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Cong getting weak, rues G-23

Senior party leaders pitch for strong Cong leadership at Centre

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Pitching for a strong Congress leadership at the Centre in order to corner the Narendra Modi-led Government, the group of 23 Congress leaders, known in the party circles as "dissident" voices, on Saturday launched a fresh offensive questioning the top brass of the party why it failed to utilise the services of an "experienced" leader like Ghulam Nabi Azad when it needed him the most.

At least seven leaders belonging to this "group of dissenters", assembled in Jammu to attend Shanti Sammelan organised by the Gandhi Global Family.

Interestingly, the "show of strength" was organised by these leaders a day after the announcement of the Assembly polls by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in five States, including Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

In one voice all these leaders sent out a clear message to the Congress leadership to start working towards strengthening the party before it's too late. The tone and tenor of the speeches made by these leaders clearly indicated the Congress party is headed for a major "shakeup" in the days to come. These leaders also made it clear they will not sit idle as the country was facing numerous challenges.



Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Raj Babbar during a Shanti Sammelan event in Jammu on Saturday

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Apart from Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Cabinet Ministers Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari, Anand Sharma, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, parliamentarians Raj Babbar, and Vivek Tankha attended the event in Jammu.

Wearing saffron headgears, all these leaders also openly came out in support of the demand for restoring "statehood" to Jammu & Kashmir.

None of the office-bearers of the Jammu & Kashmir

Pradesh Congress Committee, including its chief GA Mir, attended the event. Only loyalists of Ghulam Nabi Azad from the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region attended the event in full strength.

Leading the charge from the front, one of the senior most members of the group Anand Sharma said, "The Congress has weakened in the last decade. Our voice is for the betterment of the party. It should be strengthened everywhere once again. New gener-

ation should connect (to the party). We've seen good days of the Congress. We don't want to see it weakening as we become older."

In a veiled attack on the party leadership, the former Union Minister went on to add, "All of us have covered a long distance to reach where we're today. Nobody among us has come through the window, all of us have walked through the door. We have come through the students' movement, the youth movement. I've not given

anyone the right to declare if we're people of Congress or not, nobody has that right. We'll build the party and strengthen it. We believe in the strength and unity of the Congress."

His Cabinet colleagues Kapil Sibal and Manish Tewari also battled for a strong Congress leadership at the top. Sibal said, "We had gathered together earlier too and we have to strengthen the party together."

Sibal questioned as to why the Congress was not utilising the rich experience of Ghulam Nabi Azad. "He is one such leader who knows the ground reality of Congress in every district of every State. We were saddened when we realised that he is being freed from Parliament. We didn't want him to go from Parliament."

Referring to the treatment meted out to Azad by the party high command, Sibal said, "What is the real role of Ghulam Nabi Azad? A person who flies an aircraft is an experienced person. An engineer accompanies him to detect and repair any malfunctioning in the engine. Ghulam Nabi ji is experienced as well as an engineer."

Echoing similar sentiments Anand Sharma also said, "There has never come such an occasion after 1950 when there is no representative of Jammu & Kashmir in the Rajya Sabha. This will be corrected."

Turn to Page 9

Centre caps Covid shot at ₹250 in pvt hospitals

During phase-II of vaccination drive beginning from March 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eligible Covid-19 vaccine aspirants in the country will have to shell out ₹250 per shot — ₹150 cost of vaccine plus ₹100 service charge — if they opt to get themselves inoculated at the designated private hospitals during the second phase of the vaccination drive beginning March 1 to cover people aged above 60 years and those over 45 with comorbidities.

However, the Government hospitals will be providing the jab free, the cost to be borne by the Centre. "The private hospitals can charge up to ₹250 per dose of Covid-19 vaccine. However, the jab will be given free of cost at Government hospitals across the States. The cost will be borne by the Centre," said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan in a statement here.

"₹250 will be the ceiling — ₹150 cost of vaccine plus ₹100 service charge. This arrangement will remain effective till further orders," Bhushan said in a statement here following an interaction with Health Secretaries and MDs (NHM) of



States and UTs on the vaccination of age-appropriate groups through a video conference (VC) on Saturday.

"There would be Government health facilities which will be used as Covid vaccine centres such as medical college hospitals, district hospitals, sub divisional hospitals, CHCs, PHCs, Health Sub Centres and Health and Wellness Centres. Geo reference maps with GPS coordinates of all these health facilities have been prepared that will serve as CVCs and these Geo referenced maps are being shared with the States," a senior health official added.

To ramp up the Covid vaccination capacity manifold, significantly a large number of private facilities are being involved. "Around 10,000 pri-

vate hospitals empanelled under Ayushman Bharat PMJAY, over 600 hospitals empanelled under CGHS and other private hospitals empanelled under State Governments.

"Health Insurance Schemes can participate as CVCs. Health Departments of State Governments have already initiated dialogue with these private hospitals so that they can be encouraged to participate in this drive as CVCs. A list of all these private hospitals has been uploaded on the website of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and National Health Authority," said the official.

So far, 77 per cent of healthcare workers have been administered with the first dose and 70 per cent got the second dose, the official added.

Turn to Page 9

DMK-Cong seat sharing hitch in TN

DMK offers only 20; Cong unhappy, says it got 40 last time

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

With the Election Commission of India declaring the poll schedule for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Friday, the DMK and the Congress are finding it difficult to arrive at an amicable seat sharing agreement.

A national leader of the Congress told *The Pioneer* that the DMK is proving to be a tough taskmaster when it is time for seat allocation. "The maximum they had offered as till Saturday 2 pm is just 20 seats. Please remember that the Congress was allocated 40 seats during the 2016 Assembly election and we won eight seats," said the senior leader who did not want to be identified.

Last week the team of Congress leaders deputed by party chief Sonia Gandhi called on the DMK headquarters and held a round of meeting with the second rung leaders of the Dravidian major.

"It was not a pleasant experience," said another leader, a close aide to party scion Rahul Gandhi.

The leader said the grand old party of India would not be happy with anything less than



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his election campaign for upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly polls in Tuticorin on Saturday

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40. "The DMK is winning election by making use of the goodwill enjoyed by the Congress in Tamil Nadu. There is a strong anti-DMK feeling in the State, but the Congress will survive because it has showed the world that the party does not require power to become strong," said the leader who was accompanying Rahul Gandhi to Thoothukudi on Saturday.

What comes out of the Congress leaders' comments is the fact that there is a trust deficit between the party and the DMK. This was visible in the downfall of the Congress-

led Narayanasamy Government in Puducherry which lost vote of trust because of the resignation of the lone DMK member.

The Congress negotiators were led by former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandi and Karnataka leader Dinesh Gundu Rao. The absence this time of Ghulam Nabi Azad has surprised TNCC leaders. "Azad was the leader who knows the functioning of the DMK inside out. But he was conspicuous by his absence this time," said the leader.

While the Congress-DMK talks are in a deadlock, the AIADMK scored a major point on Friday by enacting a legislation that granted 10.5 per cent reservation for the 2 crore strong Vanniyar community in the Government service. This has been a long standing demand of Dr Ramadoss, founder of the PMK. This brought in some cheer to the AIADMK as it has pacified three of its major allies, the BJP, the PMK and the Puthiya Tamilakam.

The DMK, which has been on an aggressive mood till early last week, has suddenly mellowed down and maintaining a silence. Meanwhile TTV Dhinakaran, general secretary of the AMMK and nephew of VK Sasikala, Jayalalitha's former aide, declared that he would be the Chief Ministerial candidate of the front to be led by his party. This means that there are four CM candidates in Tamil Nadu as on Saturday, the other three being incumbent Edappadi Palaniswamy, MK Stalin (DMK) and film actor Kamal Haasan (MNM). Tamil Nadu goes to the poll on April 6 to elect 234-member Assembly.

Centre: Enforce Covid appropriate behaviour

States, UTs told to deal firmly with violations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday advised States and UTs — Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana and Jammu & Kashmir — to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour by dealing firmly with violations and ensure effective surveillance in case of potential super spreading events so as not to let the situation go out of hand.

These States and UTs have been reporting a high Covid-19 active caseload or an increasing trend in new cases in the last week, noted Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba while chairing a high-level review meeting with Chief Secretaries of States/UTs.

"They were advised not to lower their guard, enforce Covid appropriate behaviour and deal firmly with violations. It was strongly underlined that they need to follow effective



Beds lined up at a NESCO Covid care centre, amid concerns over surge in Covid-19 cases, at Goregaon in Mumbai on Saturday

PTI

surveillance strategies in respect of potential super spreading events," the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

The need for effective testing, comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation of positive cases, and quick quarantine of close contacts were also strongly emphasised.

During the review meeting, States were advised to undertake vaccination on priority in districts reporting higher cases and monitor strains and clustering of cases for early hotspot identification and control.

They have also been asked to improve the overall testing in districts reporting a reduc-

tion in testing, and increase RT-PCR tests in districts having high antigen testing.

The States and UT were directed to focus on surveillance and stringent containment in selected districts reporting reduced tests/high positivity and increased cases.

They have also been advised to carry clinical management in districts reporting higher deaths and promote Covid-appropriate behaviour to ensure effective citizen communication to not let complacency set in, especially in light of the vaccination drive entering the next phase.

Turn to Page 9

Biden won't sanction MBS over murder of Khashoggi

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) likely approved the killing of US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, according to a newly declassified US intelligence report. But the Biden Administration is not going to sanction MBS.

The intelligence findings were long known to many US officials and, even as they remained classified, had been reported with varying degrees of precision. But the public rebuke of MBS is still a touchstone in US-Saudi relations.

Turn to Page 9

All 728 dists to become unique hubs to boost farm exports

Peda, Bindi, jaggery, spices among items under One Dist One Focus Product scheme

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As part of its effort to boost farm exports, enhance farmers' income and raise rural jobs, the Centre on Saturday finalised a list of products from agriculture and allied sectors under the "One District One Focus Product (ODOFP)" scheme that will be promoted in a cluster approach in 728 districts across the country.

For instance, Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district is to be promoted as Bindi (tikuli) cluster; Deogarh and Dumka in Jharkhand for Peda products; Rajouri for spices; Anantnag for trout fish; Ayodhya for Jaggery; Auraiya for food processing desi ghee; Srinagar for flowers; Budgam

for exotic vegetables; East Delhi for namkeens, and South-west Delhi for milk-based products.

Similarly, Kupwara is to be developed for walnut; Ganderbal for honey; Bandipora for processed poultry/mutton; Durg and Koriya in Chhattisgarh for tomato-based products; Surguja for litchi; Batod in Gujarat for guava; Porbandar for gram-based products; North Goa for jackfruit; Ambala for onion and Kinnaur for fruit wine under the ODOFP scheme.

According to the Ministry, the product chosen in the district for promotion, having export potential which will boost farm exports and enhance farmers' income.



Besides, also help to provide jobs in rural sector.

The list includes 25 districts of Arunachal Pradesh; 38 districts of Bihar; 28 districts of Chhattisgarh; 2 districts in Goa; 22 districts of Haryana; 12

districts of Himachal Pradesh; 24 districts of Jharkhand; 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir; 31 districts of Karnataka; 14 districts of Kerala; 52 districts of Madhya Pradesh; 36 districts of Maharashtra; 16 districts of

Manipur; 30 districts of Odisha; 23 districts of Punjab; 4 districts of Sikkim; 36 districts of Tamil Nadu; 8 districts of Tripura; 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh; and 18 districts of West Bengal.

As many as 13 districts each of Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh, 11 districts each of Delhi, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland; and 33 districts each of Assam, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana have been included.

That apart, three districts of Andaman & Nicobar Islands; total three districts of Daman and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; two districts each of Ladakh and Puducherry; one district each of Chandigarh and Lakshadweep are part of this exercise.

According to the Ministry, fruits have been identified for 226 districts, the highest in the

list while vegetables for 107 districts and spices for 105 districts are at the second and the third position in the list. Paddy will be promoted in 40 districts, wheat-5 districts, coarse cum nutri cereals in 25 districts, pulses 16 districts, commercial crops 22 districts, oilseeds 41 districts, plantation 28 districts, floriculture 2 districts, honey 9 districts, animal husbandry/dairy 40 districts, aquaculture/marine fisheries 29 districts and processed products 33 districts. The Ministry said that the list of products have been finalised after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

"These products will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the Government of India schemes, to increase the value of the products and with the ultimate

aim of increasing the income of the farmers. These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme (PM Formalisation of Micro food Processing Enterprises Scheme) of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoter and micro-enterprises," the Ministry said.

At the governing council meeting last week, the NITI Aayog also reiterated that food processing and export under One District One focus Product scheme not only aligns perfectly with district-level crop diversification, but will also help raise rural jobs and income of farmers.

"This future development of agriculture with rise in income will augment shift in demand towards processed food and thereby furthering this cycle," it said.

CAPSULE

8 HELD IN TELANGANA OVER COW SLAUGHTER
Hyderabad: Eight people were on Saturday arrested for allegedly slaughtering 16 cows in Siddipet district of Telangana, police said.

3 COVID-19 DEATHS, 243 CASES IN DELHI ON SAT
New Delhi: Delhi recorded 243 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, while three more fatalities pushed the death toll to 10,909, according to the data shared by the city health department.

ASI SHOOTS HIMSELF DEAD INSIDE PCR VAN
New Delhi: An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Delhi Police allegedly shot himself dead with his service pistol in a PCR van while he was on duty at Zakhira flyover in West Delhi on Saturday morning, officials said.

FIRE AT FACTORY IN PRATAP NAGAR, ONE DEAD
New Delhi: The charred body of a 22-year-old labourer was recovered after a fire broke out at a warehouse in North Delhi's Pratap Nagar area in the early hours of Saturday.

ASSAM: BPF QUILTS NDA TO JOIN CONG ALLIANCE
Guwahati: The Bodoland People's Front (BPF), a part of the BJP-led Assam Government, on Saturday said it will join the 'Grand Alliance' helmed by the Congress to contest the upcoming Assembly polls.

Lucknow (PNS): In a tragic incident, a man accidentally shot his nephew dead with a country-made pistol in Muzaffarnagar district, police said on Saturday. In a 30-second clip which went viral on social media, a man can be seen picking up the pistol, loading it with a bullet and shooting the person (sitting in front of him) dead. The incident took place two days ago but the local police took cognisance after the video went viral. Sources confirmed that the video was recorded by the victim himself.



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Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this newspaper is not to be held responsible for any contents published in this newspaper.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



Stating that religion is considered a duty in Indian mythology and Guru Ravidasji is the living icon for this, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath narrated a short incident. He said that

crores of followers living in the country. He spent his entire life in an attempt to make man a human being." In another tweet, she said, "Under the BSP government formed four times in UP, a lot of efforts were made to realise the dreams of Sant Ravidas and the public interest and public welfare work done in his honor is not hidden from anyone. It

Thanking the members of the committee, the chief minister said that it had been working to propagate the teachings of Guru Ravidasji for the last 83 years with their limited means. "Sanatan Dharm is strengthening Hinduism to fulfill the vision of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, the chief minister added.

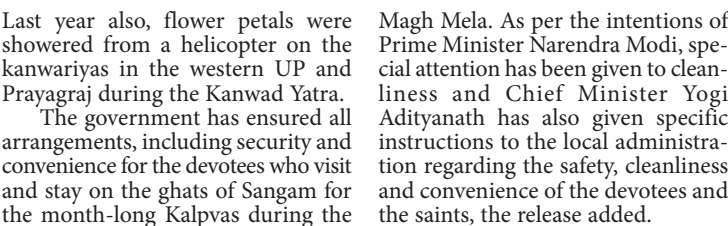
will be appropriate if the Central and state governments do good for the society and the country by following this path." Indirectly targeting the opposition parties celebrating Sant Ravidas Jayanti, the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh said that many leaders had no real respect for the great saint but were just celebrating the occasion for political gains.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

He also slammed the government for inflation, farmers' distress and lack of opportunities for setting up industries in the state.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

It may be mentioned that earlier on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya and Kumbh in 2019, the devotees and saints were given a similar welcome.



Magh Mela. As per the intentions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, special attention has been given to cleanliness and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also given specific instructions to the local administration regarding the safety, cleanliness and convenience of the devotees and the saints, the release added.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

11 About 41.16 per cent of bank accounts have been covered under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) against the total Jan Dhan accounts in UP, according to the additional chief sec-

retary. "The state government's one gram panchayat, one bank correspondent programme has started under which the process of appointment of 58,000 Bank Correspondent Sakhi is underway. In addition, a loan of over Rs 1.45 crore has been distributed under the annual loan scheme till the end of the current fiscal," SLBC convenor Brajesh Kumar Singh said.

In the review meeting, under-secretary in the Union Ministry of Finance, Amil Agarwal, suggested that the banks and the NABARD take necessary steps to reach out to potential projects and entrepreneurs for the use of agricultural infrastructure funds.

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar

The Stamps and Registration Department has allowed the self-printing of stamp papers. Self-printing of e-stamp papers will be permitted only for the stamp papers up to Rs 500 only. Official sources said a huge demand for stamp papers was expected

during the panchayat elections as affidavits would have to be filed along with lakhs of nomination papers to be filed by the candidates for the three-tier panchayat institutions. As per the new system formalised by the Stamps and Registration Department, the candidates, after depositing the money, can self-print the stamp papers from the website of the Stock Holding Corporation of India. The candidate will have to make online payment to the Stock Holding Corporation of India.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

Tender Notice No.:- 28-Elec/G/PRY/J/20-21


Date: 25.02.2021

E-Tender Notice


Senior Divl. Electrical Engineer/Gen/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite the following e-Tenders on prescribed form for the following works up to **15:00 hrs on 22.03.2021**. The details of the tenders are as under:-

Tender No.	Name of work	Cost of work ₹	Duration of Completion
ELG-100 -2021	Hiring, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Desert Coolers at GM office & associated offices at Prayagraj for two Years.	3308981.50	24 Months

Tender Opening Date: 22.03.2021 & 15:00 hrs. Note:- 1. The complete information alongwith tender document of above e-Tenders are available on website www.irops.gov.in upto 15:00 hrs. on the due date of tender opening. 2. Bids other than in the form of e-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website alongwith Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entry in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight away ignored and shall not be considered. 4. This tender notice has also been uploaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in 5. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 6. The Contractors should submit valid Class 'A' Electrical License issued by State Government otherwise tender shall not be considered. 7. Rate Quoted by Firm will be inclusive of all Taxes & Duties (D, 8. Suppliers of goods and/or services would be subject to GST Act and Rules as Applicable from time to time. **264/21(D)**

 North central railways

www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

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PNS ■ LUCKNOW

He said that the boats which were damaged in the scuffle were already being repaired and strict directions in this regard had been issued to the district administration.

"Also, the process to withdraw

"There was an allocation of Rs 243 crore for Centre's PM Matsya Sampada Yojana while there is a provision to cover two lakh fishermen with free insurance scheme during 2021-22," he stated.

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No. - F10(101)RJSFSC/ICDS/ Tender/2020-21/18947 Dated - 26/02/2021

e-Bid Notice

e-Bids are invited for transportation work of Food Grain, wheat, Rice & Dal under ICDS in (14) Districts [junhunjhi, Sikar, Bharatpur, Bikaner, bundi, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Sirohi, Udaipur, Barmer, Nagaur, Sawaimadhopur, Bhiwara & Chittorgarh] for one year from the date of agreement. If the tenders of those districts where they are in process, are finally cancelled by the date of uploading this tender, those districts should also upload the new tender. The Bid shall be submitted only through online tendering system at concerned districts on the website www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. As detailed below:

UBN No. - FCS2021080B00053

S. No.	Name of the Service	On line uploading date and date	On line bid submission date
1.	Transportation work for ICDS wheat, Rice & Dal	01/03/2021	22/03/2021

For details visit our Website <https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in/http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>
 Raj.Samwad/CD/2010320 General Manager (Adm.)

S. No.		Portal Tender No.	Name of Work	Probable Amounts of Contract	Cost of Bid Document (excluding portal fees) (Rs.)	Period of Completion i/c rainy season
1-	2021_DTCP_131985	Construction of Bus Terminal Complex at Vidhyanagr, Hoshangabad Road Bhopal	9219.00 Lacs	75,000/-	24 month i/c rainy season	

- The detailed NIT and all other details relating to the Bid Document can be viewed on the website <http://www.mptenders.gov.in>
- The Bid Document can be purchased & deposit after making on-line payment of portal fees and cost of Bid Document through Credit Card/Debit Card /Cash Card or Internet Banking system at aforesaid website from 08/03/2021 at 17:30 up to 15/4/2021 at 17:30. Other key dates may be seen in bid data sheet.
- Amendments to the NIT, if any, would be published on website only, and not in newspaper.
- Any relevant information can be obtained from office of the undersigned during the office working hours & days.

Executive Engineer
Division No 7

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ



WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS IN CENTRAL HOSPITAL PRAYAGRAJ

There are **five (5) posts of House Officers** one each sanctioned for following department of CH/NCR/Prayagraj.

1. Medicine	— 01
2. Pediatrics	— 01
3. General Surgery	— 01
4. Orthopedics	— 01
5. Obstetrics and Gynae.	— 01

Stipend paid to House Officers will be given as per **IRMM para 243(2)(1)** at par with stipend of first year resident of U.P. State Government Hospital.

As and when required a walk-in-interview for vacant post of House Officers, will be held by **Medical Director/ CH/Prayagraj** on first working day of every month at **16.00 hrs.** in MD's chamber. In case the first day of the month is a holiday then interview will be held on next working day. The notice for walk in interview will be pasted on Office notice board of Central Hospital NCR Prayagraj, Medical College Principal Office, Hostel of Medical College, Civil Hospitals and website of NCR/ Prayagraj www.ncr.indianrailway.gov.in. 25/12/1 (R)

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7.5 lakh senior citizens to be vaccinated next

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The total population of senior citizens (above 60 years) in Lucknow is 7.5 lakh and they are next in line for Covid vaccination, according to a senior health official. The Health department is planning to vaccinate them in 15 working days, he said. Dates have not been decided but the vaccinations is likely to begin in March.

“On our part, we have made the plans for the vaccination of those above 60 years, but are waiting for directions regarding the selection criteria. There will be no training session for the health workers because everything is already in place since so many sessions have been conducted since January 16,” he added.

Over 30,000 frontline and health workers were still left to get vaccinated after all the rounds as well as mop-up sessions till February 26. They will now be vaccinated along with the senior citizens when the next round begins.

Regarding the rise in Covid cases across the country and the likelihood of the same in in Lucknow, he said: “There has been no increase in the number of per-day Covid cases as there were just 12 cases on Friday and the situation is well in control. There seems to be no spike in cases in Lucknow.”

On Saturday too, 12 people tested positive for coronavirus in the state capital while nine patients recovered. In the state, 78 people tested Covid positive, including six from Gautam Buddh Nagar and five from Varanasi, pushing the UP case tally to 6,03,427. There were no Covid deaths reported from anywhere in the state. Besides, 115 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 5,92,556. There are 2,147 active cases in the state.

A senior doctor from Lok Bandhu Hospital claimed that most of the people above 60 years are keen on getting themselves vaccinated. “People who are above 60 and have co-morbidities are eager to get themselves vaccinated on priority



because they form the high-risk group. In our OPD too, whenever we get an opportunity to interact with them on if they were willing to get vaccinated, we get positive feedback,” he added.

Meanwhile, Association of Anaesthesia and Operation Theatre Technologists, UP, held a conference at the Anaesthesiology department of SGPGI to discuss and share their experiences about the usage of innovative medical devices and safety of anaesthesia equipment and instruments used during the Covid-19 pandemic in operation theatres.

Dr Sandeep Sahu said it was the first of its kind of conference which was held virtually and across the country. “This conference was for anaesthesia technicians and operation technicians. Whenever we work in the OT, we never work alone and we need assistance from anaesthesia technicians. These are qualified and trained, and with a two-year diploma or three-year course in anaesthesia. They also support us in the OT and ICU. They help us in preparations of the equipment such as machines, their monitoring, separation and sterilisation. They play an important role because if a wrong drug is

administered to patients, it can lead to fatal results,” he said.

He said that the training of this manpower is crucial and some of them are not properly trained. “A trained person will know the errors and the fallacies involved because they can lead to medico legal issues apart from a life getting lost,” he added.

Dr Sahu said that in the Covid era, a lot of things have changed. “Inserting a tube in general anaesthesia is a high-risk procedure not only for the anaesthetists but also for others present in the OT and if this is not done as per the international protocols to reduce the aerosol, it can lead to the spread of Covid because we have to operate upon both Covid and non-Covid patients, hence precautionary measures and steps have been increased,” he said. He added that they discussed how to save their patients and their whole team of doctors, nurses and surgeons to prevent the transmission of infection in the OT.

Around 300 specialists and technologists from Maharashtra, Gujarat, New Delhi, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Karnataka Andhra Pradesh and Bihar participated in the conference.

Pankhuri Pathak lodges case against FB user

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A lawyer and national media panelist of Congress, Pankhuri Pathak lodged a case against a Facebook user for making a derogatory comment against her. In her complaint, Pathak said Arun Kumar Yadav made derogatory comments against her in a Facebook post.

Pointing out that police have been actively taking cognisance of such acts, she said hoped she would not be let down. She said she made a complaint regarding the same on Twitter as well.

Pathak attached relevant screenshots while sending the complaint to Lucknow’s Commissioner of Police DK Thakur on February 26.

Woman stabbed to death by husband

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was stabbed to death by her husband who doubted her loyalty, in Madaon. Police arrested the accused and also recovered a blood-stained knife from his possession. The accused, Rafiq of Gayatrinagar, is a tailor by profession. Over the past few months, he grew suspicious over his wife’s character and it jeopardised the couple’s relations. On Saturday, his wife Afsana left for some work and returned home by evening. Rafiq, who was sulking, thinking that she might have gone to meet some man, lost his cool the moment he saw her in the lane leading to the house. According to eyewitnesses, he whipped out a knife and repeatedly stabbed her in the stomach. Some neighbours nabbed him when he was fleeing the scene and thrashed him. He was later handed over to the police. The woman was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre where he was declared brought dead.

Rafiq told the police that his wife was in love with another man and that was the reason for discord between them. He said he wanted to take Afsana to his native house and get rid of the man who spoiled their marriage life, but Afsana was not ready for that. The police said Afsana’s refusal to go to their native home deepened Rafiq’s suspicion and he stabbed her to death.

Meanwhile, a day after registering a case of murder in the mysterious death of BDS (II) girl student in Madaon, police started a probe on Saturday. A team reached the college campus to collect

details related to the incident. The police also talked to other hostel inmates.

Sources said that Jyoti of Basti died after she accidentally fell down from the fourth floor of the hostel room. They said the police did not get any clue to suggest that she was pushed down from the balcony. However, Jyoti’s brother Pawan cried foul and demanded a threadbare probe into the case. He said he had talked to Jyoti about an hour before the incident which took place around 2:30 pm. He said Jyoti had told him that her last exam was scheduled to be held on February 27.

It surfaced during investigation that Jyoti had a plan to visit Nainital after her exams were over. The police recovered a portrait of Lord Hanuman, made by herself. Pawan said

there is no CCTV camera installed at the entry/exit point of the hostel. Though the college management claimed that they rushed to the hostel and made arrangements for her treatment, but failed to show any prescription. The sources said Jyoti’s body was found lying around 13 feet away from the building, and it was still unclear whether she jumped off the balcony or was pushed down. “Also, the railing of the balcony is high and it is difficult for anyone to climb it,” the sources said.

Jyoti had fallen down from the balcony of the hostel on Thursday afternoon and was taken to hospital by her colleagues and college administration. Her room partner had said she had taken lunch and went out of the room, saying she was going for a walk.

Athawale for tie-up with BJP in poll-bound states

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale said his Republican Party of India (RPI) wanted an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party for the upcoming polls in four states and the Union Territory of Puducherry, as also for the 2022 Uttar Pradesh elections.

Athawale, who was here on Saturday, said he would speak to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for an alliance in the state, and also with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadra and Home Minister Amit Shah in due course. “If the BJP leaves 8-10 seats, the RPI can give a jolt to the BSP,” he said talking about Uttar Pradesh. He said the people in the state were getting disenchanted with the Bahujan Samaj party and were shifting towards the RPI.

Regarding alliance in the poll-bound Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, the RPI president said his party wanted to contest these elections together with the BJP.

However, he said, if the RPI was not given seats by the BJP, it would field its candidates on some seats and extend

support to the saffron party on the others.

He pointed out that the Dalits constituted 36 per cent population of West Bengal and the BJP would benefit if the RPI fought the election with it.

Athawale, whose RPI is a BJP ally at the Centre, also praised the works done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Asked about any political understanding with Bhim Army chief Chandrasekhara Azad, Athawale said Azad is an “independent person, but if he joins my party he will be given an important post”.

