

OPINION 6
A FLIGHT AND TRAVEL
AFTER ONE YEAR**WORLD 8**
HUNDREDS OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLGIRLS
TAKEN IN MASS ABDUCTION**SPORT 12**
K'TAKA BEAT KERALA
IN VIJAY HAZARE

RAIPUR, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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KRITI JUGGLES
BETWEEN
SHOOTS
10 VIVACITY

Battle for 5 States from Mar 27, results on May 2

8-phase polls in Bengal; Assam 3 phases; TN, Kerala, Puducherry on April 6

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With political temperature running high ahead of the Assembly polls, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday announced that voting for five Assembly polls will begin on March 27 with West Bengal going for an eight-phase elections till April 9 and Assam for a three-phase exercise till April 6. The Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry will be held in a single phase on April 6.

The counting will be held for all five States on May 2. With the announcement of poll schedules, the model code of conduct came into effect from Friday evening. Terms of the Legislative Assemblies in West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are coming to an end in May and June.

Announcing the election schedule, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said that nearly 18.68 crore electors will vote at 2.7 lakh polling stations for 824 seats in these Assembly elections and polling stations will be at the ground floor without any negotiation. "There shall be maximum 1,000 electors instead of 1,500 electors at a polling station and voting will be allowed for an extra hour, adding that arrangements would be made for candidates to file nominations online," he said.

In Assam, elections will be held for 126 seats in three



Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, with Election Commissioners Sushil Chandra and Rajiv Kumar, arrives for a Press conference in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

phases on March 26 (47 seats), April 1 (39 seats), April 6 (40 seats). The last date of nomination is March 9.

Announcing the schedules for West Bengal, Arora said, "For 294 seats in West Bengal, the first phase of the election has been scheduled on March 27 and it will cover 30 constituencies. The second phase of West Bengal's Assembly elections has been scheduled for April 1 and will cover 30 constituencies, followed by the third phase on April 6 for 31 seats, the fourth on April 10 for 44 constituencies, the fifth on April 17 for 45 seats, sixth for 43 seats on April 22, seventh phase on April 26 for 36 seats and last and eighth phase on April 29 for 35 seats."

Last time, the Assembly elections were conducted in seven phases in Bengal. A total of 68 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 16 for the Scheduled Tribes. Term of the current West Bengal Assembly is scheduled to come to an end on May 30.

The election for the 140 seats in Kerala, 234 seats in Tamil Nadu and 30 seats Puducherry will be held in a single phase on April 6.

Taking note of the threat of intimidation and violence during the poll campaign, the EC has directed that the election security plan of poll-going States will be jointly decided by a committee comprising the chief electoral officer, State police nodal officer and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) coordinator. According to offi-

cial, over 6,600 polling stations in West Bengal have been identified as "vulnerable" and 715 critical ahead of the Assembly elections while over 2,654 polling stations has been identified as "critical" and 338 vulnerable in Assam.

Recounting the Covid-19 guideline issued by the commission in August 2020, the EC said polling time has been extended by an hour and door-to-door campaigning has been restricted to five people. He added that States can modify the guidelines according to their local Covid-19 situation. The EC also said that adequate Central

paramilitary forces will be deployed during the elections. All sensitive, critical and vulnerable polling stations have been identified and an adequate number of CAPFs will be deployed there.

Everyone on poll duty to get jab before polls: EC

New Delhi: Everyone on election duty for the upcoming polls for five Assemblies will be vaccinated against Covid-19 before polling day, the Election Commission said on Friday.

Assembly Poll Schedule 2021	
ASSAM Total seats: 126 Three phase poll Phase I (47 seats): Mar 27 Phase II (39 seats): Apr 1 Phase III (40 seats): Apr 6	WEST BENGAL Total seats: 294 Eight phase poll Phase I (30 seats): Mar 27 Phase II (30 seats): Apr 1 Phase III (31 seats): Apr 6 Phase IV (44 seats): Apr 10 Phase V (45 seats): Apr 17 Phase VI (43 seats): Apr 22 Phase VII (36 seats): Apr 26 Phase VIII (35 seats): Apr 29
KERALA Total seats: 140 Single phase poll: Apr 6	PUDUCHERRY Total seats: 30 Single phase poll: Apr 6
TAMIL NADU Total seats: 234 Single phase poll: Apr 6	Counting for all states: May 2, 2021 K&K Infographics

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Mamata raps EC, sees Modi, Shah design in 8-phase polls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Soon after the Election Commission of India announced an unprecedented 8-phase Assembly election for Bengal, a furious Mamata Banerjee attacked the poll panel accusing it of playing a prejudiced role to the advantage of the BJP.

The TMC chief said the EC was "following the commands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah," and that the "people of Bengal will not forgive them for giving us such a humiliating deal."

Emerging from a Trinamool Congress core committee meeting, she said, "I have reports that the list of phase-wise elections found in the BJP office completely matches with the EC's announcement... I think as a Constitutional body it should have been more reasonable, impartial while deciding on the number of phases."

Bengal had witnessed 7-phased elections in 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Wondering as to why polls would be held in four other States in lesser number of phases, Mamata said, "They are conducting elections in



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a Press conference at Kalighat in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

Assam in three phases, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in single phase, but they are holding elections in Bengal in 8 phases... why they are heaping such an insult on the people of Bengal... the people will not take this lightly."

The Bengal Chief Minister also said, "The EC is an important Constitutional body. If they do not give justice to the people then who will they turn to? I came to know that the election dates have been

given as per the requisition of the BJP... tell me why the districts have been divided in halves for the conduct of the elections... Moreover districts like South 24 Parganas where the TMC is stronger, the elections are being held in three phases... This means that the polls have been planned as per the desire of the Modi and Shah. But let me tell you the Prime Minister and Home Minister cannot misuse their power like this."

Complete pullback must for lasting peace: India to China

India, China agree to establish hotline contact for real-time exchange of views

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After India and China pulled back troops from the Pangong Tso (lake) stand-off site in Ladakh, New Delhi has stressed the need for disengagement from all the other friction points for lasting peace and tranquility at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Making this assertion during his 75-minute-long telephonic talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said disengagement was necessary to contemplate any de-escalation of troops. The two sides agreed to establish a hotline contact for timely exchange of views.

During the talks on Thursday, the two Ministers also reviewed the current situation at the LAC, the process of smooth withdrawal of troops of



both the Armies from the Pangong, and general ties between the two countries, External Affairs Ministry said here on Friday.

The high-level political contact took place after the disengagement from the southern and northern banks of the Pangong lake was completed last week.

The process had started on February 10 and the two Corps Commanders met on Saturday last to take stock of the situation. They also discussed the road map for early disengagement of troops from face-off sites in Hot Spring, Gogra and Depsang valley.

During his talks with his Chinese counterpart, Jaishankar said peace and tranquility on the border is essential for development of bilateral relations.

Giving details of the talks, the Ministry said India told China bilateral relations have been impacted severely over last year. "EAM said boundary question may take time to resolve but disturbance of peace and tranquillity, including by violence, will inevitably have a damaging impact on the relationship," the Ministry said. The two Ministers agreed to remain in touch and establish a hotline, it added.

According to a late-night Press release issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing, Wang said China and India should firmly follow the right path of mutual trust and cooperation between neighbouring countries, and not go astray with suspicion and distrust nor fall back on a road of "negative retrogression."

Wang noted that the two countries need to properly handle the border issue so as to prevent the bilateral ties from trapping into a "vicious cycle" because of it.

Farm, services, construction revive GDP to grow at 0.4%

After contracting for two quarters in a row, it enters positive territory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After contracting for two quarters in a row, the Indian economy entered the positive territory with a growth of 0.4 per cent in the October-December quarter, mainly due to good performance by the farm, services and construction sectors, official data showed on Friday.

Ahead of the release of the GDP data, Sensex slumped by nearly 2,000 points on the fear that long-term growth projection may not be sustainable. The 0.4 per cent growth is at the lower end of the forecast made by most of economists and others.

Trade and hotel industry registered a contraction of 7.7 per cent during the third quarter this fiscal, as the sectors continued to suffer on account



of coronavirus pandemic.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the farm sector recorded a growth of 3.9 per cent, and the manufacturing sector output grew by 1.6 per cent in the quarter under review.

The construction sector advanced by 6.2 per cent, while electricity, gas, water supply, and other utility services clocked a 7.3 per cent growth.

The NSO said, "GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at

₹36.22 lakh crore, as against ₹36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 per cent."

The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 3.3 per cent in the corresponding period of 2019-20. In its second advance estimates of national accounts, the NSO has projected 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21, showing the pandemic impact. In its first advance estimates released in January, it had projected a contraction of 7.7 per cent for the current fiscal as against a growth of four per cent in 2019-20.

The economy had shrunk by an unprecedented 24.4 per cent in the first quarter this fiscal following the coronavirus pandemic and the resultant lockdown. In the second quarter, the GDP declined 7.3 per cent amid a perk up in economic activities after the easing of the lockdown.

The first and second-quarter GDP growth figures are revised from (-) 24.9 per cent and (-) 7.5 per cent provisional estimates, respectively, released in November 2020.

Corona rears its head in Delhi again; experts warn of another wave

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Just as the Delhi Government had asserted that the coronavirus pandemic had been "defeated" in the national Capital, cases are on the rise again dramatically, as doctors on Friday warned the numbers could go up in the coming months and urged people to continue to wear masks and follow Covid-19 safety norms.

Many doctors at leading healthcare facilities here cautioned that the rise was "alarming" with an "upsurge" in the number of patients going there in the last couple of days, after the cases had shown a downward spiral for nearly six weeks. Delhi had recorded 94 fresh Covid-19 cases on February 16, the lowest in over nine months then.

However, after a week on February 24, it more than doubled to 200 and increased further to 220 on Thursday and 256 on Friday.

Health experts and doctors

on Friday attributed this "sudden rise" to complacency in people and not following Covid appropriate behaviour and "assuming all is well now."

Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine at Apollo Hospital, said he "wasn't surprised" to see the rise in daily cases as so many people have thrown caution to the wind, attending parties and big social gatherings, with many of them not even wearing masks, let alone maintaining social distancing.

"The coronavirus behaviour pattern seen in the West and elsewhere tends to get seen in India, a month later, as it happened in reporting of the first case in Kerala and so on and so forth. So, if the US and UK are seeing a surge again, we should have become more watchful and not complacent. The next two months will be even more critical and I would not be surprised if the cases show a much higher upward trend," he told PTI.

Chhattisgarh economy to shrink by 1.77 %

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh's economy is set to contract by 1.77 per cent while per capita income too is expected to decline in fiscal 2020-21.

The negative growth could be attributed to the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the economy, read the "Economic Survey 2020-21" tabled in the Assembly on Friday.

The report states that as per advance estimate, the Gross State Domestic Product (market price) at constant price is likely to decrease at -1.77 per cent over 2019-20.

The agriculture sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fishing) is likely to grow by 4.61 per cent, Industry sector (Mining and Quarrying, Construction, Manufacturing and Electricity, Gas and Water supply) to decrease by 5.28 percent and

Service sector is expected to grow by 0.75 percent over the previous fiscal year.

Similarly, the per capita income in 2019-20 as per quick estimate is ₹105,089, which will fall to ₹104,943 during 2020-21. Percent decrease compared to the previous year is 0.14 percent.

The report states that the Gross State Domestic Product (market price) at current price is likely to increase ₹350,270 crore in 2020-21 from ₹344,955 crore in the previous year, a growth of 1.54 percent. Quick Estimates for 2019-20 at constant price: GSDP (market price) registered growth of 5.12 percent over 2018-19.

The Agriculture, Industry and Service sectors are estimated to grow at 3.67 percent, 3.43 percent and 7.71 percent respectively over the previous year.

Biden pushes for immigration reform

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden believes that it is important and long overdue to modernise the immigration system, and this includes taking steps to help ensure highly skilled workers can stay in the country, the White House has said. Biden has revoked a policy issued by his predecessor during the Covid-19 pandemic that blocked many Green Card applicants from entering the US, a move that will benefit many Indians working in America on the H-1B visa.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.



President Joe Biden walks out of the White House to board Marine One at the White House on Friday. AP

"The President believes that it's important and long overdue to modernise our immigration system, and that includes taking steps to help ensure that high skilled workers can stay in the country and can go through the proper processes to stay in the country," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Thursday.

18 States under NCDC lens over new Covid strains



Health workers arrive to screen passengers at the CSMT railway station, owing to surge in Covid-19 cases in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the UK, South Africa and Brazil Covid-19 strains rose to touch to 194-mark on Friday, at least 18 States, including Maharashtra, Kerala and Telangana have come under the scanner of the National Centre for Disease Control Disease

(NCDC), a Central agency for disease surveillance and prevention.

These regions have added almost all the cases of Covid-19 strain from the UK, South Africa and Brazilian variants of SARS-CoV-2. Also, these States are reporting a surge in the Covid-19 cases, though the

Union Health Ministry has denied that the increase is due to the new variants.

The NCDC has asked States to keep tabs on cases with variants arriving here from other countries as the tally of people infected from such strains has reached 194 in the country, according to the latest figures shared by the Union Health Ministry.

These include 187 cases of the UK variant, six from the South African variant while one has been found infected by the Brazilian one.

"The States have been told to increase monitor international arrivals and ensure strict isolation of positive cases, as per protocol as well as increase genome sequencing in the states," an official from NCDC.

He also said the presence of the foreign variants has been also found in large States such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Sujeet Kumar Singh, the director of the NCDC confirmed that monitoring has increased after samples from these regions revealed the presence of mutated versions of the virus. "They have been further advised to send at least 5 per cent daily samples for genome sequencing as per the norm," he added.

RT-PCR test for returning expats in Kerala now

Thiruvananthapuram: In view of rise in fresh Covid-19 cases, the Kerala Government will conduct RT-PCR tests free of cost for expatriates returning to the State, the Government said on Friday as 3,671 more people tested positive, taking the infection count to 10.52 lakh.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Engagement of Part-Time Contractual Teachers

No. E/SA/EDU/Cont.Teacher/2021-22 Date:- 17-02-2021

Walk-in-interview for the following posts will be conducted in the SEC Railway, HSS No-1, Bilaspur (near Punjab National Bank) on 23-03-2021 (Tuesday) for the post of PGT & TGT and 24.03.2021 (Wednesday) for PST, interested candidates may report and ensure their registration between 9.00 hrs and 10.00 hrs. Screening will be conducted for empaneling and making engagement purely on Contractual/Part Time basis for the session 2021-22 in Railway Schools at Bilaspur. The candidates should be of age between 18 and 65 years on date of notification.

