week function at BLW in Varanasi on Tuesday

vice shop (Central Transport Shop).

The best stocking award was given to TOT-40 ward (stores), the second best to G-54 ward, best purchasing section award was given to Purchasing Section-04 and the second best to Purchasing Section-09.

The Railway Week is celebrated by the Indian Railways in the month of April, but due

to COVID-19 during the last year, it could not be celebrated in time. Now last year's Railway Week was celebrated in BLW.

In the beginning, Arun Kumar Sharma (Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, Loco) was honored by the GM. Sharma was also given the National Award for Distinguished Service by the Ministry of Railways, 2020. He did remark-

able development work in the Engine Inspection Block of BLW by adopting reliable and scientific methods to train, spread awareness and encourage employees and supervisors resulting in an excellent feedback system in the shop and high quality production without malfunction.

In her address, Goyal greeted all those who had brought laurels for the BLW during the

year. The BLW finished second in the production units, winning the ICF Cup. Anjali Devi and Rohit Yadav were selected for the 400 metre race and javelin throw events in the Olympic Games to be held in Japan. Rekha Singh and Jyoti got first and second place in hammer throw and athletics events in the National Championship and Arjun Yadav finished third in freestyle wrestling.

Besides, BLW Sports Association organised the All India Railway Golf and Handball Championship in 2019-20 and secured second places in both these competitions.

Goyal said that it was a matter of pride for the BLW that Gopal Yadav won a bronze medal for the Indian Railways team in the 92 kg weight category in the Freestyle Senior National Wrestling Championships held in Noida recently. She also praised the Women's Welfare Organisation, Civil Defense Organisation, St John's Ambulance Brigade and Bharat Scouts and Guides for their selfless service during the lockdown period.

# Fire in PAC camp at Magh Mela area

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

A gas cylinder caught fire in the PAC camp in Magh Mela area on Wednesday causing severe losses to the belongings of the jawans and other material stored there.

The whole PAC camp went up in smoke.

Fire tenders reached the spot but by then the fire had reduced the camp to ashes.

On Wednesday morning, an LPG cylinder in the PAC camp of Sector 1 on Akshayavat Road caught fire, and within minutes the flames engulfed the PAC tents within that camp.

# Sports Fest concludes at SMS

PNS ■ VARRANASI

School of Management Sciences (SMS) conducted a four-day annual Intra-Institutes Sports Fest under the aegis of its Crest Club. The Sports Fest concluded with prize distribution to the winners.

Addressing the participants at the Sports Fest, MLA from Sakaldaha (Chandauli) Sushil Kumar Singh highlighted the significance of sports and physical activities for the overall development of personality.

Inaugurating the event, SMS Director Prof PN Jha said in academics, not only mind but the whole body should remain fit and healthy. He said the importance of fit body was nowadays growing by leaps and bounds.

Events such as cricket, volleyball, badminton, 100 metres race, tug of war, table tennis, carom and chess were conducted in which the students from all the courses participated.

Sumit was declared Man of the Match and Ankit Tiwari was declared Man of the Series (Boys) while Preeti was declared Woman of the Match and Woman of the



Executive secretary of SMS Dr MP Singh and registrar Sanjay Kumar Gupta congratulated all the participants and praised their sportsmanship. Dr Pallvi Pathak conducted the entire proceedings. Meanwhile, executive secretary of the institute, Dr MP Singh, donated Rs 1 lakh to Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

# Missing youth's body found in drain

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

The body of a 21-year-old youth was found lying in the drain in Kareli police station area of Prayagraj city on Wednesday morning.

The deceased was later identified as Sandeep Nishad, who went missing six days back. The family members alleged that Sandeep was murdered. However, the police said no injury mark was found on the body and they would wait for the autopsy report.

Sandeep Nishad, living in Sadiyapur locality of Kareli police station area, used to work as a labourer. On January 29, he had left the house on foot alone but did not return. Even after hectic search, when he was not found, the family members filed a complaint at the Kareli police station the next day. On Wednesday morning, when some people saw the body of a young man lying in the Karelibaug drain, they informed the police about it. The body was later identified by the kin.

The place where the dead body was found is close to a country-made liquor shop. It is suspected Sandeep fell into the drain in an inebriated state and drowned.

# NCR GM reviews progress of hot priority works

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

North Central Railway and North Eastern Railway General Manager Vinay Kumar Tripathi reviewed the status of safety, punctuality, loading performance and human resource development of NCR.

In a meeting through video conference, NCR AGM Ranjan Yadav, PHODs concerned, DRMs from Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra and other officials from HQ and divisions participated.

During safety review, precautions to be taken for proper closing and securing of wagon doors; adequate illumination at level crossing gates; protection to be taken at work sites were discussed.

The GM stressed that a very high level of safety precaution must be taken by agencies working near running lines and all laid down rules must be followed without any exception.

Position of asset reliability, punctuality of trains, loading, revenue earning etc, was also reviewed. Tripathi said that the root cause of each asset failure must be investigated in detail to avoid recurrence.

The status of speed raising in Lalitpur-Khajuraho section was also reviewed. Requisite works for speed raising from existing 70 kmph to 110 kmph have already been completed and sectional speed shall be enhanced shortly after necessary inspection and certification.

Besides the regular agenda the focus of the review meeting was on

hot priority works. These works are critical to safe and efficient operation of trains and timely completion will help in improving mobility of trains over North Central Railway. Hot priority works on Prayagraj division are construction of two standard washing pit lines at Prayagraj, third line between Naini and Prayagraj Chheoki, commissioning of traction substation at Sonbhadra, automatic signaling in Ruma-Fatehpur section, provision of crossover in down direction and construction of two washing lines at Subedarganj, works for proper connectivity with PPGS Bevara and Meja Thermal Power Plant, longer loops at Gaipura, Bhadana, Jasra and Dabhaura.

In Jhansi division, the hot priority works are doubling of Jhansi-Bhimsen section, Babina-Jhansi third line, Jhansi-Datia third line, rail flyover at Lalitpur, electrification of sidings.

Works classified under hot priority in Agra division include Achnera bypass, construction of FOB at Mathura, conversion of Ghasinagar to B class station, longer loops at Kithan and Ghosrana, fourth line work in Palwal-Mathura section, yard remodeling at Yamuna bridge and Mathura stations and rail flyover at Bhuteshwar.

Reviewing progress of these work, Tripathi stressed that besides monitoring overall target, work-wise milestones for critical activities should be drawn, monitored and achieved to ensure early commissioning of these critical infrastructure works.

# 17 mobile towers to be installed in Cantt area

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

The Cantonment area of Prayagraj city will no more face any mobile network problem as 17 mobile towers will be installed there.

The tender for installation of mobile towers has also been floated. Now the process of installing mobile towers will start soon. The BTS of all companies will be installed on these towers.

For the security in the Cantonment area, the army officers hardly give permission for setting up mobile towers. Hence the mobile towers in the entire Cantonment

area are very less.

Thousands of people live in this area. Due to lack of mobile towers, military personnel and civilians have difficulty in talking to their loved ones.

During the COVID-19 times, most of the works are done through online mode but many works were interrupted due to lack of mobile towers in the military area. In such a situation, the army has given permission to install mobile towers with some conditions.

After getting permission from the army, the Cantonment Board has started preparations for putting up mobile tower. Cantonment

Board CEO Mane Amit Kumar Baburao said that a survey had been made for mobile towers in new and old Cantonment and 17 mobile towers would be installed.

The mobile towers will be installed near pump house in RA Bazaar, Akbar Road, Kariyapur Road, Sadar Bazaar, BI Market, II Bazaar Park, Rani Jhansi Marg, Sangam Vatika Park, Joginder Singh Stadium, Ram Priya Road, Baghrai, Saraswati Ghat, Krishna Garden Park, Fort Tusker Gate, OD Fort.

The Cantonment Board CEO said that these mobile towers would be installed soon and then there would be no network problem.

# Atique Ahmad kin's house demolished

Allahabad (PNS): Prayagraj Development Authority bulldozers on Wednesday demolished a huge house built in Kasari Masari area by a relative of Atique Ahmad and an active member of his gang, Gul Hasan.

Gul Hasan himself is a history sheeter, and had built a palatial house on 60 feet road in Kasari Masari scheme.

The PDA officials reached the spot in the morning with two bulldozers and a heavy police force and gave some time to the residents to shift their belongings to a safe place and then the machines were pressed to demolish the house.

# Water conservation, its optimal utilisation a priority of govt: DC

PNS ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar on Wednesday visited the Institute of Rural Development and Training (IRDT) on Polytechnic College campus and also the Kanpur Development Authority.

He said conservation of water and its optimal utilisation was one of the priorities of Uttar Pradesh government.

He said the government had initiated a state-wide campaign for conservation of water and its optimal utilisation.

He said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was reviewing the scheme and its implementation with all departments and field officers on a regular basis. He said Chief Secretary RK Tiwari was monitoring this regularly on a fortnightly basis with all the commissioners and district magistrates.

He added that the Groundwater Department was made nodal department for the implementation of the project and the Minor Irrigation Department was made the coordinating department of the project.

The divisional commissioner said one of the most important components of the conservation of water campaign was rooftop rain water harvesting. He said that under this scheme, the government



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar inspecting the rainwater harvesting system on Wednesday

had directed all departments to ensure that all the government buildings whose rooftop area was more than 300 square metre had rooftop rainwater harvesting systems. He said in Kanpur Division, there were around 15,000 such government buildings (including all offices, schools, colleges, institutions etc). He said out of these the rooftop rainwater harvesting system was available in around 2,500 buildings only. Shekhar said in the next one year, all efforts would be made to ensure rooftop rainwater harvesting systems were set up in 12,500 government build-

ings. He then visited the model rain water harvesting system of the Groundwater Department at IRDT office on the polytechnic building campus. He said this newly-constructed model was completed one month back and had four chambers and could conserve around three lakh litres of water annually and its cost was just around Rs 25 lakh. He said Rs 25 lakh could save three lakh litres of rain water and could improve the groundwater level. The divisional commissioner directed the district magistrates of the division to

monitor water conservation on a monthly basis as an important agenda and ensure that all the government buildings above 300 square feet rooftop areas had rain water harvesting in the next one year.

He asked the KDA vice chairman to get one automatic online reporting piezometer set up on KDA campus for effective monitoring of the rain water harvesting system. He also directed him to make the KDA building rain water harvesting a model to showcase it to developers publicly by March 31, 2021.

Shekhar also directed KDA vice chairman to ensure that all the buildings whose plan was sanctioned in the last 10 years and had more than 300 square metre rooftop area had fully functional rooftop rain water harvesting system as mandated by the government.