The Dalit leader extended Azad and BSP president Mayawati invitations to join his party. “If Mayawati comes, she will be given the post of the president of RPI and I will myself opt for the post of vice-president as this is the party of Babasaheb (Bhimrao Ambedkar),” Athawale said.

When pointed out that the BJP was not inclined to give his party any seat, he said, “As of now, our organisation is not very strong but we are strengthening it at the district level.”



He also claimed that the BJP would be getting more than 200 seats in West Bengal. “There is resentment against the government in the state,” he said, adding that the NDA would form its government in four states and in Kerala too, it could succeed since the people there intended to hand

over power to the BJP.

On the ongoing farmers’ agitation against the Centre’s three agricultural reforms laws, he said, “Our government is not against farmers but if one law is repealed, there will be pressure to withdraw all laws. The government is ready for amendment in the farm

law.”

To a question on Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra’s visit to Varanasi on the occasion of Sant Ravidas Jayanti, Athawale said she could visit whichever temple she wanted but there was no future for the Congress till there was Rahul Gandhi.

Gang of imposters duping women busted; 4 held

Lucknow (PNS): With the arrest of four accused, police claimed to have busted a gang of imposters who duped several unsuspecting people while posing as policemen. Those arrested were identified as Dharmendra Shah, Shambhu Shah, Kailash Kumar Shah and Sonu Kumar Shah, all of a family and natives of Katihar in Bihar. The police recovered ornaments, including gold chains, bangles, rings and lockets. The police also recovered four mobile phones from their possession.

ADCP Rajesh Srivastava said the miscreants were arrested following a tip-off from Pontoon bridge at Mehndi Ghat around noon. He said the



accused used to stop women going for work and intimidate them by telling them about fake murder cases.

“They would pose as cops and use harsh language to force the victims to put off their ornaments which they quickly exchange with fake ones before returning the same to the victims,” he said. The accused had duped women in Wazirganj, Chowk, Ghazipur, Alambagh, Talkatora and Vikas Nagar areas in the past.

SGPGI plans surgery on foetus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) is planning to start surgery on foetus soon, head of paediatric neurosurgery department Dr Arun Srivastava said.

“These surgeries will help in removing abnormalities due to increased or excess fluid in the brain of the foetus and defect in the spinal cord which can be repaired,” he said, adding that he is going to the USA for a hands-on experience. “We have the experience and a team of qualified doctors. The only thing which is required is a hands-on experience and we need to see, observe and assist the doctors who train us for at least 3-4 months,” said Dr Srivastava, who will be visiting Prof Samer K Elbabaa for the hands-on experience.

“If they are able to do it, SGPGI will be the first hospital in the country to carry out such a surgery. Also, it is necessary for the maternal and reproductive health care department to be on the same page when such operations are conducted. These surgeries are being carried out in the UK and the USA,” he added.

Meanwhile, the neurosurgery department of SGPGI organised the third ‘Dr DK Chhabra and Dr VK Jain oration’ on the theme of ‘Paediatric neurosurgery’. The SGPGI oration was delivered by Prof Paul Steinbok from Vancouver, Canada on ‘Paediatric spinal cord abnormalities which leads to urinary problem, limb deformity and paralysis’.

He focused on specific conditions where MRI does not support the diagnosis, but surgery offers excellent outcomes. The Dr DK Chhabra oration was delivered

by Prof Samer K Elbabaa from the USA. He talked about surgery on foetus for congenital spinal malformation and hydrocephalus which are detected by routine pregnancy scans.

Dr VK Jain oration was delivered by Dr Michel Zerah from Paris. He described fascinating future technology to conquer several non-treatable conditions where micro-robots can be used to send genetic material in specific areas of the brain causing the illness.

The invited special lecture on cyber crime was delivered by an IPS officer, Dr Vaibhav Saxena from Thiruvananthapuram. The virtual event was followed by an interesting photography contest in which neurosurgeons from across the world participated. The first prize was won by Dr Vikrant Sethi from the UK.

UP becoming land of opportunities: Pandey

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

UP organised investors summit where MoUs worth Rs 4,28,000 crore were signed while two ground-breaking ceremonies have happened and investment worth Rs 2,00,000 crore has been initiated. The summit also helped UP in moving to second place from 16th in terms of ease of doing business. Uttar Pradesh is slowly becoming a land of opportunities, former Chief Secretary Anup Chandra Pandey said while speaking on the second day of ‘IIC Conference’, organised by Jaipuria Institute of Management.

Pandey also talked about the role of ‘Udyog Bandhu’ and ‘Nivesh Mitra’, which are single-window systems for the convenience of investors and entrepreneurs. He said the state has to put more emphasis on development of agri-processing, tourism and information technology.

“The state has plans to start 21 airports in the next three years, which will connect the state not only with the rest of the country but also from other countries as well, leading to an increase in business opportunities as well,” he added.

In another session, Dr Vijay K Anand talked about the Kumbh Mela, which was organised in Prayagraj in 2019. He explained the world-class arrangements, challenges and administration. He gave details of all the work done by the government to make the mega event a big success.

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88 AKTU students selected in pool placement drive

Lucknow (PNS): As many as 88 AKTU students have been selected in the ongoing pool placement drive through the University-Industry Interface Cell headed by Vice-Chancellor Prof VK Pathak. AKTU spokesperson Ashesh Mishra said the selections have been made by NTT Data, Coforge and Mobilitie.

In the results declared by NTT DATA, 34 students from the affiliated institutes have been selected. NTT Data has provided placements to the students on an initial package of Rs 3.5 lakh. Eighteen students have been selected by Coforge, which has offered them an initial package of Rs 3.65 lakh. Besides, 36 students have been selected by Mobilitie, which has provided placements to students on an initial package of Rs 2.4 lakh.

Welcome students traditionally when schools reopen: BSA

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In view of schools with classes I to V reopening from March 1, Basic Shiksha Adhikari Dinesh Kumar has issued instructions to all the schools that children should be traditionally welcomed when they return after a long gap.

Kumar said that with the pandemic impacting the academic session, a festive atmos-

phere should be created in schools for the return of the students. “The students should be properly welcomed so that they feel important and look forward to coming to schools,” he said.

He added that all the parents have to be informed about reopening of the schools and on the first day, schools’ premises should be decked up with balloons and flags.

The BSA said instructions have also been issued that discussions should be carried out with the children in small groups to know their reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic. “For the mid-day meals, children should be served a breakfast and meal of their choice. The students should be involved in creative activities such as painting, drawing and colouring,” he added.



Lucknow metro ridership crossed the 3-crore mark on Saturday. UPMRC managing director Kumar Keshav said it’s a moment of pride for Lucknow metro and everyone associated with it. “It is an important achievement because since its beginning on September 5, 2017, the metro has successfully carved a place in the hearts of Lucknowites and has become a part of their day-to-day life,” Keshav said.

Manfest-Varchasva kicks off

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

‘Manfest-Varchasva 2020-21’ was off to a flying start on Saturday. Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy inaugurated the fest in the presence of IIM-L director Prof Archana Shukla and others.

The theme for this year’s fest is ‘Inspire the revolution’, which stresses on the individual revolutionary efforts required to come out of this pandemic stronger than ever. Murthy interacted with the students by sharing his vision on how businesses should survive in these tough times through persistence. He also explained the importance of benchmarking ourselves against the best. The session was motivational for the students who aspire to excel in their respective fields even in these adverse times.

Prof Archana Shukla addressed the students and motivated them to develop resilience to grow in these times. She also explained how developing an adversity quotient would be vital for standing strong in the face of hardships in future.

Chief Economic Advisor Dr KV Subramanian explained to the students the complex working of economies and how the country can revive its economy in these challenging times. He explained how economics is the art of maximising

the benefits from scarce resources and how good policy-making is about implementing the policy with the least cost and maximum benefit.

Former CEO of HCL Technologies Vineet Nayar’s session was related to the students at a very fundamental level as he explained how higher-order leadership is all about inspiring people. The participants got to understand how the first concentric circle around is that of colleagues and how being kind and honest to them is critical to everyone’s success.

Indian chess player Tania Sachdev taught the participants one of the most important lessons of life on how losses in life are the most rewarding events and how they teach us to be more persistent and consistent in our efforts. She also stressed the importance of mental strength in achieving our goals in life.

World Bank’s country director Junaid Kamal Ahmad talked about risk management and how the new world needs to rethink how the state works and how the multilateral system works.

The participants also got an opportunity to sharpen their critical thinking skills through IIM-L’s Model United Nations, which saw the participation of over 150 students. The topics of discussion were mitigation of the Covid-19 pandemic and elimination of middlemen in agricultural markets.

CH. CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT
चौ० चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय, मेरठ
32वाँ दीक्षान्त समारोह

अधिसूचना

एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि चौ० चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय, मेरठ का 32वाँ दीक्षान्त समारोह मंगलवार, दिनांक 09 मार्च, 2021 को होना सुनिश्चित हुआ है। दीक्षान्त समारोह की अध्यक्षता माननीय कुलाधिपति एवं श्री रायपाल श्रीमती आनंदी बेन पटेल जी करेंगी। समारोह के विशिष्ट अतिथि उत्तर प्रदेश के माननीय उपमुख्यमंत्री एवं उच्च शिक्षा मंत्री जी दिनेश शर्मा जी तथा मुख्य अतिथि प्रो० एम०एन० पटेल, पूर्व कुलपति, गुजरात विश्वविद्यालय, अहमदाबाद होंगे। दीक्षान्त समारोह में कार्यक्रमानुसार विश्वविद्यालय के विभिन्न संकायों में सर्वोच्च स्थान प्राप्तकर्ता विद्यार्थियों को प्रायोजित पदक, शोध छात्रों को उपाधि, पदक व विशिष्ट योग्यता प्रमाण-पत्र, लाला लाजपतराय मेडिकल कॉलेज, मेरठ से एमबीबीएसो एमडीओ उपाधि तथा विश्वविद्यालय परिसर से एम०ए०, एम०एससी०, एमफिलो एवं अन्य पाठ्यक्रमों के उपाधि धारकों को उपाधि प्रदान की जायेगी। उपाधियों का वितरण दीक्षान्त समारोह के दिन प्रातः 06:30 बजे से 08:30 बजे तक विश्वविद्यालय परिसर के गोपनीय विभाग एवं प्रशासनिक भवन के स्वागती कक्ष के काउन्टर से किया जायेगा।

कार्यक्रम

(दिनांक 09.03.2021, प्रातः 09:00 बजे से)

वर्ष 2020 में प्रदत्त किये जाने वाले पदकों से अर्ह विद्यार्थियों का अलंकरण, किसान ट्रस्ट, नई दिल्ली के पुरस्कारों से अर्ह विद्यार्थियों का अलंकरण, प्रायोजित पदक, विशिष्ट योग्यता प्रमाण-पत्र तथा विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा पूर्व परम्परानुसार दीक्षान्त समारोह में प्रदान की जाने वाली उपाधियों से किम्बित किया जाना एवं दीक्षोपदेश, नेताजी सुभाषचन्द्र बोस प्रेक्षागृह, विश्वविद्यालय परिसर में सम्पन्न होगा।

समस्त पदक एवं प्रमाण-पत्र प्राप्त करने वाले विद्यार्थी दिनांक 07.03.2021 को प्रातः 10:30 बजे विश्वविद्यालय परिसर स्थित नेताजी सुभाष चन्द्र बोस प्रेक्षागृह में पहुँचकर अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराते हुए वांछित पत्रजातों को उपलब्ध करायेगे। दीक्षान्त समारोह का कार्यक्रम, उपाधि वितरण का कार्यक्रम, सभी पदक व उपाधि धारकों की सूची एवं अद्यतन सूचना चौ० चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय, मेरठ की वेबसाइट www.ccsuniversity.ac.in पर उपलब्ध रहेगी। अर्ह विद्यार्थियों से अपेक्षा है कि विश्वविद्यालय वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध विवरण व कार्यक्रमानुसार निर्धारित प्रारूप में पदक प्राप्त किये जाने की समस्त औपचारिकतायें पूर्ण कर अपनी उपाधि तथा पदक ग्रहण करने के लिए उपस्थित होना सुनिश्चित करें।

विशेष : दीक्षान्त समारोह में प्रवेश निर्धारित समय तक ही निमग्न-पत्र एवं फोटोयुक्त परिचय-पत्र के द्वारा होगा, इनके अभाव में प्रवेश वर्जित होगा।

(बीरेन्द्र कुमार) कुलसचिव

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LUCKNOW | SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Farmers told how to make ice-cream from mango pulp

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The farmers also got the benefit of technical knowledge about ready-to-eat mushrooms and papain variants of papaya

Farmers undergoing skill development training programme at BBAU visited the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) where principal scientist Dr Manish Mishra told them how they can make ice-cream from the pulp of mangoes. He told them about the value addition and also how they can increase their income by making value added products.

Apart from this, through this training, the farmers got the benefit of technical knowledge about ready-to-eat mushrooms and papain variants of papaya. The farmers were also given some useful information about nursery as well as benefits of nursery and also assured the farmers support in future.

Principal scientist Dr SR Singh told the farmers about the diseases of fruits and how to overcome the deficiency of micronutrients for the value rich crops and products. Under the workshop, the farmers of three states also visited mango farms and benefited from the valuable information regarding mango diseases, care of fruits, method of preparation of plants among other things. Under the direction of Dr SR Singh, all the farmers went to the nursery of CISH where they got information about various nurseries of mango, guava, seed-free berries and papaya developed by CISH. In addition, Dr Singh suggested the farmers that they should first talk to the buyers about their products so that they can get good market value of their products and increase their income. Project investigator Prof Naveen Kumar Arora and Prof Rupisudan from BBAU also assured the farmers that their problems would be resolved with the help of scientific interventions and developed methods of CISH. Along with this, Prof Arora gave some important information about the value added products and importance of value addition in present scenario.

SCHOOLSCAN

MELANGE CONCLUDES

The 3-day international English language festival, 'Melange 2021', organised online by City Montessori School, Station Road Campus, came to a close on Saturday. Students from prestigious schools of Russia, Germany, Canada, Sri Lanka, Nepal and various states of India participated in various events. Saanvi Dev of CMS, Gomti Nagar Campus I, was awarded the first prize in 'Guess the Good Word' competition while Archit Srivastava of CMS, Aliganj Campus I, and Atharv Mishra of CMS, Rajendra Nagar Campus I, jointly won the first prize in Tell-a-Tale competition. Navya Gupta of CMS, Chowk Campus, won the first prize in Mono Act Theatre competition.

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कार्पोरेशन लिमिटेड अत्यन्तकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 110 / 111 / 112 / ECTC/ 2020-21 अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु प्रथम-प्राप्त निविदायें दो भागों में आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। 1. 220 केलीडा उपकेन्द्र, पीलीभीत पर 01 अद्वार 132 केलीडा टीएनडीएस २ के निर्माण सम्बंधित जानपदीय कार्य। 2. 132 केलीडा उपकेन्द्र, पीलीभीत पर 1x10 MVAR कैपेसिटर बैंक की स्थापना से सम्बंधित जानपदीय कार्य। 3. 132/33 केलीडा उपकेन्द्र उसवाँ, बदायूँ पर क्षमावृद्धि (2x40 MVA) से (2x44 + 1x63 MVA) करने से सम्बंधित जानपदीय कार्य। उक्त निविदा की Technical Bid पत्र अन्य शर्तें तथा मात्रा बीजक दस्तावेज़ का विस्तृत विवरण www.upptcl.org पर देखा जा सकता है। एमए <http://etender-up.nic-in> साइट पर देखा एवं प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। निविदा दिनांक 18.03.2021 को संध्या 14:00 बजे तक साइट पर जमा जा सकता है तथा दिनांक 20.03.2021 को 15:00 बजे तक तकनीकी रूप से निविदायें खोली जाएंगी। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत जानपद पारेषण मण्डल, उ०प्र० एनएलसीडीओसी परिवार, विपुति खण्ड गोमती नगर, लखनऊ पञ्जाब - 577 दिनांक 27.2.21 राप्प हित में बिजली बचाए

- फर्म को सुपरवाइजर/कर्मचारी द्वारा कार्य स्थल पर किसी भी मशीन एवं उपकरण को क्षतिग्रस्त करने की स्थिति में क्षति की प्रतिपूर्ति फर्म के देयक से अथवा जानमत धनराशि से कटौती करके की जायेगी।
- नेशनल ग्रिन ट्रिब्यूनल (NGT) के निर्देशों के क्रम में कान्ट्रिवेशन एवं डिमोलेशन रुस्स 2016 के अनुरूप समस्त मानकों का अनुपालन सुनिश्चित किया जायेगा तथा इस आशय का प्रमाण-पत्र भी अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है।
- फर्म को विद्युत सुरक्षा नियमों का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा तथा फर्म के किसी भी कर्मचारी के दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने पर फर्म को ही पूर्ण उत्तरदायित्व का वहन करना होगा।
- ई-निविदा आमंत्रण तिथि को यदि सार्वजनिक अवकाश घोषित होता है तो निविदाएं अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेगी।
- जी०एसटी० विभाग द्वारा नियमानुसार अलग से देय होगी।
- शासनदत्त संख्या-4435/छ-मु-14-40-50(7)/2006 दिनांक: 02.11.2006 के अनुसार जिलाधिकारी महोदय से निर्गत चरित्र प्रमाण पत्र, हैसियत प्रमाण पत्र एवं चल रहे कार्यों का शपथ प्रमाण पत्र के साथ ₹0-1000 के स्टाम्प पेपर पर भर कर प्रारूप टी-4, टी-5, टी-6, के रुप में वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करना एवं मूल प्रति कार्यालय में जमा करना अनिवार्य है।
- ई-निविदा के समस्त कार्यों की अनुरक्षण अवधि एक वर्ष होगी। धरोहर/जमानत धनराशि कार्य पूर्ण होने के एक वर्ष के पश्चात एवमुक्त की जायेगी, परन्तु एक ई.टी. लाईट, सोलर स्ट्रीट लाइट एवं सोलर पैनेल का अनुरक्षण 05 वर्ष तक किया जायेगा। इस आशय का प्रमाण पत्र/अन्डर टेकिंग फर्म द्वारा दी जायेगी।
- क्रमांक-4 की ई-निविदा उन्ही फर्मों फर्मों की मान्य होगी, जिनके पास बहुमंजिला भवनों में फायर फाइटर एवं फायर एलार्म सिस्टम के 24 घंटे संचालन कार्य करने का कम से कम तीन वर्ष का अनुभव होगा। अनुभव का प्रमाण-पत्र निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।
- क्रमांक-04 की ई-निविदा उन्ही फर्मों की सामान्य होगी, जिनके पास फायर फाइटर एवं फायर एलार्म सिस्टम के संचालन कार्य करने हेतु कामगार/कर्मचारी फायर सेफ्टी कालेज/कार्यालय से प्रशिक्षित होने चाहिए। इस आशय का प्रमाण-पत्र निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।
- क्रमांक-05 की ई-निविदादाता फर्म द्वारा लिपट संचालन में बाधा/ब्रेकडाउन की स्थिति में तीन घंटे के अन्दर उपस्थिति होकर प्रत्येक दश में दो दिवस में संचालन सुचारु रूप से करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा की स्थिति में प्रतिदिन की दर से कटौती की जायेगी।
- क्रमांक-05 की ई-निविदा उन्ही फर्मों की मान्य होगी, जिनके पास सरकार/अर्धसरकारी संस्था में लिपट का कम्प्लेक्सिव अनुकरण कार्य करने का अनुभव होगा। इस आशय का प्रमाण-पत्र निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।
- क्रमांक-05 की ई-निविदा उन्ही फर्मों की मान्य होगी, जिनके पास लगातार 12 वर्षों का कम्प्लेक्सिव अनुकरण का अनुभव होगा। इस आशय का प्रमाण-पत्र निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।
- क्रमांक-04 एवं 05 की ई-निविदा उन्ही फर्मों की मान्य होगी जो जी०एसटी०, पीएफ० एवं एस०आई० में रजिस्टर्ड होंगे। इस आशय का प्रमाण-पत्र भी निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।

उप निदेशक(वि०/पी)

NTPC Tanda bags awards in HR, CSR categories

Lucknow (PNS): NTPC Tandoa bagged two titles in the 'UP Leadership Awards 2021' in the Human Resources (HR) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) categories, conferred by World CSR Day organisation on Friday. The awards were presented to CGM K Srinivas Rao on behalf of NTPC Tandoa in a virtual ceremony. The UP Leadership Awards are conferred upon organisations or individuals driving change through groundbreaking policies and initiatives. NTPC Tandoa won the titles of 'Best HR company to work for' and 'Best CSR practices' for its 'people-centric' approach in both the categories.



work done in HR and CSR by NTPC Tanda. "NTPC Tanda's work in CSR has been nothing short of impressive. We deserve the best CSR practices award because our initiatives are aimed at addressing the prob-

lems in the project affected villages (PAVs) at the grassroots level. In the past year, we tried our best to equip the villagers with skills, education, health-care and more to improve their quality of life in everyday and

exigency situations. We are always eager to provide them all required support in the middle of the Covid crisis," he said.

AGM (HR) SN Panigrahi also expressed joy on this dual accomplishment and thanked UP Leadership Awards for the honour. "NTPC Tanda's fantastic performance in HR indeed makes it the best HR company to work for. We come up with innovative, inclusive and safe means for employee engagement even during the coronavirus pandemic, all the while following the guidelines. We overcame challenges pertaining to employee engagement and contract labour management in order to provide seamless energy generation & supply," he said.

Statins reduce Covid severity: Research

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People who took statins — widely used cholesterol-lowering medications — may have reduced risk of developing severe Covid-19 disease, a team of researchers said adding that they were approximately 50 per cent less likely to die if hospitalised for the infection.

“Our study is one of the larger studies confirming this hypothesis and the data lay the groundwork for future randomized clinical trials that are needed to confirm the benefit of statins in Covid-19,” said Aakriti Gupta, cardiologist at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center and one of the co-lead authors of the study published in the *Nature* Center. Gupta, Madhavan, and the study’s leadership group are cardiologists who cared for hospitalized Covid-19 patients in the spring and summer of 2020 when the first wave of the pandemic swept through New York City.

“We observed that patients who got very sick and required hospitalization had high rates of hyperinflammation and clotting,” says Elaine Wan, the

Communications. "If their beneficial effect bears out in randomized clinical trials, statins could potentially prove to be a low-cost and effective therapeutic strategy for COVID-19," adds co-lead author Mahesh V. Madhavan, cardiologist at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Gupta, Madhavan, and the study's leadership group are cardiologists who cared for hospitalized Covid-19 patients in the spring and summer of 2020 when the first wave of the pandemic swept through New York City.

"We observed that patients who got very sick and required hospitalization had high rates of hyperinflammation and clotting," says Elaine Wan, the

Esther Aboodi Assistant Professor of Medicine in Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology and a cardiologist-electrophysiologist at NewYork Presbyterian /Columbia University Irving Medical Center, one of the study's senior authors. "As cardiologists, statins naturally came to mind," Gupta says. "In addition to their well-known cholesterol-lowering effect, statins are known for their anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant and immunomodulatory properties"

Based on their observations, the authors looked at outcomes for 2,626 patients with Covid-19 who were admitted to a quaternary academic medical center in Manhattan during the first 18 weeks of the pandemic.

New Delhi (PTI): The Congress Saturday accused the Modi Government of ignoring the woes of common man and asked it to shed its "arrogance" and reduce the tax imposed on petrol, diesel and LPG.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said the government should immediately roll back the additional taxes of '23.78 and '28.37 per litre on petrol and diesel respectively, which will help bring down fuel prices. He quoted PM Narendra Modi's words as Gujarat CM to urge the government to reduce the high tax components on petroleum products. Singhvi said the common man is already hurt due to rising inflation and joblessness amid a decline in the economy post-pandemic.

क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, उ०प्र० प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, म०सं०-162, उत्तर मोहाल (निकट चण्डी होटल), राबर्ट्सगंज, सोनभद्र ।

पर्यावरणीय अधिसूचना दि० 14.09.2006 के अन्तर्गत श्लोक सुनवाई हेतु आम-सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि जनपद-मिर्जापुर में निम्न अवयस्क खनिज बिलिंग स्टोन/सेण्ड स्टोन के खनन परियोजनाओं हेतु तथा सीमेंट क्लिंकर ग्राइडिंग यूनिट की क्षमता 2.0 मिलियन टन/वर्ष एवं डी०जी० सेट 1.5 मेगावॉट क्षमता के स्थापना हेतु प्रस्ताव उ०प्र० प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड में प्राप्त हुआ है। इस सम्बन्ध में पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रख्यापित प्राविधानानुसार लोक सुनवाई का आयोजन जिलाधिकारी, मिर्जापुर महोदय अथवा उनके द्वारा नामित अपर जिलाधिकारी (वि०/मू०-रा०) की अध्यक्षता में आवेदक/परियोजना के सम्बन्धित तिथि, समय एवं स्थल पर **वैश्विक महामारी कोविड-19 के दृष्टिगत सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन** करते हुए किया जाना प्रस्तावित है:-

क्र० सं०	परियोजना का नाम व पता	परियोजना का स्थल पता	खनन क्षेत्रफल	लोक सुनवाई की तिथि एवं समय	लोक सुनवाई स्थल का नाम व पता	लोक सुनवाई हेतु नामित अध्यक्ष
1	मेसर्स श्रीमती रूची सिंह, पट्टाधारक, ग्राम-सरिया, थाना-अहरीरा, तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-01, ग्राम अहिरपुर, तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-1.01 हेक्टेयर (10100.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 30.03.2021, अपराह्न 03:00 बजे	पूर्व माध्यमिक विद्यालय, सोनपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (मू०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
2	मेसर्स श्रीमती रूची सिंह, पट्टाधारक, ग्राम-सरिया, थाना-अहरीरा, तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-01, ग्राम-अहिरपुर, तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-1.01 हेक्टेयर (10100.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 30.03.2021, अपराह्न 04:00 बजे	पूर्व माध्यमिक विद्यालय, सोनपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (मू०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
3	मेसर्स ओम साई कन्स्ट्रक्शन के पट्टाधारक श्री जितेन्द्र कुमार सिंह निवासी-हाउस नं०-3/408, विखनाथपुरी कॉलोनी, नवलपुर शिवपुर, जनपद-वाराणसी (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-188 मि, ग्राम अहिरपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-0.809 हेक्टेयर (8090.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 30.03.2021, अपराह्न 05:00 बजे	पूर्व माध्यमिक विद्यालय सोनपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (मू०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
4	श्री रामेन्द्र नारायण सिंह पट्टाधारक), निवासी-शिव सदन इनफ्रन्ट ऑफ लंका घाट, वाराणसी (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-428 ग्राम-धुरिया, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	क्षेत्रफल-0.809 हेक्टेयर (8090.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 30.03.2021, अपराह्न 04:00 बजे	प्राथमिक विद्यालय, धुरिया, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (वि०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
5	मेसर्स श्री गुलवदन (पट्टाधारक), ग्राम-सोनपुर, अहरीरा, तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-170 ग्राम-सोनपुर, अहरीरा तहसील-चुनार, मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-1.21 हेक्टेयर (12100.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 31.03.2021, पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे	पूर्व माध्यमिक विद्यालय सोनपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (वि०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
6	मेसर्स पी०वी० इन्फ्राटेक प्रा०लि०, पट्टाधारक श्री अरूण कुमार त्रिपाठी निवासी-ग्राम चिरैया, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-141 ग्राम-चिरैया, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-0.809 हेक्टेयर (8090.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 31.03.2021, मध्याह्न: 12:00 बजे	पूर्व माध्यमिक विद्यालय सोनपुर, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (वि०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
7	मेसर्स श्री मुकेश सिंह, निवासी-ग्राम अकोड़ी, तहसील-सदर, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	आराजी संख्या-188 मि, ग्राम-लाहौरा, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	क्षेत्रफल-2.828 हेक्टेयर (28280.00 घनमीटर / वर्ष)	दिनांक: 31.03.2021, अपराह्न: 4:00 बजे	प्राथमिक विद्यालय लाहौरा, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	अपर जिलाधिकारी (मू०-रा०), मिर्जापुर
8	मेसर्स इको प्लस सीमेंट प्रा० लि०, ग्राम-धौहान, परगना-सवतेशगढ़, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर (उ०प्र०)	मेसर्स इको प्लस सीमेंट प्रा० लि०, ग्राम-धौहान, परगना-सवतेशगढ़, तहसील-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर	सीमेंट क्लिंकर ग्राइडिंग यूनिट की क्षमता 2.0 मिलियन टन/वर्ष एवं डी०जी० सेट 1.5 मेगावॉट क्षमता	दिनांक: 31.03.2021, पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे	तहसील सभागार-चुनार, जनपद-मिर्जापुर सोनपुर,	जिलाधिकारी, मिर्जापुर

राज्य प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड द्वारा पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार द्वारा जारी अधिसूचना संख्या-एस०ओ०-1533, दिनांक 14.09.2006 यथासंशोधित एस०ओ०3067(ई) दिनांक 01.12.2009 के प्राविधानों के अनुपालन में उपरोक्त परियोजनाओं की लोक सुनवाई उपरा, त्त सूची में अंकित परियोजनाओं हेतु उक्त वर्णित तिथि, दिनांक एवं समय के अनुसार आयोजित किया जाना प्रस्तावित है। उक्त परियोजनाओं की लोक सुनवाई हेतु सुझाव, विचार एवं टिप्पणियां आदि आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। परियोजना से सम्बन्धित ई०आई०ए० एवं इसका संक्षिप्त अभिलेख निम्नलिखित कार्यालयों में उपलब्ध है :-

- (1) जिलाधिकारी, मिर्जापुर, (2) कार्यालय जिला पंचायत, मिर्जापुर, (3) उपायुक्त उद्योग, जिला उद्योग एवं उद्यम प्रोत्साहन केन्द्र, मिर्जापुर (4) क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, मध्य क्षेत्र, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, पंचम तल, केन्द्रीय भवन, सेक्टर-एच, अलीगंज, लखनऊ.
- (5) उ०प्र० प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, टी०सी०-12वी, विभूति खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ एवं (6) क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, उ०प्र० प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, 162, उत्तर मोहाल, निकट चण्डी होटल, राबर्ट्सगंज, सोनभद्र।

अतः सर्वसाधारण को इस आम सूचना के माध्यम से सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रस्तावित उक्त अवयस्क खनिज बिलिंग स्टोन/सेण्ड स्टोन के खनन परियोजनाओं हेतु तथा सीमेंट क्लिंकर ग्राइडिंग यूनिट की क्षमता 2.0 मिलियन टन/वर्ष एवं डी०जी० सेट 1.5 मेगावॉट क्षमता के स्थापना हेतु प्राप्त प्रस्ताव के सम्बन्ध में पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति संबंधी प्रकरण के निरतारण हेतु उक्त अंकित तिथि, समय एवं स्थल पर **"लोक सुनवाई"** की कार्यवाही निर्धारित की गयी है, जिसमें **वैश्विक महामारी कोविड-19 के दृष्टिगत सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन** करते हुए आप उपस्थित होकर अपना सुझाव व आपत्तियां प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं अथवा सुझाव/आपत्तियां लिखित रूप से इस प्रकाशन की तिथि से 30 दिन की अवधि में उपरा. त्त वर्णित कार्यालयों में प्रेषित कर सकते हैं।

क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी

PM for making eco-friendly toys

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, giving focus on ‘Vocal for Local’ mantra, stressed the need for popularising products of Indian toy industry in the world and emphasised on making eco-friendly toys. According to him, there is a huge potential hidden in the industry to make the country a global hub and help the nation self-reliant in the field. He was interacting with people across the toy industry through video conferencing on the occasion of ‘India Toy Fair-2021’ on Saturday.