Name of post	Subject	Qualification Required	Remuneration Admissible
PGT (SEC Railway, HSS No-1, Bilaspur)	(English Medium) Hindi-1 History-1 Political Science-1 Commerce-1 Economics-1 English-1 Physics-1	Essential (A) Two Years Integrated Post Graduate M.Sc. Course of Regional College of Education of NCERT in the Concerned Subject. OR Master Degree from a recognized University with at least 50% marks in aggregate in the following subjects. a) PGT (Hindi) - Hindi or Sanskrit with Hindi as one of the subject at Graduate level. b) PGT (English)- English c) PGT (History) - History d) PGT (Commerce) Master's Degree in Commerce. However, holder of Degree of M.Com. in Applied/Business Economics shall not be eligible. e) PGT (Political Science)- Political Science f) PGT (Economics)-Economics/Applied- Economics/ Business Economics. g) PGT (Physics)- Physics B) B.Ed. or equivalent degree from recognized university. C) Competence to teach through the medium/media as required. Desirable Knowledge of Computer applications.	Consolidated monthly pay Rs. 27,500/-
PGT (SEC Railway, HSS No-2, Bilaspur)	Hindi-1 English Medium English-1	(I) Graduation (in the teaching subject) and 2- years Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name Known) OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 50% marks and 1-year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 45% marks and 1-year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) in accordance with the NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulations issued from time to time in this regard. OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4 years Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-years B.A./B.Sc. or B.A.Ed./B.Sc. Ed. OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 50 % marks and 1-year B.Ed. (Special Education) AND ii) Pass in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), to be conducted by the appropriate Government in accordance with the Guidelines framed by the NCTE for the purpose. AND iii) Competence to teach through the medium/ media as required.	Consolidated monthly pay ₹ 26,250/-
TGT (SEC Railway, HSS No-2, Bilaspur)	(English Medium) English-2 Science-1 (Bio group)	(I) Graduation (in the teaching subject) and 2- years Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name Known) OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 50% marks and 1-year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 45% marks and 1-year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) in accordance with the NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulations issued from time to time in this regard. OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4 years Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-years B.A./B.Sc. or B.A.Ed./B.Sc. Ed. OR Graduation (in the teaching subject) with at least 50 % marks and 1-year B.Ed. (Special Education) AND ii) Pass in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), to be conducted by the appropriate Government in accordance with the Guidelines framed by the NCTE for the purpose. AND iii) Competence to teach through the medium/ media as required.	Consolidated monthly pay Rs. 21,250/-
PST (Eng. Med. School) Bilaspur	(English Medium) To teach all Subjects up to Class V (25-Vac)	Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 2 year Diploma Elementary Education (by whatever name known) OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 45% marks and 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known), in accordance with NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure), Regulations, 2002. OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) OR Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 2-year Diploma in Education (Special Education) OR Graduation and two year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known) OR Graduation with at least 50% marks and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) (ii) Pass in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), to be conducted by the appropriate Government in accordance with the Guidelines framed by the NCTE for the purpose.	Consolidated monthly pay Rs. 21,250/-

All the above vacancies are for English Medium Only. This is to form a panel for further engagement of Teachers on Contract Basis on day-to-day basis. This is in terms of Estt. Rule No. 230/07, 123/09, 66/10, 52/12, 219/13, 139/14, 37/16 & 129/18 and on basis of National council for Teacher Education Notification dated 28.06.2018. Candidates applying for more than one post should submit separate application for each post. The candidate should bring original as well as Attested Xerox copies of Certificate and testimonials. No TA/DA is to be paid for attending interview. information regarding qualification, payment, service conditions and format of application can be obtained at the time of interview. Preference will be given to fresh faces, However such Contract Teachers who were engaged last year also can apply but there candidature will be considered only if new/fresh face candidate is not available. for more details please visit SEC's web site www.secr.indianrailway.gov.in.
Note : As per as validity of CTET/TET certificate is concerned it should must be valid on the date of notification.

CPR/10/454

Divisional Railway Manager (P)

Portly, unfit Punjab cops may get in shape

Police to establish Health and Wellness Centres in all districts

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab's portly and unfit cops now have a fat chance to get in shape with the Punjab Police deciding to establish Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) for its Police force in all the districts, including the three Commissionerate Police (CPs) in the State. The Centres are also proposed to be set up in all the Armed Police and Police Training Centres.

Aimed at improving the health and overall well-being besides preventing lifestyle diseases among the cops, the HWC will have facilities, including indoor gym, outdoor gym, space for meditation and yoga, physiotherapy centre and counselling room to provide counselling and appropriate interventions to focus on the health and wellness for the cops.

For the purpose, the police department has planned a week long health and wellness programs by health professionals, including psychologists who will recommend physical exercise, give advice regarding diet, conduct counselling sessions to bring necessary lifestyle changes.

Besides, the Physiotherapy centres will provide facilities to the cops, who are suffering from age related minor pain and aches in knees, joints, back, etc.

Apart from that, the

Commissioners of Police (CPs) and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) have been asked to constitute a panel to identify the cops, who require to undergo health and wellness programs.

Divulging details, the state Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said that the pressures of job and stressful working conditions of Police leads to fatigue, trauma and stress, among which could lead to serious health issues.

"Health and Wellness Centres will encourage the police personnel to focus and attend to their physical and mental fitness and provide the necessary interventions to bring the required change in their overall health and well-being," he said.

The coming up of such centers comes over four months after the Punjab and Haryana High Court had asked the Punjab Police not to depute overweight police officials in investigation of cases involving raids on bootleggers and drug peddlers.

The High Court, taking cognizance of the cases where middle-aged, and even elderly persons managed to run away from the police, had directed the police not to depute officials who failed to nab the accused at the spot during investigation even though the accused were either middle-

aged or older.

Besides, directions were also issued to conduct the physical fitness test — to be conducted at the police training academies in presence of a team of doctors — of all police officials who failed to nab accused in excise and drug cases.

"If need be, all these police officials be deputed for a physical training session of three months to make them physically fit for conducting raids. In the alternative, the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Bureau of Investigation, Punjab, will explore the possibility of deputing young and fit officials, where the raid under the Excise Act is to be conducted," stated Justice Arvind Singh Sangwan.

In the first phase, an amount of Rs 2.97 crores from the Budget's welfare head has already been given to 15 districts, including Ludhiana and Amritsar's Commissionerates of Police to establish HWCs, the DGP said adding that majority of centres including in CP Amritsar and districts Patiala, Tarn Taran, Mansa and Pathankot are almost ready and expected to get functional by mid March while construction work at the remaining centres are going on.

He said that in the second phase, funds will be disbursed among the remaining districts, Armed Police and Police

Training Centres to establish such centres.

DGP Gupta added that an amount of Rs two lakh annually has also been earmarked to each district from the next financial year under the head welfare of police personnel to conduct Health and Wellness programs.

The five to seven days health and wellness programs will be conducted at the Health and Wellness Centres by health professionals including psychologists who will recommend physical exercise, diet advice, counselling to bring necessary lifestyle changes in the cops for better health, said the DGP adding that the Physiotherapy centres will provide facilities to the cops, who are suffering from age related minor pain and aches in knees, joints, back etc.

The state ADGP (Welfare) V Neeraja said that instructions had been issued to all the Commissioners of Police (CPs) and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) to constitute a Committee with the SP headquarters and medical officer to identify cops, who require to undergo health and wellness program.

The committee will also design and conduct monthly Health and Wellness programs as suitable to the cops besides ensuring all the Police personnel posted in a district get an opportunity to attend the pro-

- ❖ HWCs for Police force in all districts, including three Commissionerates
- ❖ May also establish HWCs in all Armed Police and Police Training Centres
- ❖ HWC to have indoor and outdoor gyms, space for meditation and yoga, physiotherapy centre, counselling room
- ❖ CPs, SSPs asked to constitute panel to identify cops who require to undergo health and wellness program
- ❖ Rs 2 lakhs annually earmarked to each district from next fiscal to conduct health and wellness programs
- ❖ Five-seven days programs to be conducted at HWCs by health professionals including psychologists
- ❖ Cops may get advice for physical exercises, diet, counselling to bring necessary lifestyle changes in the cops

gram at least once a year, she said.

Meanwhile, the DGP has expressed hope that the HWCs will be able to nudge the cops in adapting to a healthy lifestyle and ensure early interventions in preventing various life-style diseases.

Haryana CM launches official website of Hifazat campaign

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday took an online pledge and launched the official website of Hifazat campaign, which was started earlier this week by Haryana State Commission for

Protection of Child Rights in collaboration with Haryana Police for creating awareness against Child Sexual Abuse.

The campaign's official website (www.hifazat.info) will provide Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material, Volunteering opportunity, details about the

Hifazat districts events and an option for corporates to sponsor these activities.

The idea behind making an official website of the Hifazat campaign is to reach the maximum number of people in the state and spread awareness regarding the need for sensitisation against Child Sexual Abuse.



Punjab to soon roll out National e-Vidhan Application

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab may soon become one of the first states to roll out the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) involving computerization of the Vidhan Sabha to ensure electronic delivery of information or data to the legislators and to interact with the State Departments.

If all goes as per plan, the proceedings of Punjab Vidhan Sabha's monsoon session would be held digitally and the entire proceedings will be digitized.

"The whole process will require 122 touch screen tablets, 40 computers, and other equipments," said the state Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan during a review meeting with the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs' Secretary Dr Rajinder S Shukla and Joint Secretary Dr Satya Parkash to make the proceed-

Mahajan said that as some approvals for the project are being obtained, concurrently, the capacity building of existing staff is being carried out, and the requisite professional staff is being deployed

ings of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha paperless under 'Digital India' on Friday.

Mahajan said that as some approvals for the project are being obtained, concurrently, the capacity building of existing staff is being carried out, and the requisite professional staff is being deployed.

As per the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs' Secretary, Punjab is likely to be among the first states to rollout the NeVA — the Centre's project to digitize and make the Vidhan Sabhas of all the states and Union Territories of the country paperless. Under the project, the NeVA app and website will also be launched, and a total of Rs 739 crore has been earmarked for the purpose.

Under this project, each member would have a multi-purpose touchscreen panel in the House that shall provide them to access all information pertaining to the Vidhan Sabha, including questions, answers, budget, speeches etc, and enable them to participate in an e-voting process.

The project would also create a facility of video conferencing and enable information dissemination for the common citizens through the public portals.

This shall lead to e-interaction and efficient communication between the citizen and their public representative for their grievance's redressal.

With a total project cost of Rs 12.31 crore, the project also envisages the setting up of a NeVA Seva Kendra (NSK) for e-Facilitation.

RELIANCE HOME FINANCE

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RELIANCE HOME FINANCE LIMITED

POSSESSION NOTICE (As per Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (4) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.

The Borrower/Co-borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Reliance Home Finance Ltd.

Name of The Borrower / Address	Co-Borrower And Guarantor Name	Date & Amount mentioned as per Demand Notice	Date & Amount mentioned as per Possession Notice	Date of Symbolic Possession	Property Address of Secured Assets
KRISHNA KUMAR RANJAN, residing at, H.NO.46/D/1 KOKHAKA ARYA NAGAR, WARD NO.7 VILL- KOKHAKA TEH- DURG, BILAI, CHHATTISGARH - 490020, also at, PLOT NO 9,KH.NO.1201, PH.NO.14/19 W.NO.8 FARID NAGAR, BAJRANG NAGAR AND ARBHAG, KOKHKA BHILAI - 490020	KIRAN KUMARI MAHTO, residing at, PLOT NO 9,KH.NO.1201, PH.NO.14/19 W.NO.8 FARID NAGAR, BAJRANG NAGAR AND ARBHAG, KOKHKA BHILAI - 490020	Rs.9,28,377/- (Rupees Nine Lac Twenty Eight Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Seven only)	Rs.10,61,532/- (Rupees Ten Lac Sixty One Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Two only)	25th February, 2021	Description of immovable Property KH.NO.1201, PH.NO.14/19 W.NO.8 FARID NAGAR,BAJRANG NAGAR ANDARBHAG, KOKHAKHILAI NORTH : LAND OF MOURYA SOUTH : HOUSE OF EKKAPLOT NO 08 EAST : ROAD OF 30 FEET WEST : PLOT NO 07
MOHAMMAD SAYEED ALI residing at, AVON FOOTWEAR, House NO.785/2 NEW AVON FOOTWEAR, OPP MOTI MAHAL BAJUNATH PARA ROAD RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH ZIP: 492001	1. NAZRE ABBAS 2. FARIDA BANO Both residing at, BEHIND HAIDER Y MASJID MOMIN PARA, RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH ZIP: 492001	Rs. 2,03,02,033/- (Rupees Two crore Three Lac Two Thousand and Thirty Three only)	Rs.2,10,25,801 (Rupees Two Crore Ten Lac Twenty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and One Only)	25th February, 2021	Description of immovable Property ANNEXURE - A LIST OF PROPERTIES MORTGAGED IN FAVOUR OF RELIANCE HOME FINANCE LTD. Part-A (As per Sale Deed) Ward no. 38, Tatyapara, Mouza Raipur Khas P. H. No. 106 A, Raipur Chhattisgarh situated land Kharsa no 206 Part of, Building no 38/202 Part of, Total land area 3172 Sq. Ft. Out of 600 Sq. Ft. 200 Sq. Ft. is vacant area and remaining 400 Sq. Ft. Land is 44 years house is constructed. Again, remaining land area 2572 Sq. Ft. and land are vacant. 1.4 KM inside the Mominpara locality under municipality Being Bounded and Butted as under: On the North by: Buyers House, On the South by: House of Abbas Ali Home and drain, On the East by: Road, On the West by: Seller's land (Purchaser MD. Sayeed) Part - B (As per Sale Deed) Ward no. 38, Tatyapara, Mouza Raipur Khas P. H. No. 106 A/46/62, Raipur Nagar Nigam Raipur -1, Dist. Raipur Chhattisgarh situated land Kharsa no 206 Part of, Building no 38/202 Part of, Total land area 1172 Sq. Ft. Out of 200 Sq. Ft. area is Shop and Rest area 972 Sq. Ft. old R.B.C house is constructed inside the Aazad Chowk locality under municipality. Being Bounded and Butted as under: On the North by: Gohar Ali Home, On the South by: House of Abbas Ali Home, On the East by: Road, On the West by: MD Sayeed Home

The Borrower/co-borrowers/Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to the provision of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date: 27-February-2021 Place: Raipur

Sd/-
(Authorized Officer)
Reliance Home Finance Limited.

AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED

Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleshwar Garden, Ajmer Road, Jaipur - 302001, Rajasthan, (India). (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381)

APPENDIX-IV-A- [See proviso to rule 8(6)] Sale notice for sale of immovable properties

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s)/ Co-Borrower (s)/Mortgagor (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank), the same shall be referred herein after as **AUSFB**. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction for recovery of amount mentioned in the table below along with further interest, cost, charges and expenses being due to **AUSFB** viz. Secured Creditor. It is hereby informed you that we are going to conduct public E-Auction through website <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>

Loan A/c No./ Name of Borrowers/Co Borrowers/ Mortgagors/Guarantor	Date & Amount of 13(2) Demand Notice	Date Of Possession	Description of Property	Reserve Price For Property	Earnest Money For Property	Date & Time Of E-Auction	Date & Time of Bid Submission	E-Auction Place of Tender Submission	Contact Person and Property Visit Date
(Loan A/c No.): L9001060714526052, Shatruhan Kumar Verma S/o Bhagwat Verma (Borrower), Mukesh Verma S/o Bhagwat Verma (Co-Borrower), Bhagwat Lodhi S/o Raruha Rash Lodhi (Co-Borrower & Mortgagor)	16-Jul-19 Rs. 12,91,548/- Rs. Twelve Lac Ninety One Thousand Five Hundred Forty Eight only as on 16-Jul-19	5-Jan-2021	House On Part Of Kharsa No. 1009/45, Vill- Durg Shankar Nagar, Ph No. 16/24, Ric Durg-1, Th. & Dist- Durg, Chhattisgarh Admeasuring 640 Sq. Ft	₹ 9,75,000/- Rs. Nine Lac Seventy Five Thousand only	₹ 50,000/- Rs. Fifty Thousand only	30-Mar-21 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM with unlimited extension of 5 minutes	On or Before 26-Mar-21 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM	Au Small Finance Bank Ltd., Branch Address :- Sky Park, 3rd Floor, Opp. Bhatia Nursing Home, Canal Road, Raja Talab Dist. Raipur - 492001 Chhattisgarh	Bhanu Pratap Singh 9358002663 Email id- auctions@aubank.in 26-Mar-21

The terms and conditions of e-auction sale:-
(1). The E-Auction sale of Secured Asset is on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "no recourse" basis for and on behalf of the Secured Creditor viz. AUSFB and there is no known encumbrance which exists on the said property.
(2). For participating in online e-auction sale, Bid document, copies of PAN Card, Board Resolution in case of Company and photo ID, address proof are required to be submitted along with EMD, which is payable by way of RTGS/NEFT/DD in the name of MSME AUCTION POOL ACCOUNT OF AU Small Finance Bank Limited, Current account No.192120112171599 AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED Fifth and Sixth Floor Sunny Big Junction STC Kharsa No. 64 to 67, Gram Sukhaura New Atish Market Jaipur 302020, IFSC Code: AUBL0002011, Once an Online Bid is submitted, same cannot be withdrawn. Further any EMD submitted by bidder will be required to send the UTR/Ref no./DD no. of the RTGS/NEFT/DD with a copy of cancelled cheque on the following email IDs i.e. auctions@aubank.in
(3). All Interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> & <https://www.aubank.in/bank-auction> for further details including Terms & Conditions, to take part in e-auction sale proceeding and are also advised to contact Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, Contact Number 9358002663 and e-mail of auctions@aubank.in
Please Note: This is also a 30 days notice Under Rule 8(6) read with Rule 9(1) to the Borrowers/Co Borrowers/Mortgagors of the above said loan account about sale through tender / inter se bidding on the above-mentioned date. The property will be sold, if their outstanding dues are not repaid in full by the borrower in the given notice period.

Authorised Officer
AU Small Finance Bank Limited

Place : Durg
Date : 26/02/2021

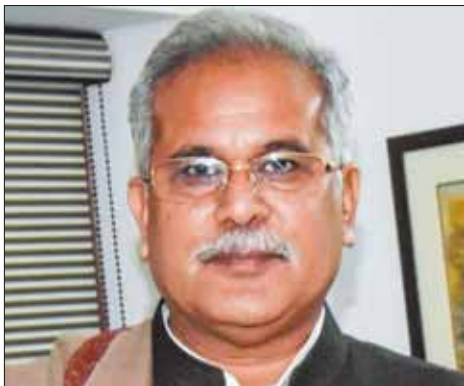
Baghel targets Centre as he defends C'garh policies

State to provide free Covid19 vaccine to its citizen, if Centre says no

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday took on the Central government as he vowed to stand by farmers and defended the decision to sell surplus paddy procured in the state.

Replying to a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's address, he said both the country and the state belongs to 'annadaata' (farmers). "We will not let the farmers be deprived of their rights. We will not allow deceit with those who provide food."



Baghel vowed to keep writing letters to the Central government on issues concerning Chhattisgarh even though the BJP had dubbed him a 'patrajivi'.

He said that when the Centre agreed to deposit 60 lakh tonnes of rice from Chhattisgarh in the Central

Pool, the opposition had the Centre should be thanked.

The day the Central government lives up to its promise, the whole House will thank them, he underlined.

The Centre has agreed to have only 24 lakh tonnes of rice deposited in the Central pool. The Chief Minister said

that compared to earlier times, more people were taking interest in agriculture as a result of the state's policies.

He pointed out that in 2020-21, 21,52,475 farmers were registered and 20,53,483 sold paddy. This amounted to 95.38 percent. This time farmers produced paddy in 24,86,665 hectares in the state -- much more than in 2015-16.

He said that there will be no need to sell paddy or rice outside if the Centre lifted 60 lakh tonnes from the state.

The country has become self-supporting and we now have surplus foodgrains but the Centre is unable to arrange for its disposal, he said.

Baghel then spoke about the higher wages paid to tendupatta collectors, value addition done to minor forest produce and resolution of pending cases of Forest Land Right certificates.

Chhattisgarh is the first state to distribute forestland

right certificates to forest dwellers, he said.

Baghel said the new industrial policy had led to the establishment of 1,249 industries, giving employment to many. Similarly, 104 MoUs were signed for mega industrial projects.

"We have set a goal to establish 200 Food Parks," he said, adding 111 locations had been identified.

In the last two years, due to better management of water resources, actual irrigation has increased from 9,68,000 hectares to 13 lakh hectares. He said the previous government spent ₹18,225 crores over 15 years but the irrigation capacity improved by only 16,000 hectares.

Defending the law and order situation in the state, the Chief Minister said the India Justice Report 2020 released by Tata Trust has described policing in Chhattisgarh as the second

best in the country.

He said the Central government owes Chhattisgarh ₹1,473 crores in central taxes. From 2004 till now, the Centre owes ₹15,154 crores to the state.

Opposing unilateral disinvestment, Baghel the Nagarnar Steel Plant should be operated by public sector companies. He said his government was working to save the plant.

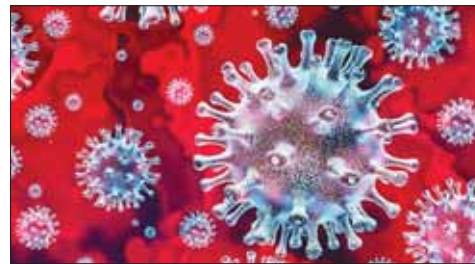
The Chief Minister asked the Centre to arrange for free Covid vaccination for everyone in the country, not just three crore people.

If this was not done, he promised to arrange for Covid vaccination for everyone in Chhattisgarh at government expense.

He said Covaxin has been used for only 1 percent of people in 11 states. Chhattisgarh will use this vaccine only after the third trial.

The Assembly then passed the motion by voice vote.

'Covid exists, people should take vaccine'



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Health Department on Friday asked people to take Covid-19 vaccine shots, saying the pandemic is not over and everyone needs to be cautious.

"We should use mask, maintain physical distancing and keep washing our hands at regular intervals. This way we can keep our families and society safe from Covid," the department said in a press release.

It added that corona cases have gone up in several states in the country.

The Department said if anyone has cold, cough, fever, fatigue, dysentery, lack of hunger and loss of smell, he should immediately contact doctors and get tested for Covid.

People should avoid non-trained doctors or quacks, it said.

"Since Covid vaccination started in Chhattisgarh not a single AEFI (Adverse Events Following Immunization) case was reported. Therefore, people should come forward and get corona vaccines," Immunization Officer Dr Amar Thakur said.

Centre to reimburse food subsidies worth ₹4,832 cr

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Union Food and Public Distribution Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday promised to reimburse Chhattisgarh food subsidies worth ₹4,832 crores after Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel raised the demand and also sought the lifting of 40 lakh tonnes of rice by the FCI.

Meeting Goyal, Baghel requested him to pay pending food subsidies for 2019-20 and 2020-21 totalling ₹5,214.97 crores. The Union Minister agreed to reimburse ₹4,832 crores, an official communication said.

Chhattisgarh Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey



and Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat accompanied Baghel.

The Chief Minister said the Centre should permit procurement of 40 lakh tonnes of rice by the Food Corporation of India at the earliest as 92 lakh

tonnes of paddy have been procured in the Kharif marketing year 2020-21.

He said the Food Department has been allowed to take only 24 lakh tonnes of rice under the Central pool.

Rajim Maghi Punni Mela begins today

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Amid Corona protocol, the Rajim Maghi Punni Mela, at the confluence of three rivers in Rajim town in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district, will start from February 27 and will end on March 11.

Assembly Speaker Dr Charandas Mahant will inaugurate the fair while Home and Religious Endowment Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu will preside over the inaugural day's function, a press release said.

Panchayat and Rural Development Minister T.S. Singh Deo, School Education Minister Dr. Premasai Singh Tekam, Commerce and Industry Minister Kawasi



Lakhma, Culture Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Leader of Opposition Dharamlal

Kaushik, Lok Sabha MPs Chunnimal Sahu and Sunil Soni, Parliamentary

Secretaries Vikas Upadhyay, Chintamani Maharaj and Kunwar Singh Nishad, and

MLAs Dhanendra Sahu, Amitesh Shukla, Damrudhar Pujari, Ajay Chandrakar and Lakshmi Dhruv will be special invitees on this event, it said.

Rajim is known as the Prayag of Chhattisgarh as it is located at the confluence of three rivers: Mahanadi, Pairi and Sondhur.

A huge religious fair is organized every year from Magh Purnima to Shivaratri. Also, Lord Vishnu is seated in the famous Rajiv Lochan Temple at Rajim town.

Meanwhile, Sahu on Friday visited the fair venue at Rajim to take note of the preparations.

No official events will be held during the fair in view of Covid-19.



A nationwide bandh call by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Friday over the Goods and Services Tax (CGST) did not evoke a response in Raipur. *Pioneer Photo*

Man jailed till death for raping minor boy

DURG: A Special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) court in Chhattisgarh's Durg district on Friday sentenced a 30-year-old man to jail till death for raping a 13-year-old boy in 2019.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Special Public Prosecutor Kamal Kishore Verma said Additional Sessions Judge Shubhra Pachouri also fined Purushottam Yadav ₹2,200.

The crime was committed on October 15, 2019 at an isolated place when the boy was returning home from a vegetable market. The boy told his grandmother about the attack and she alerted the police.

The man was arrested on October 19, 2019.

In another case, Judge Pachouri on Friday rejected a bail plea of a 35-year-old man who raped his three-and-a-half-year-old daughter and four-and-a-half-year-old son.

The man is in jail since January this year.

Ayushman cards free at CSC centres from March

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

From March, Ayushman card will be made at the Common Service Centres across Chhattisgarh for free, it was announced on Friday.

A MoU in this connection was signed between the National Health Authority and the Common Service Centre on February 18 according to in 10 states Ayushman cards will be made free of cost.

The states are Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Tripura, Nagaland, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Madhya Pradesh, a press release said.

Earlier, ₹30 was charged at CSCs for an Ayushman Card. Also, these cards will be generated free of cost at hospitals registered under Ayushman scheme.

At first the beneficiaries will receive paper cards and later they will

Earlier, ₹30 was charged at CSCs for an Ayushman Card

get PVC cards. A PVC card is digitally signed secure QR coded with photograph and demographic details with multiple security features.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), a beneficiary family gets health treatment facility up to ₹5 lakh.

Of these, 10.74 crore beneficiaries or 53 lakh families have been identified for secondary and tertiary health care.

Assembly updates

BJP walks out over Gauthan, Godhan funding | BJP indulging in politics over farmers: Baghel

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

BJP members on Friday walked out of the Chhattisgarh Assembly in protest against not getting clear replies from the Agriculture Minister to pointed questions raised over the funding of Gauthan and Godhan Nyay schemes.

On the fifth day of the Budget session, Ajay Chandrakar (BJP) sought details of the notification issued to impose cess to promote Gauthan, funds received and how much of it was utilized to procure cow dung till January 31, 2021.

Demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee

probe, Chandrakar said the cess should be used for the purpose for which it is collected.

He said it has been used for other purposes and a notification justifying such use, if any, should be tabled in the House. A cess of ₹5 has been imposed on liquor besides a cess for health.

Minister Ravindra Choubey said Gauthan and Godhan are different schemes, Godhan is to facilitate poor farmers but both are linked to cattle. As the revenue collected goes to exchequer, it can be used as per the need.

Shiv Ratan Sharma (BJP) said the government has no clarity. Then the BJP members trooped out.



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday accused the BJP of doing politics over farmers, saying the earlier BJP government in the state had filed an FIR when Congress leaders visited the family of a farmer who killed himself.

Baghel intervened during Question Hour in the Assembly after Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik raised the issue of suicides by farmers in the state and sought compensation to the nearest kin.

Kaushik sought to know the reasons for farmers' suicides from April 2020 to February 2 this year. He

wanted district-wise data, compensation given and, if not, when they will be disbursed.

Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey said 141 farmers committed suicide in this period. A Patwari, Dongar Nag, was suspended over errors in records in Keshkal in Kondagaon district.

Raising supplementary questions, Kaushik said the government had been blaming mental illness and other reasons for the death of farmers, which he said was an insult to the deceased.

Choubey replied that only one suicide note was received blaming spurious pesticides. Raids were conducted after that against 50 pesticide outlets in Durg and

Rajnandgaon.

The Chief Minister then pointed out how during the BJP rule FIR was lodged against Congress leaders for visiting the residence of a farmer who had committed suicide.

Baghel insisted there was no provision for compensation for suicides by farmers and if indeed there was, he asked why no compensation had been given to the 200 farmers who have killed themselves while protesting against the Central farm laws on Delhi's borders.

It is sheer politics by the opposition in the name of farmers, he said. This triggered sloganeering by BJP members who walked out of the House.

16K Covid cases for 2nd day in a row



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh Covid-19 cases are showing a worrying upward trend over the past one week with India recording its single-day increase of above 16,000 for the second consecutive day on Friday. The infection tally rose to 1,10,63,491, while the recoveries have surged to 1,07,50,680.

According to data from the Union Health Ministry on Friday, a total 16,577 infections were reported in a day, while the death toll increased to 1,56,825 with 120 new fatalities. As per the data, the Union Territory of Lakshadweep has reported its first death. The 120 new fatalities include 56 from Maharashtra, 14 from Kerala, 13 from Punjab.

The number of active cases increased to 1,55,986, which accounts for 1.41 per cent of the total infections, the data stated. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,07,50,680 which translates into a national recovery rate of 97.17 per cent. The case fatality rate stood at 1.42 per cent.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7; 30 lakh on August 23; 40 lakh on September 5; and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28; 70 lakh on October 11; 80 lakh on October 29; 90 lakh on November 20; and the one crore mark on December 19.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 21,46,61,465 samples have been tested up to February 25, of which 8,31,807

samples were tested on Thursday.

A total of 1,56,825 deaths have been reported in the country so far, including 51,993 from Maharashtra, 12,483 from Tamil Nadu, 12,316 from Karnataka, 10,905 from Delhi, 10,260 from West Bengal, 8,723 from Uttar Pradesh, and 7,168 from Andhra Pradesh.

Meanwhile, the country has so far since January 26, 2021, vaccinated 1,34,72,643 healthcare and frontline workers. However, no vaccination will take place on Saturday and Sunday as the Centre will enable transition of CoWIN app from version 1.0 to 2.0 ahead of the commencement of vaccination from March 1 for people above 60 years of age and those above 45 years with comorbidities, said the Ministry.

The vaccination will take place at around 10,000 government facilities which will be free of cost. However, at private hospitals, beneficiaries will have to pay for vaccination.

CSIR bats for Pfizer, says it will convince Centre to bring it back for vaccination

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India's apex scientific research organisation, head Shekhar Mande on Friday batted for US based Pfizer and BioNtech's Covid-19 vaccine saying that he will try to "convince" the Government to initiate talks with the pharma giant and find out ways to bring it back for vaccination of people in India.

Not only Pfizer, he said, the government should also consider inviting Johnson & Johnson, Sputnik and Moderna to India and asserted that India will need at least 4 other vaccines to help finish immunisation drive faster.

Pfizer had applied for an emergency-use nod for its Covid vaccine in India, but withdrew its application earlier this month.