He said that action should be taken against the owners of all such buildings which failed to comply with the directive and the buildings be sealed.

He was accompanied by KDA VC Rakesh Singh, KDA Secretary SP Singh, Joint Development Commissioner Avadesh Kumar (Assistant in Ground Water Department), Minor Irrigation EE Dr Akhlesh, IRDT assistant professor Kulshreshtha and several other officials.

# Kidnapping, rape accused arrested

PNS ■ KANPUR

The accused involved in kidnapping and rape of a teenage girl was arrested by the Bidhnu police on Wednesday morning.

He had kidnapped the 16-year-old daughter of a labourer from New Azad Nagar police area on January 28 evening when she was returning from the market.

Station Officer Vinod Kumar Singh said after the girl, a class XII student, went missing on January 28, her father did not inform the police and continued to trace her here and there. On Monday evening, the girl suddenly returned home and approached the police with her father on Tuesday.

The girl disclosed that she was kidnapped by Sagar Rajput (19) of Satbari village who took her to his house and raped her for five days. She alleged that Rajput also threatened to kill her if she dared to open her mouth. On Monday evening, he left the girl at the doors of her house.

On the complaint of her father, police registered a case against the youth for kidnapping and rape under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

On a tip-off, the police arrested Rajput near Sainik Chauraha on Wednesday morning and sent to jail.

# SP conducts annual inspection

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Singh conducted the annual inspection of Madihan police station on Tuesday. On the occasion the SP inspected the kitchen, store, barracks, toilets, bathrooms, computer room, entire premises of police station, official records, progress of investigation, cases pending in the courts etc. He directed the cops to remain updated with not only the activities of criminals but with other activities in the area too. The SP directed to take preventive action timely and keep a vigil on all disputes which might cause problem in future. He directed the cops to tighten the noose around the criminals, touts etc and increase the frequency of patrolling in the area in view of the ensuing panchayat elections. Giving tips to cops the SP emphasised on strengthening the beat system and taking instant action on the inputs provided by the beat staff. The SP also interacted with Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel deployed at the police station and told them to establish a rapport with the police station staff. Besides, the SP conducted combing in the Naxal-affected area under Madihan police station along with the PAC and heavy police force and interacted with residents. He assured the people that police was available for them. The SP directed the cops to keep amicable relation with people of the area.

inspected the register related with the Sampurn Samadhan Divas and instructed the tehsil authorities to make a call to the applicants and be aware with the quality of the disposal of cases. He directed the officers concerned to withhold the one-day salary of those who were absent on that day. During Divisional Commissioner's inspection Additional District

positively. He also directed the officers of the tehsil to make a call to the complainants after the disposal report in order to know whether they were satisfied with it or not. On the occasion he himself made a call to few complainants of the last Sampurn Samadhan Divas function during which Buddhiram, a resident of Patevar village said that the



DM, SP, CDO and SDM Madihan during the Sampurn Samadhan Divas at Madihan tehsil on Tuesday

Magistrate (ADM), Finance and Revenue, UP Singh and Chunar sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Surendra Bahadur Singh were present along with the entire revenue staff. Meanwhile during the Sampurn Samadhan Divas organised at Madihan tehsil which was jointly attended by District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar and Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Singh in which out of 110 only one matter was disposed of on the spot. For the remaining applications the DM directed the officials concerned to dispose of the matters on the basis of merit and ensure the satisfaction of the complainant. On the occasion the DM made it clear that on each application the disposal report should be submitted

measurement of his land was yet to be done. Taking the matter seriously the DM directed the officials concerned to ensure that it was done the next day positively and thereafter inform him about it. On the occasion cases related to paddy purchase, irrigation, consolidation, revenue, electricity etc were received and the officials concerned were directed to do dispose them of on priority. Show-cause notices were issued to Project Officer DUDA and executive engineer (EE), Minor Irrigation for their absence on the day. The meeting was mainly attended by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Avinash Singh, PD DRDA Rishimuni Upadhyay, Madihan SDM Roshni Yadav, tehsildar Nupur Singh along with all the officials concerned.

# Seven more test positive

PNS ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that seven more people tested positive for novel coronavirus in the city, taking the tally of confirmed cases to 32,889 on Wednesday evening.

He said no COVID-19 death was reported in the city during the past 24 hours.

The CMO said 139 COVID-19 patients were undergoing treatment in the city. He said 2,651 samples were sent for testing on Tuesday.

# Criminals operating from four houses of Labour dept, OEF

PNS ■ KANPUR

Four houses of the Labour Department and Ordnance Equipment Factory under unauthorised possession of notorious drug smuggler Sushil Bachcha and his accomplices have now become safe dens for operating criminal activities.

On the report of the local police, DIG/SSP Printinder Singh has sent a letter to both the organisations to set up a departmental probe and secure possession on their properties.

It may be recalled that about three months ago, police had arrested history-sheeter Sushil Bachcha with a huge cache of drugs and sent him to jail.

During investigations, it was found he had close relations with several cops. At the same time, due to his cordial relations with the officials of other departments, he had managed to secure possession of the houses of Labour Department and Ordnance Equipment Factory with the help of his accomplice Raj Kumar alias Bauwa Linda in

their Shastri Nagar and Amedkar Nagar housing schemes respectively. He had also carried out some unauthorised construction in the houses of the Ordnance Equipment Factory.

With the incident coming to the notice of the DIG/SSP Printinder Singh, he has apprised the

Sources said the officials of the Labour department and Ordnance Equipment Factory were aware of the unauthorised possession of their houses and had been exchanging correspondence with the police for

the past three months but the latter had failed to initiate any action in this respect.

Station House Officer of Kakadeo, Kunj Behari Mishra, said he had informed the Labour department and Ordnance Factory about the unauthorised possession on their four houses by the criminals Sushil Bachcha and Raj Kumar.

He has also assured them to provide sufficient police force during the eviction process if carried out by the officials of both the departments.

# Padampat Singhania remembered

PNS ■ KANPUR

Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre Principal Bhawna Gupta, while paying rich tributes to Sir Padampat Singhania on the occasion of Founders Day on Wednesday, highlighted several instances of the founder's life and appealed to youth to emulate them for a successful existence in the world.

She said these instances also presented an unforgettable panoramic survey of some of the important events in the history of modern India as well.

She then apprised the audience about the varied facets of Sir Padampat Singhania and his significant contribution to the cause of education and culture and above all his dedication to the task of strengthening the country through research and industry. She said every student of this institution was the torch bearer and the brand ambassador of his philosophy.

The institution organised a special gathering on Wednesday to com-



SPSEC principal Bhawna Gupta paying tributes to Padampat Singhania on School's Founder's Day on Wednesday

memorate the birth anniversary of Padampat Singhania and to celebrate the Founder's Day. She said Padampat Singhania was a great humanist and philanthropist.

The programme commenced with the welcome speech by a student followed by the chants of mantras, lighting of the lamp and garlanding of the portrait of Sir Padampat Singhania.

# Kanpur has great potential to boost tourism: Prof Rai

PNS ■ KANPUR

Prof Sidhanshu Rai from Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur who is also the in-charge for tourism promotion, said Kanpur Nagar and its surrounding areas, especially places related to mythology, had a great potential to boost tourism which could be of great advantage for the economic growth of Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing a seminar on promoting tourism, organised by the Tourism Development and Encouragement Committee on Saturday, Prof Rai said by bringing revenue to historic sites, ruins, mausoleums and mythological places, tourism had the potential to enhance and safeguard the heritage and culture.

He said similarly the much-needed foreign currency and investment that tourism brought in had the power to revitalise industries for economic growth. Prof Rai said Uttar Pradesh was

known as the land of temples and pilgrimage destinations. He said these places were not just popular on account of the temples and pilgrimage destinations but also for their beautiful geography.

It may be mentioned here that Dr Rai is behind increasing awareness about tourism among the university students.

He said lack of interest shown by the district administration in maintaining the tourist spots, lack of awareness among the tour operators and poor maintenance of the sites were a few factors responsible for Kanpur losing its charm as a tourist destination. He said if planned efforts were made in this direction, Kanpur could emerge as a prominent tourist centre of Uttar Pradesh.

Others who took part in the seminar were Dr Omendra Kumar, Dr Purnima Tiwari, Dr OP Anand, Pooja Gupta and several others.

# Siddhartha Mohanty new MD of LIC

PNS ■ KANPUR

Siddhartha Mohanty has taken over as the managing director of Life Insurance Corporation of India.

He was appointed as MD by the Government of India notification dated January, 20, 2021.

Prior to taking charge as the managing director of LIC, he was managing director and chief executive officer of LIC Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL), one of the largest housing finance companies in India.

He was also LIC HFL's chief operating officer. Mohanty started his career as a direct recruit officer with LIC in 1985 and rose through the ranks to this senior position. Before joining LIC HFL, he was executive director (legal) with the Life Insurance Corporation of India.

In a career spanning over three decades in the LIC, Mohanty made his mark in the areas of marketing, HR, investments and legal. He served as chief of investments (monitoring), regional head of a marketing vertical of LIC's western



zone spanning the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa. He was also the senior divisional manager in-charge of Raipur and Cuttack divisions of the LIC.

He is a post-graduate in political science with a degree in law. His other qualifications include post-graduation in business management and licentiate from the Insurance Institute of India.

His innovative style of working, people orientation, marketing acumen and technical expertise resulted in success in each of his assignments.

# Trader's house burgled

Kanpur (PNS): On the third day of the closure of Koriya (Bidhnu) police outpost, a locked house was burgled on Tuesday night. The burglars took away cash and ornaments worth around Rs 3 lakh from the house. At the time of theft, all the family members had gone to attend a marriage ceremony in Sujatganj.

It may be recalled that after a woman was crushed to death by a dumper transporting illegally mined sand, the agitated villagers had set police vehicles and the outpost on fire a few days ago. Subsequently, DIG/SSP Printinder Singh had closed down the Koriya village outpost.

According to reports, the house of Mohd Salim of Koriya village is situated only 500 metres away from the police outpost. He also runs a grocery shop on the ground floor of his house. On Tuesday, he along with the family members had gone to Sujatganj to attend the marriage ceremony of a relative. Taking advantage of the absence of a police outpost, the miscreants broke into his house and stole Rs 10,000 in cash and ornaments worth around Rs 3 lakh.

# Degree mandatory for pesticide shop licence

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Agriculture Defence Officer Ashish Kumar Singh said with the amendment to the Pesticide Act, 1971, the minimum prescribed qualification for running a pesticide shop was a degree from a recognised university, institute or agricultural college.

He said even science graduates with zoology, botany and chemistry or those who held a one-year diploma would be granted licence for pesticide shops.