Highlighting the toy industry, he said that toys help intellectual development in chil-



Varanasi toy makers interacting with PM Narendra Modi through a virtual platform on Saturday

dren, insisting on making a masked toy (mask on the face of the toy) during the corona period so that the toys can become a part of children's life. ‘Varanasi has the finest hand-icraft complex and to promote

toy business, the government will do whatever it can to convince the traders,’ he said giving examples of wooden toys and dolls etc of his parliamentary constituency, he urged the wood toy businessmen to

avoid plastic in toy production to a minimum and use such materials which could be used through recycling in the future as toys are cherished as a legacy of generations.

During his talk with Rameshwar Singh of Kashmiriganj in Varanasi who is associated with wooden toy industry, Modi laid special emphasis on making wooden toys with masks and said the children and toys see each other and as children copy toys, the toys become a part of children's life,’ he said. District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, Joint Commissioner (Industries) Umesh Singh, Deputy Commissioner (Industries) etc were present on the occasion.

SP to forge no alliance with major political parties: Akhilesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Extending his support to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the assembly election of West Bengal, the surpemo of Samajwadi Party (SP) Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said that his party will forge no alliance with major political parties in 2022 election in UP but its door will remain open for the smaller parties. The government should tell the place where the farmers will get the maximum support price (MSP) when there will be no mandis, he asked. The ex-CM also visited Seer Govardhan to seek blessing of the great Saint Ravi Das on his Jayanti.

He is agree with Mamata Banerjee who had raised question over the Election Commission which announced the assembly elections in West Bengal in eight phases, Akhilesh Yadav said and advised her to ensure the presence of party polling agent at each polling booth on the polling day to ascertain the fair election as the force of Central government ousts the party agents from the polling booths.



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav offering prayer at Seer Govardhan temple in Varanasi on Saturday

She should raise this issue before the Election Commission, he added while talking to presspersons at Circuit House after attending the Jayanti celebration of great Saint Ravi Das at Seer Govardhan.

The party has decided to make no alliance with major political parties in the 2022 UP assembly election but its door will remain open for the smaller parties, the SP chief said at the time when the AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi was also present in the

city. The SP had forged a pre-poll alliance with the Congress Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 2017 assembly election and 2019 parliamentary election respectively but had not got good experience as the party had not performed well.

Due to wrong decisions of the BJP Governments at Centre and in the state, the nation suffered a lot, the SP chief said and added, the three new farm laws will be death warrant for the farmers after being implemented.

The government should tell about the place where the farmers will get MSP and make their income double in a situation when the mandis were closed, Akhilesh Yadav said adding, the government should issue a missed call number for the farmers so that they could get MSP.

The SP believes in inter-faith religion but it is the BJP which vitiate hatred in the name of religion and caste he accused adding, the state government had signed MoU of ₹5 lakh crore but no investment took place in the state. He flayed the government for its failure in checking the rising price of petro products and domestic cylinders and said, a good government saves its assets instead of selling them to generate revenue.

The BJP does not believe in democracy and the state government is using the police to harass the workers of opposition parties and fake cases were registered against more than 10000 party workers when they came to the road in favour of the farmers’ agitation, he blamed.

Priyanka, others offer prayer at Ravidas temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Though the assembly election in the state is still far away, Seer Govardhan, the birthplace of a famous medieval period saint, saw thronging of several senior leaders of both ruling and opposition parties on the occasion of 644th Sant Ravidas Jayanti here on Saturday. Through their visit they tried to send messages to the Scheduled Castes across the country, especially those five states going to poll soon. Top leaders who visited there were Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhim Sena president Chandrashekhar. The festival

sees such activities every year as thousands of followers of the great saint of lower strata of the society gather here from across the country, especially from Punjab. It is expected that the gathering of politicians would be much bigger next year when the UP assembly polls would be round-the-corner. It was the second continuous year when Priyanka reached there in view to regain the party's lost vote-bank of SC and sought the blessings from Sant Niranjana Das of Sachkhand Ballan Dera (Jalandhar) and chief of Sant Shiromani Janamsthan Mandir. She also visited Satsang pandal and she was accompanied by UPCC chief Ajay Singh Lallu, ex-MLA Ajay Rai, city president Raghvendra Choubey and many others. After landing at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport,

Babatur, Priyanka directly reached the temple.

Later, former Chief Minister (CM) Akhilesh Yadav also visited there along with senior party leaders including Satish Fauzi, who belongs to the same place. When Mayawati became the CM for the first time during the mid-1990s, Seer Govardhan witnessed a strong protest from the SP supporters forcing the then Mayawati government to shift its many projects from there. Akhilesh in view to strengthen the party's organisation in this belt was on a three-day visit to Purvanchal (eastern UP).

Earlier, Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also visited there. He offered prayer and sought blessings from Sant Niranjana Das. He said that he visited there as a messenger of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, who is making a big plan for the development of temple areas. He assured Sant Niranjana Das that he would apprise the PM of his plans. He was accompanied by senior BJP leader Sunil Bansal, MLC Laxman Acharya, MLA Surendra Narayan, former Mayor Kaushlendra Singh, city chief Vidya Sagar Rai, district president Hansraj Vishwakarma and others.

Earlier, in the morning the function began when Sant Niranjana Das garlanded the statue of great saint at Sant Ravidas Park, Nagwa and then various religious and cultural programmes were organised at Seer Govardhan. As the birth anniversary of Sant Ravidas falls on the auspicious occasion of Maghi Purnima, thousands of devotees took a holy dip at different ghats of the city.

BLW’s electric locos 98 pc indigenous: GM

VARANASI (PNS): In the production of electric locomotives, Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) is using 98 per cent indigenous materials, supporting MSMEs and domestic manufacturing sector in a large way, said the General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal, while talking to the reporters on the occasion of inauguration of first interactive post-COVID Vendor Meet on Saturday organised to encourage domestic manufacturing under Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission. ‘The annual procurement of BLW in 2020-21 is ₹ 3,000 crore. A substantial share of material is procured from MSMEs. In 2019-20, purchases from MSMEs were nearly ₹ 1,400 crore. The turnover of nearly ₹4,000 crore per annum adds to the manufacturing GDP of the economy,’ she said.

BLW is now in a unique position of leveraging its multipurpose infrastructure to produce multi gauge and multi traction rolling stock towards achieving the government’s



GM Anjali Goyal seeing products at Vendor Meet at BLW in Varanasi on Saturday

visionary policy of Atmanirbhar Bharat. BLW has already supplied four diesel locomotives worth Rs 36.46 crore to various customers like NTPC, NMDC. Further order for five locomotives worth Rs 47.88 crore, is under execution which will be supplied with in current financial year. In addition to this, spares worth Rs 5.54 crore have already been supplied to customers and order for spares to various customers worth Rs 8.18 crore are in hand and will be supplied soon, she said, adding that BLW has embarked upon var-

ious initiatives to improve quality of locomotive manufacturing. In this connection, BLW has engaged with vendors of large fabricated items, to have their welders trained to ISO-9606 standard at BLW state-of-the-art Welding Research Institute, capable of certifying welders.

Anjali Goyal said ‘BLW has planned to step up manufacture of 6000 HP freight locomotives of WAG9 class in a big way to meet requirement to run faster and heavier trains as rail-based freight demand is expected to be doubled in

coming years, as per draft National Rail Plan. Railways require faster and heavier trains to achieve this objective.’

PRADHAN INSPECTS CNG STATION: Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inspected the CNG Station at Khirkhia Ghat here on Saturday. He said that the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Yojana was started from the city and now due to the boat running from CNG, the scheme has technically reached inside the Mother Ganga as well. ‘In the Ganga, the boats will go by cheaper CNG instead of diesel and this will also improve the environment. During his two-day visit here, earlier Pradhan along with other BJP leaders visited Seer Govardhan to attend the Sant Ravidas Jayanti celebrations.

‘The work of making Varanasi a smart city is happening rapidly. Under this, the ghats of the city are being built with state-of-the-art facilities,’ he said.

Lakhs take holy dip at Sangam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the fifth bathing festival Maghi Purnima, Kalpavas also came to an end in the month long Magh Mela at the Sangam of the Prayagraj. At the same time, over lakhs of devotees took a holy dip in various bathing ghats of the Ganga Yamuna and mythical Saraswati here on Saturday.

On Maghi Purnima, flowers were also showered by the government on the devotees who were taking a holy dip in the Sangam. On the instructions of the Chief Minister, flowers were being showered by helicopter. People taking bath in the Ganga with floral rains welcomed it with the shout of Har Har Gange.

A state helicopter arrived from Lucknow for Pushp Varsha. This helicopter flew from the Police Line and showered flowers in Sangam. Flowers showered at the confluence in several rounds till about 11 o'clock. This time, the Magh Mela was receiving the rain of flowers for the second time. Earlier, flowers had been showered on Mauni Amavasya also.

By evening, over eight lakh devotees had taken a dip in the Sangam. In the morning the mela area was relatively less crowded but in the afternoon suddenly the crowd started growing. In the afternoon, the number of vehicles in the fair area also increased. The police had to struggle to control the traffic.

Three lakh people took a dip in Prayagraj's Sangam at 10 am on Maghi Purnima. There were crowds of devotees at various bathing ghats of Ganga including Sangam. The crowd increased in the afternoon. After the bath at the holy confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati, devotees witnessed donating with worship. The faith of having a holy dip at various bathing ghats of the Ganga was quite visible. This is the fifth bathing festival in Magh Mela



Jyotirvid Acharya Devendra Prasad Tripathi said that the full moon date was fixed at 2.53 pm on Friday afternoon, which remained till 1.51 pm on Saturday afternoon. The day Magha Nakshatra was till 12.24 pm on Saturday afternoon. The special yoga of bathing was during the stay of Magha Nakshatra. With the transmission of Jupiter, Mercury and Saturn in Capricorn, a combination of trigonal yoga was made.

Devotees from far flung places had started returning to their destination after taking a dip with Ganga water, calendar, Ramcharit Manas and Janeu. With the grace of Mother Ganga, many works had been successful.

The Magh Mela on the Sangam coast from January 14 is now towards the end. On Saturday, on the fifth bathing festival Maghi Purnima, lakhs of people took a holy dip and wished for the welfare of the masses from the mother Ganga.

Harikesh Tiwari coming from Delhi to Prayagraj was also returning from today after taking a Ganga bath. He stayed at the Sangam for four days and

took a bath and saw the saints. He also heard satsang. While returning, he was carrying Ganga water with him. Also took half a dozen panchang. He has to come here for the last 15 years. It is said that due to the blessings of Mother Ganga, his business in Delhi is going very well. He has a medical business there. His family has been engaged in this business for the last decade. He takes the calendar every year from the Magh Mela. He will distribute some of it to his friends as well. He also bought Ram Charit Manas and Janeu.

After the Maghi Purnima snan, the last bathing of Mahashivratri will be held on March 11. However, only after the full moon, many people have started returning home. Now the heat has increased and Kalpavas is also complete. After taking today's bath, saints and seers are planning to move Haridwar Kumbh.

According to Acharya Vidyakant Pandey, director of Parashar Astrology Institute, starting or ending any ritual is auspicious on Tuesday and Saturday. This time Kalpavas came to an end on Saturday. It is beneficial for every

Kalpavasi. Makar Sankranti was the first bathing festival at Prayagraj Magh Mela. The second was Pausa Purnima and the most important bathing festival of Mauni Amavasya was the third one.

After that Basant Panchami and now Maghi Purnima snan was the fifth festival on Saturday of the month long Magh Mel. From the day of Pausa Purnima, a month of Kalpavas started at the Sangam. Staying in the camps, the kalpavas were engaged in bathing, worshiping and bhajan-kirtan. Or simply say that the devotees meditated in the Sangam area for a month.

The month-long Kalpavas also ended with the Maghi Purnima snan. While returning, the Kalpavasis also took religious rituals from the saints, initiation and golden memoirs of the moment spent in Sangamnagar. Along with the Kalpavasis, the saint-mahatma will also leave for their monastery. Most of the Mahatmas will go to Vrindavan and Haridwar from here. Camps of saints and kalpavasis will be uprooted from Sunday.

Benefits of many schemes to uplift Nishad community announced

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

State Cabinet Minister Siddharth Nath Singh on Saturday announced the benefits of several schemes to uplift the Nishad community in Baswar village. He said that the excesses that have taken place with the Nishad here are quite condemnable, but the government stands with the Nishad. He ordered the officers of the district administration present on the spot to immediately fix the boat which had been towed and help the Nishad in all possible ways. People presented their problems in writing.

The government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court under the leadership of the state's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the problems that were posed for this com-

munity by the Environment department NGT. It will be heard soon. He also showed a copy of the petition. Minister Siddharth Nath said that earlier the government was giving a loan of ₹ 25 lakh to the people of Nishad community for fisheries. If the people of the Nishad community here want to do fisheries, they should meet the district administration here and inform us, we will help them fully, he added.

Minister Siddharth Nath Singh said that the people here should take a step towards fisheries by forming a committee. One crore rupees will be provided for them. Taking a copy of the government's visit in Hindi, he showed it to the Nishad community and said that this government is doing everything possible for the

Nishad. There is a legal conflict, there is every hope that the government will succeed.

Member of Parliament Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi and state minister Siddharth Nath Singh reached Baswar village in Ghurpur on Saturday afternoon. There they met Nishad and heard their problems. The purpose of this meeting was to remove the resentment of the Nishad community.

It may be noted that on February 4, action was taken against illegal mining of sand from the middle stream of the river in Baswar village adjoining Yamuna. A case was registered against some 200 people for breaking some boats. A section of the Nishad community was dissatisfied with this action. On Sunday, February 21, Congress general secretary

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra herself came to Baswar. She had announced the fight of Nishad from the road to the Parliament.

The Congress party is going to take out the ‘Nadi Adhikar Yatra’ from Baswar on March 1. In this, along with the persecution of Nishad, illegal mining of mafia from the river will be raised. On Friday, State Congress President Ajay Kumar Lallu gave financial assistance of ₹ 10 lakh to 23 Nishad families from the party. Along with the Samajwadi Party, the Nishad Party is also seen standing alongside the Nishad. The BJP put up the banner of the Nishad Problem Solving Function at this event. Along with IG KP Singh, administrative officials were also present in the event.

Communicable disease control campaign from tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Communicable disease control campaign will be carried out in Prayagraj district from March 1 for the whole month. In addition to the Medical and Health department, City Development, Panchayati Raj, Animal Husbandry, Medical Education, Child Development Services and Nutrition (ICDS), Education, Disability Amendment, Agriculture and Irrigation department will have an important role in the operation of the campaign.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Prabhakar Rai said that all preparations for the operation are almost complete. In this, public awareness programmes will be conducted in the community through all departments. Coordination with other departments is also being established. He informed that a door-to-door campaign will be conducted from March 10 to 24. In this, ASHA workers will go door-to-door to make people aware about mosquito-borne diseases especially

dengue and malaria and their prevention. Also they will inform as to which circumstances mosquitoes are bred.

District Malaria Officer Kaushal Prasad Dwivedi said that a meeting was held on February 20 in the CMO office under the chairmanship of Nodal Officer Communicable Disease Dr Arun Kumar Srivastava. In this, the work and responsibilities of all departments were discussed with all ACMOs and employees for successful operation of communicable disease control campaigns and further strategy was decided. Asha and Anganwadi workers will go door-to-door under this campaign.

The District Malaria Officer informed that a ‘Dastak Abhiyan’ will be conducted from March 10 to 24. Under this, ASHA workers will go door-to-door to make people aware about communicable diseases as well as collect information about possible patients inflicted with fever and tuberculosis. On receiving information about a person with TB

symptoms, the information will be given to the headquarters through the ANM.

In addition, ASHA workers will register birth and death certificates of infants and individuals. The list of malnourished children will also be prepared along with disabilities due to meningitis. They will also mark children vaccinated, so that complete immunization can be done. He informed that the Health department is playing the role of the Nodal Department in this campaign. They are being trained and sensitised by coordinating with other departments.

MARTYRDOM DAY OF AZAD OBSERVED: Martyrdom day of Chandra Shekhar Azad was observed on Saturday in Azad Park under his statue. On this very day in 1931 Azad had shot himself dead with the last bullet of his pistol after fighting the British police.

Azad had convened a secret meeting in Alfred park, popularly known as Company Bagh, but the Britishers came to know about the meeting

venue through informers, and the surrounded the venue. An encounter took place and Azad after fighting bravely shot himself dead with the last bullet of his pistol. The pistol is put on a display at Allahabad Museum.

On Saturday people started reaching Alfred Park (now Azad Park) to pay tributes to the great martyr. Phulpur MP Keshri Devi Patel and Justice Ashok Kumar Gupta paid floral tributes to Azad on this occasion besides thousands from hundreds of associations.

KALPAVASI TENT CATCHES FIRE: A Kalpavasi tent caught fire in Magh Mela area on Saturday causing panic when lakhs of bathers had gathered there to take a holy dip in the Sangam waters on the auspicious occasion of Maghi Purnima. This is considered to be the last bathing of the Magh Mela, and the Kalpavasis go home after Maghi Purnima bathing enjoying month long regular Sangam bathing and round-the-clock sermons, bhajans, and other religious activities.

NA concern over high infant mortality rate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Former -Director General Medical Education Dr VN Tripathi while addressing the inaugural function of the Neonatology Association (NA) here on Saturday said in India the infant mortality rate was 24 per 1,000 whereas in Uttar Pradesh it was 30 per 1,000.

He said out of the total death of infants, over 40 per cent were pre-term births while 21 per cent deaths were due to infection.

He said it was ironic that even today 60 per cent of deliveries were at the hands of untrained health personnel.

He said the Neonatology Association was concerned over the current state of affairs and had decided to join hands

with the government to ensure that the infant mortality rate was successfully brought down at least by 50 per cent in the beginning.

He said the association had also decided to impart training to personnel who wanted to take up the job of trained ANMs.

Addressing the gathering, subject expert and head of pediatrics department Dr Yeshwant Rao said even today 19 per cent of deaths were due to complications related to births majorly termed as birth asphyxia. He said infants who survived suffered later from cerebral palsy and fits.

He said if the birth was carried out under trained staff then these deaths could be avoided. He said for this a cam-

paign would have to be launched to ensure that trained personnel were able to save the lives of the infants at the time of confinement.

Discussing cool head birth asphyxia, he said mild selective head cooling combined with mild systemic hypothermia in term newborn infants after perinatal asphyxia was a safe and convenient method of quickly reducing cerebral temperature with an increased gradient between the surface of the scalp and core temperature.

He said hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy was a serious condition affecting newborn infants which could result in death and disability.

He said there was strong clinical evidence that moderate post-asphyxia total body cool-

ing or hypothermia in full term neonates resulted in long-term neuroprotection, allowing to proclaim this innovative therapy as "standard of care".

He said the treatment was a time-critical emergency and should be started within six hours and this required optimal collaboration among local hospitals, transport teams and the closest neonatal intensive care unit.

He said the technique was only safe when applied according to clinical trial protocols, and with admission of these patients to a neonatal intensive care unit.

Others present included Dr Ashish Srivastava, Dr Dharendra Kumar, Dr Amit Chawla and several others.

Around five dozen officers keen to guide Abhyudaya students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar, on Saturday, disclosed that around five dozen administrative officers (IAS, IPS, PCS, PPS, PMS and Allied Services) had evinced keen interest in guiding and motivating the Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana students preparing for various competitive examinations like Civil Services, JWW, NEET, CDA and NDS.

He said these officials had been shortlisted on the basis of their areas of interest and their educational backgrounds besides the subjects they had opted for in the civil services exams. He said these officials would be allotted sessions for coaching and guiding once in 15 days or so depending upon the topic and chapter they had shown their interest in.

Shekhar said liaison officers had also been deputed for each administrative official for coordination and communication. He appealed to the aspirants to ensure they availed themselves of the facility to not only clear their exams but also further their careers through the help and guidance being provided to them free of cost on the UP government's initiative.

Hotel employee killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A hotel employee was fatally attacked with an iron rod in Cooperganj under Collectorganj police station late Friday night. His colleagues rushed him to UHM Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The assailants managed to escape before the cops from Collectorganj and Badshahi Naka police stations reached the spot.

According to reports, Aman Bajpai of Naughara (Badshahinaka) was employed in a hotel in Cooperganj. Late Friday night, when Aman returned to the hotel after purchasing eggs from Ghantaghar, he had an argument with an employee of an adjacent hotel over some petty issue. Suddenly, the latter and his accomplices attacked Aman with iron rods, injuring him seriously. The hotel manager and his colleagues rushed the profusely-bleeding Aman to UHM hospital where he died during treatment.

Collectorganj Station House Officer Sanjiv Kant Mishra said the kin of the deceased had been informed and the manager of the other hotel had disclosed the names of the assailants. He said raids were on to nab them.

RAPE ACCUSED NABBED: The police arrested a rape accused after a brief encounter in which he sustained bullet injury. He was admitted to hospital and a case was registered against him. According to a report, a seven-year-old girl was raped by her grandfather in a field in Rania town of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday night. On being informed about the incident, the police raided Rania early in the morning on Saturday to arrest the accused. However, he opened fire on the police team. The cops returned the fire in which the accused sustained bullet injury. During the exchange of fire, police outpost incharge Anurag Pandey narrowly escaped the bullet attack.

The police recovered a country-made pistol and live cartridges from the accused.

ACCIDENT: A mason was killed when a truck knocked down his moped on Ramadevi flyover in Shakari police station area on Saturday morning.

The truck driver escaped after abandoning his vehicle at some distance away. Police impounded the truck. According to reports, 45-year-old mason Vinod Kumar Prajapati of Barra was going to his workplace in Sarsaul on Saturday morning, when a speeding truck knocked down his moped from behind on Ramadevi flyover, killing him on the spot.

Goyal inaugurates Tanakpur-Delhi Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi special

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Minister of Railways, Commerce and Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal, through video link on Saturday inaugurated the Tanakpur-Delhi Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi special train. Goyal said there was a demand of the people of the area that a daily train should be run from Tanakpur to Delhi. Keeping this fact in mind equipped with modern facilities and safe LHB coaches the run of new train Tanakpur-Delhi Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi Express was approved. With it people of Uttarakhand will have an easy travel facility to go to Delhi and also, with the promotion of regional tourism, employment opportunities will increase, he said. Extensive steps have been taken to strengthen infrastructure of railways to deal with upcoming challenges, he said. The section from Delhi to Pilibhit is electrified and the electrification work from Pilibhit to Tanakpur (62 km) has also been completed. Railway Minister said in Uttarakhand at a cost of ₹4,200 crore the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag (125.09 km) new line construction work is in progress and Haridwar-Laksar section (27 km) doubling work has been completed. With the completion of the ongoing railway projects, Uttarakhand will reach a new horizon of development, he said. Goyal said that in the last few years remarkable work has been done by the Railways in this area under which the gauge conversion of Pilibhit-Tanakpur section was completed in 2017 and Tanakpur railway station was connected to the broad gauge line. Minister of Education Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', was present in the programme through video link. At the function held in Tanakpur, MPs Ajay Tamta, Ajay Bhatt and Anil Baluni expressed their gratitude to Railway Minister for the running of Tanakpur-Delhi Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi special and said an excellent travel facility has been made available to the people of this region to go to Delhi. Additional General Manager, North Eastern Railway (NER)

Amit Kumar Agarwal welcomed the Railway Minister and guests at Tanakpur. He said Railway Minister approved the running of new train in view of the demand of the people of Tanakpur area. He said that from February 27 the 05325 Tanakpur-Delhi Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi special will depart from Tanakpur at 11.25 hrs and reach Delhi at 21.35 hrs and 05326 Delhi-Tanakpur Purnagiri Jan Shatabdi Special train will leave Delhi at 06.10 hrs and reach Tanakpur at 16.10 hrs. Agarwal said advanced passenger facilities have been provided at Tanakpur station. DRM, Izzatnagar, Ashutosh Pant thanked the guests. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Izzatnagar, Neetu, conducted the programme which was held following the Covid-19 protocol.

TRAINS TO BE CANCELLED/DIVERTED

Due to the farmers' agitation going on in Punjab, the cancellation and diversion of trains by the railway administration will be done as follows, CPRO PK Singh said. The 05531 Saharsa-Amritsar special to run from Saharsa on February 28 will remain cancelled. The 05532 Amritsar-Saharsa special to run from Amritsar on March 1 will remain canceled. Besides, the 04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar special to run from Amritsar on February 28 will instead of its running on its scheduled route i.e. Amritsar-Jandiala-Beas will be diverted via Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas route. The 04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar special to run from Jaynagar on February 28 in stead of running on its scheduled route i.e. Beas-Jandiala-Amritsar will be diverted via Tarn Taran-Amritsar route. The 04649 Jaynagar-Amritsar special to run from Jaynagar on February 28 instead of running on its scheduled route i.e. Beas-Jandiala-Amritsar will be diverted via Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar route. The 04674 Amritsar-Jaynagar special to run from Amritsar on February 28 in stead of running on its scheduled route Amritsar-Jandiala-Vyas will be diverted via Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Vyas route.

Retiring rly personnel given virtual farewell

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal on Saturday through video link from the Conference Hall, Railway Board, New Delhi, bid farewell to 2,673 railway personnel retiring from the entire Indian Railways on February 28 and wished them a happy future. We should always keep taking advantage of the experience of retired railway personnel, Goyal said. "Wherever I go I definitely get to hear praise of Indian Railways, for which I am indebted to the railway family. Today, Indian Railways are being praised all over the world," he said and extended his best wishes to the retiring personnel. In his address Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Railway Board, New Delhi, Sunit Sharma, said population of about 50 countries in the world is less than the number of our railway personnel. At the headquarter, Gorakhpur, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer RP Chand honoured 19 non-gazetted railway personnel retiring on Sunday by presenting them gold-plated medals, service certificates etc. Assistant Personnel Officer Aniruddh Prasad, railway employees etc were present at the function during which social distancing and other safety norms were followed.