Mande's comment comes in the backdrop of a study that said that a single dose of Pfizer and BioNtech's Covid-19 vaccine cuts the number of asymptomatic infections and could significantly reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. In fact, Pfizer had also announced earlier this week that its Covid-19 vaccine can



be stored at warmer temperatures.

Earlier, the vaccine required storage temperatures between -80°C and -60°C, which made the vaccine less viable for India.

Also, the requirement of multiple options of vaccine candidates in India will soon go up as India Wednesday said private hospitals could start vaccination now.

"I am not aware of the issues due to which Pfizer had withdrawn the application but now the regulator and company should try to find a middle way. Pfizer is performing very well in other countries," he told a news agency.

Pfizer was the first pharmaceutical firm to apply for emergency-use authorisation for its Covid vaccine in India.

However, on February 5, 2021 the company decided to withdraw its application.

According to the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC), the expert panel that recommends vaccines to India's drug regulator for approval, it had turned down Pfizer's proposal as the company did not show interest in conducting 'bridging trials' in India.

"The firm has not proposed any plan to generate safety and immunogenicity data in Indian population," the minutes read.

However, Mande said he would not like to comment on why the company withdrew its application. "I want both of them, the company and the regulator to find a middle way," he said, according to the agency.

Chargesheet against 11 Qaeda/AQIS operatives



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Friday filed a chargesheet before Special NIA Court here against 11 members of Al Qaeda/AQIS from West Bengal and Kerala under various IPC Sections and provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

Those chargesheeted are Murshid Hasan alias Sofiq, Mosaraf Hosen, Mainul Mandal, Lea Yean Ahmed alias Leion, Najmus Sakib, Iyabul Biswas, Samim Ansari, Abu Sufian, Atiur Rahman, Al Mamun Kamal and Abdul Momin Mandal. They have been charged for criminal conspiracy, waging war against the nation, collecting arms with intention to wage war against the Government of India besides provisions of UA (P) A and Arms Act.

The instant case was registered following inputs about an Al Qaeda inspired module sprouting and operating in West Bengal and Kerala under the leadership of Murshid Hasan alias Sofiq and that the members of this module were in an advanced stage of conspiracy to execute terrorist attacks in different parts of the country.

In synchronised raids conducted on September 19, 2020 across West Bengal and Kerala, nine alleged terrorists were arrested. Subsequently, two more terror operatives were arrested from West Bengal on August 26, 2020 and November 1, 2020.

"Investigation has revealed that Murshid Hasan alias Sofiq was in touch with Al Qaeda handlers based in Pakistan and Bangladesh and had received instructions along with radical propaganda material through encrypted social media platforms from them. Murshid

NIA chargesheets 1 in UP espionage case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has filed a supplementary chargesheet against accused Rajakbhai Kumbhar of Mundra, Gujarat in an espionage case of Uttar Pradesh relating to passing on defence secrets to ISI operatives.

Kumbhar has been charged for Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and waging war against Government of India besides provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 01/2020 dated January 19, 2020 at Police Station-ATS, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow in which accused Md. Rashid of Mughal Sarai, Chandoli, UP was arrested on January 19, 2020 for supplying sensitive information, photos and videos of vital installations of strategic importance to ISI operatives based in Pakistan.

The NIA had re-regis-

tered this case as RC-03/2020/NIA/LKW on April 6, 2020 and took up the investigation.

Earlier, a chargesheet was filed against Rashid on July 16 last year for his role in supplying sensitive, tactical and strategically important information about vital installations and movement of Indian security forces to his ISI handlers based in Pakistan.

"The chargesheeted accused Rajakbhai Kumbhar was arrested on September 30 last year. Further investigation had revealed that he had visited Pakistan twice on legal documents. During his return in the course of second visit, Kumbhar had come in contact with Pakistani ISI operatives Hamid alias Asim and he had joined the conspiracy with the co-accused. He transferred funds to accused Md. Rashid for the information he had provided to the ISI operatives in Pakistan," the NIA said in a statement.

Hasan along with his other associates conspired to radicalise and recruit more individuals into the terrorist organisation Al Qaeda," the NIA said in a statement.

The accused persons allegedly disseminated radical material through social media and encrypted chat platforms with an intention to radicalise and recruit others for establishing an Islamic State by waging violent jihad in India, it said.

Investigation has also revealed that the group members planned to attack individuals whom they consider Kafirs.

The group members had conducted a series of conspiratorial meetings for raising funds for the purchase of arms

and ammunition/explosive materials, radicalising and recruiting more members and charting out the future course of action including establishing a Markaz (a training centre for providing religious and weapons training to new recruits). The accused persons were also in active communication with an arms dealer through their foreign based handlers and were planning to receive a consignment of sophisticated arms and ammunition in the national capital.

"However, their nefarious plans were obviated by their timely arrest by NIA. The accused persons were planning to attack among others, an India based Bangladeshi blogger for his views expressed on social media," it added.

MHA extends existing Covid-19 guidelines till March 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Home Ministry on Friday said the existing Covid-19 guidelines will remain in force till March 31.

In a statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said while there has been a substantial decline in the active and new Covid-19 cases, there is need to maintain surveillance, containment and caution so as to



fully overcome the pandemic.

The States and Union Territories have also been advised to speed up the vaccination of the target population so as to break the chain of transmission and overcome the pandemic.

Accordingly, containment zones will continue to be demarcated carefully and prescribed containment measures will be strictly followed.

Air travel sans baggage to be cheaper soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flying within the country without any check-in baggage could soon get cheaper. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has issued a circular, allowing airlines to give concessions in ticket prices to passengers who carry no baggage or only cabin baggage. The new rules will provide tickets for cheap for those passengers travelling with no baggage or just cabin baggage.

However, the cabin baggage has to be within the permissible weight limit. The services that will now be chargeable on the opt-in basis include preferential seating, meal or snacks or drinking charges, sports equipment charges, musical instrument carriage, fee for special declaration of valuable baggage (allow for higher unit on carrier liability), charge for using airline lounges. Currently, a passenger can carry up to 7 kilograms of cabin baggage and 15 kilograms of check-in baggage.

In a circular, the DGCA said the government has decided to unbundle certain services and make them chargeable on an opt-in basis



based on feedback received from passengers. The DGCA said that "as part of airline baggage policy, scheduled airlines will be allowed to offer free baggage allowance as well as "zero baggage/no check-in baggage fares".

This will be subject to the condition that the passenger booking ticket under such fare scheme is made aware of the charges that shall be applicable if the passenger turns up with the baggage for check in at the airline counter. These applicable charges shall be reasonable; prominently displayed to the passenger at the time of booking of ticket and also to be printed on the ticket," DGCA said in a circular.

The move comes as an effort to make flying more affordable and accessible to passengers. It is noted that domestic airlines have seen 10-12 per cent drop in bookings as state governments have tightened measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the last two weeks.

Under the new rule, if a passenger declares s/he will be travelling with no check-in baggage or only with cabin baggage within the permissible weight limit, airlines can offer tickets at lesser prices. This declaration will have to be made at the time of the booking of the ticket. "As part of airline baggage policy, scheduled airlines will be allowed to offer

free baggage allowance as well as "zero baggage/no check in baggage fares", the DGCA said in its circular.

Passengers will be charged if they choose "no check-in baggage" fare and turn up at the airport with check-in luggage. "These applicable charges shall be reasonable; prominently displayed to the passenger at the time of booking of ticket and also to be printed on the ticket," the DGCA said. It also allowed unbundling of other services like preferential seating and said passengers should be charged if they opt them.

"On the basis of various feedback received, it is felt that many times these services provided by the airlines may not be required by the passengers while travelling. Considering the fact that unbundling of services and charges thereto has the potential to make basic fare more affordable and provide consumer an option of paying for the services which he/she wishes to avail, it has been decided by the government to allow these services to be unbundled and charged separately on opt-in basis," the DGCA added.

Judicial probe sought into alleged suicide of Dadra and Nagar Haveli MP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday demanded a judicial enquiry into the alleged suicide of Dadra and Nagar Haveli MP Mohan Delkar in Mumbai earlier this week and asked why the Centre had not acted when he repeatedly raised the issue of "harassment" by the Union Territory's administrator.

The Opposition party claimed the seven-time MP, who was found dead in a hotel room, had named the administrator, Praful Khoda Patel, and other officials of the union territory in his purported suicide note. According to Congress spokesperson Pawan Kherra, Delkar had in the past written letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior leaders, flagging the "harassment" he was facing at the hands of the administrator and other officials of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

"He (Delkar) had enumerated the manner in which he was being humiliated and harassed



The Opposition party claimed the seven-time MP, had named the administrator, Praful Khoda Patel, and other officials of the union territory in his purported suicide note

ever since he won the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 as an independent candidate," Kherra said at AICC Press conference.

"This is a set template of the Government in power (at the Centre). If you lose elections, you try and harass, you try and intimidate through agencies, governors, lieutenant governors and administrators. They try and browbeat the person, try and control him or her. If they agree with you (government), make them join you, if not then these are the tragic results," Kherra alleged.

CBI, ED raid multiple locations across Bengal in coal pilferage scam



PTI ■ KOLKATA

ED sources said the agency has started searches at Durgapur and Asansol and also in the city

Investigation agencies CBI and Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted joint raids at various places in West Bengal in connection with the multi-crore coal pilferage scam, sources in them said.

CBI sources said its sleuths raided the official and residential premises of businessman Randhir Kumar Barnwal in Kolkata.

ED sources said the agency has started searches at Durgapur and Asansol and also in the city.

Both the agencies are concurrently probing the scam.

While CBI is looking after the criminal aspect of it, ED is delving into the money laun-

dering angle of the scam.

CBI has already examined Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira for her alleged involvement in the coal scam. Banerjee in the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

It has also issued a look out notice against alleged kingpin Anup Majhi, alias Lala, who has been absconding.

Can't allow sexual harassment cases to be swept under carpet: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday said it cannot allow sexual harassment cases to be "swept under the carpet" and asked a retired District Judge of Madhya Pradesh to face "in-house departmental inquiry" instituted by the high court on the allegations levelled against him by a junior woman judicial officer.

"We cannot allow sexual harassment cases to be swept under the carpet like this," a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said.

The Bench, also comprising justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, rejected vehement submissions of senior lawyer R Balasubramaniam, appearing



for the former judge, that the woman judicial officer had withdrawn her earlier complaint and had categorically stated that she wanted "conciliation".

In the proceedings conducted through video conferencing, the bench made clear that it is not going to interfere with the Madhya Pradesh High Court order of an inquiry and said that as on date the former judge stood "convicted" and there may be a chance of his acquittal if he

chooses to face the inquiry.

"You are walking on a very thin ice you can fall any time. You may have a chance in the inquiry they conduct you may acquit," the bench said, asking him to join the inquiry.

The counsel for the former judge then withdrew the appeal against the high court's order.

Earlier, the top court had observed that "to flirt with a junior official is not acceptable conduct for a judge".

It, however, had taken note of submission of Balasubramaniam that sexual harassment allegations were levelled against the former judge only when he was in the zone consideration for elevation as a high court judge.

EC orders 3-member panel for poll security plan

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the possibility of large-scale violence, the Election Commission (EC) has directed that the election security plan of poll-going States be jointly decided by a committee comprising the chief electoral officer, State police nodal officer and CAPF coordinator. According to officials, over 6,600 polling stations in West Bengal have been identified as 'vulnerable' and 715 critical ahead of the Assembly elections while over 2,654 polling stations have been identified as 'critical' and 338 vulnerable in Assam.

According to EC, the first such formal arrangement that will apply to all future polls, will ensure randomisation of the state police and CAPF personnel, besides their optimum and effective utilisation in the interest of free and fair and fair elec-

tions EC, in a communication sent to chief electoral officers of all states and UTs on February 8, directed that the committee comprising state CEO, state police nodal officer and CAPF coordinator, shall periodically/ frequently meet during the polls to monitor deployment and ensure effective and optimum utilisation of police and security forces. The committee will also oversee the arrangements made for the security forces within the poll-bound state.

According to the Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, all critical and vulnerable areas have been identified and advance teams have been already deployed across all four states and one union territory Puducherry going to the polls. "Also, webcasting arrangements will be in place at polling stations in critical and vulnerable areas, while

adequate CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) deployment will be ensured for the assembly polls, he said.

The CEC Arora said that the CAPFs/SAP shall also be deployed in the Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies and other vulnerable areas and critical polling stations as per the assessment of ground realities by the CEOs of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry, in consultation with the various stakeholders. "All critical events will be video-graphed. District Election Officers will arrange sufficient number of video and digital cameras and camera teams for the purpose," he said.

Vulnerable polling stations have been identified on the basis of several parameters which include a polling booth that has recorded more than 90% polling is classified under vulnerable category.

SC nixes plea challenging Centre's order making FASTag mandatory



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea challenging the Centre's decision to make FASTag mandatory for all the vehicles.

The Government has made FASTag mandatory from February 15 midnight and any vehicle not fitted with it will be charged double the toll at elec-

tronic toll plazas across the country, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has said.

A three-judge Bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde, Justice Bopanna and Justice V Ramasubramanian asked the petitioner to approach the Delhi High Court and granted the petitioner liberty to withdraw the plea.

UDF has an edge, LDF chances dim: Observers

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As kick-off began for the April 6 Assembly polls in Kerala on Friday, poll observers in the State are of the view that the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) has a slight edge over the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front.

Veteran scribe and author P Rajan, who led Mathrubhumi daily's editorial team for four decades and continues writing and commenting on political and social issues, is of the view that events in the last one week witnessed by the State have cast an uncertainty over the poll prospects of the LDF.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan himself had to announce the cancellation of the MoU signed with the US based EMCC, a dubious company and the Kerala Shipping and Inland

Navigation Corporation for deep sea fishing. Similarly, the ongoing agitation by rank holders of the Kerala Public Service Commission for appointment in Government service and the goofing up of the way the administration treated the job seekers too will play a significant role in coming days," said Rajan.

He said he does not expect a sweep by the UDF which was witnessed during the Lok Sabha election. The UDF had won all but one seat in the 20 Lok Sabha constituencies from the State. "The situation has changed because the minorities which voted en masse for the Congress hoping that the party would regain the power which it lost in 2014 have understood that the Grand Old Party is no more the same entity. The CPI(M) has said that it made a mistake in handling the Sabarimala temple

issue, dear to all Hindus in the State," said Rajan.

N Prasanth, the managing director of KSINC, who has been alleged by the chief minister and J Mercykutty, the fisheries minister, of signing the deal with the US company for deep sea fishing, created a sensation when he warned all that he would not take it lying down. "I will disclose all details associated with the signing of the MoU at the right time," he had told reporters on Friday.

Hari Kartha, senior scribe and commentator, is of the view that Wednesday night's murder of RSS leader Nandhu by SDPI activists at Alapuzha has upset Hindus all over the State. "What I understand is that though the police was present in the spot, they did not do anything to save the victim from the attack," he said.

Explosive-laden SUV found near Ambani's house was stolen: Police Mumbai cops launch manhunt for 2 absconding culprits

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having established that SUV that lay abandoned near Industrialist Mukesh Ambani's skyscraper mansion "Antilia" in south Mumbai on Thursday evening was a stolen car and the gelatin sticks found in it were manufactured in a Nagpur facility, the crime branch sleuths of the Mumbai police on Friday launched a manhunt for two unidentified culprits behind the sensational plot.