He said initially its deadline was December 20, 2020 but this had now been extended till December 31, 2021. He said all those who failed to meet the norms would not be able to run such retail shops.

He said those who were mere high school should pursue a 12-week course from DAESI and they need to apply at the earliest so that the new batch could be started as early as possible. He said this course would be run by SAMETI, Lucknow and would hold a session on any Sunday or a holiday.

Singh said pesticides posed risks to man and environment from the stage of manufacture until they were used, disposed of safely or completely degraded.

He said one major source of risk was during storage and handling at the point of supply to users and added that the risks may be even greater in countries which lacked the infrastructure and suitably trained personnel for their safe handling during the stage of distribution.

He said pesticides were imported from the country of origin and sold to the end retailers, most of whom were located in rural areas.

He said the pesticide may be stored under rather varying conditions which could adversely affect its physical and chemical properties and damage the packaging by the time the end-user received it.

He said pesticides could pose danger to man and environment and thus it was imperative that due care be exercised to minimise the deleterious effects of the pesticide.

# Dibrugarh-New Delhi spl to run five days a week

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers will increase the frequency of the 02503/02504 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Dibrugarh weekly special train and run it five days a week. All coaches in this train will be of reserved category and passengers will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said. After increasing the frequency the 02503 Dibrugarh-New Delhi weekly special train from Dibrugarh from February 16 will run five

days a week i.e every Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday while the 02504 New Delhi-Dibrugarh weekly special train from New Delhi from February 19 will run five days a week i.e. every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

BOY FOUND: The Railway Protection Force (RPF), North Eastern Railway (NER), makes constant efforts to protect passengers and provide them better travel facilities. In the same sequence, the staff of the RPF post, Gorakhpur, found a girl aged 17 years in unclaimed condition on platform No 02 of Gorakhpur rail-

way station recently. After questioning, she was handed over to the Child Line, Gorakhpur. Likewise the staff of the RRF post, Gorakhpur, recently found a boy aged 12 years in unclaimed condition on platform number 1 of Gorakhpur railway station. After questioning, the boy was later handed over to Child Line, Gorakhpur. On the other hand the RPF post, Lucknow City, recently caught one person from Vaishnav Nagar, Gudamba, Lucknow, along with as many as 102 illegal e-tickets against whom action was taken under the Railway Act and a case was registered in this connection.

# Health camp organised

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

The Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), a Miniratna company of the

camp in the surrounding areas continuously where its doctors along with examining the health of the villagers distribute free medicines among them



Government of India, under the 'Sab Swasth' (All Healthy) campaign organises medical

camp in a school in Tamai village under Chitrangi. The camp was inaugurated by MLA from Chitrangi Amar Singh. Through this camp which started at 6:00 am more than 1,000 villagers met the specialists concerned, got treatment and also received necessary medicines from them.

On the occasion Dr Neha Kumari, Dr Jagdish Lal, Dr Sukhsagar, Dr Sandeep Lal, Dr Preeti Lakra, Dr Harish, Dr Aleem, medical/paramedical team, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) nodal officer, labour union representative and other villagers were present. It may be pointed out here that in making the camp a success in Tamai village the residents also made a special contribution.

# Virtual ICE concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The third virtual edition of 41st India Carpet Expo (ICE) — an exclusive trade fair for handmade carpets and other floor coverings organised by the Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) which was inaugurated by Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Shantmanu received an overwhelming response from around 292 overseas buyers from 51 countries and 81 buying representatives/buying houses from across the world. Over 150 prominent member-exporters from major carpet belt of Bhadohi, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Agra, Jaipur, Panipat, Jammu & Kashmir participated in the five-day Expo which concluded recently. The top five visitor countries were USA, Germany, Australia, UK and Canada. CEPC Chairman Siddh Nath Singh, said the response of the exhibitors is encouraging. As per the feed-

back received from the exhibitors there is a huge demand for hand-knotted high-end carpets as well as tufted carpets. He said this is the beginning of a new era which opens the global business opportunities for handmade carpet industry with the use of new technology. CEPC arranged an interactive webinar on importance of trend insights in design of handmade carpet and rugs on January 21 in association with NIFT and World University of Design. For the second time Council organised 'Design Awards - 2021' in the third Virtual Exhibition - 41st India Carpet Expo through video conferencing. Siddh Nath Singh, second Vice-Chairman, Umer Hameed, members, COA, Umesh Kumar Gupta, Onkar Nath Mishra, Abdul Rub, Sandeep Kataria, Rajendra Prasad Mishra, Feroze Waziri, Gulam Nabi Bhat, Bodh Raj Malhotra, Mohd. Wasif Ansari, Sunil Jain, Husain Jafar Husaini, Satish Wattal, Sanjay Gupta,

Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad and Shree Ram Maurya were very happy on the success of the third Virtual Expo. CEPC Chairman conveyed thanks to Union Minister of Textiles and Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani, Union Commerce and Industry and Railway Minister, Piyush Goyal, Commerce Secretary, Department of Commerce, Government of India, Dr Anup Wadhawan, Secretary (Textiles), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, UP Singh, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Shantmanu, for their support and guidance to the carpet industry. CEPC chairman further thanked all participants, his colleagues in the Committee of Administration for their support, Executive Director, Sanjay Kumar and all officials and staff for their hard work, Sooraj Dhawan of M/s Falcon Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd. and his entire team for providing 24x7 technical support to all participants.

# Opp urges Govt to withdraw farm laws, talk to farmers



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Wednesday urged the Government to withdraw the farm laws and reach out to the farmers now agitating on the borders of the national Capital. Though they condemned the incidents at the Red Fort on January 26, they, however, cautioned the Government against targeting the innocent farmers. Calling for the repeal of the laws, some members including Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad also said even the British had to take back three bills in early 1900s in the face of strong protest in Punjab and Champaran. He also suggested that repealing the present laws should be announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

These views came out strongly during the first day of the debate in the Rajya Sabha on the motion of thanks to the President's address. The House agreed to discuss the farmers' issue during the 15-hour dis-

ussion in the next two days and the Question Hour will remain suspended for the debate.

While the discussion on Wednesday took place in an orderly manner, the beginning was marred by protest and sloganeering by three Aam Adami Party (AAP) members. They rushed into the well of the house forcing Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu to order them to leave the proceedings for the rest of the day. The members included Sanjay Singh, Sushil Gupta and N D Gupta.

In his speech, Azad urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was present during his presentation, to repeal the three farm laws, voicing the united stand of the opposition during a debate on the contentious laws.

Stressing the point that the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' was as relevant now as when it was coined by then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, Azad said every Indian is indebted to the farmer com-

## Govt accuses Opp of going back on agreement on vote of thanks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Lok Sabha witnessed a repeat adjournments on Wednesday following a slogan-shouting Opposition demanding a rollback of the farm laws, the Government accused the Opposition of going back on the agreement that the vote of thanks to the President's address will be taken first in the house.

For the second consecutive day, the House was first adjourned till 4.30 pm and then till 5 pm during question hour and thereafter until 7 pm.

Soon after the house began its proceedings, opposition members started shouting "take back black laws" and refused to take their seats as requested by the Speaker Om Birla.

Congress leader of the house Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said "let us discuss farm laws...image of the coun-

try is being affected internationally".

The house was adjourned till 4.30 when it resumed Chowdhury again sought separate discussion on President's address and farmers issue.

The Speaker said discussions have taken place with leaders of all parties and he will give opportunity to all to speak provided members resume their seats.

Opposition members on their feet, however, continued to shout slogans.

AAP member Bhagwant Mann was among opposition leaders who continued to protest. The Speaker asked him not the cause disruption and cautioned that he will be forced to take action against him.

At this stage Birla said he has followed all adjourned motions which have been moved by the opposition and adjourned the house till five pm.

When the house resumed for Zero hour, bedlam continued and the proceedings were again derailed.

At this stage Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi accused the opposition of "going back on its word of taking up President's address first and then that of the farmers".

The Minister said "same demand was there in Ranya Sabha and we agreed for a discussion, 15 hours decided".

Joshi said a similar arrangement was discussed with leaders in the Lok Sabha and "agreement was that discussion on President's address will be taken first".

The Minister alleged that the opposition changed its mind after reaching an agreement for allowing discussion in the house. "We agreed then but now you decide otherwise", he said. The Speaker, soon after, adjourned the house.

## Recording proceedings on phones contempt of House, V-P warns MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday warned MPs against recording proceedings of the House on mobile phones, saying such unauthorised recordings and its circulation on social media may be a breach of Parliamentary privilege and contempt of the House.

Some opposition MPs had on Tuesday used their cell phones to record the disruption in proceedings over farm bills. These videos were shared on

social media and aired on television channels.

When the House met for the day, Naidu said Parliamentary rules restrict "usage of cellular phones within Rajya Sabha chambers."

"It is observed that some members are using their mobile phones to record the proceedings of the House while sitting in the Chamber. Such conduct is against Parliamentary etiquettes and is not expected from members," Naidu said without naming anyone.

MPs, he said, should desist from such "unwarranted activ-

ities inside the Chamber".

"Such unauthorised recording of proceedings of the House and its circulation on social media may lead to a breach of privilege and contempt of the House," he said.

Naidu said sections of the media, who started using the clips, are advised not to do so as "it is not authorised" and they could be "liable for consequences thereon".

"Members are, therefore, advised to be careful in this regard. I only hope that everybody will follow rules and regulations," Naidu added.

confronting them. Instead, the Government should focus on other important issues, including on revival of the economy.

Tiruchi Siva (DMK) sought assurance from the government and the prime minister on the repeal of the three contentious laws that have led to protests at border points of the national capital and several parts of the country. He also expressed concern over the manner in which the farm bills were passed last year, but Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said everything was done according to rule.

Criticising the

Government for giving a free hand to the corporates through the new laws, Ram Gopal Yadav (Samajwadi Party) said the barricading of the protest sites around Delhi suggested that the government feared that the farmers will attack the capital.

Asking the Government not to treat the farmers as enemies, he said such barricading was not even there at the India-Pakistan border. He claimed the government has become "merciless and cruel" as it is not even affected by the death of some farmers during the ongoing agitation. Elamaram Kareem (CPM)

said these laws were enacted "without proper consideration or taking into confidence the opposition parties".

Defending the laws, Vijay Pal Tomar (BJP) said the new laws will finish the role of the middlemen who rake in most profits and harming the interests of the farmers and consumers.

RN Singh (JD-U) was of the view that the laws will go a long way in improving the lot of the farmers and cited the example of farmers of Bihar. They were now selling their produce in places like Kolkata and Ranchi and earning good profit, he said.

## Centre not holding any informal talks with protesting farmers, says Tomar



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The last and 11th round of meeting between the Government and 41 protesting unions, held on January 22, was inconclusive.