MEMENTO PRESENTED: The general meeting of the North Eastern Railway Promotee Officers' Association (NERPOA) was convened

on Friday under the presidency of Deputy Chief Personnel Officer RP Chand to honour a retiring officer. It was conducted by Ramesh Pandey, general secretary/NERPOA, joint secretary/ Publicity, CP Chauhan said. In his address Pandey appreciated the retiring officer for his contribution to the railway service. Deputy Principal Financial Adviser Tejprakash Pandey, welcomed the retiring officer Kamlesh Kumar Rai, secretary /Principal Financial Adviser by garlanding him. He was honoured by being presented a memento on behalf of the Association. The



officers present on the occasion praised KK Rai's working and his simple nature and remembered the time spent with him and wished him a long life and bright future. On the occasion Ajay Rishi, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Afzal Ahmed Khan, SK Kanaulja, Munnillal Gupta, RN Mishra, DK Srivastava, Mukesh Kumar Singh, Umesh Kumar, RK Srivastava, SK Srivastava, Sushil Kumar Mishra, MP Aghari, Sudhir Kumar Srivastava, MA Singh, AK Rai, Jaiprakash, CB Srivastava, Ravindra Pratap, RU Vishwakarma, UC Yadav, Sanjay Srivastava and many officers were present.

6 stolen motorcycles recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Chunar police arrested four accused and recovered six stolen motorcycles on Thursday evening. On being tipped off by an informer about the presence of some suspects near Dhauhaan hillock the police rushed there and found four accused on two motorcycles who failed to show the documents of the vehicles. During interrogation they disclosed that they had hidden four more motorcycles beneath the hillocks. A case under relevant sections of law was registered in this connection. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the accused to jail and took the motorcycles into custody. The accused were later identified as Shailesh and Gupteshwar, residents of Bhagalpur village under Madihan police station and Ajay, resident of Dhanisaria village under Madihan police station and Saket, a resident of Pukharaul village under Chunar police station.

PROGRAMME: UP

Minister of State for Energy Rama Shankar Singh Patel while speaking as the chief guest at a programme in Ranipur village, which had been selected as Ayush village, said on Friday that regular exercise, timely and balanced diet could keep a person healthy. Inaugurating a stall the minis-



ter said it was the need of the hour that we adopt ways of Ayurveda in our life because it was based on the herbs and they were available in the rural area. The programme was also addressed by member of Rajya Sabha Ramshakal and DM Parveen Kumar Laxkar. It was conducted by Dr Piyush Tripathi and vote of thanks was proposed by regional officer of Ayurveda and Yunani Dr Shrikant Rajak.

'ASHA of the Month Award' to be given

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAU

DM Priyanka Niranjan said on Saturday that 'ASHA of the Month Award' will be given in order to boost the morale of ASHAs. She told 'The Pioneer' that during Covid crisis ASHAs worked tirelessly for the welfare of the people by going door to door and this award will increase their enthusiasm towards work. She said earlier this award was 'ASHA of the Year' Award and they had changed it to 'ASHA of the Month'. They used to give this award during 'ASHA Sammelan' usually held in August but due to Covid it had been postponed so they decided to change its format by presenting it on monthly basis. She said they will provide certificate to the 'ASHA of the Month' and added she had instructed district-level officials to ensure that board was hung outside their offices mentioning the CM helpline/complaint numbers.



Gang stealing iron bars busted, three arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Panki police busted a gang involved in stealing iron bars at New Transport Nagar for the past several months.

Police arrested three members of the gang and recovered stolen iron bars worth lakhs of rupees from them early morning Saturday when the thieves were going to sell the bars in a truck.

According to a report, on a tip-off, the Panki police raided a spot in New Transport Nagar and arrested three persons with 40 quintals of stolen iron bars worth around Rs 20 lakh.

The accused were identified as Neeraj Dixit of Panki Parao, Ashwani Verma of Sunder Nagar and Ramesh Vishwakarma of Kakwan (Bilhaur).

During interrogation, the trio disclosed that they used to steal iron bars from the trucks of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) parked outside New Transport Nagar 2 am and 4 am and hide them in the



Panki police arrest three persons involved in stealing iron rods from SAIL's stationery trucks on Saturday morning. Pioneer.

bushes there. Thereafter, the stolen iron rods were sold at low rates. The police were quizzing them to extract information about other gang members.

MM principal donates for Ram temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Mahila Mahavidyalaya Principal Dr BR Agarwal, while speaking during the Shri Ram Mandir Nidhi Samarpan Abhiyan, appreciated the innovative ideas put forth by students for making articles from waste materials.

She assured the students that in future talks on career opportunities would be organised from time to time in the college as they equipped students with new skills to face the challenges of life.

Addressing the gathering, Director of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Centre, CSJM University Kanpur, Dr Ram Babu Gupta said Lord Ram was the symbol of faith and as Indians one need to donate generously and contribute willingly for the construction of a grand temple at Ayodhya.

Dr Agarwal later contributed Rs 1,01,111 for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya. The faculty members also contributed generously while the non-teaching staff contributed Rs 7,501 as well.



Principal of Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Dr BR Agarwal handing over the cheque to Director DeenDayal Upadhyaya Centre, Dr Ram Babu Gupta. Pioneer

Later the Career Counselling Cell and BED department organised a career talk. It also displayed all the material prepared by the students to promote Atmanirbhar Bharat. Dr Mohini Agarwal introduced the career talk.

Others who took part were Dr Nutan Vohra, Ajay Jain, Mridul Tiwari, Dr Kalpana Srivastava and several others.

FIRs being registered against those who fled RTO during DM's raid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, on Saturday, said FIRs were being lodged against all those persons who had escaped the RTO campus during the raid by scaling walls. He said five people had been identified and FIRs had been lodged against them in the respective police stations. He said the regional transport officer had said that eight more people had been

identified. The DM has directed the regional transport officer to provide the list of outsiders who work in departments like permit, registration, fitness, tax, DL and enforcement. He said it had been confirmed that a big section of touts were working hand in glove with the officials and staff of the RTO. He said once the list was obtained, action would also be taken against such persons and the officials aiding them. It may be

mentioned here that during a surprise raid at the RTO, the DM had got the two gates closed. However, dozens of people on the campus had scaled walls and gates to escape and they were videographed while escaping. He had directed the regional transport officer to trace out all the persons who fled the scene on his arrival through the video. He also directed that strict action be taken against the unauthorised people present on the

campus **Haq Ki Baat:** DM Alok Tiwari, while addressing a meeting at Saraswati Mahila Degree College, said the UP government had issued a directive to hold direct dialogue - Haq Ki Baat - under Mission Shakti for the safety and security of women and children. He said Mission Shakti aimed at motivating women and girls to come up boldly and lodge complaints against victimisation.



PNS ■ VARANASI

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of NER (Varanasi division) Vijay Kumar Panjjar on Saturday in order to see development of passenger facilities, doubling, including progress of infrastructure development works, besides on the Salempur-Barhaj Bazar rail section the work of the last phase of the ongoing electrification project inspected the Barhaj Bazar and Salempur railway stations and the said section. The DRM first reached the Barhaj Bazar station on his inspection vehicle and inspected the operational arrangements, work in accordance with electrification standards, improvement work in the station building besides arrangements related to safety, cleanliness and passenger amenities. He also conducted a thorough inspection of safety equipment there, plans for development of passenger facilities and the circulating area. Thereafter

the DRM conducting a window-trailing inspection of Barhaj Bazar-Salempur rail section on his inspection vehicle proceeded further. During this period in the context of electrification on Barhaj Bazar-Salempur rail section he reviewed the work plan and various development works and gave directions to the officials concerned for possible improvement. Subsequently the DRM reached Salempur railway station and inspected safety equipment, cleanliness etc there. Along with it under doubling project he thoroughly inspected platform construction, improvement in building, foot overbridge, yard plan, various works of passenger amenities etc. The DRM then conducted a window trailing inspection of the Salempur-Amrnihar rail section. DRM was accompanied by SDE III Atul Tripathi, SDEE (TRD) Pankaj Kesharwani, SDEE (General) Satyendra Yadav, SDOSV Virendra Yadav and DOM Balendra Pal during the inspection.

National action plan to boost toy industry: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Government has prepared a 'National Toy Action Plan' that includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive and provide it with a global platform.

The Prime Minister said the ancient toy culture of the country reflects the practice of reuse and recycling, which is part of the Indian lifestyle.

He said India has the potential to take the world back to eco-friendly toys.

The fair that will continue from February 27 to March 2 aims to bring together all stakeholders including buyers, sellers, students, teachers, designers, etc on a virtual platform to create sustainable linkages and encourage dialogue for the overall development of the industry, according to a Government statement.

Speaking at the India Toy Fair 2021 here that he also inaugurated, the Prime Minister said the Government has prepared a National Toy Action Plan. It includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive, 'Aatmanirbhar', and to provide it with a global platform.

"This first Toy Fair is not just a business or economic event. This programme is a link to strengthen the country's age-old culture of sports and gaiety. India toy culture is as old as the Indus Valley



Civilisation. The world has studied the toys of the Mohenjo-Daro and Harappan era," he said.

Prime Minister had in his 'Ma'am ki baat' radio programme also stressed the role played by the toys in shaping mind and reflected on the rich and varied Indian tradition of toy Making.

Addressing the Toy Fair that he inaugurated, the Prime Minister said that India has given the world some of the most popular games like Chess and ludo.

"Chess, which is so popular in the world today, was earlier played in India as 'Chaturanga' or 'Chaduranga'. Modern Ludo was played as 'Pachisi'. In our scriptures too, there are descriptions of young lord Ram, and lord Krishnas toys," he said.

Modi said that even today Indian toys are simpler and cheaper than western toys and appealed to the manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology and psychology. "Try to use less plastic in toys. Use such things that can be recycled," he said.

Indian toys, he said, contain elements of science, enter-

tainment and psychology.

"Take Lattu (top) as an example. When children learn to play with Lattu, they learn about gravity and balance. In the same way, a child playing with a slingshot inadvertently starts learning basics about kinetic energy and potential energy. Puzzle toys develop strategic thinking and problem-solving thinking," Prime Minister sight to explain.

Modi said that the new National Education Policy also incorporates play-based and activity-based education.

"This is an education system in which logical and creative thinking can be increased in children through riddles and games. Special attention has been given to this," he said.

The Prime Minister asserted that in the field of toys, India has tradition and technology coupled with concepts and competence.

"We can take the world back towards eco-friendly toys. The National Toy Action Plan has been prepared which includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive, Aatmanirbhar and take India's toys to the world," he said.

KVIC's e-market portal touches new milestone, gives big push to 'swadeshi'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi and Village Industry Commission's (KVIC) foray into the online marketing segment has found tremendous public patronage. Testimony to this is the gross turnover of over Rs 1.12 crore in just 8 months of the launch of Khadi's e-portal www.khadiindia.gov.in.

Launched on July 7, 2020, Khadi e-portal has delivered orders to over 10,000 customers out of the 65,000 people who visited the e-portal till date. The KVIC has also delivered more than 1 lakh articles/commodities to these customers. During this period, the average online purchase has recorded at Rs 11,000 per customer, which is an indication of Khadi's ever-growing popularity and the diversity of its product range.

Minister of MSME Nitin Gadhkari has lauded Khadi's successful e-commerce venture saying this provided a wide marketing platform for various Khadi and village industry products to a larger population. "E-marketing of Khadi is proving to be a game-changer. Our efforts should be to reach a turnover of Rs 200 crore per year," Gadhkari said.

KVIC has developed the e-portal in-house without spending a single rupee on web-developing. Unlike other online portals, the KVIC takes care of all logistics and infrastructure support like cataloguing, product photoshoot, maintaining online inventory and packaging and transportation of goods to the customers' doorsteps. This saves Khadi artisans, institutions and PMEGP units manufacturing Khadi products from any financial burden. "All expenses incurred on operating Khadi e-portal is borne by the KVIC. While in case of other e-commerce sites, product cataloguing, packaging and dispatch are the responsibility of the respective sellers, KVIC has a policy that the Khadi institutions and PMEGP units are exempted from any such financial and logistical burden. This saves them a lot of money and, therefore, Khadi's e-portal is a unique platform for lakhs of Khadi artisans," KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

Khadi's online sale that started with just Khadi Face Masks during the Covid-19 lockdown, has evolved into a full-fledged E-market platform with nearly 800 products.

'Hunar Haat boon for Vocal for Local plan'

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Saturday said here that the "Hunar Haat" is playing "phenomenal and perfect" role in making "Vocal for Local" campaign a "mass movement" and as of now given employment to over five lakh people and still counting.

Speaking at the "Hunar Haat" in Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here Naqvi said that "Hunar Haat" has been becoming "Kumbh of backers of brilliance".

Naqvi said that more than 12 lakh people have visited the "Hunar Haat", started from 20th February and become "Proud Promoter" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Vocal for Local" campaign by purchasing handmade products of indigenous artisans and craftsmen worth crores of rupees.

The number of visitors is likely to go above 16 lakh in the next two days, he said. This "Hunar Haat" will be concluding on March first, 2021.

The 10-day "Hunar Haat" was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Several Ministers, MPs, senior government officials, various Diplomats, renowned industrialists have come here to encourage the artisans and craftsmen.

More than 600 artisans and craftsmen from more than 31 States and UTs participating in the "Hunar Haat". Artisans and craftsmen from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal etc are participating in the "Hunar Haat to display and sale of their indigenous handmade products.

Naqvi said that indigenous handmade products such as Applique work, dry flowers, jute-cane, brass products, wooden and clay toys, Ajrakh Block Print, Blue Art Pottery, Pashmina Shawl, Khadi products, Banarsi Silk,



Wooden Furniture, Chikankari Embroidery, Chanderi Silk, Lac bangles, Rajasthani jewellery, Phulkari, Oil Painting, Leather products, Khurja pottery, Sandalwood artefacts from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Jute products from West Bengal, rare antiques made of glass, mats and carpets etc were available for sale and display at the "Hunar Haat".

Naqvi said that the visitors also enjoyed traditional delicacies from every region of the country at "Bawarchikhana" section.

Besides, different cultural and musical programmes were daily presented by renowned artists of the country such as Vinod Rathore (21 Feb); Nizami Brothers (24 Feb); Sudesh Bhonsle (26 Feb); SI Kailash Kher (27 Feb) and others.

Naqvi said that the "Hunar Haat" has, as of now, provided employment and employment opportunities to more than 5 lakh 30,000 artisans, craftsmen and artists.

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs will provide employment and employment opportunities to 7 lakh 50,000 artisans and craftsmen through 75 "Hunar Haat" which will be organised by completion of 75 years of the country's independence.

The "Hunar Haat" is available on virtual and online platform <http://hunarhaat.org> and on GeM Portal also where the people of the country and abroad can buy products of indigenous artisans and craftsmen digital/online. Next "Hunar Haat" will be organised in Bhopal (12 to 21 March 2021); Goa (25 March to 04 April); Kota (9 April to 18 April); Surat (23 April to 2 May).

ED attaches ₹84.40 cr assets of Kanva group of companies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached immovable assets (agricultural and non-agricultural land, buildings, residential flat and factories) worth ₹84.40 crore held by Kanva Group of companies) and related entities besides those of Founder Director and President of Bengaluru-based Sree Kanva Souhardha Co-Operative Credit Limited (SKSCCL), Harish S.

The accused individuals and the entities had collected ₹ 650 crore from the public and total attachments

in the case is about ₹340 crore. The attached assets are situated at Nelmangala, Koratagere, Chikkabalapura, Srirangapatana and Bengaluru in Karnataka and at Madakasira in Andhra Pradesh.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of a complaint received from the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Bengaluru and various registered FIRs wherein it was alleged that the entity has collected ₹650 crore deposits from the members of public, assuring high rate of interest through commission agents, without maintaining required liquidity.

India, B'desh agree to finish early completion of border fencing, tackle terrorism

New Delhi (PNS): India and Bangladesh on Saturday decided to finish the early completion of border fencing and tackle the menace of cross-border terrorism. At the virtual Home Secretary level talks, headed by Union Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Bangladesh Mostafa Kamal Uddin, Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, it was reiterated that either country should not be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests.

"The 19th Home Secretary Level Talks (HSLT) between India and Bangladesh were held virtually today in the backdrop of 'MujibBarsho'and 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation War and

establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

"India and Bangladesh attach high-importance to their bilateral relations. Both Secretaries reiterated their commitment to further expand and strengthen mutual cooperation in the security and border related issues. Both sides reaffirmed not to allow the territory of either country to be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests. Both sides discussed early completion of pending fencing along the Indo Bangladesh Border (IBB) as agreed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries," said Union Home Ministry in a statement.

Office of Executive Engineer
Construction Division -2, P.W.D. Lucknow
No.447 /E-Tender/2020-21
E-Tender Notice Short Term
Dated : 19/2/2021

The E.E., C.D.-2, P.W.D., Lucknow on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered Road Work with UP PWD, class 'A','B','C' and 'D'. The Bidder may submit for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

SL. No.	Dis-trict	Name of work	Estima-ted cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lakhs)	Tender Cost +Stationary Charges	Time of Completi-on	Address of Executive Engineer	Address of Superint-ending Engineer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	LUCKNOW	Laying of Interlocking Tiles & Miscellaneous civil work in ancient Sheelta Mata Mandir Situated on BantharaRamchaura-Garhi Chunauti-Latfinagar Padyana Road Km-10	33.38	3.34	Rs. 300.00+ 500.00 (Stationary Charges) +144 (GST18%) =944/	06 Months	CD-2, PWD Lucknow	Lucknow circle, P.W.D. Lucknow

➤ **The Rate adopted in the BOQ are excluding GST.**

Bids can be downloaded online from dated 01.03.2021 at 11:00 AM to 09.03.2021 at 12:00 Noon and bid can be submitted online on or before 09.03.2021 at 12:00 Noon. The technical bids will be opened online on dated 10.03.2021 at 12:30 PM. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 1/2018/3070/78-2-2018/42 IT/2017 (22) Dated 03-01-2018, after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department/office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.

All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.co.in>

(Pradeep Rastogi)
Executive Engineer
UP- 161316 Date 26.2.2021
बिज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgownic.in पर उपलब्ध है। Construction Division-2 PWD, Lucknow

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PRAYAGRAJ
CIRCLE, P.W.D. PRAYAGRAJ (U.P.)
E-TENDER NOTICE

No. 1594/06 का (3) का E21
1. The S.E., Prayagraj Circle, P.W.D., Prayagraj on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the Percentage rate online bids from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP, PWD, Class A, Class B & Class C Road work as the can be. The Bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

Sl. No.	District	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Bid Document (Rs)	Time of Completion (Days)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Prayagraj	Construction of Barna road to Semari Jaunpur via Panchayat Bhawan link	83.00	6.15	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
2	Prayagraj	Construction of Pratappur Block to Atursuila link road	42.00	4.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
3	Prayagraj	Construction of Aara Khurd Harjari Basti Link road	62.00	5.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
4	Prayagraj	Construction of Pratappur Mathoi Jeeva Deep Hospital to Lahaura link road.	84.00	6.20	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
5	Prayagraj	Construction of Thanapur Gosai basti to Khanpur Dandi link road	62.00	5.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
6	Prayagraj	Construction of Janghai Anuwa to Baghedhi Saroj Basti link road	42.00	4.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
7	Prayagraj	Construction of Anuwa Primary School to Chanethu link road	42.00	4.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
8	Prayagraj	Construction of Pratappur Dubey Rice Mill to Saripur link road	62.00	5.10	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days
9	Prayagraj	Construction of Devali Gulchappa link road	54.00	4.70	2000+300/- stationery charges+GST=2336.00	180 Days

3. Time allowed for completion of each work is as mentioned in Column No. 7 includes rainy season.

4. Website <http://etender.up.nic.in> may be referred for detailed terms and conditions of the invitation for Bids (IFB)4. Website <http://etender.up.nic.in> may be referred for detailed terms and conditions of the invitation for Bids (IFB)

5. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from 0203-2021 to 09-03-2021 upto 12:00 Hours. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of <http://etender.up.nic.in> on or before 12:30 Hours on 09-03-2021 according word, Order No. 14/2020/879/237-2020-176 Dt. 25-08-2020 through Prahari App <http://www.upwd.gov.in>/Prahari. Technical Bid received online will be opened on 09-03-2021 at 03:30 Hours

6. The prospective bidders who do not possess Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) must get the same issued from approved agencies before submission of bids.

Executive Engineer
Construction Division-3, P.W.D.
Prayagraj

UP-161321 Dt. 26.2.21 बिज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgownic.in पर उपलब्ध है।
Superintending Engineer
Prayagraj Circle, P.W.D.
Prayagraj

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
LUCKNOW CIRCLE, P.W.D., LUCKNOW
No. 1225/523 (2) C-LKO.CIR/2020-21
E-Tender Notice
(Short Term)
Dated : 20/2/2021

The S.E. Lucknow Circle, U.P.P.W.D. on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD for Road Work class 'A', 'B' & 'C' Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

SL. No.	Dis-trict	Name of work	Estima-ted cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lakhs)	Tender Cost +Stationary Charges	Time of Completi-on	Address of Executive Engineer	Address of Superint-ending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	LUCKNOW	Beautification & Widening work of Approach road to Bhawreshwar Mandir Situated at Kurri Sudauli Road.	95.03	6.75	2000.00+ 300.00 + 414 = TOTAL =2714.00	12 Months	CD-2, PWD Lucknow	Lucknow circle, P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone, P.W.D., Lucknow
2	LUCKNOW	Laying of Inter-locking Tiles & Miscellaneous civil work in Shri Jhureshwar Mahadev Mandir on Harauni Shildeen Khara Marg/Via Bani-Mohan (SH)	74.39	5.72	2000.00+ 300.00 + 414 = TOTAL =2714.00	12 Months	CD-2, PWD Lucknow	Lucknow circle, P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone, P.W.D., Lucknow.

➤ **The Rate adopted in BOQ are exclusive GST.**

Bids can be downloaded online from dated 01.03.2021 at 09:00 AM to 09.03.2021 at 12:00 Noon and bid can be submitted online on or before 09.03.2021 at 12:00 Noon. The technical bids will be opened online on dated 10.03.2021 at 12:30 PM. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 1/2018/3070/78-2-2018/42 IT/2017 (22) Dated 03-01-2018, after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department/office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.

Technical evaluation of tenders is to be done by **Prahari Software**, the details of which are available in NIT enclosed with Bid Document.

All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>

(Pradeep Rastogi)
Executive Engineer
Construction Division-2 PWD, Lucknow

(J. K. Banga)
Superintending Engineer
Lucknow Circle
P.W.D. Lucknow
For on behalf of Governor of UP

The Pioneer ready to undergo major facelift

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Battling insolvency proceedings, *The Pioneer* media group is gearing up to undergo a major facelift. The group is planning to augment its revenue, improve its contents, and radically change its digital presence through the introduction of new technology, new marketing strategy and revamping of its circulation.

The senior employees of the newspaper both from the manage-

ment and the editorial side met on Saturday under the leadership of NCLT-appointed Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) Ranjeet Kumar Verma where it was decided to effectively tackle the "existential" challenge the one of the oldest media houses in the country is facing.

"I am here as a representative of the court and my main objective is to keep *The Pioneer* group as a going concern. I've no score to settle or no axe to grind. I want the cooperation



of everyone to make *The Pioneer* a vibrant brand again, both in Hindi and English," Verma said during the course of an exchange of idea session. He added that he expected the company operation to return to normal in a short while.

The IRP assured the employees that their priority would be look into a range of serious issues flagged by them regarding their remuneration and staff shortage. "I will do everything possible to create a proper atmosphere so that everyone can

contribute to the revival of the company," he said.

He said he didn't believe in a witch-hunt, but he expected everyone to help him implement the court's order in letter and spirit.

The Delhi bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) last month initiated insolvency proceedings against the CMYK Printech, which runs the operation of *The Pioneer* newspaper, following a plea by one of its directors.

Delhi's law & order situation deplorable: CM

Kejriwal urges Shah, L-G to take action

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday questioned the law and order situation in the national Capital and urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal to take action citing two crimes in the last 36 hours.

Taking to Twitter, Kejriwal tweeted, "Deeply concerned by the murder of a 8-yr-old girl in Khichdipur and attack on a 17-yr-old boy in Kalkaji. Delhi's law and order situation is in a serious turmoil, I appeal to Hon'ble Home Minister and Lt. Gov to take appropriate action to address the situation."

His tweet came after a 17-year-old boy was beaten up and stabbed for allegedly opposing three boys who were stalking his sister and passing indecent remarks on her in south-east Delhi's Kalkaji area.

According to a senior police official, the incident took place on Friday near a



school in southeast Delhi's Kalkaji area. "The injured boy, a resident of Sarvodaya camp in Kalkaji Nagar, was taken to AIIMS Trauma Centre for treatment. He was shifted to Operation Theatre so he could not be examined," he said.

"In her statement, the victim's sister said that on Friday while she was with her brother, three boys followed her and passed indecent remarks on her. When her brother objected to it, they all started beating him and one of them stabbed him on left side of abdomen and fled from the spot," said the senior police official adding that he was shifted to AIIMS Trauma centre where he is still unfit for statement.

"Police have registered a case under section 307 (attempt to murder), 354 D (stalking), 509 (Word, gesture or act

intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) and further investigation is going on," said R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district.

"Efforts are being made to trace the accused who are residents of JJ camp, Giri Nagar in the area of Govindpuri," said the DCP.

Earlier, two days ago, a body of a nine-year-old girl, who was kidnapped from east Delhi's Khichripur three days ago, was found in the sugarcane fields of a village in Modinagar, near Ghaziabad, on Friday morning.

The police had said that the autopsy has ruled out sexual assault. Four alleged kidnappers, who live in the same neighbourhood as the girl's family, have been arrested in connection with the kidnap and murder.

The arrested persons were identified by their first names — Johnny alias Shiva, the key suspect, his cousin Nareish, Kailash and Tarun. "In the kidnapping and murder case of Kalyanpuri, four persons have been arrested and the weapon of the offence has been recovered," said a senior police official.

Women, children not safe under Delhi Police: Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MLA of Kalka Ji constituency Atishi on Saturday said that neither women nor school-going children are safe under Delhi Police.

Atishi said that a girl was molested by some men at Kalka Ji just 100 metres away from the police station while she was returning from school and her brother was stabbed when he tried to save her.

She said that the law and order situation in the entire city is crumbling, criminals think that they can kill anyone and they will not face any punishment.

"The survivor's family will get all kinds of help from our party and the government, went to the ICU to see the boy," she said.

Atishi Tweeted, "Met the family of the boy who was stabbed in Kalkaji yesterday. Have assured them of full sup-



IT IS VERY UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL OF INDIA IS GOING THROUGH SUCH A MISERABLE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION

port. Also spoke to the doctors at the AIIMS Trauma Centre, who said that the boy is stable and recovering."

"Have also spoken to DCP east Delhi and asked them to ensure that the perpetrators are swiftly located and arrested.

Delhi Cong president visits family of victim

Demands probe by ex-judge, 1 crore compensation to kin

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar on Saturday visited the family of the Dalit girl from Kalyanpuri and demanded a probe by a retired Supreme Court or High Court judge to "unravel" the truth and ₹1 crore compensation to the family.

Kumar promised the full support to the family of the girl who was allegedly kidnapped, raped and murdered. Senior Delhi Congress leaders accused the BJP and Aam Aadmi Party leaders of protecting the criminals involved in the kidnapping, rape and murder of the nine-year-old girl.

Addressing the media, ex-MP Udit and ex-MLA Jaikishan said that ever since the BJP and the AAP came to power, attacks and crimes against Dalits are on the rise.

They said that the dastardly rape and murder of the Vth Standard Dalit girl was the latest incident of attacks against Dalit women and the Kichripur rape was a repeat of the Hathras' Dalit girl rape and murder crime. "If the Delhi Police and Uttar Pradesh had acted on time, the criminals could have been caught," they added.

Jaikishan said that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind, who was an expert in sitting on dharnas demanding safety and security of women, was silent on the rape and murder of a girl from a poor Dalit family and it exposes his double-standard.

AAP spent just 1.6% of green cess to tackle pollution: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Adesh Gupta on Saturday said that the Delhi Government has spent only 1.6 per cent of ₹883 crore collected from the people in the name of green cess to control pollution which has now reached an alarming level.

Addressing the media, he charged the Kejriwal government with having completely failed in controlling the increasing pollution level and said the apathy of the government has resulted into Delhi becoming "a capital of dust". "The chief minister is only interested in political expansion of his party that has led to the worsening overall situation in the city where most of the people are compelled to live in miserable conditions," he added.