A day after the 20 gelatin sticks and a letter were recovered from a Scorpio that was found abandoned in the vicinity of Mukesh Ambani's 27-storey residence "Antilia" on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai, the Gamdevi police registered an FIR in the case, while the Mumbai Crime Branch sleuths landed "strong leads" in their investigations in the case. The two early leads that the investigations found in the case were: the SUV – a Scorpio – used in the crime had been stolen from Vikroli in north-east Mumbai and the gelatin sticks found in the car were manufactured at Nagpur-based firm M/S Solar Explosives Ltd.

Informed sources in the Mumbai police said that the Scorpio used in the crime had been stolen from a service road near the Vikhroli Airoli junction. The owner of the car has told the police that his car broke down near Vikhroli Airoli junction while he was on his way from Thane to Mumbai. The owner parked the car on the wayside of the road. On the following afternoon, when he returned to take the car for repairs, he found the vehicle was missing. He lodged a complaint with the Vikhroli police.

After the theft of the SUV, the miscreants damaged the chassis plate and tried to make the number illegible. However, the police retrieved the chassis number and identified the owner.

In one of the multiple CCTV footages from the area around the crime spot showed the suspect who parked the car at the site, but he has not been identified as yet as he sported a mask on his face and had covered his head with a hoodie that he wore.

The seized car has meanwhile been sent for a forensic analysis

The purported threat letter -- written in broken English and Hindi -- that was recovered from the seized SUV was addressed to "Nita Bhabhai aur Mukesh bhyya aur femili". The culprits said that what they were witnessing was a mere "trailer". "Be alert. We have made all arrangements to blow up the entire Ambani family", the letter read.

"An FIR has been registered and investigations were in progress," deputy commissioner of police (operations) and Mumbai Police spokesperson S Chaitanya said. Chaitanya, however, declined to comment on the contents of the letter, saying: he said: "I cannot comment on the letter. It is part of the investigations. We have got some leads, we are working on it".

Having confirmed that the gelatine sticks found in the car were manufactured at a Nagpur-based firm, the investigators have sought the details of sale of the seized gelatin sticks "Since only packets and not the individual sticks are bar-coded, it will take us time to confirm who bought it or whether these were also stolen," a senior police officer said.,

Cong to initiate dialogue at grassroots level in UP

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Congress is all set to initiate a dialogue process at grassroot level in the main Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh while it prepares to reap benefits ahead of the assembly elections next year under the leadership of party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi. To being with the manifestos to committee of the grand old party will visit Bahraich this weekend to get people's feedback to formulate a 'people's manifesto'.

In this regard the members of the manifesto committee for Uttar Pradesh polls met on Thursday in the presence of Priyanka, who also is general secretary in-charge of the state to brainstorm how to take on the might of incumbent government led by Yogi Adityanath and overall the prevailing charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In the present UP assembly of 403 seats, BJP is 312 while Congress is just seven while other two big regional players, Samajwadi Party and BSP who have ruled back to back in the State has been downsized to 49 and 19 respectively. The last best of the Congress in UP was in 1980 at 309 seats followed by 269 in 1985.

According to the grand old party think tanks, while the country witness large scale unemployment, poor economy and highest ever inflation besides several restlessness in all spheres across the country, Modi and BJP still remains popular and common man issues have been eclipsed by this.

AICC sources said the leaders under the chairmanship of former Union Minister Salman Khurshid deliberated to prepare a "people's manifesto" and on strategise for the elections right from now onwards. Besides Khurshid, who is party's UP manifesto committee chief, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete were among those present in the meeting.

Ahead of the Assembly elections in the State next year, Priyanka has stepped up her efforts to revive the party in the politically crucial State where the party has been struggling to make a presence in the past three decades. In recent days, Priyanka has been attending and addressing kisan mahapanchayats to connect with farmers protesting against the new farm laws for three months now.

She also went to Rampur to condole death of a farmer who had died during the January 26 tractor rally violence, and last week she addressed farmers at Mathura and also visited the Vrindavan temple and before that she took also a holy dip at Sangam in Prayagraj. She is scheduled to visit Varanasi on Saturday to attend Guru Ravidas Maharaj birth anniversary.

"She has been frequenting the State and is focusing only that State ever since she came into full active politics. People of the state, particularly the oppressed and downtrodden are looking towards her as a ray of hope in the same fashion the State loved her grandmother former PM Indira Gandhi," said a senior Congress leader who is closely associated to Team Priyanka with the sole agenda to win back the confidence in the State which sends the maximum number of Lok Sabha MPs.

Last week the grand old party's electoral footprint shrunk further with the fall of its government in Puducherry. The party is now left on its own only in Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh while as coalition in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Crucial states like Madhya Pradesh which the party won over after long stint was lost due to acute internal squabbling and similar situation prevailed in another state Rajasthan.

Kerala: In a jolt for BJP, minority wing chief quits

KOCHI: In what could be a dilemma for the Kerala BJP, one of the senior leaders of the party belonging to the Christian community resigned from all posts including the post of general secretary of the minority wing of the party on Friday.

Baby John, former RSP leader who joined the BJP in 2011 and was elevated to the position of the minority wing general secretary told *The Pioneer* that his elevation in the party was because of his organisational and mobilising capabilities. "But of late I understood that the Kerala BJP is a divided house with so many groups and sub-groups. The minorities always are treated as second-class cit-

izens. Though the groups owing allegiance to K Surendran, union minister V Muraliedharan and former party chief Krishnadas do not see eye to eye on any issues, they are united against their hatred for Christians and Muslims. I am disappointed that I joined a party like this and devoted my life for them," said Baby John.

He said he is likely to cast his lot with the CPI(M) in coming days. "As a school student I was a member of the SFI, the student wing of the CPI(M) and hence there is nothing new in my regards for that party," said Baby John.

But Prof Stanly Sebastain, an educationist-turned-entrepreneur,

who is known as a BJP fellow traveller said there was nothing shocking in Baby John's resignation.

"He belongs to the group of migratory birds who came to nestle in the BJP on the recommendation of a cartel led by bishops and arch bishops. The BJP leadership's failure to thoroughly scan the people who come in search of greener pastures is the root cause of this phenomenon. The BJP leaders in Kerala should work together and appoint only people with credentials to various wings of the party," said Prof Sebastain who is one of the pioneers who alerted the Kerala Government about Love Jihad in the State. **PNS**

Goa bans students from driving two-wheelers to school

Panaji: The Goa Education Department on Friday banned students from driving two-wheelers to school.

According to an order issued by Director of Education Santosh Amonkar, the reason behind banning school students from driving on two-wheelers stems from complaints of reckless driving by students.

"It is informed that many students are seen using two wheelers and riding in a reckless manner violating traffic rules," Amonkar said in his order.

Amonkar has also urged heads of all educational institutions to address the issue of reckless driving by students with their respective Parents

According to an order issued by Director of Education Santosh Amonkar, the reason behind banning school students from driving on two-wheelers stems from complaints of reckless driving by students

Teachers Associations, while also urging them to ensure that no student should drive two wheelers to the school campus.

"It is once again enjoined upon all heads of institutions to address this issue in PTA meeting and ensure that no students will drive two wheelers to the schools," the order states.



Oval Maidan, the Grade-I recreational ground, which has been shut from Friday owing to surge in COVID-19 cases, in Mumbai on Friday

PTI

Andhra registers 96 more Covid infections, tally rises to 8.89 lakh

With 71 more recoveries, total recoveries crossed 8.81 lakh in the southern state

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh registered 96 new Covid cases on Friday, increasing the state's tally over 8.89 lakh, even as 71 more persons recovered from the virus in the past 24 hours.

Chittoor district reported the highest number of cases at 22, followed by Guntur (17), Krishna and Nellore (9 each), East Godavari (7), Kadapa and Anantapur (6 each).

Among other places, Visakhapatnam (5), Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari (4 each) and Kurnool (3).

However, no infection was recorded in Prakasam district in the past 24 hours while Chittoor has been logging the highest number of cases for some days already.

East Godavari's tally crossed 1.24 lakh, the highest among all Andhra districts, while the state's positivity rate fell to 6.41 per cent, which is still higher than the national average of 5.15 per cent.

Surprisingly, the state's active coronavirus cases climbed back over 600 to reach 635.

Meanwhile, one more fatality occurred due to the virus in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of deaths to 7,169.

With 71 more recoveries, total recoveries crossed 8.81 lakh in the southern state.

With as many as 34,778 more tests, total Covid tests in Andhra Pradesh crossed 1.38 crore mark. **IANS**

Special Covid vaccination drive for women in UP

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh will launch a special Covid-19 vaccination drive for women above the age of 60 years on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8.

This was announced by additional chief secretary (ACS) home, Avanshi Kumar Awasthi on Friday during a high-level meeting with of UP Women's Commission chairperson Vimala Batham.

The official, during the meeting with Women's Commission chairperson, discussed measures to provide a safer environment to women, strengthening the peace, effectively curbing crime and providing cent percent benefit of government-run schemes under the state government's Mission Shakti campaign.

Awasthi said, "As per directives from chief minister Yogi Adityanath, effective action

should be taken to make women economically independent so that the benefits of government-run schemes can be made available to women on priority." He also directed the officers to pay special attention to the programmes run under the Mission Shakti campaign.

ACS Home also announced that the state government will facilitate women entrepreneurs on March 10 in Lucknow.

"The invitees will be honoured, and the participants will be informed about the efforts and success made by women entrepreneurs. Efforts will also be made to motivate women working in various institutions of Lucknow district in the programme," he said.

UP Women's Commission chairperson Vimla Batham said a work-plan would be prepared by the commission for the empowerment of women through Mission Shakti. **IANS**



Boats anchored at Mora Jetty Uran during fishermen's protest against the Central Government and JNPT in the midst of Arabian Sea by blocking its water channel way over rehabilitation of fishing community from nearby fishing area, in Navi Mumbai on Friday

PTI

Karnataka transporters' strike successful, vehicles stay away

Bengaluru: The day-long strike in support of the Bharat Bandh-call given by the CAIT on Friday in protest against the rising fuel prices among others, was largely successful as majority of trucks and goods-carrying vehicles did not ply on highways across the State.

The Karnataka State Lorry Owners and Agents Association (KSLO&AA) came out in full support of the Bharat Bandh-call given by the Confederation of All India Traders to protest against the rising fuel prices, Goods and Services Tax, E-Bill etc.

KSLO&AA President GR Shannugappa said that around 75,000 trucks that operate in

Bengaluru -- both up and down -- were off the roads. "We did not disturb supply of daily essential commodities like milk, medicine and fruits and vegetables, but our strike was largely successful," he said.

He also told reporters that transporters across the country have been using the latest amendment in the GST laws, which has halved the validity of the E-way bill, a permit associated with the inter-state and intra-state movement of goods, from 100 km per day, to 200 km per day.

Penalties for a truck carrying a consignment with an expired E-way bill, or with an erroneous E-way bill amount to

200 per cent of the tax value, or 100 percent of the invoice value under Section 129 of CGST Act, 2017," he explained.

According to him, a lorry owner in the changed tax and fuel regime was forced to shell out around Rs 1,000 extra just to pass from Nelamangala to Attibele, which is around 35 km.

"This is a classic case how cost has become unmanageable to transporters. Therefore, both union government and state governments need to be more sympathetic towards us and must agree to roll back their back breaking taxes, toll charges and fuel prices," he appealed. **IANS**

Govt colleges in K'taka to get 12,500 de-bonded desktops

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Government on Friday signed an agreement with Cognizant Technology Solutions India Pvt Ltd and Rotary Club Whitefield to provide 12,500 de-bonded desktop computers to the first-grade government colleges in the state as part of the 'Help Educate' initiative, Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayana said.

This initiative is part of the Karnataka Learning Management System (Karnataka LMS) based digital learning. The Karnataka LMS initiative is aimed at training around 24,000 teachers and 4.5 lakh students of 430 government first grade colleges, 87 government polytechnics and 14 government engineering colleges.

Addressing reporters after Cognizant Technology and Rotary Club signed an agreement with the Department of Collegiate Education and Technical Education (DCTE) here, Narayana, who also holds the Higher Education portfolio, said, "The 'Help Educate' initiative is aimed at partnering with MNCs and philanthropists to educate and train students, train professors in modern methodology through faculty development programmes and digital teaching and also equip the government colleges with digital assets in order to adopt digital learning which is both a recent trend and also a necessity of times."

He added that Cognizant India will provide 12,500 de-bonded desktop computers, while the Rotary Club has come forward to instal Windows operating system and Office 365 besides taking

The Deputy CM explained that the initiative's prime objective is to facilitate the government first grade colleges with computers and make a difference in the learning of students, most of whom hail from a socio-economically marginalised background

care of transportation and installation of the desktops in the respective colleges.

The Deputy CM explained that the initiative's prime objective is to facilitate the government first grade colleges with computers and make a difference in the learning of students, most of whom hail from a socio-economically marginalised background.

"These 12,500 desktop computers will be distributed among all the government first grade colleges to establish computer laboratories for the use of the students," he said.

Narayana said that the government colleges need at least 30,000 computers, but under this initiative, 12,500 computers are being provided.

"This contribution is valued about Rs 50 crore and will help fill the digital divide of the students studying in government colleges," Narayana said, as he hoped that many more MNCs would come forward to contribute to this initiative.

Launched in November last year, the Karnataka LMS is a comprehensive system which aims to empower teachers, enrich students and bridge the digital divide. **IANS**

Khelo India Winter Games 2021 inaugurated in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The scenic resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam in Kashmir valley are witnessing huge rush of tourists and adventure sport lovers who are flocking there to participate in the ongoing winter carnival and sporting events.

On Friday Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at 2nd edition of Khelo India National Winter Games-2021 through virtual mode.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju also addressed the huge gathering during the inaugural ceremony of the mega event. From February 26 to March 02, 2021, more than 600 Athletes from all over the country are participating in different winter-sports disciplines including Alpine Skiing, Nordic Ski, Snowboarding, Snow Mountaineering, Ice Hockey, Ice Skating, Ice Stock and Snow Shoe.

In his address, the Prime Minister observed that the second edition of Khelo India Winter Games is a major step towards making Jammu and Kashmir a hub of the Winter Games.

The Prime Minister said that winter games in Jammu & Kashmir would help in developing a new sporting ecosystem and would instill new spirit and enthusiasm in the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

Experience from this winter games would help the players while participating in the Winter Olympics, said the PM.

With two Khelo India Centres of Excellence and Khelo India Centres in all 20 districts coming up in J&K, the UT would become the centre of sporting excellence, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha called upon the participating sportspersons to spread the message of Peace, Unity, Goodwill, Love and Empowerment.

Let us share this experience of unifying power of sports with the world, remarked the Lt Governor. Gulmarg has been acknowledged as a promising Winter-sports destination in the International circuit. Khelo India Winter Games is not merely an event, it is a mission to bring together the youth from all over the country and showcase our sporting talent to the world, observed the Lt Governor. **IANS**

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Censorship?