When told that protesting unions demand that no formal talks with the Government can be held until the police and the administration stop "harassing" them and release the detained farmers, the minister said, "They should talk to the Police Commissioner. I don't want to comment on the law and order issue. That's not my job."

Since the January 22 talks, there has been no meeting between the farmer leaders and the Centre to discuss the farm laws although the Government reiterated that its offer stands and doors are open for discussion.

On Tuesday, Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) — the umbrella body of farmers' unions protesting the Central farm laws — had said that there can be no "formal" talks with the Government until the "harassment" of different kinds against the farmers' movement by the police and administration is "immediately stopped".

"No. We will inform when formal talks will be held," Tomar said.

## Cong raises ₹139 cr through donations and contributions in excess of ₹20,000

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has raised just ₹139 crore through donations and contributions in excess of ₹20,000 while Nagaland's Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party and Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party received 'NIL' contributions in excess of ₹20,000 in 2019-20. In power now in Maharashtra, the Nationalist Congress Party's contribution soared to ₹59.95 crore, almost five times more than the Rs 12.05-crore donations it received in 2018-19.

According to the information uploaded on the Election Commission website, the Congress has received ₹139, 016, 2000 from 352 donors in excess of ₹20,000 in 2019-20. Prudent Electoral Trust, ITC Ltd, New Democratic Electoral Trust, BG Sirke Construction, Muthoot Finance, Gayatri Projects, RSWM Ltd, HEG Ltd, Russell Credit Limited, Avon Cycles Ltd, Samaj Electoral Trust Association, New Democratic Electoral Trust and Rajasthan Liquors Limited were among the main major donors to Congress for the year 2019-20. Prudent Electoral Trust and Jankalyan



Electoral Trust donated ₹ 25 crore each, followed by ITC Ltd ₹17.85 crore and New Democratic Electoral Trust ₹10 crore. The Congress got ₹148.5 crore as donations in excess of ₹20,000 in 2018-19.

The Election Commission is yet to receive the contribution reports of other national parties — BJP, CPI, CPM, Trinamool Congress — in view of extension in the deadline for filing Income-Tax returns for 2019-20.

Among the major donors to NCP, which is part of the coalition in Maharashtra, were B G Shirke Construction Technology Pvt Ltd (₹25 crore), Panchshil Corporate Park Pvt Ltd (₹ 7.5 crore), Covid-19 vaccine maker Serum Institute of India (SII) (₹3 crore) and Finolex Industries Ltd (₹1.25 crore). Only one electoral trust — Harmony Electoral Trust — contributed to NCP, the

amount being 1.5 crore.

Among the regional parties whose annual contributions for Financial Year 2019-20 are now uploaded on EC website, AIADMK had put its donations above Rs 20,000 at a total value of ₹52.17 crore. This includes ₹46.78 crore (94% of total contributions received by the party) donated to Tamil Nadu's ruling party by Tata Group-controlled Progressive Electoral Trust. Its local rival, DMK, has declared total contributions worth 48.31 crore, of which ₹45.5 crore or 93% has come from electoral bonds, a funding mode that continues to be questioned by many citing lack of transparency.

JD(U) in its contribution report for 2019-20, has declared total donations in excess of ₹20,000 at ₹6.08 crore of which ₹1.25 crore (20%) came from Samaj Electoral Trust.

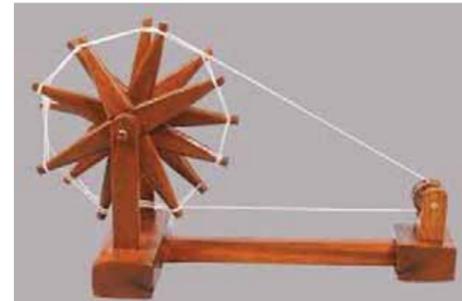
## 1,650 artisan families in Murshidabad embrace khadi for self-sustainability

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In poll-bound West Bengal, last Saturday as many as 1,650 artisan families in Murshidabad took a stride towards self-sustainability by embracing various self-employment schemes of khadi.

KVIC Chairman VK Saxena distributed 825 new model charkhas, 50 silk charkhas, 235 modern looms, 120 Reeling Basins and 95 readymade garment machines to artisans engaged with Khadi spinning and weaving activities. The KVIC Chairman also distributed 80 electric potter wheels and other equipment to marginalised potters in Murshidabad under the flagship Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana of KVIC.

Distribution of charkha, looms and sewing machines aims at strengthening the local Cotton and Silk industry in Murshidabad which has a glorious history of producing exquisite fabric like Muslin Cotton and Mulberry and Tussar Silk. The KVIC has disbursed Rs 20 crore to strengthen 23 Khadi Institutions engaged with production of khadi in



Murshidabad.

The development came a day after the KVIC's massive employment drive in Malda where 2250 beneficiaries were distributed advanced tools. The employment activities rolled out in West Bengal will boost the Hon'ble Prime minister's call for "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" and "Vocal for Local".

Distribution of electric potter wheels also aims at empowering the potters' community and reviving the dying art of pottery. The potters have been distributed equipment after successfully completing 15-days of training.

The KVIC Chairman said empowering 1650 rural artisan families on the Martyr's Day on January 30 was the biggest trib-

ute to the Father of the Nation as this would go on to strengthen Indian villages. "Gandhi ji was the embodiment of Khadi. For him Khadi was not just fabric but a tool of self-sustainability. Rural resurgence through Khadi was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is striving to fulfill that dream. There could not be a better way to pay tribute to Gandhi ji than empowering 1650 rural artisans on the Martyr's Day," Saxena said.

He said providing jobs to every hand is the vision of the Prime Minister and in the last 5 years, KVIC has spent more than ₹200 crore to strengthen Khadi institutions and artisans in West Bengal.

## PwDs got raw deal: NGOs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Disability rights NGOs and activists from the sector have claimed that differently-abled people have been "neglected" in the Budget 2021-22 unveiled on Monday as the allocation has been cut down. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also did not care to mention the disabled people even once in her speech, they said.

Other than exempting senior citizens above 75 from filing ITR and easier dividend payout, the Budget has no specific mention of inclusion and schemes for persons with disabilities (PwDs), they rued.

Arman Ali, the executive director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), said the Budget document talks about it being dependent on six pillars, one of them being inclusive development for aspirational India, but PwDs have once again been "neglected".

"Year after year, disability sector sends its asks to the Government but this time these asks were not even mentioned. This budget was of utmost importance due to the ongoing pandemic as people have lost jobs and children have dropped out of schools because of the lack of facilities," he said.

Ali said the Atma Nirbhar Swasthya Bharat Scheme, which



is the highlight of this budget, focuses on strengthening primary and secondary healthcare centres but has no word on PwDs.

"However, we hope that all disabled people are included under the announced health schemes."

The allocation for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DePwD) has been reduced to Rs 1,171.76 crore from Rs 1,325.39 crore, Ali said.

National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled, in a statement, said fund reduction in the budget will adversely impact various schemes and programmes that are being undertaken by the department. Dr. Satendra Singh from Doctors with Disabilities:

Agents of Change added that despite Covid-19 creating a demand for mental health services, the National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation did not receive any budgetary allocation.

"However, the yet to be approved National University of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies which is still a bill and criticised by the disability sector was allocated 0.01 crore well in advance whereas there is no road map seen to implement the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016," he alleged.

Also, the flagship Accessible India Campaign despite being launched by the Prime Minister was never allocated a separate budget and money for it was pooled from Scheme for implementation of Persons with Disability Act (SIPDA) which received a further reduction from ₹251 crore to ₹209 crore.

Same was the case with the autonomous Indian Sign Language, Research and Training Centre which did not receive any budgetary allocation while the Centre for Disability Sports gets a 47 per cent reduction in budget. Similarly, reductions were seen for the ADIP scheme, DDRS & National Trust. No disaggregated data either for persons with disabilities, said the Dr from Delhi based GTB Hospital.

## Ideological bankruptcy in Cong, CPM: Nadda

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

BJP national president JP Nadda said the CPI(M) and the Congress are suffering from the phenomenon of ideological bankruptcy. "That is the reason the CPI(M) and the Congress are fighting the Assembly election together in West Bengal while they are fighting against each other in Kerala," said Nadda while speaking to media at Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. The BJP chief is in Kerala for a two-day visit to take stock of the preparedness of the party for the upcoming Assembly election.

Nadda said the Pinarayi

Vijayan-led Kerala Government was violating all norms and attacking Constitutional bodies like the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for highlighting the improprieties committed by various departments of the administration. "The CPI(M)-led government has made three lakh illegal appointments.

The Public Service Commission has become a recruiting ground for the CPI(M). We have never seen such misuse of office by a political party anywhere in the country," said the BJP president. Pinarayi Vijayan has lost all credibility and stands

exposed for all to see, he said.

Referring to the scandals that were rocking the Government, Nadda said that corruption was being perpetrated with official patronage. "Even Speaker of the Legislative Assembly P Sreeramakrishnan has become the patron for acts of corruption," he said.

The BJP president was equally critical of the Congress and its leader Oommen Chandi. "Names of most of the Congress leaders in Kerala figure in the solar scam. The LFD and the UDF are the two sides of the same coin. They are obsessed with corruption. There are no ministers in the State who are not facing any

charges of corruption," said Nadda.

He said the Covid-19 management in the State has been a disaster. "Kerala accounts for more than half of the total Covid-19 cases in the country.

The People of Kerala deserve a much better government and the BJP is ready to offer the same. The party has emerged as a principal force in Kerala politics as the recent Local Body elections have shown," he said.

Referring to the Congress move to make the Sabarimala Temple issue an election issue, the BJP chief said it was the height of sheer hypocrisy on

the part of the Congress. "When hundreds of Ayyappa devotees were brutally attacked by the police in 2019 the Congress did not utter a single word. Now that the election is here, they want to cheat the Ayyappa devotees by making it an election issue," said the BJP president.

He also scoffed at reports in a section of the media that there was a nexus between the BJP and the CPI(M) to ensure the defeat of the Congress in the assembly election in Kerala.

"We do not believe in underhand dealings and unprincipled strategies. The BJP will emerge as a powerful group in Kerala," he said.

## Praveen Sinha appointed acting CBI Director

New Delhi: The Centre on Wednesday appointed Gujarat cadre IPS officer of 1988 batch and Additional Director in the CBI, Praveen Sinha, as the interim chief of the premier agency following superannuation of the incumbent boss Rishi Kumar Shukla.

Praveen Sinha, IPS (GJ:88), Additional Director, CBI shall have immediate effect look after the duties of Director CBI, vice Shri Rishi Kumar Shukla, IPS (MP:83), till the appointment of new Director CBI, or until further orders, whichever is earlier, reads an order of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

CBI Director RK Shukla retired from service on Wednesday after completing his two-year tenure in the

agency.