Citing reports by some medical experts, he said corona pandemic would not have taken a monstrous turn in Delhi had air pollution been under control. "If people are suffering from lung cancer, heart disease, asthma, TB, it is Kejriwal who is responsible



for all this," he said.

Extensively quoting from an NGO's Greenpeace Southeast Asia report, he said 54,000 people died of pollution-related diseases in the capital last year alone or a daily average of 148 deaths and it caused a monetary loss of Delhi to the tune of ₹58,000 crore.

Talking about the Green budget of the Kejriwal government, Gupta said even on stubble burning, he made a lot of hue and cry, but figures show last year the government spent only ₹40,000 in buying bio decomposer units while ₹24 lakh was spent on their distribution and another whopping ₹9 crore on its publicity.

Woman, son stabbed by 4 boys for raising objection at noise

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman and her 19-year-old son were allegedly stabbed by a group of four boys when they raised objections for making noise in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area on Saturday.

Police said that both the injured boy Moin and his mother, aged around 48, were taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital where they are being given treatment.

"In his statement, Moin told police that four boys, all residents of his locality on DDU camp area of Punjabi Bagh were making noise. When his parents tried to stop them, they started fighting and one of the boys stabbed his mother on her chest with a



knife and injured him on his left thigh," said the senior police official.

"A case has been registered and during investigation, it has come to notice that all the accused involved in the incident are below 18 and are presently absconding," he said.

Fire breaks out at factory in Pratap Nagar area, 1 dead

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A charred body was recovered after a fire broke out at a factory in Pratap Nagar area of North Delhi in the early hours of Saturday. Police said that no one has been reported injured.

According to Delhi Fire Services (DFS), one of the firemen sustained minor injury on his finger during the fire-fighting operation but was given first aid at the spot.

"A call about the fire was received at around 3.47 am and 18 fire tenders were pressed into service. Later, 10 more fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the fire was brought under control while the cooling process is underway," said Atul Garg, the Director, DFS.



Fire brigade personnel douse a fire which broke out in a factory at Pratap Nagar industrial area in New Delhi on Saturday

"The fire broke out on the first and second floor of the factory. The plastic and nail polish materials caught fire and a

charred body was recovered from the first floor of the factory. The cause of the blaze is being ascertained," said Garg.

Two held for planning to kill pro-Kashmir activist

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two residents of Punjab have been arrested in Delhi's RK Puram area on charges of conspiring to kill an activist who is quite vocal on Kashmir.

"Two pistols, two country-made guns and four live bullets have been recovered from them. The seized pistols are of the kind, manufactured in Pakistan," police said.

The accused have been identified as Sukwinder Singh (25), a resident of Faridkot and Lakhana (21), a resident of Kotpura.

According to Ingit Pratap Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southwest district, both of them are acquaintance from

Punjab Faridkot and were sent to Delhi at behest of one person identified as Prince alias Lutti.

"During interrogation it was revealed that Prince, is a childhood friend of Lakhana and facing murder trial in Faridkot and facts of which are being verified," he said.

"They were promised ₹10 lakh cash if they kill one Sushil Pandit who is Human Rights Activists and CLO of Hive Communications India Pvt Ltd.

"The duo also revealed that they were provided with four pistol, two of which are Country made pistol and two are foreign made pistol along with four cartridges and one mobile phone containing photograph of Sushil Pandit, provided by Prince," said the

DCP in a statement issued on Saturday.

"While they were on the lookout for a rented accommodation in South West District they were nabbed by the local police of RK Puram police station on specific inputs," said the DCP.

"A case under section 25/54/29 Arms Act, 120B (Punishment of criminal conspiracy) 115 IPC (Abetment of offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life) has been registered in RK Puram police station," said the DCP adding that further investigation going on.

"Considering the nature of the case and that foreign hand may be involved in the case, the case is now being transferred to Special Cell of Delhi Police," said the DCP.

465 EVs registered since launch of EV policy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Since the launch of the Delhi 'Electric Vehicles' (EVs) policy in August 2020, 465 new EVs have been registered and more are being registered every day.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted "This will go a long way in curbing pollution in Delhi. Delhi is fast becoming a modern city. Every Indian is proud of Delhi".

Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "Since the launch of Delhi EV policy, 465 new EV four-wheelers have been registered. Incentives of up to ₹3 lakh are provided under Delhi EV policy, which includes 1.5 lakh subsidy, registration, and road tax exemption".

"This is the highest subsidy in India and makes the total cost of ownership of an electric car in Delhi the same as a diesel car. Subsidies provided on electric cars in Delhi EV policy are reducing the total cost of own-



ership of the electric cars by up to 30 per cent. An individual can save ₹1,050 per month by switching to EV from a diesel car," he said.

The third week of the Delhi Government's Switch Delhi electric vehicle campaign that focused on sensitizing Delhiites on the benefits of electric four-wheelers along with the incentives that EV adopters can avail under the Delhi Government's EV policy received overwhelming support from Delhiites.

The Switch Delhi pledge is available on ev.delhi.gov.in/pledge has been launched to encourage more and more Delhiites to be a part of the EV revolution and help to make Delhi the EV capital of India.

Delhiites can take the pledge to switch to an EV or install a charging point in their premises in the next 3 years.

The Delhi Government issued an order on Thursday saying that all Delhi Government departments, autonomous bodies, and grantee institutions will replace their existing fleet of hired conventional fuel vehicles with an electric vehicle. 2,000 cars will be impacted by this decision and transition will happen to EVs in the next 6 months.

The Transport Department of Delhi will be the nodal department to monitor the progress of the transition from existing diesel or petrol vehicle fleets to EVs. It will also be necessary for all departments to produce monthly action reports on the transition to EVs to the nodal department.

"Delhi gov't commitment to switch all its hired cars to Electric in 6 months is unprece-

dented globally. As the nodal dept, Transport dept will leave no stone unturned to ensure a smooth transition. CM @ArvindKejriwal's call for @SwitchDelhi marks a start of the EV revolution", tweeted Gahlot.

Delhiites who have switched to electric cars came forward to share their experiences of switching to EVs under the #DilliKeGreenWarrior initiative.

Anju Jain, a Delhite and an EV owner said, "Buying an EV was so convenient and it offers a very smooth and noiseless drive. Driving an EV is way better than driving an ICE vehicle in terms of speed and performance. All thanks to Delhi Govt's EV policy, I got benefits of around three lakhs and also, a waiver of the road tax and registration fee. I charge my EV at my home through a 15A plug point and it runs for around 220 km."

Man kills wife after scuffle in Rohini's Budh Vihar



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her husband following a quarrel between them in Budh Vihar area of Rohini. Police said that prima facie, it appears that the woman was thrashed and hit with stick by her husband who was suspected to be under the influence of alcohol during the time of incident.

The accused has been identified as Chetan Prakash Solanki while his wife has been identified as Geeta. The couple has a seven-year-old daughter and the accused husband is a driver by profession.

According to a senior police official, the incident took place on Friday night after a quarrel broke out between Chetan and his wife Geeta over some dispute.

"On reaching the spot, police broke out the door and found the injured woman while her husband was also found lying unconscious in the room. The two were rushed to BSA hospital where the woman was declared brought dead and her husband was also admitted to the hospital," said the senior police official.

"During enquiry, neighbours told police that there was a quarrel between the couple. On the statement of the woman's brother, a case of murder was registered and the accused husband has been apprehended in connection with the incident," he said.

"Chetan is being interrogated to ascertain the sequence of events and the reason that led to a quarrel between them," police said, adding further investigation is underway.

People throng Garden Tourism Festival

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

People from all age groups visited the 34th edition of the Garden Tourism Festival in large numbers. They were seen experiencing the floral arrangements, and unique displays of hanging baskets, dahlias, cut flowers, recycled floral displays and tray gardens. Many were keen on gaining experience to create their own home gardens and were seen interacting with buyers at the Garden Bazaar while purchasing products.

The event was graced by his excellency Walter J. Lindner- German Ambassador to India. Over the first week of the event, visitors

With the objective to create awareness about the environment and showcase the rich floriculture of Delhi, the three-week extravaganza is



themed "#Colours of Nature has been this year. Unlike a three-day format that was being followed previously, Delhi Tourism has extended the festival to three weeks, to give a safe, socially distanced and memorable experience to its visitors.

The venue, Garden of Five Senses spread over 22 acres of land is a unique venue appealing to the five senses. With sculptures like Prayer of Peace, Tree of Infinite Knowledge,

Wind Chime, Five Senses through Five Seasons dotting the lush green expanse, Garden of Five Senses is the largest collections of public art in the Capital.

A 95 year old lady visiting the festival shared, "I was visiting the festival for the first time and I thoroughly enjoyed. Everything from the flowers displays to the ambience of the Garden is very fascinating. I also appreciate the medical facilities provided at the

entrance to ensure the safety of the visitors during CORONA times."

Two visitors from Kashmir shared, "It is a beautiful display of flowers and we are having a great time with our friends. Seeing the beauty of nature, we feel like we are home. We thank the organizers for such a thrilling experience."

In order to revive tourism in the city, Delhi Tourism has modified this event in order to extend the experience to more visitors, keeping safety in mind. This will enable a guided movement that will adhere to all the norms of COVID-19 guidelines. Digital payment facility has also been available at the ticket counters along with online bookings on Paytm Insider, enabling cashless transactions.

The second weekend of the festival witnessed perfor-

mances by Sid K Official in partnership with Radio FM, our official radio partner. The performance was thoroughly enjoyed by the crowd as many were seen dancing to his tunes.

Sunday 28th February, 2021, will witness performances by Punjabi artists Praveen Sharma and Ravinder Kaur, presented in collaboration with Punjabi Academy, Govt. of Delhi.

With the Garden Tourism Festival, it calls out to all garden enthusiasts and city dwellers to teach more about this skill and also help make Delhi a greener city. A special display of hydroponic plants has also been set up to showcase how certain plants can be grown without the use of soil.

Delhi Tourism will also provide free electric shuttle service from Saket Metro Station to the venue and back.

SDMC removes 2,000 posters under Swachhh Survekshan drive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of Swachhh Survekshan-2021, South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) carried a sanitation and poster removal drive in all its zones. Under the drive, posters were removed from public places, markets, metro pillars, roads, key places etc. Nearly 2,000 posters, banners and hoardings were removed. The drive will be continued till March 2.

Nodal Officer of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Rajiv Jain said that in order to improve ranking in Swachh Survekshan-2021, theme based sanitation drives are being carried in the area under jurisdiction of

South MCD and poster removal drive is part of it.

The drive was started on Saturday from 85 locations including Najafgarh Road, New Mahavir Nagar, Govindpuri Metro Station, Kalkaji, Chirag Delhi, RK Puram, Pushp Vihar Ramphal Chowk, Palam Flyover, Sagarpur, Dabri, Ganesh Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Dwarka, Malviya Nagar, Greater Kailash-2 and Tagore Garden.

Jain said that to aware people about Swachh Survekshan-2021, sanitation drives are being conducted at various places. He said that drives are being conducted at various roads, parks, colonies, markets, bus stops, metro stations, schools, vacant plots etc.

Myanmar police deploy early to crank up pressure on protests

AP ■ YANGON

Police in Myanmar escalated their crackdown on demonstrators against this month's military takeover, deploying early and in force on Saturday as protesters sought to assemble in the country's two biggest cities and elsewhere.

Security forces in some areas appeared to become more aggressive in using force and making arrests, utilising more plainclothes officers than had previously revealed themselves. Photos posted on social media showed that residents of at least two cities, Yangon and Monywa, resisted by erecting makeshift street barricades to try to hinder the advance of the police.

Myanmar's crisis took a dramatic turn on the international stage at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday when the country's UN ambassador declared his loyalty to the ousted civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi and called on the world to pressure the military to cede power.

There were arrests Saturday in Myanmar's two



Police stand in formation blocking a main road in Mandalay, Myanmar on Saturday

AP

biggest cities, Yangon and Mandalay, where demonstrators have been hitting the streets daily to peacefully demand the restoration of the government of Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy party won a landslide election victory in

November. Police have increasingly been enforcing an order by the junta banning gatherings of five or more people.

Many other cities and towns have also hosted large protests against the Feb. 1 coup. Police in Dawei, in the southeast, and Monywa, 135

kilometres northwest of Mandalay, used force against protesters. Both cities, with populations of less than 200,000 each, have been seeing large demonstrations.

Social media carried unconfirmed reports of a protester shot dead in Monywa.

The reports could not immediately be independently confirmed but appeared credible, with both photos and identification of the victim. The reports from Monywa also said dozens or more people were arrested.

The military takeover reversed years of slow progress toward democracy after five decades of military rule. Suu Kyi's party would have been installed for a second five-year term in office, but the army blocked Parliament from convening and detained her and President Win Myint, as well as other top members of her government.

At the General Assembly in New York, Myanmar's UN ambassador, Kyaw Moe Tun, declared in an emotional speech to fellow delegates that he represented Suu Kyi's "civilian government elected by the people" and supported the fight against military rule.

He urged all countries to issue public statements strongly condemning the coup, and to refuse to recognise the military regime. He also called for stronger international measures to stop violence by security forces against peaceful demonstrators.

Myanmar's UN envoy dramatically opposes coup in his country

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Myanmar's UN ambassador strongly opposed the military coup in his country and appealed for the "strongest possible action from the international community" to immediately restore democracy in a dramatic speech to the UN General Assembly Friday that drew loud applause from many diplomats in the 193-nation global body.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun began his statement saying he represented Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy "civilian government elected by the people" in November, and supported their fight for the end of military rule.

He urged all countries to issue public statements strongly condemning the military coup, and to refuse to recognize the military regime and ask its leaders to respect the free and fair elections in November



In this image taken from video by UNTV, Myanmar Ambassador to the United Nations Kyaw Moe Tun flashes the three-fingered salute, a gesture of defiance done by anti-coup protesters in Myanmar, at the end of his speech before the UN General Assembly at the United Nations on Friday

AP

won by Suu Kyi's NLD party. He also urged stronger international measures to stop violence by security forces against peaceful demonstrators.

"It is time for the military to immediately relinquish power and release those detained," Tun said, agreeing

with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "that military coup is not acceptable in this modern world and the coup must cease."

"We will continue to fight for a government which is of the people, by the people, for the people," he vowed.

GLOBE TROTTER

42 ABDUCTED FROM NIGERIAN SCHOOL FREED

Lagos: An official says 42 people including 27 students who were abducted two weeks ago from a school in northern Nigeria have been freed. The chief press secretary for the Niger state governor, Mary Noel-Berje, told The Associated Press on Saturday that those released have arrived in the State capital, Minna.

COVID CASES CONTINUE TO RISE IN PAKISTAN

Islamabad: Pakistan's aviation authority on Saturday extended the existing restriction regarding the standard operating procedures for all inbound travellers for another two weeks as the nation continues to witness a surge in the number of coronavirus cases.

IRAN EXPECTS 2,50,000 JABS FROM CHINA

Tehran: Iran's Health Ministry says the country expects to receive 250,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine from China on Saturday. Alireza Raisi, deputy Health Minister, says the country will receive doses of other vaccines, including from India, in the "near future" as the country struggles to fight the worst

Biden: Strikes in Syria sent warning to Iran to 'be careful'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden said Friday that Iran should view his decision to authorize US airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or personnel.

"You can't act with impunity. Be careful," Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send with the airstrikes, which the Pentagon said destroyed several buildings in eastern Syria but were not intended to eradicate the militia groups that used them to facilitate attacks inside Iraq.

Administration officials defended the Thursday night airstrikes as legal and appropriate, saying they took out facilities that housed valuable "capabilities" used by Iranian-backed militia groups to attack American and allied forces in Iraq.

John Kirby, the Pentagon's chief spokesperson, said mem-

bers of Congress were notified before the strikes as two Air Force F-15E aircraft launched seven missiles, destroying nine facilities and heavily damaging two others, rendering both "functionally destroyed." He said the facilities, at "entry control points" on the border, had been used by militia

groups the US deems responsible for recent attacks against US interests in Iraq.

In a political twist for the new Democratic administration, several leading Congress members in Biden's own party denounced the strikes, which were the first military actions he authorized.

President Joe Biden protected US personnel, facilities: White House

Washington: The White House has said that through the airstrikes in Syria, President Joe Biden protected US personnel and facilities, and deterred the risk of additional attacks "over the coming weeks."

On Thursday, airstrikes in Syria targeted facilities belonging to a powerful Iranian-backed Iraqi armed group, reportedly killing one fighter and wounding several others.

The strikes came in the

wake of recent attacks on US interests in Iraq, including a rocket attack last week which killed a civilian contractor and injured a US service member and other coalition troops.

"The president is sending an unambiguous message that he's going to act to protect Americans, and when threats are posed, he has the right to take action at the time, and in the manner of his choosing," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. **PTI**

FROM PAGE 1

CONG GETTING WEAK, RUES G-23

Meanwhile, Azad, who reached Jammu on Friday said the Congress party will contest the coming Assembly elections in four States and a Union Territory with its full might. He said, the fight is not over yet. "I may have retired from Parliament but not for the politics", Every time I received this treatment I have bounced back," he thundered.

Addressing the 'Shanti Sammelan Azad said, "Be it Jammu or Kashmir or Ladakh, we respect all religions, people and castes. We equally respect everyone, that is our strength and we will continue with this".

"In the last 5-6 years, all these friends did not speak any less than me in Parliament over Jammu & Kashmir, its unemployment, stripping off of statehood, finishing off industries and education, implementation of GST," the former Rajya Sabha MP added.

Raj Babbar also addressed the event and emphasised that the G-23 leaders want the Congress party to be strong. People say "G23", I say Gandhi 23. "With the belief, resolve and thinking of Mahatma Gandhi, this nation's law and Constitution was formed. Congress is standing strongly to take these forward. 'G23' wants Congress to be strong," he said.

CENTRE: ENFORCE COVID APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Maharashtra reported the highest daily new cases at 8,333, followed by Kerala with 3,671 while Punjab reported 622 new cases in the last 24 hours. In the last two weeks, Maharashtra has shown the highest rise in active cases from 34,449 on February 14 to 68,810 currently, the Ministry said.

They informed about the enforcement of Covid appropriate behaviour by levying heavy fines and challans, reviewing the surveillance and containment activities closely with the district collectors, and other steps being taken in line with the guidelines provided by the Ministry

of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

India's total Covid-19 active caseload is 1,59,590 which is 1.44 per cent of the total infections.

BIDEN WON'T SANCTION MBS OVER MURDER OF KHASHOGGI

It leaves no doubt that as the prince continues in his powerful role and likely ascends to the throne, Americans will forever associate him with the brutal killing of a journalist who promoted democracy and human rights.

Yet even as the Biden administration released the findings, it appeared determined to preserve the Saudi relationship by avoiding direct punishment of the prince himself despite demands from some congressional Democrats and Khashoggi allies for significant and targeted sanctions.

Questioned by reporters, Secretary of State Antony Blinken defended the approach.

"What we've done by the actions we've taken is not to rupture the relationship but to recalibrate it to be more in line with our interests and our values," he said. "I think that we have to understand as well that this is bigger than any one person."

CENTRE CAPS COVID SHOT AT ₹250 IN PVT HOSPITALS

All the private health facilities which will serve as Government Covid Vaccination Centres has also been asked to strictly follow norms of due process, quality and safety including integration with the National Co-Win technology platform.

"All private health facilities must also have adequate space, adequate cold chain arrangements, adequate number of vaccinators and support staff and adequate arrangements for addressing Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI)," said the official.

UK PM Boris reiterates support against Taliban in call with Afghan Prez

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has reiterated Britain's support to Afghanistan in its fight against the Taliban, as part of the wider North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance.

In a phone call from Downing Street in London with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday, Johnson also agreed on the importance of making progress in peace talks to secure a sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan.

"He [Johnson] reiterated the UK's longstanding support for the Afghan government's fight against the Taliban as part of the NATO coalition," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

In February last year, the US and Taliban signed a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar, which provisioned withdrawal of all American and NATO troops from war-torn Afghanistan by May 1.

"They agreed on the importance of making progress in peace talks to secure

a sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan, and to preserve the gains made by civil society and women and girls," the Downing Street spokesperson said.

The US-Taliban Peace Agreement also mentioned a pledge from the Taliban to prevent militant forces from operating in its areas, and dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghanistan government.

Besides regional matters, Johnson and Ghani discussed the Covid-19 crisis and global efforts around access to vaccines to combat the pandemic.

"The Prime Minister and President Ghani also discussed global efforts to tackle the pandemic and the rollout of vaccines in Afghanistan and the UK," Downing Street said.

The conversation between the two leaders comes amidst a review of the US-Taliban peace deal by the Joe Biden-led US administration, creating uncertainty over the future course of events.

India has highest stake in resolution of Rohingyas' return from B'desh to Myanmar: India at UNGA

United Nations: India has emphasised the need for an early return of displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh to Myanmar, saying that it has the highest stake in resolving the issue since it is the only nation that shares a long border with both countries.

Speaking at the informal UN General Assembly meeting on Friday on the situation in Myanmar after the military staged a coup this month, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti said that it must be ensured that the recent developments in the country do not impede the progress made so far and the international community must encourage and support positive steps.

Bangladesh is hosting over 1.1 million Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, who fled Myanmar facing military crackdown, often considered as "ethnic cleansing" by many rights groups.

Myanmar doesn't recognise Rohingya as an ethnic group and insists that they are Bangladeshi migrants living illegally in the country.

Myanmar military seized the power on February 1, detaining the country's de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The military coup

took place at a time when Bangladesh was spearheading a desperate campaign for safe return of some 1.1 million Rohingyas.

Tirumurti, addressing the issue of displaced persons from the Rakhine state of Myanmar, said India has the highest stake in resolving the issue of repatriation of the displaced persons since it is the only country that shares a long border with both Bangladesh and Myanmar.

"We have continued to counsel our partners on the need for a balanced and constructive approach to this issue. For this, mobilisation of support for the developmental needs of the local people is crucial. India has been consistently encouraging stakeholders to find practical and pragmatic solutions," he said. He emphasised the need for an early resolution of the issue of Rohingyas.

Underscoring that a "collaborative and consensus-based approach" is key to arriving at a meaningful and practical outcome, Tirumurti said the international community must work to address the challenges that the concerned stakeholders continue to face so that this humanitarian problem is resolved in a timely manner. **PTI**

Officials: 400 escape, 25 dead after Haiti prison breakout

AP ■ PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

Haitian authorities announced Friday that more than 400 inmates escaped and 25 people died in a prison breakout, making it the country's largest and deadliest one in a decade, with the prison director and a powerful gang leader among those killed.

Some believe on Thursday's jailbreak at the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison in north-east Port-au-Prince was to free gang leader Arnel Joseph, who had been Haiti's most wanted fugitive until his 2019 arrest on charges including rape, kidnapping and murder.

Joseph was riding on a motorcycle through the Artibonite area in the town of L'Estère on Friday a day after his escape when he was spotted at a checkpoint, police spokesman Gary Desrosiers told *The Associated Press*. He said Joseph pulled out a gun and died in an exchange of gunfire with police.

Joseph ruled Village de Dieu, or Village of God, a shantytown in downtown Port-

au-Prince, and other communities, including some in Artibonite, which is Haiti's largest department.

Authorities have not yet provided much details on the breakout except to say that 60 inmates have been recaptured and the investigation is ongoing. State Secretary Frantz Exantus said authorities have created several commissions to investigate who organized the breakout and why. Among those killed was the prison director, identified as Paul Joseph Hector.

Residents who declined to be identified because they feared for their life told the AP that they saw gunmen shoot at prison guards on Thursday before inmates escaped from the Croix-des-Bouquets penitentiary.

The prison is known for a 2014 breakout in which more than 300 of the 899 inmates being held there at the time escaped. Some believed that attack was designed to free Clifford Brandt, the son of a prominent businessman, who had been imprisoned since

2012 for allegedly kidnapping the adult children of a rival businessman. Brandt was captured two days later near the Dominican Republic border.

After the 2014 breakout, officials said they were taking steps to up security at the prison that Canada built in 2012, including installing security cameras and placing ankle monitors on the most dangerous prisoners. It wasn't immediately clear if any of those measures were taken. At the time of Thursday's breakout, the prison held 1,542 inmates, nearly twice its capacity.

Haiti's largest prison breakout in recent history occurred after the devastating 2010 earthquake in which more than 4,200 inmates fled the notorious National Penitentiary in downtown Port-au-Prince.

President Jovenel Moise tweeted on Friday that he condemned the most recent jailbreak and asked people to remain calm. He added that Haiti's National Police "is instructed to take all measures to bring the situation under control."

Onus of creating enabling environment for further progress rests with India: PM Khan

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday welcomed the ceasefire agreement with India but said the onus of creating an "enabling environment" for further progress rests with India. India must take necessary steps to meet the long-standing demand & right of the Kashmiri people to self determination according to UNSC resolutions," Khan tweeted.

India has told Pakistan that "talks and terror" cannot go together and has asked Islamabad to take demonstrable steps against terror groups responsible for launching vari-

ous attacks on India.

On Thursday, India said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan and is committed to resolving all issues bilaterally in a peaceful manner.

"On relations with Pakistan, as we have said earlier, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. We have always maintained that we are committed to addressing issues, if any, in a peaceful and bilateral manner," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said in New Delhi.

PTI

HOME THEATRE

Not a patch on the book or original movie



THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN
Netflix
***ing: Parineeti Chopra, Aditi Rao Hydari, Kirti Kulhari, Avinash Tiwary**
Rated: 5/10

Let's talk about the positives first. It starts off on a good note. The opening scene tells you that there is more to come and it is bound to be interesting — murder-crime thrillers are definitely a treat to watch. And this latest Parineeti Chopra film is no different. A girl on the train who watches the life of another woman and reminiscing her own and wishing it was her in place of that girl is normal enough. More so when our life is in shambles and nothing is going right. So far so good.

Unfortunately, as the movie progresses it starts to spiral out of control and goes off track. Of course the makers wanted to give a Bollywood feel to the film and hence the song and dance but there

was no need to let it deviate so much.

If the makers had gone with the name and copied most of the scenes, they might have stuck true to the book by British author Paula Hawkins 2015 novel of the same name. One doesn't understand the need to go for a twist that doesn't make much sense because there are so many gaps that are difficult to fill. However, if can manage to watch it like any other B-town movie and not look for answers that need to be addressed, The Girl On The Train manages to hold your attention. But there is a condition— one should have neither seen nor read the book by the same or watched the 2016 movie starring Emily Blunt. The character in the Hindi version is played by Chopra.

If by any chance one gas done either of the above, it will be a lost cause even if there is a deviation at the climax which is definitely a surprise.

— Shalini Sakseena

Guru-shishya parampara is what it's about

AAVARTAN
IMDB
***ing: Miroslaw Baka, Mateusz Banasiuk, Adrianna Chlebicka, Krzysztof Czeczot, Wojciech Kalarus, Tomasz Karolak, Jacek Knap, Anna Smolowik, Sebastian Stankiewicz**
Rated: 5/10

The latest film by writer-director Durba Sahay, who had made her debut as a director with The Pen, is a take on the guru-shishya parampara and how one cycle ends and the next begins. With danseuse Shovana Narayan in the lead, the one-hour-and-56 minutes are spent exploring the beautiful relationship that a gurus have with their shishyas and how sometimes ego and pride cone in the way of this beautiful and sacred relationship. But the whole premise behind an art form is to surrender to the art and

there is no place for egos here.

Through the four generations of passing on the tradition of who will lead the next generation of young dancers, Aavartan, which means a cycle, is interesting to watch — that a guru can be jealous of her pupil but manages to over come her insecurities via a story told to her by her guru.

Narayan may not be a great actor but there is no doubt where her skills lie — a brilliant Kathak dancer. Those who love classic dance forms, this movie is a treat to watch. To see Narayan dance so beautifully even though she is 70 years old is magical. It just goes to show that one can never take the art form from the artist whatever be the age. The dual towards the climax where she performs is absolutely riveting. One can see clearly why she is still the queen of her art.

Watch this one for some excellent footwork by Shovana Narayan.

— Shalini Sakseena



Plan Your Day



Pupper Party 4.0

Venue: Cafe 27, Kailash Colony, New Delhi
When: February 28, 2021
Time: 1 pm onwards
We are pumped and ready for yet another pupper party in our city! Join us for the Delhi Pupper Party 4.0.

Enjoy a thrilling Sunday with your pups. Let your pets chomp on a yummilicious doggy buffet, play fun games & win super gift hampers worth ₹2,200! All pets at the event get a dazzling Just Dogs voucher worth ₹975 and humans get a complimentary FNB Coupon with ₹100 with each ticket!

Ultra Run

Venue: Delta 105, Village Pada,Manesar, Gurugram, India
When: February 28, 2021
Time: 6 pm onwards
A run in the clean and green environs on the outskirts of Gurgaon.