The Government's guidelines regulating OTT platforms and social media raise a few questions

The first-phase lockdown of last year's pandemic outbreak spawned newfound attention and increased popularity for a number of web series as cinema halls had been ordered shut and people were forced to remain closeted inside their residences. Several big-budget and multi-starrer movies, which had been slated for theatrical release in the last week of March 2020 and beyond, fell to the Government's social distancing order and, to make up for the imminent financial losses in light of the prevailing uncertain conditions, chose the new fad of releasing the films online. As days gave way to weeks and months wore on, the average Indian family — already reeling under fear psychosis and bored to death by now — rediscovered the panacea of entertainment in various web

series streaming on Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. So far, so good. *Mirzapur* aired, made a splash, but there was no hue and cry. Along came Saif Ali Khan-starrer *Tandav*, focusing on how politics affects collegial environment, and all hell broke loose. Everybody seems to have conveniently forgotten *Haasil* (released in 2003, starring Jimmy Sheirgill, Irrfan Khan and Ashutosh Rana, directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia) which was a gripping narrative based on the same subject. As avid watchers of the series among the OTT viewers point out, the ostensible objection — "hurting religious sentiments" by taking umbrage to the Shiva scene in the first episode — was just a ruse to express

anger against the way the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, and the National Register of Citizens issues had been projected in the series.

The "religious sentiments" angle, coupled with allegations of the earlier series brimming with sexually explicit scenes and foul language, brought the spotlight back on *Mirzapur*, too, though there had been no protests during its run earlier. The tepid response of Twitter officials to the Centre's recent earnest entreaty to suspend the handles of certain "rumour-mongering members" during the ongoing farmers' agitation, especially in the wake of the January 26 violence at Red Fort, seems to have added fuel to the authorities' displeasure and, therefore, today we find both the OTT platforms and social media facing a barrage of directives. The question now arises: Are the Government guidelines regulating the two media correct, or could it lead to pressure or censorship on them? Experts opine that the 29 pages of rules raise concerns over several factors, including the privacy of users and censorship of digital news media, which will ultimately affect citizens' rights. It seems the Government just does not like us to have fun and make personal choices. It had better heed common sense and allow its adult population, those who are eligible to vote and can take learned decisions in all other spheres of life, to decide for itself whether it wants to watch a particular show or series. Of course, cracking down on the creators and propagators of fake news is a different ball game altogether.

PICTALK



Sam Bennet celebrates after winning the sixth stage of the UAE tour cycling race in Dubai on Friday

AP

Dark secrets

Who is giving patronage to Mukhtar Ansari?
Who is gunning for him, and why?

Arguing in the Supreme Court, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi termed him "a small fry". However, anyone who knows even a little about don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his deadly gang war in the badlands of Uttar Pradesh (UP), is aware that the name is enough to send a chill down the spine of many politicians, bureaucrats, police officers and, especially, businessmen. Ansari, an MLA from UP's Mau Sadar, is currently lodged in the Ropar Jail of Punjab in connection with an extortion case. The Punjab and UP Governments are at loggerheads for his custody, with the former trying every trick up its sleeve to keep him from the UP Police's hands on health grounds. A natural question to ask would be as to what makes a dreaded criminal so important that UP's BJP-led Government and Punjab's Congress Government are fighting over his custody in the Supreme Court. Well, there is nothing new in Ansari's name being associated with heinous crimes like murder, extortion and kidnapping, but what actually has pitted him against the saffron party is the chilling murder of then BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai in 2005, who and six associates were gunned down by assailants armed with AK-47 rifles. The murder was more than sensational as 400 rounds were fired. Ansari, the main accused, was acquitted by the CBI court in 2019.

Recently, the BJP's Mohammadabad MLA Alka Rai, the slain MLA's widow, wrote to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accusing the party Governments in Punjab and Rajasthan of shielding Ansari. However, the story is not as simple as it appears. The UP Police has of late become "trigger-happy" and several criminals have been gunned down in encounters that the Opposition terms "extra-judicial killings". Last year, wanted criminal Vikas Dubey was shot by the State police after the vehicle carrying him "overturned" on a highway and Dubey "tried to escape after snatching a gun" from a policeman. There is no denying that Ansari must be fearful of meeting the same fate if Punjab jail authorities hand him over to the UP Police. But there is another side to the story: The criminal-politician-bureaucrat-police nexus is nothing new and Ansari must have been part of many such connections at the interstate and intrastate level, and it is only in the interest of such corrupt elements to exterminate the voices that can reveal their dark secrets. Now, who is giving patronage to Ansari and who is out to get him, and why, is the moot question.

A flight and travel after one year

As an air trip to Goa for an event after a year-long hiatus revealed, being constantly stressed about the virus is clearly not the way to be

It is not good form to write columns in the first person but since this column talks of a personal experience, I will be writing it as such. The experience in question was catching a flight for the first time in 350 days. Part of my work involves evaluating and reviewing motor vehicles and that invariably involves a lot of travel, although the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that the few drives we did in 2020 all occurred in the Delhi-NCR and were fairly well-managed. Car companies don't do events in places like Goa because of the sun and sand or because folks like me enjoy flying, there are hundreds of decent hotel properties in Goa and the State is connected by flight to almost every major city in India. So, to do a media drive in Goa makes immense sense; in fact it is probably cheaper than organising individual drives in different cities and is definitely logistically easier.

I had promised myself that I would not fly in 2020, even after flights resumed and a few isolated automotive events took place. But as the new year rolled around and the first events began to be planned, one could not put off travel much longer. After all, working in a newspaper, I had been reading firsthand how the Government has more or less brought the pandemic in check. Of course, by the time I did eventually fly that had actually changed a bit with the new strain emerging in Maharashtra. However, my tickets were booked and I was taking a flight after 350 days.

A drive that once seemed like a weekly commute to Terminal 3 from my house appeared strange, not least because this was my first time in a taxi after almost a year. Traffic to and from the airport seemed normal and the few jams were more to do with the construction of the new flyover taxiways. Since my flight was in the afternoon, there was less chaos at the drop-off area. Airlines are running at a restricted domestic schedule at about three-quarters capacity and with very few international flights, India's largest airport terminal did not feel crowded.



We have all heard the term, the "new normal", things like people commuting and the need for hygiene. But other than everyone wearing face masks and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) staff wearing shields and attaching a handle to their metal detector "wands", flying in 2021 was not very different from flying in 2019 and before. Though I did sanitise my hands after going through security which I feel is the biggest congregation point of the entire flying process, it felt the same as before. I must state, at no point did I feel unsafe and while I would not go as far as to claim that there was a *laissez faire* attitude, you really would not have guessed that there was a pandemic going on.

Now part of this can be explained by India's caseload, something that was well explained by oncologist and award-winning medical writer Siddhartha Mukherjee in *The New Yorker* recently. It elucidated on the concept that because we live in India and have been exposed to so many pathogens before, maybe we had been exposed to a "relative" of the COVID-19 virus and that gave our bodies the B-cells and the T-cells needed

“THAT SAID, WE SHOULD STILL BE CAREFUL, PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE IS IN ALL LIKELIHOOD A MORE VIRULENT STRAIN DOING THE ROUNDS. IT MAY (OR MAY NOT) BE MORE DEADLY, BUT IT WOULD BE STUPID TO FIND THAT OUT THE HARD WAY

to deal with the virus. What else could explain the low death toll in India, many parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia? One could argue that the "true" death toll has been suppressed but there is no way to hide hundreds of thousands of deaths; people would be talking about it, and that clearly isn't the case.

That said, we should still be careful, particularly since there is in all likelihood a more virulent strain doing the rounds. It may (or may not) be more deadly, but it would be stupid to find that out the hard way. I was flying on Vistara and while mask compliance was followed, the flight was packed with families travelling to Goa to get away from the boredom, one presumes. Some passengers stuck in the middle seats were covered in their woven-fibre protective suits and most people kept their face-shields on during the flight.

But it was not so much the flying experience, but what I saw in Goa which was scary. My hosts had organised dinner at a popular nightspot and it was crowded. There were few precautions being taken and while the bouncers were taking temperatures using an infra-red scanner, it was quite evident that the public at large

had travelled to the party State to leave their Coronavirus worries behind. 'Thalassa' on Vagator beach was packed to the rafters and nobody appeared to care.

With the Goa airport seeing flights from every corner of the country even if some States ask for the returnees to be tested, the crowds at restaurants and bars were back to pre-COVID levels, just that they were almost completely Indian with very few foreigners. That said, there were some expats around; those who had business and diplomatic visas and they were praising the Government and Indians for taking such a "Zen" attitude to the pandemic.

It was really incredible. Either people were not worried or they had reverted to their usual "dekha jayega" (we will see) attitude. Or maybe this was another example of Goan "susegad", the chilled-out laid-back attitude. I still don't know whether it is the attitude to adopt, but being constantly stressed about the virus is clearly not the way to be. But the "new normal" doesn't really seem very different from the "old normal".

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

SOUNDBITE

One after the other steps have been taken to pull the country out of the non-transparent credit culture. Now NPAs cannot be swept under the carpet; even an NPA for one day needs to be reported.

Prime Minister
— Narendra Modi

Russia is confronted with a highly aggressive policy aimed at disrupting its development and creating problems along its perimeter.

Russian President
— Vladimir Putin

An actor can only choose what is offered to him. There is nothing by intent but I am just fortunate that I get parts which most actors will be envious of.

Actor
— Avinash Tiwari

I officially announce retirement from all forms of the game. I thank my family, friends, fans, teams, coaches and the whole country wholeheartedly for all the support and love.

Cricketer
— Yusuf Pathan

Today in 2019, the Indian Air Force (IAF) had responded to the Pulwama terror attack and reiterated the country's policy against terrorism in "New India".

Union Home Minister
— Amit Shah

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP SCARED OF RAHUL GANDHI

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Slip of the tongue?' (February 26). Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has yet again proved that he is suitable for politics and can make the BJP and its leaders uncomfortable. The BJP leaders, including the top brass, fear the popularity that Rahul enjoys among people and miss no opportunity to project the Gandhi scion in bad light or poke fun at him.

They know that only he can change political equations and has the ability to lead the country. On the other hand, knowingly or otherwise, Rahul makes such statements or speeches which give good fodder to the BJP to keep attacking him, his family and also the Congress. Attacking Rahul gives the ruling party an opportunity to cover up its own failures. All the BJP leaders talk about 70 years of Congress rule alleging that the 'Grand Old Party' did nothing for the nation but rather looted it. However, they fail to count the achievements of the Congress against which the seven years of the BJP's rule stand nowhere.

Fuel prices are at an all-time high, the economy is at all-time low, unemployment rates are high and there are no jobs in the Government sector. The Modi Government is doing rampant privatisation to benefit its corporate friends and is least concerned about the plight of the poor and the have-nots. Only a Government under Rahul's leadership can save the nation and put the economy back on tracks.

N Nagarajan | Secunderabad

EXTRADITE ALL FUGITIVE INDIANS

Sir — There is finally the good news that fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering in Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, will be extradited from the UK. Mumbai's Arthur Road jail has kept a special cell ready to lodge him. It is like a win-win situation for the Indian Government and authorities. Further, the UK judge ruled that there is no evidence to suggest that Nirav would

Nothing wrong with renaming stadium



An unnecessary controversy is being created for having the Motera stadium named after Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Those making the hue and cry must understand that Modi isn't the first living person to have a stadium named after him. Many stadiums in India have been named after leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and so on. Even airports and railway stations have been named after great leaders and personalities. Narendra Modi,

during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, had developed the State quite a lot. After all, it was Modi's dream to create a stadium meeting the global standards with state-of-the-art facilities and he played an instrumental role in the redevelopment of the sports facility.

We must understand that renaming the stadium after Modi in no way belittles or insults other leaders. In the past, Mumbai's Brabourne and Wankhede stadiums were named after individuals who were then alive. Similar is the case with Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium, Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium and Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium. Mohali's PCA Stadium was renamed after former BCCI and Punjab Cricket Association president IS Bindra. However, this outcry reeks of dirty politics and a section of people who have developed a sort of phobia against the name of the Prime Minister. However, we should not lend our ears to such people who criticise him for the sake of criticism only.

M Pradyu | Kannur

not receive a fair trial in India. With this, Nirav lost his nearly two-year-long legal battle against extradition on all grounds.

The 49-year-old fugitive businessman has been repeatedly denied bail due to the seriousness of the allegations against him and remains behind bars in a London prison since his arrest in March 2019. It will also set an example for other criminals who flee the country after committing financial and other crimes and think they can get away with it. Such criminals and fugitives can afford big lawyers, but they must remember that law is above all and it's not easy to hide or escape its long hands. All fugitives should be extradited and punished as per the law of India.

CK Ramani | Chennai

SHAMEFUL ACT BY POLICE OFFICER

Sir — It is really shocking that Rajesh Das, the Special Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, has turned out to be a black sheep as he is accused of misbehaving with a female IPS officer on duty and sex-

ually harassing her. This is what happens when officers are promoted to senior positions, particularly in the police department, without taking into account their past records but rather on various other considerations. It is also unwarranted that posts such as Special DGP are created with the intention of accommodating blue-eyed officers.

Suspension would not be sufficient in his case and he should be summarily dismissed from service as the female IPS officer has come forward to lodge a complaint against him.

It is expected that the panel to probe the harassment charge would do a fair job and submit its final report in record time. If women police officers are not safe and are vulnerable to such crimes at the hands of their own colleagues, the plight of common women is not hard to understand.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ADULT EDUCATION SET TO TURN A PAGE

Free access to adult learning through online mode backed by extensive usage of ICT has been emphasised



VIPIN KUMAR

American industrialist Henry Ford famously said: "Anyone who stops learning is old - whether this happens at 20 or at 80. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young but becomes constantly more valuable - regardless of physical capacity." This is true even today, particularly for illiterate adults. Adult Education (AE) extends schooling options to those who are 15 years of age or above and have missed the opportunity of formal tutoring earlier but now want to pursue education. Though the literacy rate in India has increased from 12 per cent in 1947 to 73 per cent in 2011, however, adult illiteracy is still a challenge for the Government because the absolute number of illiterates in India was 25.76 crore, the largest in the world, as per the 2011 census. Successive Central governments took major initiatives to improve the adult literacy rate in the country. For instance, under the National Education Policy (NEP), 1986, the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) was founded to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years in a time-bound manner. Subsequently, the Saakshar Bharat Programme continued till March 2018.



A major paradigm shift in the programme could help in imparting functional literacy to 7.63 crore non-literates, including 5.38 crore women, with four broader objectives namely: Basic literacy and numeracy, basic education, vocational education and continuing education. In this programme, the Government introduced new components of literacy and under the financial literacy component, one crore bank accounts of adult illiterates or neo-literates were opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. With regard to legal literacy, a new curriculum was designed and developed for neo-literates to create awareness of their rights and duties. These components have been included in the critical life section of AE and the lifelong learning chapter of the NEP 2020. The new curriculum will be developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and includes five components: Foundational literacy and numeracy; critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, healthcare and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare); vocational skills development; basic education and continuing education (including holistic adult education courses in arts, science, technology, culture, sports, recreation and more advanced material on critical life skills).

The NEP-2020 recommends a strong and innovative Government initiative for AE to facilitate community involvement and the smooth and beneficial integration of technology to expedite the aim of achieving 100 per cent literacy. These resources are a must to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6 of the United Nations. Giving impetus to adult literacy, the Union Budget 2021-22, states that "to enable increased access of resources, online modules covering the entire gamut of adult education will be introduced." Hence, for the improvement of the AE programme, free access to adult learning in States and Union Territories (UTs) through online mode backed by extensive usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has been emphasised. An online teaching and learning system will be developed in which a learner may register with essential information like name, date of birth, gender, Aadhaar number (not mandatory), mobile number and so on and attend the class through online mode by using a mobile or any Common Service Centre (CSC) or digital booth or cybercafé. At the national level the NCERT, NIOS, National Informatics Centre and the DAE will facilitate ICT support in designing and developing central modules, portal, apps, while States and UTs may explore partnerships with stakeholders for a vibrant adult education programme. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated."