He had taken over the reins of the agency following the ouster of then CBI chief Alok Verma and his deputy Rakesh Asthana following an ugly spat between the two officers.

"Shri Rishi Kumar Shukla, an IPS officer of 1983 Batch (Madhya Pradesh Cadre) today relinquished the charge of Director, Central Bureau of Investigation on superannuation. He had taken over as

Director, CBI on 04.02.2019," the CBI said in a statement.

Shukla had worked as the Director General of Police of Madhya Pradesh for around three years. He had served in various positions during his long tenure of about 37 years of service, including as SP of Damoh, Shivpuri, Mandsaur, DIG; IGP and ADG in MP police. He had also served in the Intelligence Bureau. "It was his endeavour all along to expedite the justice delivery

system.

Efforts taken by him in this regard led to early conclusion of numerous important trials of heinous crimes resulting in award of exemplary punishment to guilty criminals," the agency said.

Shukla, a Post Graduate in Philosophy, has been decorated with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 2007 and Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 1999, it added. PNS

# SENSEX MAKES HISTORY

## Closed above 50,000-mark for first time

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE SENSEX closed above the historic 50,000-mark for the first time ever on Wednesday as the post-Budget euphoria continued for the third straight session amid a spurt in buying by foreign funds and positive global cues.

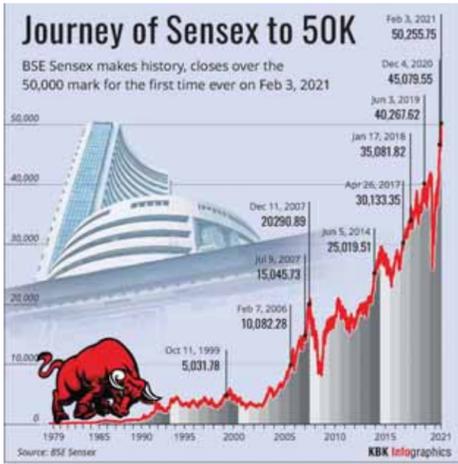
Banking, finance and pharma counters hogged the lime-light, while cement and FMCG stocks succumbed to profit-taking.

After touching a record intra-day high of 50,526.39, the 30-share BSE benchmark ended at 50,255.75, up 458.03 points or 0.92 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 142.10 points or 0.97 per cent to its fresh closing record of 14,789.95. It touched an all-time high of 14,868.85 during the day.

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart, zooming 7.65 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, NTPC and Axis Bank.

On the other hand,



UltraTech Cement, Maruti, ITC, Kotak Bank, Asian Paints, Nestle India and TCS were among the losers, slipping up to 0.90 per cent.

bulls and broader indices made fresh record highs today," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Optimism created after the announcement of bold measures in the Union Budget

continued to attract investors. Favourable global cues also supported the market rally. Notably, market cap of Indian market is just fraction away from surpassing ₹200 trillion levels, he added.

"Given sharp increase in capital expenditure along with a number of reforms to give impetus to investment activities, momentum in corporate earnings is expected to sustain in subsequent quarters. Further, higher fiscal stimulus in the US, persistent soft monetary policy stance of global bankers and weak dollar should continue to act as key tailwinds for FPIs flows.

"In the near term, monetary policy outcome will be a key focus area for market, which is broadly expected to remain favourable," he noted.

Sector-wise, BSE utilities, healthcare, power, metal, telecom and finance indices rose as much as 2.47 per cent, while realty and FMCG finished with losses.

# Amazon's billionaire founder Jeff Bezos to step down as CEO

## Andy Jassy named successor

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Jeff Bezos, who founded Amazon as an online bookseller nearly three decades ago, will step down as the CEO of the \$1.7 trillion global e-commerce giant and will become the executive chairman, a move he said would give him "time and energy" to focus on his other ventures and passions.

Amazon, which announced on Wednesday that 2020 net sales increased 38 per cent to \$386.1 billion, compared with \$280.5 billion in 2019, said Bezos will transition to the role of Executive Chair in the third quarter of 2021 and Andy Jassy, CEO of the company's cloud business, Amazon Web Services, will become CEO at that time.

Bezos has been Amazon's CEO since its founding in 1995. He oversaw its growth



from an online bookseller into a \$1.7 trillion global retail and logistics giant, which has also made the 57-year-old into one of the world's richest persons.

"Amazon is what it is because of invention. We do crazy things together and then make them normal," Bezos said, adding that the company pioneered customer reviews, 1-Click, personalised recommendations, Prime's insanely-fast shipping, Just Walk Out shopping, the Climate Pledge, Kindle, Alexa, marketplace, infrastructure cloud computing, Career Choice, and much more.

# India does not agree with USTR's report on ecommerce tax: Commerce Secy

New Delhi: India does not agree with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) report that the country's two per cent equalisation levy on foreign e-commerce firms discriminates against American companies, Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said on Wednesday.

Last month, an USTR investigation has concluded that India's 2 per cent digital services tax on e-commerce supply discriminates against US companies and is inconsistent with international tax principles.

"We do not agree with that conclusion," Wadhawan told reporters when asked whether India has responded to the USTR report.

# FinMin releases weekly installment of ₹6K cr to States to meet GST shortfall

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Wednesday released the 14th installment of ₹6,000 crore to States to meet the GST compensation shortfall, taking the total amount of fund released so far to ₹84,000 crore.

Till now, 76 per cent of the total estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to States and 3 UTs.

Out of this, an amount of ₹76,616.16 crore has been released to 23 States and ₹7,383.84 crore to the 3 UTs with Legislative Assembly (Delhi, J&K, Puducherry).

The remaining 5 States, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation, it added.

The Centre had set up a special borrowing window in October 2020 to meet the estimated shortfall of ₹1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST. The Finance Ministry in a statement said it has released the 14th weekly installment of ₹6,000 crore to states to meet the GST compensation shortfall. PTI

# ₹ settles flat at 72.95 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee ended just 1 paise higher at 72.95 against the US dollar on Wednesday amid a firm trend in the domestic equity markets.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 72.96 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 72.92 and a low of 72.98.

It finally ended at 72.95 against the American currency, registering a rise of just 1 paise over its previous close.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.03 per cent to 91.17.

"The USD-INR spot is not breaking the narrow range of 72.75-73.20. Right now, the market is very flat and volatility is muted.

"The bullish sentiments and inflows into local stocks confined the advance in rupee, but for that RBI's protection around 72.75-73 zone should end," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research-Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services.

Gupta further noted that traders are waiting for RBI policy outcome for more clarity over the trend.

# Gold declines ₹232, silver tanks ₹1,955

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Wednesday declined by ₹232 to ₹47,387 per 10 gram amid decline in global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹47,619 per 10 gram. Silver also dipped ₹1,955 to ₹67,605 per kilogram from ₹69,560 per kilogram in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at \$1,835 per ounce and silver was flat at \$26.78 per ounce. PTI

# RBI's panel starts deliberations on monetary policy

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) began its meeting on Wednesday and is likely to hold interest rates and continue with accommodative policy stance so that necessary monetary action could be taken to push growth.

This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.

Although the bi-monthly monetary to be announced on February 5 is likely to refrain from cutting benchmark repo rate, it will ensure availability of adequate liquidity which

# RBI unveils risk-based internal audit guidelines for select NBFCs, urban co-operative banks

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday unveiled the risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks, with a view to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their internal audit system.

All the deposit-taking non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and the ones with an asset size of over ₹5,000 crore, and urban co-operatives banks (UCBs) with assets of over ₹500 crore will have to migrate to the new system, the RBI said. PTI

# AI employees' interest will be protected, says Union Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The interest of Air India employees will be safeguarded in accordance with the guidance of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday.

The disinvestment process of Air India, which had a total debt of over ₹38,366 crore in the last fiscal — is in progress. PTI

# Reliance gets world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US

New Delhi: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of "carbon-neutral oil" from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

Reliance, which operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year, got 2 million barrels of consignment Permian basin, the US supplier said in a statement. PTI

## world

# Myanmar police file charges against Aung San Suu Kyi

AP ■ YANGON

Police levelled their first formal charge against Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, members of her party said on Wednesday, giving military authorities who staged a coup a legal reason to detain her at least through the middle of the month.

The charge - that Suu Kyi was in possession of illegally imported walkie talkies - came to light two days after she was placed under house arrest and appeared to be an effort to lend a legal veneer to her detention, though the generals have previously kept her and others locked up for years.

The military announced on Monday that it would take power for one year — accusing Suu Kyi's government of not investigating allegations of voter fraud in recent elections. Suu Kyi's party swept that vote, and the military-backed party did poorly.

National League for Democracy spokesman Kyi Toe confirmed the charge against Suu Kyi that carries a



maximum sentence of three years in prison. He also said the country's ousted president, Win Myint, was charged with violating the natural disaster management law. A leaked charge sheet dated February 1 indicates they can be held until February 15.

"It was clear that the military were going to look for some legal cases against the leaders of the National League for Democracy and especially Aung San Suu Kyi to actually legitimize what they've tried to do," said Larry Jagan, an independent analyst of Myanmar affairs. "And that is really a

power grab." Police and court officials in the capital Naypyitaw could not immediately be contacted.

At the same time that authorities were working to keep Suu Kyi in detention, hundreds of lawmakers who had been forced to stay at government housing after the coup were told Wednesday to leave the capital city within 24 hours and go home, said a member of Parliament from Suu Kyi's party who is among the group. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared drawing the attention of the military.

# International action should not escalate tensions in Myanmar post-coup: China on UNSC meet

Beijing: China on Wednesday said it was opposed to any strong resolution by the UN Security Council condemning the military coup in Myanmar and insisted that any action by the international community should not escalate the tensions and complicate matters. Myanmar's military on Monday took control of the country for one year and detained top political figures, including de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

China along with Russia reportedly blocked efforts by the UNSC at its consultative meeting on Tuesday to issue a strong statement condemning the coup. Asked what China has proposed at the meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Wednesday that the international community should create favourable conditions for settling the issues between Myanmar military and Suu Kyi.

"The UNSC held its internal consultation on Myanmar. China has participated in the consultation. China is a friendly neighbour to Myanmar," Wang said. PTI

# NCP's Prachanda-led faction to stage general strike in Nepal today

Kathmandu: The ruling Nepal Communist Party's splinter faction led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Madhav Kumar Nepal has announced a country-wide general strike against Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli-led government on Thursday.

Opposing the government's move of administering oath of office and secrecy to newly appointed members of various constitutional bodies, the splinter faction of the ruling party decided to stage a general strike, Narayan Kaji Shrestha, spokesperson for the party, said on Wednesday.