Choose your distances from short and sweet 10K to herculean 24hrs ultra run or an experiential night run inside a safe Military themed campus- Delta 105.

Race Categories
Note: Crew supporting participants & accompanying

guests will have to buy Food-Coupons to order meals from the campsite kitchen.

Race Categories (check route map)

63.3Km Ultra Run (Feb 28 6 am start, cutoff 10hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹2,000

Full Marathon (Feb 28 6:15 am start, cutoff 7hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,400

Half Marathon (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000

10Km Run (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000



TELLY TALE

'I FEEL WAJID'S PRESENCE'

Zee TV has been a pioneer and a trend-setter in shaping television content over the past three decades and is all set to



change the face of music reality shows once again with its latest non-fiction property, the *Indian Pro Music League* (IPML). In what will be a clutter-breaking format innovation, Zee TV is all set to present audiences with the world's first-ever music league championship, starting February 26. While the world of sports has seen several league competitions, this unique music league will have six teams representing different regions of India, battling it out against each other in a musical championship.

Each of these six teams supported by leading Bollywood and sports celebrities will have top playback singers as their captains, one reality show star and one fresh voice. The likes of Mika Singh, Kailash Kher, Sajid Khan, Shaan, Ankit Tiwari, Javed Ali, Asees Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, AkritiKakar, Payal Dev, Neha Bhasin, Shilpa Rao have been signed on to captain the 6 zonal teams.

During the shoot of the grand premiere episode, everyone was ecstatic to kickstart the reality show. In fact, all the celebrities put their best foot forward and gave some splendid performances on the grand Indian Pro Music League stage. However, it was popular Bollywood composer, Sajid Khan's words that left everyone teary-eyed during the shoot. Sajid, his family, and the whole of Bollywood was dealt a huge blow last year when his brother Wajid Khan passed away suddenly. Participating in the *Indian Pro Music League* was actually Wajid's dream and not having him around made Sajid very emotional, after all, it was also his first reality show without him. On the stage, Sajid mentioned how he missed his

brother but also felt his presence on the stage, and hence, he is looking forward to making this show a huge success.

Sajid Khan who is the captain of Delhi Jammers mentioned on the stage, "Even when Wajid was hospitalized, he was constantly concerned about the show. Whenever I visited him, he kept telling me that we must work hard for the *Indian Pro Music League* and make it a success. Till date, I have never done a show without Wajid, but this is the first time I am coming without him on such a big show with so many star singers. However, I feel his presence here, I think he is always with me and that makes me extremely comfortable. I feel I am no one without him and I will work really hard and make him proud."

PACKAGE FULL OF MASTI

Get ready to witness showdowns in the upcoming episodes across & TV shows. In *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai*, Manmohan Tiwari (Rohitashv Gour) finds himself at crossroads with his beautiful Anita Bhabi (NehhaPendse) who is fighting a court case against him. Either way, Manmohan is



destined to lose! Whereas, Rajesh (Kamna Pathak) who tire to create a rift between her husband Happu Singh (Yogesh Tripathi) and Beni (Vishwanath Chatterjee) makes matters go out of hand in *Chatterji Ki Ultan Paltan*.

Bringing *aandhi* and *toofan* are the new visitors at Pappu's (Manmohan Tiwari) guest house in *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* with an announcement that there is a pot full of gold hidden in the haveli, followed by an exhausting treasure hunt. In *Santoshi Maa Sunaye Vrat Katahyein*, a time warp takes place bringing Indresh (Ashish Kadian) back to life and Swati (Tanvi Dogra) to justice. But will Asur Rani Paulomi (Sara Khan) give up without a fight?

Sharing more on the zesty details of the track, NehhaPendse *aka* Anita Bhabi shares: "If there is one woman who can influence Vibhuti Narayan Mishra (Aasif Sheikh) like Anita does, is Angoori Bhabi (Shubhangi Atre). When Tiwari *ji* tortures Tillu (Syed Salim Zaidi) under pandit *ji*'s orders, Anita gets furious and files a case against him. When Angoori convinces Vibhuti to fight Tiwari *ji*'s case against

Anita herself, things get heated."

Kamna Pathak *aka* Rajesh Singh says, "Beni and Happu's *dosti* is *pakki*! But Rajesh has triggered the two of them that will result in an ugly fight. The pair makes efforts to make each other feel jealous and ultimately refuse to talk.

Iss darar ke beech, will Rajesh and Kamlesh (Sanjay Chaudhury) be able to patch the two best buds? "Samta Sagar *aka* Sarla shares: "The Gupta family is used to Gudiya's frequent surprises. This time around she brings the previous owners of the house who got displaced a long time ago. They reveal that back in the day they hid a huge pot of gold in the house. After knowing about the treasure, Sarla is determined on finding the fortune."

Sara Khan *aka* Asur Rani Paulomi shares: "Swati along with the help of Santoshi Maa (Gracy Singh) has always fought her battles. But will Indresh support her after being emotionally blackmailed by his father Singhasan Singh (Sushil Sinha)? Asur Rani Paulomi will not let Santoshi Maa win and to find out how, the audience must stay tuned!"

WELCOME SARGAM ON SCREEN

Laughter is the best medicine to take stress away, and Sony Entertainment Television is making sure the audience gets a good dose, with the launch of its new show *Sargam Ki Sadhesatii*. The channel is all set to unveil a sitcom that encourages family viewing. Produced by Vipul Shah of Optimystix Entertainment, *Sargam Ki Sadhe Satii* brings forth the Awasthi household with Sargam as the *bahu*, and her unique *sasural* where she is the only woman among men.

The shenanigans of the Awasthis from Ghaziabad will throw viewers into giggle-fits, while also warming the hearts with relatable situations. Altogether, the Awasthi family will be seen elevating the most mundane situation — ones that viewers will easily relate to — into a whole lot of fun. The makers have chosen an eclectic cast, led by *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* actor Anjali Tatrari as Sargam and Kunal Saluja as Aparshakti Awasthi. The rest of the key cast members include names such as Darshan Jariwala, Sanat Vyas, Ojas Rawal, Yash Sehgal, Vishnu Bholwani, Akash Makhija, Yash Sehgal and Krish Chugh.

Sargam Awasthi is empathetic, rational, intelligent, selfless and a leader in essence, but for someone who becomes a homemaker, she faces two key challenges. Firstly, she does not know to cook, a stereotype that is often associated with a good *bahu*. Secondly, in her earnest desire to balance everything and to be a Jack of all trades at home, she keeps faltering here and there. Comical twists in the story happen as Sargam tries her best to be The Sadhesatii men include Sargam's husband Aparshakti Awasthi *aka* Appu, who is a small-time influencer for the world, but a *jugaadu* hero of his house. An aspiring actor, he is unabashedly disorganised and takes pride in being a multi-tasker.

"Dadaji" Anandilal Awasthi, also called 'sympathy seeker' due to his unending love for talking about his 'fake' ailments, is the oldest, but most youthful member of this mad-house. His favourite topic is his bowel movement!

'I waited for movies, got TV shows instead'

AYUB KHAN, who plays Guddu Mishra on *Ranju Ki Betiyaan* on Dangal TV speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his role in the series, how he got into acting and why he ventured into TV shows

■ What is your role in Ranju Ki Betiyaan?

I play Guddu Mishra; he is from Muzaffarpur, Bihar. He is someone who is respectful of his father and because of his father's wish to get married to a particular person, even though he doesn't agree to this, he gets married to Ranju (played by Reena Kapoor). She is timid and has no voice of her own. Ranju has four daughters. But my character is of a patriarchal mindset, he yearns for a son who can take his family name forward. Even though he respects his father, he wants to break the norm and achieve what he has wanted to do, dreaming of doing. Even though he has a wife and daughters, he gets married to another with whom he has two sons. His situation is unconventional but with a conventional marriage. This is a bit of dichotomy.

■ How did you get this project?

I had earlier done a show for Rashmi Sharma Telefilms titled *Shakti-Astitva Ke Ehsaas Ki*. The show was about a eunuch child. The role that was offered to me was challenging. The show was quite progressive and hence had agreed to do this show. I liked that my role was strong and all the twists and turns that happen are because of me.

■ What made you play Guddu Mishra?

Of course, the fact that while my character finds himself in a conventional marriage, the situation is unconventional. Second, the more important one is that the show is about a single working mother; something that is becoming prevalent in our society. More and more people are breaking out and craving a life for themselves. It is encouraging people to believe in their dreams and to strike out and make a living.

■ Was the fact that the role different from what you had done in the past also the attraction of taking up Ranju...?

More than the character that I was essaying, it was the concept of the show that had me take up the project. The concept is very interesting. I felt that the show is extremely progressive, that it has something to say. The part that has been offered here, I have something to say, there was a certain amount of identifiability here. I thought that the audience would get something out of it.

■ Do you think that people get impacted by what a show wants to say?

Yes, it does. When you pick up a subject like *Ranju*... when one wants to break the mindsets of people, if one tries to approach this aggressively, there is a possibility that one may be rejected. At times, at the cost of looking regressive, you slowly and gently push a thought process forward and steer him towards a path that is different from the present one. One has to achieve a



balance where you don't lose your audience and yet cater them towards progressive ideas.

■ You started off with films, what was the attraction of venturing into TV?

After doing films like *Mrityudand*, whatever that came my way after that was not all that exciting. The roles offered were not doing anything for me. I waited for two years to get work. Then came a time when I needed to work and met a person who was making a show, he appeared to be progressive with his ideas. He made the show *Muskaan* (1999). Once I started doing TV I realised that the commitment to TV is very heavy especially with daily soaps. With weekly, one could still do films. Once daily started, it became difficult to do films and TV. But if your character was not pivotal, one could still manage but the minute your role became central to the show, doing anything else, it was unfair to not be committed to one platform.

■ Is that why you haven't done movies in the recent past?

The funny part is; it is ironic but the truth is that every time I waited for a movie to come my way and it didn't and I took up a TV show, the very next day of shooting of the TV, I would get an offer of doing a film. I don't know whether it is luck or fate. Also, once you commit to a TV show, it requires full attention and one cannot plan in advance.

■ You have a film background. Was there ever a time when you wanted to be something else besides an actor?

Yes, definitely. There was a time when I wanted to be a fighter pilot — the whole idea of having so much power under you! But then my mother threatened and bullied me, I am the youngest of the siblings and since she could not bully them, she did it with me. I agreed not to pursue flying. But I have no regrets.

■ Is it important for an actor to find a connection with the character he is essaying?

Actually, what an actor needs to have in his arsenal is to understand different facets of life and society. To be able to understand different thought processes. Also, to be able to understand characters of people. If one is unable to do this, one is just playing a part that people may or may not be able to identify with. One learns a lot from society and people and an actor needs to learn from them.

■ What next?

I am open to any form of medium to work in. It is just that whenever it comes my way, I hope I am in a position to take them up. Let's see what is in store.



COLOUR ME DIFFERENT

From a 15-year-old who has designed a model that uses photographs to identify children afflicted with Down Syndrome to a 16-year-old who has been working with the transgender community to a 25-year-old IT professional who decided to work while on the move, the young are carving a niche for themselves and doing things differently. SHALINI SAKSENA tells you more

Photo reveals lot of information

SAANVI MEHRA (15)
THE SHRIRAM MILLENNIUM
SCHOOL, NOIDA

One would hardly associate a 15-year-old to work on a model that can detect Down Syndrome (DS) and prevent deaths. At present, 20,000 die with it in India. But this is precisely what Saanvi Mehra of The Shriram Millennium School has done. The 15-year-old who submitted her model to Google India Code Learn Contest 2020 not only won it in the Class IX-X category, but the model will be a boon for those suffering with DS.

Mehra chose this project because the DS prevalence in the country is estimated at roughly one out of every thousand children leading to over 30,000 children being born every year with this genetic disorder with survival rate standing at 44 per cent.

There is a more personal reason why Mehra chose DS as a project. It was during her mother's second pregnancy. It was suspected that the baby was at a high risk of DS.

"Fortunately, we were living in a metro and were privileged to be able to afford the necessary tests but I know this is not the



case for everyone. Since it was so personal to me, it struck me as something worth raising my voice. In India the penetration of smartphones is more than the basic healthcare; early detection of DS and treatment can change the lives of many," Mehra says.

The Class X student has always been inclined towards technology. She tells you that she came to know about the Google India Code Learn Contest when she was in Class VI.

"I had won the contest when I was in Class VI as well. It was for a book donation app called Vidyadaan that facilitates book donation. The app connects donors with those who need books utilising the surplus of books created each year. This year, I saw it was in the AI & ML category. They provided us with Google Cloud AutoML engine. I had a lot of time in my hand during the lockdown. I had also done a course in AI for Everyone by Andrew Ng. I was confident I would be able to showcase my talent," the 15-year-old who loves to read and cook tells you.

She took photographs from a dataset and statistics from the Internet to train an AutoML model using API which is the

visual AutoML. Children afflicted with DS have certain distinctive features like slanting eyes and flat nose bridge. She set these parameters and adjusted the sensitivity of each feature to determine DS. She trained, tested and deployed the model by repeatedly adjusting the sensitivity of each parameter.

She tells you that at present, there is no app only a model but she is working towards creating an app that will make things easier in the future. For now, she wants to test the clinical validity of the model. "I plan to test the validity of the model. All one has to do is send a photograph of the child to me. I will feed it into the model and do the test," Mehra says who started working on the model in October 2020.

At present, she is looking to broaden the dataset in a real time environment and make the process, background and lighting more uniform in existing photos that she has. The idea of taking a photo under set conditions makes it possible to ease the process and perfect the model before using it in real time.

"Suppose the parent had to use the model, I would ask the parent to go out in the open to take the photo so that the camera can recognise the facial features better," Mehra says who is interested in pursuing AI, ML, technology and loves to study Computer and Biology. She plans to apply for a double major or a dual degree. She tells you that as of now, she is in talks with doctors who have been impressed.

"They are interested in the accuracy but would like her to make the process more uniform and come to the hospital and take photos of kids with DS and check for accuracy and then run tests to see if the child is really afflicted with DS and take it to the next level," Mehra says.

SARANYA BHATTACHARJYA
(16)
THE SHRI RAM SCHOOL,
MOULSARI, GURUGRAM

For now, this 16-year-old has taken a break from what she loves doing — writing — something that she has been doing since she was nine years old. Saranya Bhattacharjya is busy preparing for her Class XI Boards. However, once she is done with her exams she will be back to writing poems.

What makes Bhattacharjya different from your average 16 year olds is that the proceeds from her poems titled *Clash With Reason* that got published recently will go towards raising funds for the transgender community via the Mitr Trust. The book is published by K2 Publishing and is available on Amazon and leading bookstores at ₹499.

The poems are a collection of everything that she has been writing in a Blog. "But when the present epidemic broke out in 2020, she understood that the condition of the transgenders was even worse. I had been interacting with the community for the past two-and-a-half-years through Mitr Trust run by Rudrani Chettri. I found out that these people didn't have access to basic necessities like food and medicine. That is when I decided to compile the poems that I had written in a book and get it published and raise funds for this community from the sale of the books. All the money that I will get from the sale will go towards bettering the lives of the transgender community," Bhattacharjya says who plans to pursue Humanities.



THE REASON WHY TRANSGENDERS ARE VIEWED DIFFERENTLY IS DUE TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON OUR PART. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT SINCE THEY ARE NOT WELL-EDUCATED, OUR PERCEPTION OF THEM IS DIFFERENT

In order to compile the book, she took the help of her friends with the art work to correspond with the poems that she has penned. However, this is not the first time that she has been published. Back in 2015, her poems

found their way into Global Citizen. She has also been published in her school magazine a few times and a text book in the North-east also finds a poem written by her. Her work with the transgen-

der community began at an event organised by the Angles Network that her mother started. This is where she met Chettri. Like most people, Bhattacharjya was also scared of the transgender due to the stigma attached to them. After her conversation with Chettri, Bhattacharjya's perception of the community changed.

"I admired the work that Chettri has been doing for this community. I wanted to know more — about their living conditions. I slowly understood that they are people like you and me and don't need the ridicule that they face daily. I found out that they are grossly misunderstood and treated as piranhas and outcasts when they shouldn't be," Bhattacharjya tells you.

A major part of her work entails spending time going to their homes and talking to them, finding out how their lives are different from ours and how one can better their lives. On her 15th birthday she collected all the money that she got and bought things that they needed.

"We have a lot to learn from them. They are far more empathetic. The most significant problem that they face is that they don't get jobs and opportunities to study," Bhattacharjya tells you.

Her friends are supportive of her since Gen Z is all about equal opportunity.

"There is still a long way to go. I have a few ideas on how I want to proceed further and will take it up once my exams are over. The reason why this community is viewed differently is lack of knowledge on our part. Another problem is that since they are not well-educated, our perception of them is different," Bhattacharjya says.

WORKING FROM A CYCLE

ANDREW MENEZES (25)
IT PROFESSIONAL, MUMBAI

What if someone were to tell you that it is possible to go on a long vacation, not till your boss that you are missing by continuing to work? While this may have not been possible a couple of years back, but the present pandemic and the work from home made it possible for an IT professional working with Oracle in Mumbai to do just this. And it was no ordinary travel plans. Meet 25-year-old Andrew Menezes, who took on the challenge of a pan-India cyclo-thon while working on the move.

When working from home became the new norm, Menezes, who loves to cycle and ride three-four days in a week, took it one step ahead. He attended zoom calls on the road at

roadside *dhabas* always completing his work for the day. Between October-December, 2020, Menezes along with his companion — his trusted cycle traveled over 3,000 km stopping at 23 cities.

"Before the lockdown last year, I used to play football but then group activities were banned so I took to cycling in the morning and evening. When October came, the weather changed for the better and I decided that instead of taking the same route why not just keep cycling and hit the highway. I was anyways working while on the move. Just went a step ahead, Menezes says.

This required him to have high speed data. He used his mobile hotspot. "The surprising part was that the reception on highways is much better than any city. Once I found that I could attend meeting and do the work assigned

for the day, all my fears were put to rest. This encourages me to cycle further. Some cities that I covered were Nashik, Indore, Ujjain, Chittorgarh, Ajmer and Agra.

Interestingly, he didn't tell anyone of his plans. Only his parents were on the know-how and that after he had reached Nashik who live in Mangalore. Once he told them, he had to keep in touch with them and let them know where he was and send daily updates of where he was and where he was staying. He told his bosses only in February that he had been missing from home and that he was on the move and working and that too because he was about to become news. They were shocked to hear his feat.

He tells you that it was not as tough as he had imagined. "Most of the people I met on the way were extremely helpful. I expected them to be hostile due to COVID-19. All *dhaba*



owners were helpful; they would carry my backpack; offer me tea and water," Menezes says.

The idea behind the ride was to see if he could travel and work at the same time. "I decided to make the road my home. To begin with, I just wanted to go to Rajasthan on a cycle and explore the State," Menezes says.

Of course, he had to budget himself. He set aside ₹800 as daily expenses including food and lodging. Where they were no hotels, he stayed in guest houses or even *dharamshala*. It took him 25 days to reach Delhi where he then spent a week before he cycled down to the South.

"It was not really a vacation. I only explore the city that I was in after I had completed my work for the day or during the weekends. Some of the things that I learnt

during my work on the move was that one doesn't have to necessarily be stuck to the chair to get the work done. Second, it is important to take small breaks. This is because the concept of work from home blurred the boundaries of work and home life destroying work-life balance. I had to achieve a balance which was a challenge. I had set a target and reach a village or a city, else I would be stuck on the highway at night. I would cycle 100 km a day. I also took the cycle for maintenance at every major city. The only time I had a major breakdown was near Chambal river and had to walk with the cycle till Morena," Menezes tells you. He is all set for another ride if work from home continues.

For him, the best food he ate was in Rajasthan. "It was tasty and spicy," Menezes says.

‘Who defines a good cricket surface?’ questions Ashwin

Indian off-spinner says all the talk around pitches being used in ongoing Test series is ‘getting out of hand’

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India off-spinner Ashwin Ravichandran on Saturday said that the talk around the pitches being used in the ongoing Test series against England is ‘getting out of hand.’

India edged ahead in the four-match series with a 10-wicket win over England in the third Test at the Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad, and a major talking point in the match was the pitch which offered sharp turn from day one.

While several former England cricketers questioned the nature of the Ahmedabad pitch, Ashwin questioned the narrative that is emerging.

“I think I have said that in the past as well, everyone is entitled to their opinion and I am not here to say that your opinion is right and it is wrong. The fact remains that the talk about the surface is getting out of hand,” said Ashwin in a virtual press conference on Saturday.

“Why would you talk about the surface and sell that to us time and time again? Is there any instance where the pitch has been talked about this much when we have played games in other countries.

“I somehow find it funny that when they speak about the surface, it immediately gets quoted all over in our press and this is the issue here. There have been instances, we have been to New Zealand, where both the Tests got over in a total of five days.”

Ashwin said that the talk around the pitch is unnecessary and there is no set rule on how a cricket pitch should behave over the course of a Test match.

“The bowler wins the game, the batsmen need to bat well to score runs. Who defines what a good surface is? Seam on the first day, then bat well in the next couple of days and spin on the last two days, come on, who makes these rules?”

“We need to get over it and if you are asking whether the pitch in the third Test was a good surface, I do not see any players of England coming out and complaining. You should be hoping for a good cricket match, not the surface,” he said.

Ashwin also cited a press conference of Virat Kohli during a South Africa tour where the India captain refused to blame the pitch for the results.

“There is a video doing the rounds where Virat Kohli is talking in South Africa and he says I am not here to talk about the pitch.

That is how we have been taught to play cricket, that’s why I say let them sell thoughts, buying is our choice,” he added, similar to the tweets he had put out on Friday.

The 34-year-old off-spinner, who has become second-fastest to 400 Test wickets, tweeted about “ideas being sold” to form public opinion.

“I am not disturbed with things being taken out of context. That is what has been happening for the last decade, if not more. That is why I put out the tweets I did yesterday (Friday). People need to get the context and what is happening,” said Ashwin.

“There have been people messaging me that the match has finished in two days. Every pink-ball game we have played has ended within three days. I do not know what to say, unfortunately, many people have not played the pink-ball game, so they will not understand this facet of the game.

“My angst against the whole thing is that someone says one thing, there are so many people watching the same picture but are not able to paint a different one as compared to someone who is driving a certain case and selling a certain case to us. This needs to stop,” he added.

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Ravichandran Ashwin has stopped bothering about landmarks “long, long time back” as his only endeavour currently is to work on his craft and be useful every time when he plays for India.

Ashwin has become the fourth Indian bowler to complete 400 wickets in Test cricket and was asked if surpassing ‘Peak 619’ could be a reality in coming years.

“If you look at it pragmatically, it’s 218 wickets away,” Ashwin, who is always good with words answered.

“For me, I have stopped thinking about all those landmarks and all long, long time ago.”

He said he is looking to become a better cricketer, every time he stepped on the field.

“It’s been about what I can do, how I can get better, what more I can offer to the team

because every time you come back into this setup, especially now that I am only playing Test cricket, it’s important to come back and offer to the team.”

Ashwin wants to be in this happy zone and enjoy his craft as he always does.

“I am looking to get better as an individual and cricketer. That’s probably one of the reasons why I am really, really happy and I am enjoying my game and probably the best I have done in the last 15 years. I would like to continue this phase and not think about too much else,” the bowler added.

Ashwin has been in the bio-bubble since the IPL and then has been part of the Australia series and the ongoing England series, and he said that is incredibly hard to be without family but in the same vein said that the team bonding has got better.

“I think without them (family) around it can be



incredibly hard. Yes, we get larger hotel spaces. We do get our entertainment area. We bond much better. One thing that stands out is that the fact that because of this bio-bubble the players are getting together more than ever. I think the team

bonding has gotten better,” he said.

Ashwin also said there was no apprehensions about playing the Pink Ball Tests.

Asked have the players spoken about the apprehension to the board about playing

pink-ball Tests, Ashwin said: “There is no apprehension. If there was apprehension, we would have expressed.”

He said it was all about adapting.

“This is a new facet that has been introduced to the game. We are used to playing with the red ball. We are conditioned to playing with the red-ball and now all of a sudden, they have got in the pink ball. The pink ball has got a new dimension to the game, so it’s about adapting,” he said.

“You play more and more and get used to it, the players are going to adapt better. The same thing with one-dayers. We were used to playing with the red ball and then shifted to the white ball. Initially, the white-ball was doing a lot. Now, it does nothing. That’s how this format will also evolve. Anything new is going to have a lot of challenges,” he elaborated.

Motera likely to escape ICC ‘Red Eye’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Motera track may have received a lot of flak after the pink ball Test ended inside two days but it is unlikely to attract any severe sanctions from the game’s governing body ICC with the pitch for the final game set to be a batting beauty.

With India 2-1 up in the four-Test series and needing a draw to qualify for the World Test Championship final at Lord’s from June 18-22, another turner is currently out of question as the home team will be aiming to take minimal risks as far as the track is concerned.

“Expect a good hard surface which will be firm and even bounce. It will be a batting beauty and since its a traditional red ball match, one can expect a very high scoring contest here from March 4-8,” a senior BCCI official privy to the developments told PTI.

Also the BCCI bigwigs along with the team management understands the fact that another dust bowl won’t augur



well for the new venue which is expected to host a lot of important matches during IPL as well as ICC T20 World Cup.

“If there are two matches played at the same venue, you can’t hold one result in isolation. Let the final Test be over and then only based on match referee Jaggal Srinath’s report can ICC decide its course of action.

Also as of now, the England team hasn’t lodged any official complaint,” the BCCI official

said.

If there has been one good and one bad pitch at the same venue, the ICC is unlikely to take any action. While India would be happy with a 3-1 margin, they will not require a result oriented turner as a draw would suffice their purpose.

Also the Indian team management doesn’t want to prepare a track that can ideally backfire on them in a very high-stake game of cricket.

Bumrah released from Test squad



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah will miss the fourth and final Test against England, beginning here on Thursday, as he was released from the Indian squad, owing to personal reasons.

The BCCI said no addition to India’s squad will be made

for the final Test at Motera.

“Jasprit Bumrah made a request to BCCI to be released from India’s squad ahead of the fourth Test owing to personal reasons,” BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a media release on Saturday.

“Accordingly, the fast bowler has been released and he will not be available for selection for the fourth Test.”

Bumrah has already been rested for the limited-over series, comprising five T20Is and three ODIs, beginning on March 12 here as part of the team’s extensive workload management programme.

The 27-year-old Indian pace bowling spearhead has been inside bio-secure bubble since August prior to the Indian Premier League in the UAE.

England all-rounder Chris Woakes also has left the Test tour without playing a match as part of the ECB’s rotation policy.

Shikha axed for SA series



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran medium pacer Shikha Pandey was on Saturday dropped from India’s ODI and T20 squads that will take on South African women in a twin series starting March 7.

The most debatable decision by the Neetu David-led selection committee, however, was the exclusion of teenage batting sensation Shafali Verma in the ODI squad which has plodders like skipper Mithali Raj and Punam Raut, whose strike-rates have come under the scanner time and again.

With 19 T20 Internationals under her belt and an amazing Women’s T20 World Cup last year, Shafali is a box-office cricketer.

“It will be interesting to know whether skipper Mithali Raj, who herself loves to bat at the top of the order and consumes more deliveries than permissible, had at all wanted Shafali in the ODI squad,” a senior BCCI official, who sounded miffed with the move, told PTI.

“Her absence means that India lack firepower save Harmanpreet and Smriti. We lost out on a big hitter,” he added.

The selectors, though, have included a lot of rookies based on their last season’s domestic performances as well as A and B team series against Bangladesh.

Rookie keeper-batsman

Shwetha Verma, along with the seasoned Sushma Verma, are the two keepers in both formats.

Pandey’s exclusion was more to do with the selectors wanting to check out the pace bowling bench strength and rookie right-arm medium pacers C Prathyusha and Monica Patel were included in both the squads.

There is also young seamer Simran Dil Bahadur, who is part of the T20 Internationals team.

Left-arm spinner Yastika Bhatia has made way for Ekta Bisht in the 50-over squad while Veda Krishnamurthy, after a prolonged lean phase, has been dropped from both squads.

ODI squad: Mithali Raj (Captain), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Yastika Bhatia, Harmanpreet Kaur, D Hemalatha, Deepti Sharma, Sushma Verma, Shwetha Verma, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Jhulan Goswami, Mansi Joshi, Poonam Yadav, C Prathyusha, Monica Patel

T20I squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Sushma Verma, Nuzhat Parveen, Ayushi Soni, Arundhati Reddy, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Mansi Joshi, Monica Patel, C Prathyusha, Simran Dil Bahadur.