(The writer is Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education. The views expressed are personal.)

Time for an eco-friendly development model

The people living in hilly regions and the country at large demand that the Govt adopt a pro-people and pro-nature development model instead of a pro-corporate one



GURINDER KAUR



ARJUN KUMAR



EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT CUTS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT, ONE-THIRD OF THE GLACIERS OF THE HIMALAYAN AND HINDU KUSH MOUNTAIN RANGES WILL MELT BY THE END OF THE 21ST CENTURY. HENCE, URGENT ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN SOONER AS NATURAL DISASTERS ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE WITH TEMPERATURE RISE

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of experts. Magsaysay Award winner Chandi Prasad said that he had written a letter to the then Environment Minister in 2010 warning about the adverse effects of hydropower project on Rishi Ganga. His worst fears were realised in 2021. He claimed that if his warning had been heeded in 2010, the catastrophe would have been prevented. Rising temperatures are melting the glaciers rapidly and, according to a report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), this melting doubled between 1980-2005. Even if the Government cuts greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement, one-third of the glaciers of the Himalayan and Hindu Kush mountain ranges will melt by the end of the 21st century. Hence, urgent action needs to be taken sooner as natural disasters are likely to increase with temperature rise.

An increase in natural disasters in India is a result of climate change, but an increase in their impact is due to overexploitation of natural resources. The Centre and State Governments have been pursuing pro-corporate development by ignoring environmental norms.

Uttarakhand is inviting climatic tragedies and destroying its beauty by regularly flouting the Environmental Impact Assessment Laws to build a 900-km-long stretch of the Char Dham route. Shockingly,

these roads pass through an environmentally-sensitive zone. The construction of this 900 km stretch was done by dividing it into 53 small sections.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Department's permission has to be sought to construct more than 100 km of a road that is passing through environmentally sensitive areas. This road's width is being kept at 12 metres, for which land with a width of 24 metres would be required. Significantly, most European countries have kept the width of their roads in the mountains to eight metres.

In the aftermath of the February 7 catastrophe, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the country stands by Uttarakhand. He also announced financial assistance to the families of the victims. But such promises and financial aid are of no use for Uttarakhandis as continuous negligence of environmental regulations by successive governments has led to repeated natural disasters. A few lakhs in assistance from the Centre and State won't help people rebuild their houses or bring back their loved ones. To prevent such emotional and financial losses to the people, the Government should mend its pro-corporate economic development models.

The massive loss of life and property resulting from natural disasters should serve as a warning signal to the Central Government and make it realise that it must strictly

abide by environmental norms. However, the Government seems to be in no mood to hear the alarm bells as the Central Government is planning to relax environmental standards for Mopa Airport in Goa, sand mining in Uttar Pradesh, Sterlite Copper in Tamil Nadu and construction activities in and around Delhi, which have been blocked by the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal. Meanwhile, the NITI Aayog — the Government's apex think tank — has commissioned a study that seeks to examine the "unintended economic consequences" of judicial decisions that have hindered and stalled big projects on environmental pretexts.

If mountainous areas of the country, including Uttarakhand and their people, are to be saved, then it is incumbent upon the Central Government not to carry out development work in these areas without seeking the opinions of geologists and the locals.

The Government should immediately ban unsustainable development projects in the hilly regions, be it the Char Dham route or hydropower projects. If this does not happen, the people of these areas will be forced to endure frequent natural disasters in the future. The people living in the hilly regions and the country at large demand that the Central Government adopt a pro-people and pro-nature development model instead of a pro-corporate economic development one.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

NICE OF THE ENGLAND BOYS TO GET THIS TEST MATCH FINISHED JUST BEFORE ENGLAND WOMEN PLAY TONIGHT.
—ENGLAND CRICKETER
ALEX HARTLEY



VERY DISAPPOINTING ATTITUDE CONSIDERING ALL THE BOYS DO TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S GAME.
—ENGLAND CRICKETER
RORY BURNS

A bleak future without sustainable water resources

India has an extremely low rainwater harvesting percentage, varying from three-six per cent of the annual rainfall. Hence, watershed management is imperative

The farmers' protest reflects their approach towards securing their future, and soon there would be a solution to that. But there still looms a larger crisis for India and its people, including the farmers. One of the most fertile lands on Earth today stands as the most water challenged nations in the world. India has the highest number of people in the world without access to safe water. Over 80 million people — a majority from impoverished communities — living on less than \$4 a day, are forced to collect dirty water from open ponds and rivers or spend most of what they earn buying water from tankers.

A report by the NITI Aayog in 2018 revealed that 75 per cent of households do not have drinking water on the premises; 84 per cent of rural households do not have piped water access; 70 per cent of the



SASHIDHAR VEMPALA

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water is contaminated and wastewater treatment remains stuck at the national average of over 33 per cent, leading to the high burden of waterborne diseases.

More than 600 million people in India face high to extreme water stress and 21 cities, including New Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, will run out of groundwater soon, affecting 100 million people. Critical groundwater resources, which account for 40 per cent of our water supply, are being exploited at unsustainable rates. India is already plagued with groundwater contaminated with iron, nitrate, chlorine, along with the predominant arsenic and fluoride, both posing human health risks.

A study published by Duke University in 2018 found uranium contamination in aquifer-drawn groundwater in 16 Indian States. Water Index

scores vary widely, but most States have achieved a score below 50 per cent and could significantly improve their water resource management practices.

Because of this, food security is at a risk as the low performers on the Water Index are home to over 50 per cent of the country's population and its agricultural baskets. The low performers, worryingly, comprise the populous northern States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and others, and are home to over 600 million people. Given the combination of rapidly declining groundwater levels and limited policy action this is also likely to be a significant food security risk for the country going forward.

Critical groundwater resources, which account for 40 per cent of our water supply, are being depleted at unsustainable



rates. Droughts are becoming more frequent, creating severe problems for India's rain-dependent farmers (over 53 per cent of agriculture is rainfed). When water is available, it is likely to be contaminated, resulting in nearly 2,00,000 deaths each year. Interstate disagreements are on the rise, with seven major disputes currently raging, pointing to the fact that limited frameworks

and institutions are in place for national water governance.

By 2030, the country's water demand is projected to be twice than the available supply, implying severe water scarcity for hundreds of millions of people and an eventual over six per cent loss in the country's GDP. As per the report of the National Commission for Integrated Water Resource Development of MoWR, water requirement by 2050 in a high use scenario is likely to be a milder 1,180 BCM, whereas the present-day availability is 695 BCM.

The total availability of water possible in country is still lower than this projected demand, at 1,137 BCM. Thus, there is an imminent need to deepen our understanding of water resources and usage and put in place interventions that make water use efficient and sustainable. Israel is the world

leader in water governance. And India has partnered with them to share methods and technology. There is a need for more such partnerships, knowledge transfer but more than that, it is awareness that is needed by common users about the impending water crisis.

With nearly 70 per cent of the water being contaminated, India ranks 120 out of 122 countries on the water quality index. Policymakers face a difficult situation because there is not enough data available on how households and industries use and manage water.

There is an urgent need to deepen understanding of our water resources and usage and put in place interventions that make water use efficient and sustainable. Consumers and industries need to look at the 4Rs with renewed rigour. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,

Recharge." India has an extremely low rainwater harvesting percentage, varying from three-six per cent of annual rainfall. Large-scale watershed management is imperative for holistic management of ecosystems. Coupled with stronger implementation policies and regulations, an ecosystem management approach will bring in adoption of newer conservation technologies.

The agriculture sector will evolve further to improve irrigation and water use efficiency. All this is not possible without investment in education and awareness. Community governance and partnerships, water pricing a strong wastewater recycling ecosystem and increasing rainwater, stormwater harvesting will make people realise the importance of every drop of water and promote sustainable use.

Nations should follow India's Covid example: WHO chief lauds Govt

Geneva: WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment for supporting vaccine equity and sharing Covid-19 vaccines with over 60 countries across the world, hoping that other nations will follow his example.

In a tweet, Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, said that India's support in supplying its vaccines is helping over 60 countries to begin the vaccination process.

"Thanks India & Prime Minister @narendramodi for supporting #VaccinEquity. Your commitment to #COVAX and sharing #COVID19 vaccine doses is helping 60+ countries start vaccinating their healthworkers and other priority groups. I hope other countries will follow your example," he said in the tweet on Thursday.

India on Wednesday dispatched the first batch of six lakh Covid-19 vaccine doses to the African country of Ghana under the COVAX facility in collaboration with UNICEF, which aims to cover 92 countries under the initiative.

The doses are a part of the first batch of Covid-19 vaccine the country is acquiring

through the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX), which Ghana among nearly 92 countries have signed into.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on February 12 said that India has provided over 229 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccines to various countries out of which 64 lakh doses have been supplied as grant assistance and 165 lakh on commercial basis.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said India will continue to take forward the global vaccine supply initiative and cover more countries in a phased manner.

Consignments of coronavirus vaccine doses were supplied as gifts to Bangladesh (20 lakh), Myanmar (17 lakh), Nepal (10 lakh), Bhutan (1.5 lakh), the Maldives (1 lakh), Mauritius (1 lakh), Seychelles (50,000), Sri Lanka (5 lakh), Bahrain (1 lakh), Oman (1 lakh), Afghanistan (5 Lakhs), Barbados (1 lakh) and Dominica (70,000), he said.

Srivastava said countries which received vaccines on commercial basis are Brazil (20 lakh), Morocco (60 lakh), Bangladesh (50 lakh), Myanmar (20 lakh), Egypt (50,000), Algeria (50,000), South Africa (10 lakh), Kuwait (2 lakh) and UAE (2 lakh). **PTI**

China plays down reports of India beating it in vaccine diplomacy

Beijing: China on Friday welcomed India supplying more Covid-19 vaccines to a number of countries, playing down reports that New Delhi has beaten Beijing in its vaccine diplomacy around the world.

Responding to a question on a report that India has beaten China in its own game of vaccine diplomacy, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin during a media briefing said, "We welcome that and hope to see more countries taking actions to provide vaccines to the world, especially developing countries, to help with the global response."

"China has been overcoming domestic difficulties to provide vaccines to other countries in concrete measure," he said, flagging China's own vaccine requirement to inoculate its 1.4 billion population. He reiterated that China has been providing vaccines to 53 countries and exporting vaccines to 27 countries, amid reports that many of those countries are yet to receive Chinese vaccines or the promised quantities.

For its part, China has promised 10 million vaccines to the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative COVAX, but the first supplies of COVAX vaccines went from the Serum Institute of India to Ghana.

India on Wednesday dispatched the first batch of six lakh COVID-19 vaccine doses to Ghana under the COVAX facility, an international cooperative programme formed to make sure low- and middle-income countries have fair access to COVID-19 vaccines. **PTI**

ISIS bride not allowed to return to UK to fight for citizenship, SC rules

London: The UK Government on Friday won a major legal battle as the Supreme Court ruled against allowing a London-born 21-year-old woman of Bangladeshi descent, who ran away to Syria as a teenager to join the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group, to return and fight her citizenship case.

The unanimous decision - with all five top court justices in agreement - comes six years after the then 15-year-old schoolgirl, Shamima Begum, ran away with two other friends to join the Islamic State (ISIS) group in February 2015.

Begum had her British citizenship revoked on national security grounds shortly after she was found in a Syrian refugee camp in February 2019.

"The Supreme Court unanimously allows all of the Home Secretary's appeals and dismisses Ms Begum's cross-appeal," said Lord Robert Reed, the President of the Supreme Court.

"The right to a fair hearing does not trump all other considerations, such as the safety of the public," he said. Begum was born in the UK to parents of Bangladeshi heritage.

Begum, dubbed an ISIS bride in reference to her marriage to Dutch ISIS fighter Yago Riedijk, was one of three schoolgirls from Bethnal Green in east London who travelled via Turkey to ISIS headquarters in Raqqa.

When discovered in a refugee camp two years ago, she had already lost two children and was heavily pregnant with her third who died shortly after being born.

Begum had challenged the UK Home Office's decision to remove her British citizenship and wanted to be allowed to return to the UK to pursue that appeal. **PTI**

Hundreds of Nigerian schoolgirls taken in mass abduction

Lagos: Hundreds of girls are missing after a large group of gunmen raided a school in northern Nigeria early Friday morning, residents say.

The Government Secondary Jangebe School in Zamfara state was the scene of the latest mass abduction of school children in northern Nigeria.

Nasiru Abdullahi told The Associated Press that school records show 300 girls are missing. His daughters, aged 10 and 13, are among them.

Resident Musa Mustapha said the gunmen also attacked a nearby military camp and checkpoint, preventing soldiers from interfering while the gunmen spent several hours at the school. It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties.

Several large groups of armed men operate in Zamfara state, described by the government as bandits, and are known to kidnap for money and for the release of their members from jail.

"We are angered and saddened by yet another brutal attack on schoolchildren in Nigeria," said Peter Hawkins,

UNICEF representative in the country. "This is a gross violation of children's rights and a horrific experience for children to go through." He called for their immediate release.

The West African nation has seen several such attacks and kidnappings over the years, notably the mass abduction in April 2014 by jihadist group Boko Haram of 276 girls from the secondary school in Chibok in Borno state. More than a hundred of the girls are still missing.

Friday's attack came less than two weeks after gunmen abducted 42 people, including 27 students, from the Government Science College Kagara in Niger State. The students, teachers and family members are still being held.

In December, 344 students were abducted from the Government Science Secondary School Kankara in Katsina State. They were eventually released.

Anietie Ewang, Nigeria researcher at Human Rights Watch, noted the recent abductions and tweeted that "Strong action is required from the authorities to turn the tide & keep schools safe." **AP**

Militia official: US strike in Syria kills 1, wounds several

Baghdad: A US airstrike in Syria targeted facilities belonging to a powerful Iranian-backed Iraqi armed group, killing one of their militiamen and wounding a number of others, an Iraqi militia official said on Friday.

The Pentagon said the strikes were retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq earlier this month that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a US service member and other coalition troops.

The Iraqi militia official told The Associated Press that the strikes against the Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades, hit an area along the border between the Syrian site of Boudkamal facing Qaim on the Iraqi side. **AP**

Myanmar protesters injured as police escalate use of force

Yangon: Myanmar security forces cracked down on anti-coup protesters in the country's second-largest city on Friday, injuring at least three people, two of whom were shot in the chest by rubber bullets and another who suffered a wound on his leg.

Protesters had gathered on a wide road outside a park in Mandalay in the early afternoon when security forces arrived and began firing what sounded like gunshots and using flash bang grenades to disperse the crowd.

Bullets, shell casings, and other projectiles were later found by local residents on one of the main streets and shown to journalists.

The victims were all taken to a private clinic for treatment. One of the men who was shot in the chest with a rubber bullet also had a white bandage wrapped around his head. The man with an injured leg was later photographed in a cast that stretched from his foot to his knee.

The confrontations underscore the rising tensions between a growing popular revolt and the generals who toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a February 1 takeover that shocked the international community and reversed years of slow progress toward democracy.

Also Friday, a Japanese journalist covering a separate protest in Yangon, the country's largest city, was detained by police and



later released, according to Japan's Kyodo news agency. Yuki Kitazumi could be seen in a video circulating among media as police seized him, with one of the officers briefly putting a truncheon around the journalist's neck.