Transport service, markets, educational institutions will be shut down during the strike, he said. At a Press meet organised at the party office at Parisdanda on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Shrestha claimed that their general strike will be peaceful.

"On Wednesday morning, Chief Justice Cholendra Shamsheer Rana administered the oath of office to almost four dozen people in various constitutional bodies in the pres-

ence of President Bidya Devi Bhandari. Following the dissolution of parliament, the newly appointed members of constitutional bodies took oath of office and secrecy without parliamentary hearing, breaching the normal procedures.

Shrestha termed the appointment of the office bearers and members of various constitutional bodies by caretaker Oli government as unconstitutional and said that it shows autocratic tendency of the government.

The caretaker government has no right to make new appointments and also reshuffle the cabinet, he said, pointing to the latest cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Oli.

"We are compelled to go to the street to oppose the government's unconstitutional move," he added. Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after 68-year-old Oli, known for his pro-China leanings, in a surprise move dissolved Parliament, amidst a tussle for power with Prachanda. PTI

# Biden signs executive orders reversing Trump's immigration policies

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has signed three executive orders that he said would lead to a "fair, orderly and humane" legal immigration system and also undo his predecessor Donald Trump's headline policies that ripped children from the arms of their families.

The review of the existing policies and the subsequent recommendations coming from 60 to 180 days from various federal agencies are likely to benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian professionals in realising their dream of citizenship of the United States.

"I'm not making new law, I'm eliminating bad policy," Biden said on Tuesday at the White House, flanked by Vice President Kamala Harris and newly confirmed Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, of the stream of executive orders he has signed as President.

"This is about how America's safer, stronger, more prosperous when we have a fair, orderly, and humane legal



immigration system," Biden told reporters.

He said his executive orders are aimed to strengthen the immigration system, building on the executive actions he took on day one to protect the Dreamers, and the Muslim ban, and to better manage of the country's borders.

"The federal government should develop welcoming strategies that promote integration, inclusion and citizenship, and it should embrace the full participation of the newest Americans in our democracy," he said in one of the three executive orders.

# Taliban on diplomatic blitz after Afghan peace talks stall

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The Taliban have been on a diplomatic blitz since peace talks with the Afghan government stalled in Qatar last month and the Biden administration said it plans to review a US-Taliban agreement signed last February.

The flurry of activity — including Taliban visits to Iran and Moscow, and a planned trip to Turkey — comes as the Afghan government's negotiating team warned this week that if the Taliban fail to resume the talks, the government could recall its team from Doha.

The peace talks resumed in early January in Qatar, where the Taliban have a political office, but quickly halted, marred by a spike in violence across Afghanistan, with the warring sides blaming one another.

A Taliban official said the talks stalled after the Taliban demanded the government side accept a new "inclusive Islamic system" that includes all "tribes and groups" in Afghanistan — language that indicates the Taliban seek guarantees that Islamic rule would be in place in post-war Afghanistan.

The Government instead demanded the Taliban first join the current political system and declare a cease-fire, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

However, Nader Nadery, a government negotiator, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that it was the Taliban who have until now refused to return to the negotiating table. He denied any discussions over competing agendas.

# Turkey's Erdogan describes student protesters as terrorists

AP ■ ANKARA

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has denounced student protesters as "terrorists" and vowed to crackdown on demonstrations opposing the appointment of a government loyalist to head Istanbul's most prestigious university.

Students and faculty members of Bogazici University have spent weeks protesting Erdogan's Jan. 1 appointment of Melih Bulu, an academic who once ran for parliament as a candidate for Erdogan's party. They have called for Bulu to resign as the university's rector and for the university to be allowed to elect its own president, saying the appointment was an affront to academic liberties.

Scores of students have been detained amid the protests, some taken away following raids of their homes.

"I do not accept these youngsters, who are members of terrorist groups, as sharing our country's national and moral values," Erdogan said in a video address to thousands of ruling party members who are holding regional congresses.

"Are you students... Or are you terrorists who try to raid the office of the rector and occupy it?" he asked.

Erdogan went on to say that his government would not allow mass anti-government protests like the ones that swept across Turkey in 2013. The protests were sparked by the government's construction plans at Gezi Park, adjacent to Istanbul main Taksim square.

"This country won't be a country dominated by terrorists. We will never allow it," the Turkish leader said. "This country won't re-live incidents such as the Gezi events at Taksim."

# Tamil activists hold protest rally in Lanka

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Tamil political and civil society groups in Sri Lanka held a protest rally on Wednesday, highlighting the grievances being faced by the community and demanding justice for civilians killed and disappeared during the civil war in the island nation.

As per UN figures, up to 40,000 civilians were killed by the security forces during then Mahinda Rajapaksa's regime that brought an end to nearly three decades of civil war in Sri Lanka with the defeat of LTTE in 2009. Both the government troops and the Tamil Tiger rebels are accused of war crimes.

According to the protest organisers, the rally saw a huge participation, despite police obtaining court orders to stop

it. The four-day protest march started from Pottuvil town in the eastern Amparar district and it would end at Polikandy in the northern Jaffna district on February 6.

The protest came days after the UN Human Rights Office last week called for an "international action to ensure justice for international crimes" allegedly committed during the 26-year civil war. Sri Lanka has rejected the report.

The protest aims at highlighting several issues being faced by the Tamil community in Lanka.

The protesters allege that lands owned by Tamils are being grabbed and Tamil areas are being systematically populated with the majority Sinhala community since the military conflict ended in 2009 in Lanka.

# Biden presses Iran diplomacy as new special envoy tapped

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration says it's going to revamp and enhance diplomacy toward Iran as the US looks at restoring constraints on the country's nuclear program and reining in its regional ambitions.

As Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the appointment of a new special envoy for Iran on Friday, President Joe Biden's national security adviser said that restoring limits on the Iranian nuclear program is a top priority and that the administration would work to build on whatever restrictions it could negotiate.

Jake Sullivan said Friday that the administration's goal is to put Iran's nuclear program "back into a box" and then to confront other problematic Iranian activity in the Middle East. President Donald Trump cited Iran's "malign behavior" in the Middle East as one reason for withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal that Sullivan helped negotiate for the Obama administration.

"Our view is that if we can get back to diplomacy that can put Iran's nuclear program in a box, that will create a platform upon which to build a global effort," Sullivan said at an event hosted by the U.S. Institute of Peace, with Trump's national security adviser Robert O'Brien.



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 —Akshay Kumar

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## TREND BLAZER



### YAMI PREPARES FOR DASVI

Actor **YAMI GAUTAM** is currently prepping for her role in Dinesh Vijan's *Dasvi* which also stars Abhishek Bachchan and Nimrat Kaur.

To get under the skin of her character, she is taking lessons in Haryanvi as she will be speaking the North-Indian language in the film. Says Yami, "This is the first time I will be playing a Haryanvi character onscreen. It is a different challenge for me. I am currently working on learning the language."

### fair talk PARINEETI CHOPRA



'I'm humbled with the response that I have been getting for my work in *The Girl On The Train*. I have given my blood, sweat and tears and tapped into the innermost traumatic memories of my life to bring this character to life. I don't remember how many times I broke down on the sets because I was harnessing memories that I have buried deep inside.'

### daily talk SHREYA GHOSHAL



'The song creation process of my latest release *Angana Morey* was a lot of fun because I had a fabulous team of musicians jamming and exploring new ideas constantly. The video creation was another awesome experience. The post-production touches by the team added the magical factor to the video.'

### 'I DIDN'T GO TO DRAMA SCHOOL'

Actress **CAREY MULLIGAN** has revealed that she used to spend months preparing for roles because she felt the need to justify her casting, as she had never gone to acting school.

"I didn't go to drama school, I felt like a chancer, so I figured that I had to do loads of home work so that I was allowed to be here," Mulligan said.



# BACK TO SCHOOL

As Delhi government announces reopening of classes nine and 11, educational institutions gear up to maintain safety and sanitisation while developing confidence among parents.

By **SAKSHI SHARMA**

Students sitting at a distance, conducting practicals and doubt clearing sessions in shifts, short and staggered classes, no food sharing, closed canteens and playgrounds, wearing masks and carrying sanitisers are now the new essentials to attending schools. This is exactly what we expected when educational institutions finally reopened.

Students of classes 10 and 12 were already attending school and, in a move towards further normalisation, the Delhi government recently allowed classes nine and 11, which were shut since March last year to avoid the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, to reopen. Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said that the classes will resume from February 5 with the consent of parents and physical attendance will not be compulsory. He added that it is mandatory for all schools and colleges to follow the COVID-19 protocols.

"The students will attend classes in a staggered manner and with the permission of parents," Sisodia said, according to news agency PTI. There are various other steps too that the school authorities need to take to ensure that the students stay safe from the infection. According to Alka Kapur, Principal, Modern Public School, the safest way for the students to commute would be via private vehicles of their parents/guardians. Other modes of conveyance should be avoided for the time being. She further advises the use of thermal scanners at all the entry points to ensure that any student or staff, who is showing signs of sickness, could be isolated and treated quickly.

"The classes should be conducted in a staggered manner. This will mean that at a time,

only a certain number of students would be present in the class," says she as this would allow the school authorities to easily maintain proper physical distancing among the students and further reduce the chances of infection getting spread. "Blended learning - with the help of webcams, speakers and microphones, supported by a strong network - would also play a major role in this, as the students can learn via a balanced combination of online and offline modes. The schools should also consider investing in touchless sanitiser and water dispensers," adds Kapur.

Maintaining social distancing in schools not only involves the classrooms, canteens or playground but staircases and labs as well. Dr Sudha Acharya, Principal, IITL Public School says, "There is one way entry from the staircase. There are five to six people who monitor the chemistry and physics labs and ensure that the equipment is sanitised frequently." Although various schools have shut the playgrounds for the students until further notice, Acharya believes that physical learning is equally important. Hence, she plans to take a batch of 12 students to the playground at



a point of time.

No matter how safe and secure an environment is, parents will be apprehensive about their ward's safety. To gain their trust, Acharya called five parents from every section to oversee the arrangements done by the school. She also con-

ducted a session with them to clear their doubts and take them into confidence.