Back to back hundreds for Shreyas

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Skipper Shreyas Iyer’s fluent 116 and an impressive show by India speedster Shardul Thakur powered Mumbai to a 67-run win over Rajasthan in an Elite Group D game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Saturday.

This was Mumbai’s fourth successive win, having earlier defeated Delhi, Maharashtra and Puducherry.

Opting to bat at the KL Saini stadium, Mumbai rode on Iyer’s 103-ball knock to post a competitive 317/7. The elegant right-handed batsman led from the front before his bowlers bundled out the opposition for 250 with Thakur (4/50) doing the bulk of the damage.

Iyer anchored the innings before toying with the Rajasthan attack, scoring his second century of the tournament with the help of 11 fours and three sixes.

He found able partners in Sarfaraz Khan (30) and



Suryakumar Yadav (29), who played their roles to perfection.

For Rajasthan, left-arm spinner Shubham Sharma (3/59) did the bulk of the damage.

Chasing 318, Manender Singh (40) and Mahipal Lomror (76) tried to take the game deep with their 101-run third-wicket stand, but medium pacer Akash Pankar broke the partnership after trapping Singh in front of the wicket.

Shardul castled Lomror to leave Rajasthan at 160/4.

From thereon, it was an uphill task for Rajasthan and they were eventually bowled out for 250.

In other matches of the group, India opener Shikhar Dhawan’s 153 helps Delhi beat Maharashtra by three wickets at Savai Mansingh Stadium. While Puducherry win by 104 runs against Himachal Pradesh.

PRERAK SLAMS 174

Kolkata: In Group E clash, middle-order batsman Prerak Mankad took Eden Gardens by storm with a sensational 174 to power

Saurashtra to a 62-run win over Chandigarh. The 26-year-old plundered six sixes and 16 fours in his knock from 130 balls to propel Saurashtra to a massive 388 for 7 after Chandigarh opted to bowl.

In reply, Chandigarh, who have been impressive in their debut Elite season with three wins on the trot, could manage 326 for 7.

The win helped Saurashtra consolidate their lead with 16 points, four clear of Chandigarh to close in on a quarterfinal spot.

The No 4 batsman paced his innings brilliantly taking 53 balls for his half-century before he stepped up to race to his second List A century in the next 39 balls.

There was no stopping Prerak as he took another 27 balls to cruise to 150. He was dismissed by Jagjit Singh in the final over but the damage had been done.

Chasing the target, Chandigarh skipper Manan Vohra (50) and Arslan Khan (61) put on a century-plus stand and then Ankit Kaushik chipped in with 54

but it proved too little in the end. In other games, Services beat Haryana by 112 runs and Bengal win by 82 runs against Jammu & Kashmir.

UK, ASSAM WIN

Chennai: Uttarakhand notched up their fourth straight win beating Mizoram by eight wickets in their Plate group match.

Uttarakhand are currently on top of the standings with 16 points from four matches, sharing the position with Assam, who won their match against Sikkim by four wickets.

Leg-spinner Dikshansu Negi took 6 for 21 in a brilliant bowling performance to help Uttarakhand bundle out Mizoram for a paltry 117.

In reply, Uttarakhand knocked off the required runs in just 10.5 overs.

In another match, Assam chased down a target of 246 set by Sikkim in the 48th over to maintain their all-win record in the group.

Gayle returns to Windies T20I side

PTI ■ ST JOHN’S

Veteran batsman Chris Gayle has returned to the West Indies squad for the first time in nearly two years for the three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka, beginning on March 3.

The 41-year-old top-order batsman was recalled to the 14-man squad under Kieron Pollard on the basis of his good performances in recent tournaments, including the IPL and Pakistan Super League.

Senior fast bowler Fidel Edwards, 39, is also back in the national squad after a nine-year

hiatus.

The three matches of the T20I series will be played on March 3, 5, and 7 at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua, which will be making its International debut.

The big-hitting Gayle last played for West Indies in their home series against India in August 2019 after



the 50-over World Cup that year.

He had earlier said that the 2019 World Cup matches would be his last appearances for West Indies.

“Chris Gayle has performed very well in recent tournaments and the selection panel thinks that he can still add great value to our team,” Roger Harper, Cricket West Indies’ (CWI) lead selector, said.

“As we build towards the defence of the T20 World Cup, the opportunity is being taken to determine our best team and squad as we go forward.”

The selection panel also named the squad for the ODI series against the visiting Sri Lankans to be played between March 10-14 at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua.

All-rounder Andre Russell is recovering from contracting Covid-19, and despite testing

negative over a week ago has been ruled out of the T20 series.

A West Indies spokesman added that fast bowlers Sheldon Cottrell and Oshane Thomas, along with batsman Shimron Hetmyer and all-rounder Roston Chase have all failed to reach the minimum fitness standard in time to be considered for selection.

T20I squad: Kieron Pollard (c), Nicholas Pooran, Fabian Allen, Dwayne Bravo, Fidel Edwards, Andre Fletcher, Chris Gayle, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Evin Lewis, Obed McCoy, Rovman Powell, Lendl Simmons, Kevin Sinclair.

ODI squad: Kieron Pollard (c), Shai Hope, Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Kyle Mayers, Jason Mohammed, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, Kevin Sinclair.

New Covid case changes NZ-Aus T20I schedule

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

A community coronavirus outbreak in Auckland has forced New Zealand cricket bosses to hastily reschedule two T20 matches against Australia as other affected sports assessed their options.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has ordered Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city and the centre of the outbreak, into a seven-day lockdown from Sunday, requiring people to stay at home except for essential shopping and work.

The remainder of the country faces Level Two restrictions which limit the size of public gatherings.

A New Zealand Cricket spokesman said the third match in the current T20 series, to be played in Wellington on



Wednesday, will go ahead but without spectators.

Game four, scheduled for Auckland on Friday, has been moved to Wellington and, again, will be played behind closed doors.

The spokesman said they would wait for Government advice on whether crowd restrictions are to be lifted before deciding if there will be spectators at the final game of the series in Tauranga on Sunday.

20 NOT OUT

Dias, Stones score in Man City's record extending win as Pep's men go 13 points clear at top of the table

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola rates Manchester City's 20-game winning run as one of the greatest achievements of his glittering career.

City moved 13 points clear at the top of the Premier League with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over West Ham at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

Guardiola's side are unbeaten in 27 games and their run of 20 successive victories in all competitions is a record for an English top-flight side.

The Spaniard has won 29 trophies as a manager with Barcelona, Bayern Munich and City, including consecutive Premier League titles in 2018 and 2019.

But Guardiola believes City's



John Stones celebrates with his Manchester City teammate Ruben Dias after he scores his side's second goal against West Ham

@premierleague

remarkable winning streak this season, amid a pandemic and despite injuries to Sergio Agüero and Kevin De Bruyne, is up there with his finest moments.

"It is so difficult. Twenty in this period, in this era, with this situation around the world. To be able to do 20 is maybe one of the greatest achievements we have done together in our careers," Guardiola said.

"That doesn't mean we will win titles but we have not had

one week's rest in three months. A game every three days, with the Covid situation, injury situations — to make this winning run shows mental strength."

City weren't at their best against in-form West Ham, but Guardiola was delighted with the way they fought for the points.

"We didn't paint something nice but there are many of these games during the season," he

said. "It was obvious to every person who saw the game it was really tough. The opposition is incredible, well composed."

"So, a big compliment to West Ham. After 26 fixtures they were in the Champions League positions. They have everything."

"It was a really tough game but that is good for us for the coming games, to realise what is going to happen."



STONES FIRES

Pep Guardiola's side are closing in on their third Premier League title in four seasons thanks to priceless contributions from their in-form centre-backs.

Ruben Dias, imperious since signing from Benfica in September, put City ahead with his first goal for the club.

Michail Antonio equalised for West Ham just before half-time, but the revitalised Stones

bagged the winner with a fine strike after the break.

City are enjoying the longest ever winning streak by an English top-flight team, with 14 of those 20 victories coming in the league to leave their title rivals trailing in their wake.

"It was really difficult. After 10-15 minutes today we realise we are not going to paint anything beautiful," Guardiola said.

"Second half we were much better than the first half. When you play a lot of games, in the league and then the Champions League, this is normal. We were lucky to get all three points. The mathematics matter at the end of the season."

Second placed Manchester United and third placed Leicester can close the gap back to 10 points if they beat Chelsea and Arsenal respectively on Sunday.

But it is hard to imagine anyone catching City over the last 12 games of the season. They survived a stern test from fourth placed West Ham and ominously for the rest of the league, Sergio Agüero returned to the City starting line-up for the first time in four months.

Once he gets his sharpness back, City's record goalscorer will provide a boost to their bid to win an unprecedented quadruple. West Ham had won seven of their previous nine league games, but even they couldn't halt City's relentless march to the title.

BHA MISS TWO FROM SPOT

Elsewhere, West Brom kept their hopes of avoiding the drop alive with just a second win in 13 games under Sam Allardyce in a game overshadowed by a surreal moment of refereeing by Lee Mason that cost Brighton an equaliser. Kyle Bartley's early header was enough for West Brom to seal the tie.



Moise Kean celebrates with his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe after scoring his side opening goal against Dijon

@PSG_English

Mbappe ensures PSG bounce back vs Dijon

AP ■ DIJON

French league top-scorer Kylian Mbappe scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain routed rock-bottom Dijon 4-0 to move up to second place on Saturday.

PSG was two points ahead of Lyon, which could reclaim second spot it wins on Sunday.

Moise Kean gave visiting PSG the perfect start after five minutes. Mbappe and defender Abdou Diallo combined down the left to find near the penalty spot the Italy striker, who shifted the ball onto his right foot and squeezed it inside the right post.

Mbappe netted a penalty in the 32nd following a handball and has converted all five he has taken this season.

Five minutes after the break, he clipped the ball into the bottom left corner after neatly being set up by Rafinha for his 18th goal. Center half Danilo headed in the fourth from a corner late on.

Elsewhere, Metz hit two late goals to win at Bordeaux 2-1 with a last-minute goal from Cape Verdean forward Vagner.

Metz's improvement under coach Frederic Antonetti continued as it rose to fifth place, while Bordeaux's fifth defeat in six games left it mired in mid-table.

Striker Samuel Kalu put Bordeaux ahead in the 13th from Youssouf Sabaly's cross. After defender Thomas Delaine equalized in the 71st with a fine curling shot from the left, Vagner met Thierry Ambrose's cross at the back post.

On Sunday, Marseille's fans will be in a better mood for the home game against Lyon after unpopular president Jacques-Henri Eyraud was replaced and Jorge Sampaoli was named as the new coach.

Lille faces lowly Strasbourg and Monaco looks to make it 12 league games unbeaten when it hosts Brest.

Niko Kovac's Monaco side has not lost since mid-December and comfortably won at PSG at 2-0 last weekend.

Lyon will move top on goal difference if it wins and Lille loses.

Messi keeps Barca alive in title race

AFF ■ SEVILLE

Barcelona reignited their title hopes after Lionel Messi and Ousmane Dembele scored in a 2-0 victory over Sevilla on Saturday to put them two points behind Atletico Madrid.

Atletico still have two games in hand, the first of those coming against sixth-placed Villarreal on Sunday, but a dip in form from La Liga's leaders has given their chasing rivals hope.

Barca looked dead and buried a few weeks ago but this was their ninth win out of 10 in La Liga, a surge that has put them back in contention, with Atletico playing against Real Madrid next weekend.

Sevilla started the day as arguably the form team at the top,



Lionel Messi scores Barcelona's second goal against Sevilla during La Liga clash

AP

having won all of their last six league games, the last five of those without conceding a goal.

But they were second best at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan, a

dominant performance from Barcelona exposing them still as slightly short of Spain's top three.

It also creates an intriguing back-drop to Wednesday's Copa

del Rey semi-final second leg when these two teams meet again, with Barca hoping to overturn a 2-0 deficit at Camp Nou.

Pedri and Ronald Araujo could be doubts after both were substituted in the second half with what looked like injury problems.

Coach Ronald Koeman could well stick with his new 3-5-2 system, which saw Jordi Alba and Sergino Dest playing as wing-backs ahead of a back three and Dembele deployed up front alongside Messi.

Without Antoine Griezmann, who dropped to the bench, Koeman sacrificed some creativity in the final third for control through the middle, not to mention the threat of Dembele in behind.

Odisha down East Bengal in 11-goal thriller

PTI ■ BAMBOLIM

Odisha FC prevailed over SC East Bengal 6-5 in a crazy 11-goal thriller as the Indian Super League on Saturday recorded the most goals in a match through teams whose season was blighted by their inability to score.

Doubles from two Indian youngsters Paul Ramfangzauva (49', 66') and Jerry Mawihmingthanga (51', 67') enabled Odisha to end the season on a high, with S Lalhrezuala (33') and Diego Mauricio (69') chipping in.

Goals from Anthony Pilkington (24'), Aaron Joshua Holloway (60', 90'), Jeje Lalpekhlua (74') and an own goal from Ravi Kumar (37') made up East Bengal's tally.

However the result had no effect on the points table.

Deepak signs off with Silver

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Deepak Kumar's stupendous run at the 72nd Strandja Memorial tournament ended with a Silver medal in Sofia, Bulgaria after he lost a fiercely-contested flyweight (52kg) final on Saturday.

Deepak, an Asian Silver-winner, was up against Bulgaria's Daniel Asenov, a two-time European championships Gold-medallist. The bout ended in a split verdict in favour of the local favourite.

The Indian had created quite a flutter in the tournament when he stunned reigning Olympic and world champion — Uzbekistan's Shakhobidin Zoirov — in his semifinal showdown.

On Saturday, the Bulgarian seemed the busier of the two boxers in the opening round and was sharper in his counter-attacking game.

Asenov's consistently high guard also denied Deepak a clear shot for most part.

Deepak's second round was better and he also put up a stronger defensive performance but the judges ruled in favour of Asenov.

In the final three minutes, however, it was Deepak who called the shots for most part, effortlessly dodging his rival's relentless attacks and also launching some strong ones of his

own.

But Asenov, despite being visibly jaded, had done enough to seal the issue by that point.

"It is disappointing that I could not win the Gold but these last few days have been nothing short of a dream come true. I was determined to make a mark in this tournament especially when I got an opportunity to play against a Champion opponent like Shakhobidin Zoirov in the semis. I am very happy that I could come out a winner. Though a lot of work still needs to be done and I will be focusing on it along with my coaches as I go return to India," Deepak added.

A Naib Subedar in the Indian Army, Deepak is also a former India Open Gold-medallist.

Earlier, Naveen Boora (69kg) settled for a Bronze medal after going down to Asian Games Gold medallist Bobo-

Usmon Baturov of Uzbekistan in his semifinal bout.

With this, India signed off with two medals at the event this year, one less than what the country managed in the previous edition.

None of the Indian women boxers could make the medal rounds and were eliminated by the quarterfinal stage.

SA women's team arrive

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The visiting South African women's team have arrived in the city on Saturday to play five one-day international and three T20 international matches against host India at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana International Stadium. The South African team directly went to their hotel, where they will be in quarantine till March 5. Indian players have already reached Lucknow and are under quarantine in a hotel on Kanpur Road. The first match will be played on March 7.

UPCA COO Deepak Sharma confirmed that the third T20I will also be a day/night affair. The first proper test of flood-lights was also done on Saturday and the expert showed satisfaction.

Ekana Sports City CMD Uday Sinha said all the preparations have been completed.

"The pitch is ready and there are adequate sanitisation arrangements. We are expecting to get Indian Premier League matches and women's series will help us better understand the bio-bubble compliance," he said. As per sources, Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association is mulling to allow few spectators with complete adherence to Covid-19 protocol. However, there has been no official word yet. "Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association officials have still not confirmed the entry of spectators but if they do, we are ready to welcome them with full Covid-19 guidelines," Sinha added.

Teams (from):

India: (ODI) Mithali Raj (C), Smriti Mandhana, Jamiema Rodrigues, Poonam Raut, Priya Poonia, Yastika Bhatia, Harmanpreet Kaur (VC), D Hemlata, Deepti Sharma, Sushma Verma (wk), Shweta Verma (wk), Radha

Yadav, Rajeshwari Gaikwad, Jhoolian Goswami, Mansi Joshi, Poonam Yadav, C Pratyusha, Monika Patel.

(T20) Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana, Jamiema Rodrigues, Shefali Verma, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Poonam Raut, Ayushi Soni, Yastika Bhatia, D Hemlata, Deepti Sharma, Sushma Verma (wk), Nujhat Parveen (wk), Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gaikwad, Mansi Joshi, Poonam Yadav, C Pratyusha, Simran Bahadur, Arundhiti Reddy.

South Africa: Anneke Elizabeth, Tazmin, Trisha, Nadine, Tshogafatso, Lara, Sinalo, Marizanne, Ayabonga, Kgosomang Hilton, Lizelle, Sune Elbie, Nonkululeko, Sedibu Joseph, Pokie Abram, Tumi Sphindile, Shabnim, Nondusimo Precious, Molebatsi Phelane, Mignon, Zane, Laura, Kokets Thebe, Faye, Zahid.

Stage set for \$15,000 ITF men's event in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow will become the first city in Asia to host an inter-professional tennis event after tennis events across the globe were cancelled after the Covid-19.

Uttar Pradesh Tennis Association (UPTA) will host the World Tennis Tour (WTT) ITF Men's \$15000 event at the Vijayantkhand Mini Stadium from February 28 - March 7. It will also be the first time that Lucknow will host an International Men's tennis event. Earlier the city has hosted 3 ITF women's event.

With international Tennis resuming worldwide, All India

Tennis Association under the guidance of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs in association with the UPTA took the lead in starting international events in India said tournament Director Punit Agarwal.

The men's circuit after Lucknow will be held at Indore, Pune and Delhi giving tournament starved Indian tennis players an opportunity to gain international tennis points.

Players who have not had an opportunity to play competitive tennis are raring to go, over 41 players signed in for the Qualifying draw which can only accommodate 32 players. While 21 Indians will feature

qualifying alongside 5 foreigners from Great Britain, Ireland, Moldova and Italy.

While 26 players made it to the qualifying draw on their ranking strength 6 other players namely include Ashutosh Tiwari, Anand Prakash, Arnab Alok Goyal, (All from UP). Vishnu Vardhan (Former Olympian), Ajay Malik, Lakshit Sood were awarded the wildcard. 8 players from the qualifying round which will be played over the next 2 days will make it to the main draw.

The president of UPTA Navneet Sehgal visited the courts to inspect the arrangements for this international on Saturday.

SINGLES

NO FANS ALLOWED FOR PUNE ODIS

PUNE: The three-match ODI series between India and England in Pune will be played without spectators due to a spike in Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra, the state cricket association said on Saturday. The three matches are slated to be played at the MCA Stadium in Gahunje on the outskirts of the city on March 23, 26 and 28.

GERMANY THRASH INDIAN WOMEN'S 5-0

DUSSELDORF: World No 3 Germany blanked the Indian women's hockey team 5-0 in their first game of the four-match tour here on Saturday. Pia Maertens (10', 14'), Lena Micheel (20'), Pauline Heinz (28') and Lisa Altenburg (41') found the back of the net for the hosts. The second match will take place on Sunday.

YUSUF, VINAY TO PLAY FOR INDIA LEGENDS

RAIPUR: Former India cricketers Yusuf Pathan, Naman Ojha and Vinay Kumar, all of whom recently announced their retirements, will feature in the India Legends team in the 'Road Safety World Series' starting here on March 5. Former Sri Lankan swashbuckling opener Sanath Jayasuriya will be playing for the Sri Lanka Legends. "Sri Lanka Legends have also included Sanath Jayasuriya, Russel Arnold and Upul Tharanga in their team led by Tilakratne Dilshan," a media release said.

LAMICHANNE REPLACES RASHID IN LAHORE

ISLAMABAD: Leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichanne of Nepal has replaced Afghanistan's Rashid Khan in Lahore Qalandars squad for the remainder of the Pakistan Super League. The 20-year-old Lamichanne has previously represented Lahore in seven games of Pakistan's premier T20 league in 2019. Rashid left for national duty after featuring in Lahore's victories against Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi in the first two matches.

POPYRIN CRUSHES CILIC'S TITLE HOPES

SINGAPORE: Australia's Alexei Popyrin took out third seed Marin Cilic in an absorbing contest at the Singapore Open on Saturday, prevailing 7-6 (5), 7-6 (2) over the Croat to make it to his first ATP Tour final. Popyrin let out a huge roar after sealing his victory in front of 250 fans, who were allowed to attend the tournament after passing Covid-19 tests. "I worked my whole life to get into an ATP final and I'm finally in one tomorrow. It's definitely an amazing feeling but I got one more match to go and I want to focus on that," said the world number 114.

INDIAN MEN'S SKEET TEAM WINS BRONZE

CAIRO: The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the Bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the ISSF Shotgun World Cup here. The Indians beat the Kazakhstan team of David Pochivalov, Eduard Yechshenko and Alexandr Mukhamediyev 6-2 in the Bronze medal match on the third competition day of the ISSF tournament.

MINISTRY RESTORES RECOGNITION OF GFI

NEW DELHI: The Sports Ministry has restored the recognition of the faction-ridden Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI) after 10 years, taking into records Sudhir Mittal's election as president in the polls held in November 2019. The recognition has been granted for the period till December 31, this year. The GFI was de-recognised by the ministry in 2011 because of infighting in the body and since then it remained so till the ministry's order on Friday to recognise it.

7 DAYS QUARANTINE IN DELHI FOR UK SHOOTERS

NEW DELHI: The quarantine period for shooters from the United Kingdom, who are going to participate in the upcoming ISSF World Cup in Delhi, will be seven days instead of two weeks. A source close to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said that the federation has got a positive feedback from the concerned authorities after it had requested for seven days hard quarantine for the shooters from UK. The combined world cup for rifle, pistol and shotgun shooters is scheduled to be held at the national capital's Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range from March 18-29. AGENCIES

Iga crushes Bencic in Adelaide final

AFF ■ ADELAIDE

French Open tennis champion Iga Swiatek crushed world No 12 Belinda Bencic in straight sets to claim the Adelaide International at Memorial Drive on Saturday.

The 19-year-old Pole was in ruthless form as she downed her Swiss opponent 6-2, 6-2 to claim the second title of her career.

Swiatek burst onto the scene at Roland Garros last year when she claimed the French Open crown, defeating then world No 6 Sofia Kenin in the final.

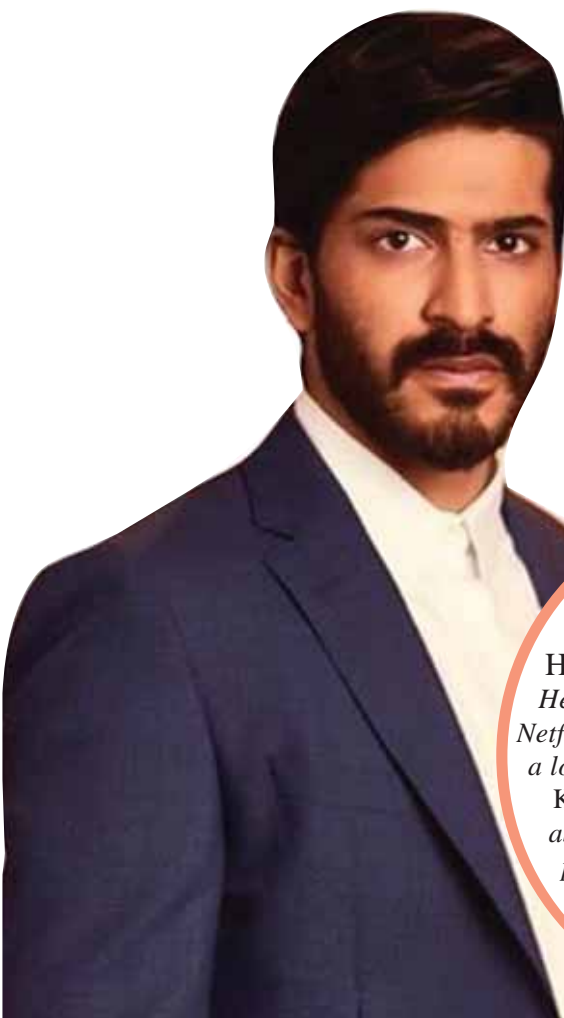


Iga Swiatek celebrates with her team after win in Adelaide final

@iga_swiatek

Swiatek went into the tournament as world No 18 but will now rise to a career-high 15th as a result of the win, her first hard-court title. The women's doubles final

was won by Chilean-US pair Alexa Guarachi and Desirae Krawczyk, who beat Hayley Carter of the US and Brazil's Luisa Stefani 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 10-3.



‘I don’t take acting advice from my father’

■ **What is keeping you busy these days?**

I am towards the end of shooting for a Netflix Original project. I can't reveal too much details, but it is a thriller drama. It stars myself, Anil Kapoor, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Mukti Mohan and Satish Kaushik. It will release towards the end of this year. I have also shot a film for Vasanth Bala.

Talktime

HARSH VARRDHAN KAPOOR
He was recently seen in AK VS AK on Netflix, though short, his role is receiving a lot of appreciation from the audience. Kapoor speaks with Musba Hashmi about the show-stealing monologue, people drawing comparisons with his father and how he doesn't take acting advice from him

It's a dark comedy. It stars Radhika Madan and I. It is also a Netflix film and will release sometime in May.

■ **Your monologue AK VS AK caught a lot of attention. Some memories that you have to share.**

When I got the film, though the part was small, but it was a seven-page long script. If I talk about the monologue, it was a unique one because the character was putting on a performance for Anurag Basu. I got the material and worked on it. I was trying to create a character of myself. In reality, I am not at all like it. It's just that the character is called Harsh and is Anil Kapoor's son, but apart from that I don't share any similarities with it. I am not an extrovert or an attention seeking person in my real life. I just played it like any other character. That was all the preparation part. Not to mention, it was great to be together in a project with dad, Sonam and Boney *chacha* which was directed by Vikramaditya Motwane. I have always dreamt of something like this. Also, I have done a lot of improvisations in it and it came out well.

Acting is a personal thing and you can't take tips from anyone. It is about you and how you play the character. Everyone has their way of playing a character. If we talk about the monologue in AK VS AK, I can't ask my dad how will he do it. It is personal and you have to do it your way

■ **When you started back in 2016, did you have the fear of people drawing comparisons with your father?**

I don't want to waste time or energy thinking about the comparisons being made. I don't want to spend my career trying to replicate what my father did in the 80s and 90s. I am different. I know whenever you try to do something different it takes people time to understand it, but eventually your work speaks for itself. My focus is on doing unique and progressive films and that is what I am working towards.

■ **Are you careful about your career choices or do you believe in going with the flow?**

I don't strategise a master plan to choose films on the basis of how much it will earn at the Box Office and how much fame I will get from it. My thinking is if I like Vasanth's film *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota*, I know if he is offering me a film it will be different from the previous ones. I know he will push me to deliver, just like Vikram did for *AK VS AK*.

■ **Is there a lesson you learnt in the industry?**

I realised that a movie's success is

judged by the amount of money it has made at the Box Office. This, for me, is a strange fact. I always wonder how only money and not the hard work of the team and the meaning of the film matters. If a film earns good, it gets good reviews. If it doesn't, the reviews will also reflect the same. This is what I have learnt in the industry.

■ **An advice that your father has given to you.**

It's a simple one: Be true to yourself and don't try to imitate anyone.

■ **Do you go to him for tips and tricks related to acting?**

I have always been saying this that acting is a personal thing and you can't take tips from anyone. It is about you and how you play the character. Everyone has their way of playing a character. If we talk about monologue in *AK VS AK*, I can't ask my dad how will he do it.

Because it is personal and you have to do it your way. But when it comes to career choices, yes I do take advice from him because of his expertise in the field. I do discuss projects with him before taking one up.

YOUNGEST AUTHOR & A GRANDMASTER IN WRITING

SHALINI SAKSENA chats up seven-year-old ABHIJITA GUPTA, world's youngest author and the first Indian kid to ink a four-book deal



youngest author to write poetry and prose.

Gupta began writing at age five. Hailing from the third generation of the renowned poet — Rashtrakavi Maithilisharan Gupta and Santkavi Siyaramsharan Gupta, Gupta has a flair for creativity. She penned her first book amid the COVID-19 lockdown. Titled *Happiness All Around*, it is a book that has short stories and poems with illustrations. The kids love reading this one. The only daughter of proud parents — Ashish Gupta and Anupriya Gupta, Gupta lives in Ghaziabad and studies in Class II, Presidium School

I LOVE TO WRITE. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I WRITE ALL THE TIME. THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I DON'T WRITE ANYTHING; THEN THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I WRITE LATE INTO THE NIGHT. NOT THAT I AM FORCED TO. MY PARENTS, IN FACT, WANT ME TO ENJOY MYSELF

Indirapuram.