There are various schools sending circulars and mails to parents explaining the merits behind school education and their support. Rohan Parikh, Managing Director - The

Green Acres Academy says, "We shall be sending out a circular to all parents informing them of the protocols and also the essential support required from them to ensure a safe environment. The circular will be available for parents via the school app and e-portal." The work was supervised

# Carvings on a hill — The Udaygiri Caves

**KUSHAN MITRA** witnesses sculptures that document the beginnings of some of our religious practices



Sometimes when you make fascinating discoveries at a hitherto unseen Indian historical site (quick aside: while I'm a child of two history scholars, I did read English Literature in college), it makes you wonder how much of the past have we lost. Lost to time and to a people who live in the now and do not care about history — an awful truth about much of India. And yet, you sometimes see a place like the Udaygiri Caves and are grateful for what we have not lost. Partially the reason why a place like this survived was because these were carvings of Hindu gods in a very religious part of the country that was rarely conquered by outsiders and also the fact that Madhya Pradesh, unlike the Gangetic plains, is not teeming with humanity at every nook and cranny. Yes, the Udaygiri Caves are located beside a small village where farmers till the lands fed by the Betwa River.

These caves are located on a lone hill, about half an hour's drive from Sanchi, through some lovely rural roads where the brilliant surface is coupled with a few twists and turns and an overall lack of traffic making it an excellent drive on the new Hyundai i20. Seriously, this little hatchback with its small terrier of an engine is the perfect car to drive through these parts. You eventually arrive at the site where construction of a new visitor centre seems stalled although, given the pandemic and the drop in visitor numbers as a result, that should not be surprising. Unlike the Buddhist sites Udaygiri does not attract religious pilgrims. Sanchi, for example, attracted thousands of Sinhalese Buddhists every month and there was even talk of a direct flight between Bhopal and Colombo.

According to inscriptions found at the site, most of these — particularly the famous carvings of Varaha and the sleeping Vishnu — were done during the reign of King Chandragupta Vikramaditya (aka Chandragupta II). The work was supervised

by his minister of war and peace Virasena. The work was continued by his heir Kumaragupta and most of the early caves are dated back to the early 400's CE. Later emperors and kings added to the complex. While the relief carved onto the caves are clearly Hindu, newer caves depict Buddhist and Jain mythology and legend as well. The Archaeological Survey of India has done a great job of preserving many of the caves although gating many cave entrances means that photography is often quite difficult. Thankfully, small mobile phone camera lenses can capture the interiors. While I agree that it is a good idea to prevent the desecration of the caves, the ASI could use clear glass or perspex barriers instead of gating everything. At the Maladevi Temple, one understood that going inside was risky, because of the structural integrity issues, but here that was not a problem. You therefore tend to not clearly see the unique 'Mukhalinga' inside Cave 4 where a face is depicted on the lingam.

There are several very interesting sculptures across the Udaygiri Cave complex, but among the most fascinating was Cave Number 5, extremely prominent

and visible from the road itself. Inside the cave is a temple to Kartikeya and the tremendous sculpture of Vishnu as 'Varaha' (the boar) saving the Earth Goddess Bhudevi from the demon Hiranyaksha while the other gods and goddesses look at him from above. What is interesting is not just this sculpture but some of the surrounding ones, notable among them being Ganesha. While the elephant-headed god is a staple in many Indian households today, this is actually the earliest known example of Ganesha in this form.

And on the same rockface, but in Cave 6, is also the earliest known representation of Mahisasurardini, the 10-handed Durga riding a lion, slaying the demon Mahisasur. Every year, Bengalis worship the *protima* (idol) of Durga doing this but seeing the first known example from 1,600 years ago is quite something. There is also the fascinating Cave 13 where a reclining Vishnu (as Narayana). As most of the other caves are quite small, you might miss a few of them. Nevertheless, the walk up to the summit is worth it, if for nothing else, for the brilliant view of the Betwa

floodplains from the top and also the fact that much of the local plant population has also survived here and hasn't been replaced by European imports.

Next up, in the final part of the Great India Drive with The Pioneer, we will write about our journey to Satdhara and the huge and unknown Stupa complex there.



# BE VOCAL FOR LOCAL

The fortnight-long National Tribal Festival, *Aadi Mahotsav*, at Dilli Haat has a variety of products on offer

It was a riot of colours at the Dilli Haat last evening, where the fortnight-long National Tribal Festival — the *Aadi Mahotsav* was kicked off. Showcasing the proud identity and culture of the tribal people, the place was abuzz with life and provided a glimpse into the rich, artistic tribal traditions. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu, said, "The greatness of the tribes lies in the fact that they have managed to retain their primal and natural simplicity. The earthy and natural tribal handicraft instantly touches a primal instinct in all of us and hence, any loss of tribal culture would be an irreparable loss to humanity."

Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs,



Renuka Singh Saruta, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, S



Subramanyam, Secretary, Tribal Affairs, RC Meena, Chairman,



TRIFED and Pravir Krishna,

Managing Director, TRIFED were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

With more than 200 stalls from across the country and about 1,000 artisans with their unique stories participating, the *Aadi Mahotsav*, an annual tribal festival organised by TRIFED, is a way to draw the *adivasis* into the mainstream and give them a chance to display their unique range of products to a larger audience. It is also a platform for the tribal artisans and *Van Dhan* suppliers to forge links with other artisans and market drivers. For the residents of the capital city, the urban audience, it is an opportunity to learn more about the natural ways of the *adivasis* and imbibe their simplicity. The beautiful handcrafted

jewellery from the Northeast and of the inimitable Dokra style, fine weaves and textiles, silks, such as *Maheshwari*, *Eri*, *Karvathi Kathi* silk sarees, Tassar silks and Pashmina shawls; wares such as *moonj grass* basketry and blue pottery from Jaipur; paintings and a wide range of products will all be available at one place. The food and forest products, heritage textiles and naturals will all be on display and sale at the festival. The visitors can also sample *adi vyanjan*, simple yet tasty fares from tribal India such as *thapdi roti*, *madva roti*, *litti chokha*, *mahua laddu*, *sabudana vada* and *adivasi laddu* to name a few.

(The Aadi Mahotsav is on till the February 15 from 11 am to 9 pm.)



AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United equalled the biggest win in Premier League history as they crushed nine-man Southampton 9-0, while Arsenal had two players sent off in their defeat at Wolves on Tuesday.

Rampant United scored four times in the first half after Southampton's teenage midfielder Alexandre Jankewitz was dismissed in the second minute at Old Trafford.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side hit five more after the break,

tying them with Leicester's 9-0 win at Southampton in 2019 and United's own 9-0 victory against Ipswich in 1995.

Aaron Wan-Bissaka's goal opened the floodgates and Marcus Rashford bagged United's second. Jan Bednarek's own goal made it three for the hosts before Edinson Cavani added the fourth.

The goals kept coming as Anthony Martial and Scott McTominay netted before Bruno Fernandes' penalty after Bednarek was sent off.

Martial and Daniel James scored in stoppage-time to complete an incredible display by United.

"We've been waiting for them to show the magic and it was a night for them to go and enjoy it. We've not had many times where we could just enjoy the second half," Solskjaer said. "You get lots of confidence from a performance like this, scoring goals is always good for a team."

Southampton manager Ralph Hasenhuttl added: "It was a stupid foul from the young lad (Jankewitz) and kills everything. What can I say? It's horrible."

After the frustration of their shock defeat against Sheffield United and a draw at Arsenal, the demolition job was a much-needed boost to their title bid.

United's first victory in three league games means they are behind leaders Manchester City only on goal difference. Pep Guardiola's team have two games in hand, including one at Burnley on Wednesday.



David Luiz reacts after he receives red card against Wolves

ARSENAL WOE

A seven-game unbeaten league run had propelled Arsenal back into contention for a return to the Champions League next season and they could have moved to within five points of the top four after Nicolas Pepe's strike opened the scoring at Molineux.

But David Luiz's third red card in two seasons as an Arsenal player for clipping William Jose on the stroke of half-time turned the game around.

Ruben Neves converted the resulting penalty before Joao Moutinho's stunning long-range strike early in the second half put goal-shy Wolves in front.

Goalkeeper Bernd Leno then rounded off a miserable night for the visitors when he was also dismissed for handling outside his box.

A much-needed victory for Wolves ended an eight-game winless run and takes them 12 points clear of the relegation zone.

Nuno Espirito Santo's men also completed a first league double over Arsenal in 42 years. Arsenal remain in 10th, eight points adrift of fourth-placed Leicester, having played a game more.

"The team was really on top of the game, we should have been three or four-nil up and after the red card the game changed completely," said Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta. "I've seen it 10 times in different angles and I cannot tell you where the contact is."

West Brom lost 2-1 at bottom-of-the-table Sheffield United, while Crystal Palace won 2-1 at struggling Newcastle.

## Advantage Bianconeri

Ronaldo's double helps Juventus beat Inter in 1st leg of Italian Cup semis

AFP ■ MILAN

Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Juventus came from behind to beat Inter Milan 2-1 at the San Siro in their Italian Cup semi-final first leg on Tuesday.

Record 13-time winners Juve will be favourites to reach a sixth final in seven years when they bid to complete the job in the return game in Turin next Tuesday.

"This is just the first leg, we haven't achieved anything yet," Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo told RAI Sport. "What this does prove is that if we are fully concentrated, it becomes difficult for anyone against us."

Inter, who beat Juventus 2-0 last month in Serie A, have it all to do to keep their hopes of lifting a first Italian Cup since 2011 alive.

They made a flying start in the ninth minute, as Lautaro Martinez got in front of Matthijs de Ligt to meet Nicolo Barella's low cross, sweeping a right-footed finish into the net despite Gianluigi Buffon getting a hand to the shot.

But Juventus were given a way back into

the tie midway through the first half.

Juan Cuadrado, who was making a run into the box off the ball, was held by Ashley Young, with VAR deeming that the visitors should be awarded a penalty.

Ronaldo did the rest, hammering the spot-kick into the roof of the net to score his 21st goal of the season.

Juventus completed the first-half turnaround in the 35th minute, as a terrible mix-up between Alessandro Bastoni and Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic allowed Ronaldo to slide in his second goal from a tight angle.

Inter, missing top-scorer Romelu Lukaku through suspension, should have equalised 11 minutes after half-time, but Alexis Sanchez's shot was brilliantly cleared off the line by Merih Demiral.

The hosts kept pushing for an equaliser, with Martinez curling narrowly over after Buffon's smart save kept out Matteo Darmian from point-blank range.

Inter coach Antonio Conte also threw on Christian Eriksen, who scored a late winner in the last eight against AC Milan, but the home side failed to create another clear-cut chance.



## Serena keeps rolling in Aus Open tuneup

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Serena Williams continued her impressive Australian Open preparations with a straight-set thrashing of Tsvetana Pironkova on Wednesday, as world No 3 Naomi Osaka and top-ranked Ashleigh Barty struggled.

Williams, 39, has been in belligerent form at the Yarra Valley Classic and overpowered the Bulgarian with a 6-1, 6-4 victory in 74 minutes.

"So far, so good. It's special to play here with what's going on in the world," said Williams, who only lost four games against Daria Gavrilova in her opener on Monday.

Williams, aiming for a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, broke Pironkova first up and kept her foot on the gas

with 25 winners and six aces. The American will play compatriot Danielle Collins in the quarter-finals.

Osaka and Barty, however, were pushed to the brink, but both avoided early exits at Melbourne Park.

Japan's Osaka was made to work hard against in-form Katie Boulter, but fought back for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory to reach the quarter-finals in the Gippsland Trophy.

The second-seeded Osaka, who won the Australian Open in 2019, raced to a 3-0 lead in the second set but the 24-year-old Briton would not fold and had break points to put the stanza back on

serve. Osaka upped her return game considerably to wrest back the momentum and level up the match before running away with the third set and sealing a last eight tie against Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu.

World No 1 Barty also had a fright in her match against Marie Bouzkova, but recovered from a second-set stutter to win 6-0, 4-6, 6-3.

"Mid-match I lacked execution ... but happy to get it on my terms in the end," Barty said after a quick turnaround, having beaten Ana Bogdan in straight sets on Tuesday night.

Barty, hoping to break her country's 43-year singles title drought at the Australian Open starting next week, will face Shelby Rogers of the United States next.

Top seed and world No 2 Simona Halep downed Laura Siegemund in straight sets to set up a quarter-final against Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova, who upset French Open champion Iga Swiatek 6-4, 6-2.



## Dortmund survive VAR drama

AP ■ DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund survived a late VAR drama to reach the quarterfinals of the German Cup, while Bayer Leverkusen was stunned by fourth-tier team Rot-Weiss Essen.

Dortmund endured a nervy finale before Erling Haaland finally sealed a 3-2 win in extra time over second-division Paderborn on Tuesday.

The Norwegian thought he'd sealed the victory in normal time when he made it a 3-1 for Dortmund on a counterattack.

But referee Tobias Stieler was alerted to a possible foul by Felix Passlack on Paderborn captain Sebastian Schonlau at the other end. Stieler consulted video replays and awarded the penalty.

Haaland's goal was duly chalked off and Paderborn forward Prince Osei Owusu equal-



Haaland scores

ized from the spot in the seventh minute of injury time to send the game to extra time.

As if in defiance of the call, Haaland raced clear to score another goal in similar fashion to make it 3-2 in the fifth minute of extra time.

There was another lengthy delay for the next VAR check to see if the Norwegian had been

offside. This time the goal was allowed, though Stieler felt the need to personally explain why to Paderborn coach Steffen Baumgart as it had been such a marginal call. It proved to be the winning goal.

Emre Can opened the scoring in the ninth minute when Paderborn's defense failed to deal with Jadon Sancho's corner.

The ball kept coming back before falling kindly for Can to let fly with his left boot to score.

Haaland sent Sancho on his way to score Dortmund's second in the 16th and it looked like Dortmund would go on to another stroll after a 5-0 win over Duisburg and 2-0 win over Eintracht Braunschweig in the previous rounds.

But Paderborn improved and a mistake from goalkeeper Marwin Hitz allowed Julian Justvan to pull one back with just over 10 minutes of normal time remaining.

Owusu's penalty sent it to extra time and Dortmund finished the match holding on for the final whistle as Justvan fired over with the last kick of the game. Elsewhere, Rot-Weiss Essen struck twice in extra time to knock Leverkusen out with a 2-1 defeat.

## SINGLES



Ekana Cricket Stadium MD Uday Sinha felicitating BCCI honorary secretary Jay Shah on his visit to Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket stadium on Wednesday. Shah was accompanied BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla and UPCA honorary secretary Yudhvir Singh. Others present were Suresh Raina, Bhubaneswar Kumar, RP Singh, Rinku Singh, Akshdeep Nath and U-19 men's and women's cricket team of UP. Shah took a tour of the stadium on praised the world-class facilities

**ASIA MIXED TEAM C'SHIP CANCELLED**  
NEW DELHI: Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship, scheduled to be held in Wuhan in China next week, was on Wednesday cancelled due to travel restrictions and strict quarantine protocols imposed by many countries in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Badminton Asia (BA), said the timing of the event, which is not a part of the qualifications for the Tokyo Olympics, was also a reason for the cancellation.

**OCAMPOS FIRES SEVILLA INTO SEMIS**  
MADRID: Lucas Ocampos' second-half goal was enough to see Sevilla edge past second-tier Almeria 1-0 on Tuesday to reach the Copa del Rey semi-finals. Papu Gomez, who joined from Atalanta last week, made his debut for Sevilla but made little impact and was substituted on the hour mark. Gomez's fellow Argentinian Ocampos broke Almeria's stubborn resistance in the 67th minute, heading home Suso's cross. It is the first time Sevilla, five-time winners, have reached the last four since being thrashed 5-0 by Barcelona in the 2018 final.

**NO CHANGE IN PAK SQUAD**  
RAWALPINDI: Pakistan have retained the same 17 players for the second Test against South Africa who were shortlisted for the first Test played in Karachi from January 26-30. The playing line-up with now be finalised by the captain in consultation with the head coach for the match, which will commence at the Pindi Cricket Stadium from Thursday, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a release. Pakistan had won the first Test by seven wickets, thus taking a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

**ARTHUR, THIRIMANNE TEST COVID +IVE**  
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka head coach Micky Arthur and batsman Lahiru Thirimanne have tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the team's tour of the West Indies later this month. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Wednesday said following the development, it was exploring the possibility of rescheduling the tour, matches of which were supposed to start on February 20.

## My job is to take back seat & help Virat: Rahane

PTI ■ CHENNAI

As captain, he was at the forefront of India's epic triumph in Australia, but Ajinkya Rahane would prefer to take a back seat while lending a helping hand to the returning Virat Kohli in the high-octane Test series against England.

Rahane, who led India to their greatest overseas Test series victory in Australia recently, also said that there is no room for complacency against a quality side like England in the series, starting here on Friday.

The upcoming matches will decide New Zealand's opposition in the World Test Championship final at Lord's in June.

"My job is to take a back seat and help Virat. My job is really easy now. When Virat asks me about anything, I will tell him. Virat was the captain and he came back for



family reasons. So I was the captain in Australia," Rahane said during a virtual media conference on Wednesday.

The senior batsman also said that the Australian series win for

him is a thing of past. "Australia is past. We are in present. We respect the England side which has won a Test series in Sri Lanka. We want to play good brand of cricket and we are not taking any-

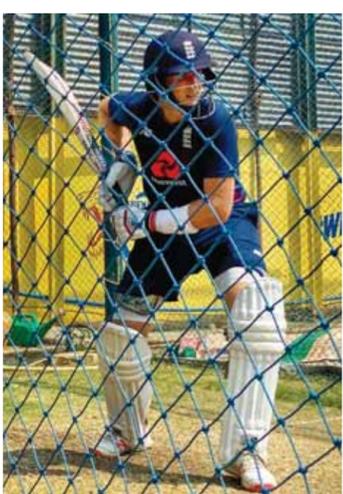
thing for granted," said Rahane. He didn't want to dwell on India being favourites to reach the final of WTC.

"The WTC final is three-four (five) months from now. The focus should be on present series. New Zealand played really well and deserved to be in the final. For us, it will be about taking one game at a time."

While he didn't spell out anything about team combination, the vice-captain did drop a hint that Chepauk will be a spinner-friendly surface. "We will decide on the playing combination after tomorrow's training," he said when asked if left-arm orthodox spinner Axar Patel will be handed a Test debut.

"The Indian wickets always have something for spinners. We will back our strength. Let's wait and see," he said.

## Important for Eng to score big in 1st innings: Trott



Chennai: Posting big first-innings total and countering the spinners will be crucial to England's chances in the upcoming Test series against India, the visiting team's batting consultant Jonathan Trott said on Wednesday.

Trott spoke to the media after his team's training session and he was asked about the message being given to the players ahead of the series opener here on Friday.

"This varies from player to player. For some it's the first tour of India and some have been quite a few times.

"Different players, different messages but the fundamentals of playing in India are pretty much the same. Big runs, early on, first innings like everywhere else in the world but it is very, very important in India," Trott said during a virtual press conference.

"... And playing spin, having your own method and able to execute that under pressure is most important thing," he added.

While Trott stressed on handling the spin challenge effectively, he was also

## Pope added to 1st Test squad

Chennai: Middle-order batsman Ollie Pope was on Wednesday added to England's squad for the Test series opener against India after taking part in the team's training sessions here since the end of its quarantine period.

The 23-year-old Pope had suffered a dislocated shoulder while fielding in

the final Test of the English summer against Pakistan last August which subsequently required surgery.

Pope, who has been undergoing rehabilitation, travelled with the England team during its recent tour of Sri Lanka though he was not part of the squad. It helped him continue his rehabilitation with

England's support staff and get acclimatise to conditions in the sub-continent. He has undergone practice with the full squad over the past two days.

If picked in the playing XI for the first Test starting on Friday, which is a high possibility, Pope is likely to bat at either number five or number six.

reminded about India's lethal pace attack, riding on which the hosts did exceedingly well in the recent past.

"We saw there pace attack in Australia did really well. They are talented, all round with the ball. Everyone got the good pace attack these days. That's crucial to prepare for both.

"Confront the new ball, spin in the middle, skill has to be very very high and playing in the heat and humidity of Chennai, you have to be very fit and strong."

Talking about captain Joe Root, who is set to appear in his 100th Test, Trott was lavish in his praise.

"Baby faced... You won't say he has

played 100 Test matches. But not surprised one bit. He has gone from strength to strength. The way he leads by example. He has passion for the game and desire, still wants to improve and that rubs on others. We are lucky to have a player like him, leading and the way he bats in middle order."

Trott was asked if his batting would be key in India. Root struck two double hundreds in the recent series in Sri Lanka.

"Captaining in India is a skill in itself, conditions, rotating bowlers. He has done well, we saw that in Sri Lanka. Seems to be very natural, his captaincy and decision making. It's going to be a real challenge but we have the confidence in Joe. Can't wait to get started."

## B'desh hold firm against WI on Day 1

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

After losing four wickets in the first two sessions, Bangladesh held firm at the end of the first day against the West Indies to score 242-5 on Wednesday.

Left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican picked up three wickets, conceding 58 runs, to pose a strong challenge to the hosts.

Left-handed opener Shadman Islam was the best batsman for Bangladesh with 59 runs, his second fifty in Test format.

Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque and Mushfiqur Rahim had managed solid starts by amassing 25, 26 and 38, respectively, but failed to come up with big scores.

Liton Das (34) and Shakib Al Hasan (39) remained not out at the end of the day, scoring 49 in the sixth-wicket stand.