She tells you that she doesn't know when and how she got interested in writing but just one day she came up with a story that she wanted to write and asked her parents for a pencil and notebook. "From that day onwards, I developed interest in expressing myself and there has been no stopping me. I love to write. But it doesn't mean that I write all the time. Sometimes, there are days when I don't write anything; then there are times when I write late into the night. Not that I am forced to. My parents, in fact, want me to enjoy myself. But they also understand that I need to express myself and

support me," Gupta tells you.

Her mother, Anupriya, an engineer-turned-entrepreneur tells you that they never force their daughter to write. "We want her to have a normal childhood and enjoy doing things that kids this age are interested in. She is the one who gets down to writing at odd hours of the day. Sometimes, she will write at night. We are extremely proud of her and will continue supporting her in every leg of her writing journey," Anupriya says.

Believe it or not but this author doesn't need anybody's help when she gets stuck while writing and tells you that she doesn't go to anybody when she has no idea how to proceed further. She just racks her brains and begins from scratch.

She tells you how writing her book was literally a child's play since she loves writing. "I didn't have any problems because writing is something which I love to do. I get ideas from my surroundings, whatever I see, hear or feel. Since I love to write, it doesn't matter whether it is prose or poetry," She says.

Strangely enough she doesn't want to be a writer when she grows up even though English is her favourite subject. "I want to be a paediatrician so that I can help needy people but yes I will continue writing as a hobby. I see so many people who don't get proper treatment because they can't afford the fees. I want to be a doctor and help such people," Gupta says.

Her first book was received with much fanfare among her friends and family. "They are excited and happy to read my books," says Gupta, who launched her second book last week.

Titled *We Will Surely Sustain*, the book is about the pandemic affected life of kids during this period.

"I decided to write this because I feel that all the kids must have gone through a difficult phase and so was I and I thought of expressing this through this book. And the money that I will get, I will donate some of it to the needy people," Gupta says.



‘I learnt music on how to be more disciplined’

National Award winner music composer, SHASHWAT SACHDEV, makes his singing debut with Machlo. He speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about what made him take to singing, why he came back to India and Bollywood journey

■ **You are a composer-producer. What made you take to singing?**

I started learning Hindustani Classical Vocal at a very young age, I was three and continued to do so for 21 years from my guru Ustad Ramzan Khan *saheb*. I also learnt Western piano for 10 years. Singing, therefore is an integral part of my composing and producing. Hence, I have always been singing.

■ **How was the experience of being at the other end of the studio?**

I have also been recording on a misra are normal for me. Most of the tracks that I produce, compose and record are sung by me; before anybody else records them even though this is only a small part of producing music.

■ **How did your music journey begin?**

My parents were very particular that I learn music as part of how to be more disciplined in life. I moved to Mumbai in 2017. My first was Phillauri and released the same year. Learning Indian classical music is important. I believe it is part and parcel of life in people who are from small towns. For me, music began as a hobby; it was much later that I decided to take it up as a profession. Producing and composing for films is the most important part in the business. I am glad and blessed that I am getting an opportunity to work with the industry.

■ **You worked on a few projects in the US. Why come back to India?**

I had worked on huge projects in the US. But there were smaller aspects of these projects that I was working on. I was not getting an opportunity to express my creativity or be the kind of music I wanted to do. Since I had so much training in Indian music everybody told me I should be making Indian music. Hence, I came back.

■ **How did you end up in Bollywood?**

I met Rhea Kapoor (film producer) in 2016 and motivated me to come back to India. She gave me a project that she was working on. This was the beginning for me. I am extremely grateful to her that this project kickstarted my journey in the industry. I will forever remain indebted to her. The opportunity that she gave me helped me gain confidence and believe in myself that I had a future here. It gave me courage and fearlessness to continue on this path.

■ **You have composed for web series, TV series and films. How are the three platforms different?**

In the long format, the opportunity to express oneself is much longer. However, the long format shows are more difficult to score than films. In films, if one works on a project, say for six months, there is a certain kind of content that has been created during this period and the entire team is involved and chooses the best part and puts it out in the movie. But in a long format that is, say for 10 hours, you get the same amount of time for a lot of content. The quality of content that you create has to be consistent for the entire duration. After a while, this takes a toll. I respect those who create music for this format.

■ **What next?**

I have a few movies planned this year and a couple of projects are in the pipeline for next year. I am excited for the new music that will come out soon. I hope that the fun that I had during the making of these songs, the listeners have just as much fun when they hear it.

A change that has been for the worse

PADMA PATIL talks about how things have changed in the last few years and the way this change is perceived by different generations

It's a no brainer that the only thing that is constant is change. With time, people change and so does countries. Even India has changed for that matter. But this change is perceived differently by different generations. For some, it is good while for others it is as bad as can be.

Padma Patil, a retired school teacher and a senior citizen, tells you how our country has changed in the last few decades. "India has changed in many aspects from lifestyle to cities and from clothing to communication. This shows how people are trying to adapt to the new technology. However, while doing this they are gradually forgetting their roots and sometimes history too," she says.

Earlier people used to live a simple life. Everything from their clothes to their lifestyle was normal. But now, with time, people believe in showing off their expensive clothes and accessories from luxurious brands. "They all live a fake lifestyle; they do things for others not for themselves or for their satisfaction. This speaks of how people are more concerned about what others think of them. Their focus

Car was considered a luxury back then and only one out of 10 people owned a car. While today, multistorey buildings have taken over the open grounds. This results in cluttering places and leaving no space for children to play at all. This leaves them with no option but to take to playing on roads



is to look fashionable, while humanity in between this is taking a back seat. However, on the contrary, earlier people lived for themselves and to the fullest, while at the same time also caring for others' opinions," Patil opines.

Not to mention, the cities have also changed in terms of infrastruc-

ture. Earlier there used to be few houses and more open grounds. "Car was considered a luxury back then and only one out of 10 people owned a car. While today, multistorey buildings have taken over the open grounds. This results in cluttering places and leaving no space for children to play at all. This leaves them with no option

but to take to playing on roads. And this comes with a risk of accidents. Also, there are uncountable number of cars on the road which create unnecessary traffic thereby increasing the travel time for even nearby places. This amount of load definitely affects our planet in some or the other way," she says.

Even relationships have gone for a toss. Back then, there were small houses with big families and everyone lived happily, but nowadays the concept of nuclear families have taken over.

"People prefer to live away from their parents and in some cases they are not happy from their partners as well," Patil explains.

Climate change is one of the major changes that the older generation has seen in the last few years. "In our times, like I said before, there were absolutely no cars on roads and more number of trees. Hence, the air quality was extremely good, but now due to air pollution, climate change has become frequent and bad. This is not only harming our health, but also harming our planet," she says.

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

The Magic of Mandu

Mandu's geographical location is what made it such an important city. It prospered greatly under the Sultans of Malwa for nearly 200 years

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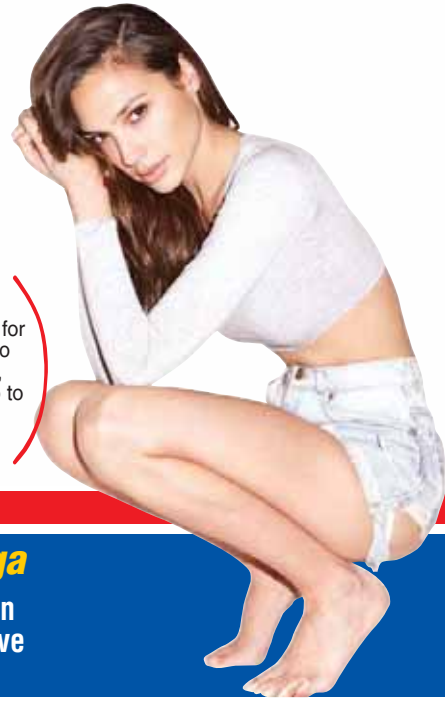


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Attaining the state of Yoga

In the state of *Yoga*, mind enters an infinite domain having no distinctive existences

It is so important for girls and boys to have a female, strong superhero to look up to
— Gal Gadot



As the pandemic brought the world economies to a halt/slowdown, different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. DISHA CHHABRA shares top 5 lessons from senior leaders across industries



LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM TURBULENT TIMES

In the last one year, our lifestyles and habits have changed forever. The way we live, eat, play, work is all altered. The resulting lockdowns of countries has brought national economies to a standstill. Salary and job cuts are happening throughout the world. Lives versus livelihood is a constant debate. No one living in these times has experienced a crisis that can be remotely equated to this one. And things are still unfolding.

When we are not going out to eat out but cooking more at home; when we prefer services at home rather than going out; when we need high speed internet to work from home, when masks are the new fashion statement; all these changes in our behaviour shape the way different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. Covid-19 has impacted every sphere of the corporate world.

The pandemic has had a varied impact on different industries. Across the globe, there have been industries where revenue has gone negative; for some it has even gone down to zero. Industries like travel which relied on people physically moving around even needed to refund future bookings. Entertainment like physical events, movie ticketing, are in the same category. It is not sure when revenue is going to return. Some of these industries fall in the bucket of 'putting off for the future'. For example, people are putting off the visit to the hairdresser and are likely to go back when the crisis eases. These industries are shifting their present revenues into the future. The immediate focus is on cash conservation.

During this crisis, we have all indulged in some kind of hoarding. Be it toilet paper in the western countries or Maggi noodles in India; industries selling products which are essentials and non-perishable are seeing their future revenues brought forward as people buy for the next quarter and at some point in future, the present day spends will impact the future spends.

On the other end, being stuck and home and having a lot of time at hand; people are finding time to take up new hobbies; cooking, gardening and other isolation friendly activities. Baking banana breads became a huge trend. Companies that help provide these virtual classes or sell the raw materials one needs for these activities are attracting a large share

of discretionary spends of customers. This is new revenue for the companies but not necessarily brought forward from the future. However, the growth that these industries are seeing may not sustain once people begin to step out for leisure and entertainment.

And then there are big winners in this crisis. Industries like video conferencing, online grocery delivery, digital payments have seen a huge spike in adoption and have reached levels they would have otherwise expected to reach in order of months to years. These are likely fundamental customer behaviour changes and expected to stay even when the crisis eases. These industries are not only making a lot of revenue during the crisis. And when the crisis is over, the new normal of these industries will be at a higher level. These are industries that are mostly constrained on their supply side to handle the exponential growth in demand.

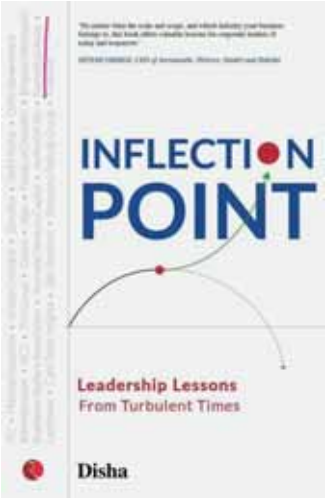
Few years down the line, leadership and business lessons from this crisis will be taught as crisis management case studies in B-schools. Which of these lessons will be permanent armours for future leaders for dealing with any crisis? And do the learnings differ depending on which side of the revenue curve a company finds itself. Does leadership need to be reactive? Here are the top 5 lessons coming directly from senior leaders across different industries and organisations.

LESSON 1: NIMBLENESS

Ever since the world reported its first case, every day has been a roller coaster ride. Situations on the ground have evolved rapidly. Every day has been different from the previous one.

A week before, leaders were checking the sales numbers and reviewing their 2020 plans. A week later, supply chains were disrupted and businesses asked to temporarily shut until further notice. A day before, all our employees were safe. A day later, an entire department got infected. The time horizon of major events was severely shortened.

In a crisis situation, dealing with uncertainty needs less planning, more execution. This is not the time to draw a product roadmap, a 5-year vision or long-term strategies. Leaders are embracing speed, mitigating the short to mid-term consequences to stabilize the situation and stay afloat. COVID-19



THE PANDEMIC HAS HAD A VARIED IMPACT ON DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES. ACROSS THE GLOBE, THERE HAVE BEEN INDUSTRIES WHERE REVENUE HAS GONE NEGATIVE; FOR SOME IT HAS EVEN GONE DOWN TO ZERO. INDUSTRIES LIKE TRAVEL WHICH RELIED ON PEOPLE PHYSICALLY MOVING AROUND EVEN NEEDED TO REFUND FUTURE BOOKINGS. ENTERTAINMENT LIKE PHYSICAL EVENTS, MOVIE TICKETING, ARE IN THE SAME CATEGORY. IT IS NOT SURE WHEN REVENUE IS GOING TO RETURN



has delivered a crash course in agility for organisations of all stripes.

LESSON 2 - INNOVATION

It is said that innovation and creativity love crises and constraints. Crisis brings out constraints and makes innovation almost a forcing function. Leaders often leverage consultants to get a fresh, outside perspective on their organisations to find opportunities to innovate. A crisis can have much the same effect, putting the spotlight on vulnerabilities, problem areas; great and small, that we've been ignoring or are just plain unaware of. When a crisis hits, we are forced to confront the truth about how our systems work (or don't). The places where things could be done better or more efficiently become glaringly obvious. All of a sudden, opportunities for innovation are staring us in the face.

The current crisis is bringing a whole new set of innovations. Services like medicine, education, industrial plant set ups are all going digital. Google and Apple are collaborating on contact tracing. Dunzo is working with brands to get the products delivered at one's doorstep. ITC's personal care team deserves recognition for introducing a range of new health and hygiene products for households. Its hospitality team curated a gourmet menu, which recreates the ITC dining experience for our customers in the comfort of their homes. While these are just a couple of examples, leaders across industries continue to strive to change and innovate to ensure that they deliver nothing short of excellence in their products and services to our customers, despite the pandemic.

LESSON 3: EMPLOYEE WELL BEING

While it may sound obvious, crises are crises because people suffer. In a situation where emotions and anxieties run high, leaders connect with employees and other stakeholders and acknowledge the personal and professional challenges they are going through. Impactful leaders convey their vision in a manner that the employees feel aligned, motivated and rallied against.

Effective crisis management requires integrity, accountability, and moral courage. Thoughtful, frequent, and empathetic communication signals that the leaders share with their organization show they care and are together in the journey that employees go

through. These messages are delivered with "bounded optimism" — hope combined with realism.

LESSON 4: RISING ABOVE SELF INTEREST

What makes a leader is not just thinking about self but for the larger community. Be it giving back to the community in cash or kind or even gestures where one takes care of people who are not directly on the organization's payroll but on the frontline; leaders showcase how it is not enough if the organization alone progresses. No true leader sees crisis as a time to carve out a competitive advantage; definitely not at the cost of a struggling competitor. Compassion is leadership, leadership is compassion — compassion not just for self but for everyone else, especially ones where one has no self-interest whatsoever. If anything, the crisis will make leadership more humane and above self-interest.

LESSON 5: BEING OPEN TO FAILING

In times of crisis, the acceptance of failure and moving on from there to the next step and the next is a critical leadership trait. These are times when given the dynamicity of the situation, decisions need to be made based on the limited information available and many times in decentralized manners. Fail fast is more important than learning and waiting to make the right decision. Different business models are prototyped and many of them may not work. It's ok. Leaders move on.

There are often external circumstances beyond one's control. Leaders are kind to yourself and to their teams. They repivot as many times as necessary. They collaborate with competitors. Leadership is not about the outcome — it is about the process. Even a decision of shutting down the business may look like a failure looking outwards. But the process of arriving at that decision, accepting, communicating and executing the failure can demonstrate leadership. Being open to failure is the biggest lesson from turbulent times.

The onus of leadership lies with each one of us. We all need to lead ourselves, our loved ones, our societies, organisations and countries out of this and every crisis.

The writer is a corporate professional and author of 4 books. Her latest book, Inflection Point – Leadership Lessons from Turbulent Times, has been published by Rupa Publications



The canopy facing the Narmada from where Roopmati looked at the river; Hoshang Shah's tomb; Jami Masjid

Though the cemetery is not easy to locate and gets only few visitors, it is very well maintained. So next time you visit Ranchi, do make time to visit this piece of history. As reads a message at one of the resting places: *Thoughts go back to bygone days. Life moves on but memory stays.*

Lankan Civil War and human rights violation

The Mahinda Rajapaksa Government in Sri Lanka is in trouble again. The horrors of the three decades of Lankan Civil War are revisiting the Government. The two brothers — Mahinda and Gotabaya — are holding the two crucial posts, Prime Minister and President, respectively.

Earlier, Mahinda served as the President from 2005 to 2010, when Gotabaya was the Defence Secretary. During this period, both the brothers crushed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and put an end to the longest Civil War in the country.

However it was the leadership of former Lieutenant Colonel Gotabaya, who finally led the Lankan Army to the successful war against the dreaded LTTE leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran in 2009. It was good that an ethnic terror movement came to an end that took the lives of many in the past. And the armed forces of this tiny island nation and its political leadership breathed a sigh of relief. Prabhakaran's torture regime was over with his killing in May 2009 at the hands of the Lankan Army.

This had not only shattered the command structure of the Tamil Tigers, but also pushed the outfit to the brink of closure. The organisation had lost both its firepower and manpower. The Lankan Government forces too had received severe casualties though the forces received abundant supply of arms from China.

The end of the war brought the most vital question to the fore — the massive violation of human rights by the Lankan Army. Though the Rajapaksa Government had justified the war, the humanitarian concerns emerging from the number of dead, missing and post-war rehabilitation of the Tamil civilians exposed the extreme level of brutalities that the Lankan forces resorted to.

Both the Rajapaksa brothers turned out to be heroes among the majority Sinhalese population, but questions of the violation of fundamental rights of the Tamils in the North and Eastern part of the country remained unanswered.



And this has been haunting the Rajapaksa Government since the end of the Civil War and now also with the returning of the duo to power.

Sri Lanka is facing a new UN Resolution at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), calling on the human rights abusers to account and asking the country's Government to deliver immediate justice to the victims. Britain and others have circulated a draft of the resolution among the members of the UNHRC.

It is expected to be adopted at the end of the four-week Spring Session of the UN's top human rights body. The session began on February 22 in Geneva.

Both the Tamil Tigers and the Lankan Army were accused of massive violations of human

rights during the war. Therefore, the UN human rights office blames both for carrying out unparalleled brutalities against the innocent civilians during the war.

Germany and Canada are among the six countries that formed the core group along with Britain to bring the resolution on Lanka. Lord Ahmad, Britain's Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, said: "The victims from all communities of Sri Lanka's brutal Civil War are, a decade later, still awaiting justice for loved ones murdered or missing and dealing with the repercussions of violence and conflict".

He further commented that the current resolution moved by his country in the UNHRC is a vital step towards reconciliation and peaceful

relations among all of Sri Lanka's diverse communities and faith groups. This will bring an added pressure on the Lankan Government, but then how Colombo will respond may only decide the future of the families of the victims.

UN Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet has submitted her report on Sri Lanka to the UNHRC. While introducing the report to the Council, she said the effect of the conflict on thousands of survivors from all communities was devastating.

She highlighted that 12 years after the end of the armed conflict in Lanka, the domestic efforts to ensure justice for victims have failed.

Further she stated, "Despite commitments made in 2015, the current Government, like its predecessor, has failed to

pursue genuine truth-seeking or accountability processes... Moreover, the systems, structures, policies and personnel that gave rise to such grave violations in the past remain and have recently been reinforced".

This has put the Rajapaksa Government in the dock. All efforts are on to pressurise Colombo so as to offer justice to the families of thousands of victims and missing persons in this devastating war.

As per the records made available by the international media and human rights agencies, the war killed about 1,00,000 people, including 40,000 Tamil civilians, massacred by the Lankan Army in the final onslaught.

However, the Rajapaksa Government completely denies these allegations. An estimated 1,50,000 people were

trapped on the coast at the end of the war. Besides thousands went missing and the Lankan security forces were blamed for the disappearance of the Tamil rebels who either surrendered or captured.

Recently in a meeting with a UN envoy, Lankan President Gotabaya acknowledged for the first time that more than 20,000 people who disappeared during the country's Civil War were dead.

Further his office released a statement that steps would be taken to issue death certificates for those missing. This has certainly dampened the hopes of those who were expecting a positive response from the Government.

Sri Lanka, the island nation, had witnessed the scourge of terrorism for about three decades. The terror fuelled by the monstrous LTTE had claimed many lives, including the civilians, soldiers and high-profile political leaders within and outside the country.

The LTTE under the leadership of Prabhakaran was simply running a parallel Government in the North-Eastern parts of Lanka. Today, the Tamils and other minority groups like the Muslims and Christians are alleging massive violation of human rights by the Lankan forces in the final war against the LTTE in 2009. But the international community must not forget the reign of terror brought by Prabhakaran and his team over innocent civilians across the island.

The LTTE, formed on May 5, 1976, by Prabhakaran was once used to be the only terror group in the world possessing its own military. Its political headquarters was in Kilinochchi, situating at a distance of 200 miles north of Lanka's capital city of Colombo. And this military consisted of three distinct branches — the Tigers (Infantry), Sea Tigers (Sea Wing) and Air Tigers (Air Wing). It had gradually emerged as the most lethal and well-organised terror group.

In fact, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in its report published in January 2008, stated that the LTTE was one of the most dangerous

and deadly extremist outfits in the world and the world should be concerned about the outfit as they had inspired networks worldwide, including the al-Qaeda in Iraq. The brutal tactics and the employment of child soldiers by the LTTE were causing concerns across South Asia in its heydays.

Further some reports indicate that women were also forced to join the organisation. Only after seven years of its formation in 1983, the organisation opened its Women's Front of the Liberation Tigers under the leadership of Vithusha. Like many other African terror groups, the LTTE used to recruit children for combat forces.

As per the estimates of the Sri Lankan Directorate of Military Intelligence, as much as 60 per cent of the outfit's fighters were below 18 years. It was also revealed that the fighters of the Tamil Tigers who were killed in the war were mostly between 9 and 18 years.

These were some of the harrowing episodes of the LTTE that rightly underlines how the terror organisation was simply twisting and undermining the epithets of basic human rights. Initially, it seemed to be an endless saga of terror, violence, torture and a parallel state run by an authoritarian leader.

Today the Tamils are calling for accountability and justice for the crimes committed during the Civil War by the Lankan forces. It is hard time for the Rajapaksa duo to respond to the Tamil minority in their country and to the world Tamil diaspora on this sensitive issue. What is expected from Colombo is quick redressal of the grievances of the minorities in the North and Eastern part of the country.

It is time to accept the responsibility of war crimes on the part of the Lankan Government. It is time to heal the wounds. Else, relationship between the Sinhalese majority and rest of the minority communities, particularly with the Tamils, would further deteriorate.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

Today the Tamils are calling for accountability and justice for the crimes committed during the Civil War. The Government should heal the wounds. Otherwise, the relationship between the Sinhalese majority and the rest would deteriorate



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Wastewater surveillance for detecting early spread of Covid

Sewers or sewage treatment plants can provide near real-time outbreak data as they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health

The ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), has been declared as a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2020).

Several research studies across the globe have confirmed that SARS-CoV-2 ribonucleic acid (RNA) has been detected in faeces of not only symptomatic but also asymptomatic patients. It has also been seen that sewers or sewage treatment plants (STPs) can provide near-real-time outbreak data because they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population.

Thus, wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) is a promising approach to understand the prevalence of viruses in any given wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) catchment population.

A densely populated country like India will require constant vigilance to contain Covid-19 infection hot spots, unless and until either a vaccine is proven to be effective or herd immunity is achieved, to combat the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health.

This could help the timely

determination of whether there are Covid-19 carriers (both asymptomatic and symptomatic) in an area to enable preventive measures such as rapid screening and quarantine, even before the residents of that city have been tested.

In India, the pandemic steadily rose from April 2020 with peaking in mid-August 2020. The cumulative confirmed cases have significantly lowered at present.

Several research groups across the globe have reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. In Switzerland, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) researchers, working in association with the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG) on wastewater sampling and analysis developed a study in March 2020, which acts as an early warning signal for spread of SARS-CoV-2 in communities. Similarly, in April 2020, sewage sampling across greater Paris (France) for more than one month, researchers have detected a rise and fall in novel coronavirus concentrations that correspond to the shape of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak in the region.

Other researchers have also reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in countries such as: Australia (Ahmed et al, 2020),

Cyprus (Michael-Kordatou et al, 2020), Ireland (Cahill et al, 2020), Italy (La Rosa et al, 2020), Japan (Haramoto et al, 2020), South Africa (Street et al., 2020), The Netherlands (Dutch Water Sector, 2020), Spain (Chavarria-Miró et al, 2020), USA (Peccia et al and Hart & Halden et al, 2020), and India (Kumar et al and Arora et al., 2020).

For effective dissemination of knowledge created by the current research efforts, and to empower collaboration on a global scale for wastewater-based epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2, there are various ongoing initiatives such as the European Union's NORMAN - SCORE Joint Initiative (Sewage Analysis CORe group Europe) (score-cost.eu/), COVID-19 WBE Collaborative (covid19wbec.org/), Biobot Analytics (biobot.io/), NSF Research Coordination Network (RCN) (sites.nd.edu/rcn-wastewater-sarscov2/), COVIDPoops19 (https://twitter.com/COVIDPoops19?s=20), Global Water Pathogen Project (GWPP) (waterpathogens.org/) and others.

In IIT Gandhinagar, India, Kumar et al, 2020, for the first time, detected the presence of three SARS-CoV-2 genes (ORF1ab, N and S virus) in wastewater. The samples were collected in May 2020 from Old Pirana WWTP in Ahmedabad

(Gujarat) to understand the application of WBE surveillance in India.

The WWTP has a capacity of 106 MLD receiving effluents of Civil Hospital treating Covid-19 patients. The number of gene copies was found comparable to that reported in the untreated wastewaters of Australia, China, and Turkey and lower than that of the USA, France, and Spain. A similar study was conducted by researchers of Dr B Lal Institute of Biotechnology (Rajasthan) with samples from hospital wastewater as well as from WWTPs of Jaipur, which has been a pandemic hotspot (red zone) since April 2020.

To analyse the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in the community wastewater of different catchments in Chennai city in India, a group of scientists led by Chakraborty et al from SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Mu Gamma Consultants Pvt Ltd (MGC) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) jointly implemented an intensive wastewater surveillance study, the first-of-its-kind in the southern region of India.

The study entailed partial lockdown and post lockdown survey along the wastewater discharge points in Adayar and Cooum Riverine belt flowing through the densely populated region of Chennai to

develop an early signalling spread of Covid-19 in communities during partial and post-lockdown periods in 2020. This study gave interesting insights for informing policy actions.

The wastewater surveillance study in Chennai has the potential for replication in other Indian cities like Delhi as well as upscaling it for larger geographic areas covering a large population. Also, it could potentially be one of the bases for scientifically informed decisions to implement public health intervention strategies consistent with legal and ethical considerations in India.

At present, Delhi has 41 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with a cumulative treatment capacity of 3,149 MLD. Out of 41 STPs, 32 STPs (2,775 MLD) are operational and 9 STPs (373 MLD) are non-operational. Also, importantly, 75 per cent of pollution is contributed by three major drains

(Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara) out of all the drains falling into the river Yamuna. Given the current sewage management scenario of Delhi, a wastewater surveillance study (similar to the one conducted by SRM IST, MGC and TERI in Chennai) can be taken up in the national Capital to track the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the wastewater samples from major drains

falling into the Yamuna river and select STPs.

The advantages of wastewater surveillance in Delhi will include the monitoring of wastewater samples from sewage treatment plants and major drains of the Yamuna river in Delhi can help in estimating the number of infected individuals, and hence provide robust scientific evidence for informed decision making at the policy level.

This is an early, cost-effective, unbiased community-level indicator of the presence of Covid-19 and of "hot-spots" within a community. It will support risk mitigation decisions for the communities, and guide decisions about where and when to impose or relax more targeted restrictions on movement and activity. It will help alert asymptomatic infections in the community through real-time community sewage detection could be determined.

It will be very useful for positioning resources and triggering public actions for improved health outcomes. It will also alert second and subsequent waves, and develop preparedness towards outbreak of other pandemics in the future.

To track any resurgence of Covid-19, national wastewater surveillance programmes are being implemented in various countries like the USA,

Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Pakistan. The same can be planned for India. In the past, WBE has played an important role in the eradication of polio in 2011 in India, and at present, wastewater surveillance continues at 52 WWTPs and unregulated catchment areas for detection of poliovirus.

This surveillance network can be a viable resource for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in the country, including the national Capital Delhi.

There is a need to identify the key issues and challenges related to the development of validated methodological protocols for the quantitative analysis of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater.

The data generated from the SARS-CoV-2 wastewater monitoring system in Delhi might be used to show a roadmap for tracking disease, intensifying testing, re-introducing public orders related to social distancing or quarantines (if needed), and even lifting restrictions once a cessation of infection is confirmed.

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