Earlier in the day, security forces in Yangon fired warning shots and beat truncheons against their shields while moving to disperse more than 1,000 anti-coup protesters.

The demonstrators had gathered in front of a popular shopping mall, holding placards and chanting slogans denouncing the Feb. 1 coup even as the security presence increased and a water-cannon truck was brought to the area.

When around 50 riot police moved against the protesters, warning shots could be heard, and at least one demonstrator was held by officers. Security forces chased the protesters off the main road and continued to pursue them in the nearby lanes, as some ducked into houses to hide. **AP**

Min: No possibility of Pakistan being blacklisted by FATF

Islamabad: There was no possibility of Pakistan being blacklisted by the FATF as it has made "significant progress", a senior minister claimed on Friday, a day after the global anti-money laundering watchdog retained the country on its "Grey List", citing "serious deficiencies" on its part in checking terror-financing.

Addressing the media after the Financial Action Task Force, the Paris-based global body against money-laundering and terror-financing, announced to keep Pakistan on its Grey List until June, Minister for Industries Hammad Azhar said that Islamabad achieved the targets despite the challenging timeline given to it.

"There was no possibility of Pakistan being blacklisted by the FATF", Azhar, who led Pakistani delegation at the plenary as the chairman of the FATF Coordination Committee, said. **PTI**

Officials: Heavy fighting kills 27 people in central Yemen

Sanaa (Yemen): Heavy fighting between rebels and Government forces in Yemen's oil-rich Marib has killed at least 27 people, tribal leaders and security officials said Friday, amid a resurgence of violence in the area.

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels earlier this month renewed their attack on Marib, a stronghold for Yemeni forces allied with the internationally recognized government. The rebel offensive has faced stiff resistance and made little progress so far. The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to talk to the media, said the uptick in violence came over the past twenty-four hours, adding that most of the dead were rebel fighters. **AP**

Covid vaccine didn't hurt at all and helps others, says Britain's Queen

London: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has said that receiving her vaccine to protect against Covid-19 "didn't hurt at all" and encouraged those hesitant about getting jabbed to think about how it would help others in preventing the spread of the deadly virus.

In a rare reference to private health matters, the 94-year-old monarch backed the National Health Service (NHS) led vaccination programme in the UK during a video call earlier this week with health officials coordinating the rollout across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

She and husband, 99-year-old Prince Philip, received their first of two doses last month.

"Once you've had the vaccine you have a feeling of, you know, you're protected, which is I think very important," said the Queen, in reference to her jab.

"As far as I could make out it was quite harmless. It was very quick, and I've had lots of letters from people who have been very surprised by how easy it was to get the vaccine. And the jab - it didn't hurt at all," she said. Addressing some concerns about the uptake of vaccines and reluctance among certain groups, the monarch added: "I think the other thing is, that it is obviously difficult for people if they've never had a vaccine... But they ought to think about other people rather than themselves."

The video interaction, posted on the Royal Family's social media pages, came as UK Vaccine Deployment Minister Nadhim Zahawi said figures suggest 11-15 per cent of people were vaccine-hesitant, with some ethnic minority communities among that category. **PTI**

Sri Lanka ends forced cremations of Covid victims

Colombo: Amidst mounting international criticism, Sri Lanka has revised a controversial mandatory order to cremate the bodies of Covid-19 victims, which denied minority communities, including Muslims, their religious rights.

The government on Thursday revised a gazette notification issued in April last year. The new notification has allowed both burials and cremations.

For 10 months, Muslim and Christian minorities in the country and international rights groups have been lobbying the government to end the policy of forced cremations.

The government was resisting calls to allow burials citing health concerns. It cited the opinion of some experts who claimed that the burial of COVID-19 victims would contaminate the water table thereby spreading the pandemic further.

The country had earlier come under intense criticism from rights groups, including the UNHRC, over the cremation order. They said it failed to respect the religious feelings of the victims and their family members, especially of the Muslims, Catholics and some Buddhists.

The cremation of bodies is forbidden in Islam.

The decision to end forced cremations followed the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan. **PTI**

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given to the General public that **Mrs. Maya Devi** is absolute owner of Two shops area measuring 21.25 sq. Yds., "said shops" part of Property bearing No. 378/379 Old, and New No. 654, area measuring 300 sq. Yds., Situated in the residential colony Near Nagar, Pargana Jajalabad, Tehsil & District Ghazabad by virtue of registered Sale deed dated 12.08.2010 Doc No. 4214. (SR. II Ghazabad). Now, Mrs. Maya Devi is taking loan from Fullerton India Credit Company Limited, by mortgaging the above said property & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 405, 4th Floor, GD-ITL Northex Tower, (A-09), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Hardeep Singh Sanchu & Mrs. Neelu are joint owners of Entire Second Floor without roof rights (said floor) of Property No. 9, (A-39), measuring 357.84 sq. mtrs., in Block A-3, situated at Jangpura, New Delhi. (The said property by virtue of Gift Deed dated 25.11.2020, Registration No. 17743, executed by Mrs. Manmohan Kaur & Mr. Gurcharan Singh, who became the owners of the said floor by virtue of two separate sale deed each for 1/2 share both dated 31.03.2020. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want Loan from HDTIC Bank Ltd. against the said floor, if anybody has any objections upon the said sale deeds/Gift deed of the said floor, and its ownership/Mortgage, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 203, 2nd Floor, 29, Shivaji Marg, Mayapuri, New Delhi-110028. Tn. 011-41105972, kumar.associates.advocates@gmail.com

Request for shortlisting of firms for preparing of scope of work, PQR & other terms and conditions for preparation of protection manual for UPCL

UPCL is in the process of preparing a protection manual taking into consideration the UERC (Distribution Code) Regulation, 2018 and UERC (State Grid Code) Regulation, 2016. Proposals are invited from reputed firms/consultants with adequate experience in the area, for preparing the detailed scope of work, the qualifying requirements, the expected completion time, financial implications involved and terms & conditions required for preparing protection manual of UPCL. Proposal on the above lines may please be submitted by the interested parties, in sealed envelopes, to the office of Superintending Engineer, Electricity Distribution Circle (Rural), 18 EC Road, Dehradun on or before 15th March, 2021, 11:00 AM. The proposals shall be opened on the same date-time-venue and the interested parties shall be shortlisted based on their proposals.

अधिकारी अभियन्ता
No.3231/EDD(N)/DDN/ विद्युत वितरण कक्ष
Date: 25.02.2021 (बुधवार)

किसी भी विद्युत समस्या के लिए समकक्ष कर
दल की No. 18004190405 वापसित में विद्युत कक्ष

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SL. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH.	NAME OF WORK/TENDER	OPENING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD / AUTH.	MODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	P.T.D. SHARMA, HARYANA	DEPLOYMENT OF OUTSOURCE AGENCY FOR PROVIDING DRUG DISTRIBUTION SERVICES FOR ONE YEAR ONE YEAR WHICH IS EXTENDABLE ON QUARTERLY BASIS	CLOSING DATE: 28.02.2021	7.20 LACS	www.hpn.gov.in	01262-281300 info@hpn.gov.in
2	CHANDHAR RANER, SINGH UNIVERSITY	SUPPLY OF PRINTED 16 LAYS ANSWER SHEETS PER ANNUM FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS (10+4 PAGES) WITH OMR & BAR CODING	CLOSING DATE: 28.02.2021	END 1.20 LACS	www.csb.ac.in	01826-204043 info@csb.ac.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

RO 1965

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Namely: Sakshi, W/o: Ajay, R/o: H.No. 43/17, C Block, Gali No. 37, IP Colony, Swaroop Nagar, Delhi Age: 35 Years, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, Face: Long, Wearing: Green Colour Suit and Cream Colour Salwar and Mehrun Colour Slipper in Feet** has been missing since 31.12.2020 From 10 AM from the area of P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi. In this regard **DD No. 01A, Dated 01.01.2021**, has been lodged at P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi.

SAKSHI

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform the undersigned.

Web-site: <http://cbi.nic.in> SHO
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/792/ON/2021 Ph.: 011-27811415, 27811738 & 9868552256

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one female **Namely Sheetal Devi W/o Rahul Singh Chauhan R/o A-89, Pradhan Enclave, Burari, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from the B-5/20, IGL Office 2nd Floor, Sec-7 Rohini, Delhi since 19.02.2021. In this regard, a case **DD No. 38A Dated 20.02.2021** has been lodged at P.S. North Rohini, Delhi. The description of the missing female are as under.

Age: 22 Years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Cut mark on right eye, Wearing: Grey colour suit and salwar. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped female then please inform P.S. North Rohini, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Sd/- SHO
Fax No. 011-24368639 P.S: North Rohini, Delhi
DP/700/RD/2021 Ph.: 011-27048210

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one female **Namely: Meena, W/o: Chet Bahadur, R/o: H. No. 65, Sawan leela ka Makan, Village - Rajapur, Sec-09, Rohini, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped since **22.02.2021** from her house from the area of P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 64A dated 23.02.2021** has been registered at P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: **Age: 33 years, Height: 4'6", Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Wearing: Purple colour sweater, maroon colour shawl and slipper in feet.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> SHO
E-mail id: cic@cbi.gov.in P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/701/RD/2021 Tel.No. 011-27557184, 8750870325

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const/SERD-II, Northern Railway, 2nd floor, NCR Building, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

1. Name of work and location:	Design, drawing, manufacturing, supplying and fixing of Spherical bearings as per approved design Load for 76.50m Bow String Girder at ROB Dholi ghat in lieu of LC-153 (Kotgaon Phatak) at Km. 20.21, near Ghaziabad Railway station on GZB-SRE section.
2. Completion period of the work	03 (Three) months.
3. Approx. Cost of work:	59.12 Lakh.
4. Earnest Money to be deposited	Nil
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 23.03.2021 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the Technical cum Commercial cum financial Bids of which will be opened at 11.30 hrs on 23.03.2021.
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document:	The detailed e-tender document is available www.ireps.gov.in from 02.03.2021 to 23.03.2021. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 59-Acs/Dhobighat-bearing/SERD-II Dated-26-02-2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 453/2021

UN rights chief cites 'need' to assess rights in Xinjiang

Geneva: The United Nations human rights chief on Friday cited the need for an "independent and comprehensive assessment" of the rights situation in China's Xinjiang region, while emphasising that activists, lawyers and rights defenders face unfair charges, detention and trials in China.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said her office is working to find "mutually agreeable parameters" for her to visit China, including Xinjiang. Efforts to arrange such a visit for the human rights commissioner date to before she took office in September 2018.

Bachelet discussed China while giving the U.N.'s Human Rights Council her regular update on the rights situation worldwide, this time involving some 50 countries.

Bachelet credited China's progress in curbing COVID-19 but said "fundamental rights and civic freedoms continue to be curtailed in the name of national security and the COVID-19 response." She said over 600 people are being investigated for participating in protests in Hong Kong.

Concerns about detention centers -- which China calls training centers -- for Muslim Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang have provoked human rights concerns for many months, and Bachelet's office and Chinese authorities have so far failed to arrange a visit for her to the region. **AP**

Before the Central Government Registrar of Companies, Delhi & Haryana

In the matter of sub-section (3) of section 13 of Limited Liability Partnership Act 2008 and rule 17 of the Limited liability partnership rules 2009

In the matter of the Limited liability Partnership Act, 2008, section 13(3) and

In the matter of Sharma Buildwell LLP (LLPIN-AAE-4427) having its registered office at WZ-463/1, MS Block, 2nd floor, Gali No.8, Road No. 1, Hari Nagar, Delhi 110064,petitioner

Notice is hereby given to the general public that the LLP proposes to make a petition to Registrar of companies, Delhi & Haryana under section 13 (3) of the limited liability Partnership Act 2008 seeking permission to change its registered office from the state of "Delhi" to the state of "Haryana".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the LLP may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/ her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/ her interest and grounds of opposition supported by an affidavit to the registrar of companies, Delhi & Haryana, within 21 (twenty one) days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the petitioner LLP at its registered office at the address mentioned above.

For and on behalf of Sharma buildwell LLP
Sd/- Suresh Sharma (Designated Partner)
ADDRESS: H.No.362, Bawari Street, Noharia Bazar, Sirsa Haryana- 125055
Date: _____
Place: Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client **India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd.** having its office at BP - 49, 1st Floor, Neelam Bala Road Nit Faridabad 121001, has instructed me to get the following public notice published in your daily newspaper:-

"This notice is to notify the information to the general public that Ms. Ruby Wo Mahesh Kumar has approached my client, India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd. having its office at BP-49, 1st Floor, Neelam Bala Road Nit Faridabad 121001 for a housing loan. Sangeeta is the owner of House no. 53, area measuring 50 Sq. yards Part of khesra no. 31 min., Situated at Viharpura, Dundaehra, Pargana Loni Tehsil & Dist. Ghaziabad, U.P., vide sale deed dated 30.07.2018. Mrs. Sangeeta has lost one prior Original above-mentioned Sale Deed dated 13.05.2002, executed by Ballu in favour of Salamat Husain and Basseer Husain, in respect of above-mentioned property (Doc. No.2137 SR-Gzb 1). This original sale deed has been lost and is not traceable to Mrs. Sangeeta. That Mrs. Sangeeta has also lodged a FIR before the UP police for the loss of the document vide Lost of Article Report No. 122033/2021, as she wants to sell the above mentioned property to her potential customer Mrs. Ruby. If anybody receive the same should return the said ID card to the below mentioned address. Further, any person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which I shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Any use of above-mentioned document will be considered illegal.

Prasoon Lal, Advocate
SG Associates
Basement C 78 Sector 2 Noida
0120-4554832, 7011172764

PUBLIC NOTICE

MY clients **Laxman Prasad Sharma S/o Sh. Chaturbhuj Sharma and Krishna Devi W/o Sh. Laxman Prasad Sharma R/o H.No. 304, Pkt B-9, Sec-5, Rohini, Delhi-85** have debarred/disowned their son **Ashish Kumar** and his wife **Sulochana (Poja)**, **Brijesh Kumar** and his wife **Preena Sharma** from all their movable and immovable properties. If anybody deals with them in any manner they do so at their own risk. MY clients shall not be responsible for the same in any manner.

Ratan Lal Gupta (Advocate)
J-125, Adhyapak Nagar
Nangloi Delhi-110041

LOST & FOUND

I, **DN Sood son of Late M.R. Sood** Karta of DN Sood HUF, Resident of 49, Residency farms, Asola, New Delhi 110030 have lost the original Form D of property No. F-33/7, Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 in the name of M/s. Indian Industrial Corporation. If any body found it please contact at 09810184289.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the General public that one ID card of Mr. **Shard Kumar Tiwari** issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. Having ID card no. 12643 has been found missing and/or lost on 31-12-2020. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to The Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, Delhi.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the said ID card no. 12643.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and perils and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

For ICICI Bank Limited
Date: 25.02.2021 ---Sd---

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the General public that one ID card of Mr. **Ram Lakhan** issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. Having ID card no. 06274 has been found missing and/or lost on 31-12-2020. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to The Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, Delhi.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the said ID card no. 06274.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and perils and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

For ICICI Bank Limited
Date: 25.02.2021 ---Sd---

GDP in positive trajectory a promising sign: India Inc

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India Inc on Friday said the recouping of the country's economy to a positive trajectory in the third quarter is a promising sign as it portends the end of the pandemic-induced recessionary phase seen in the first-half of the fiscal year.

Industry bodies expressed confidence that the GDP will improve further in the coming months on the back of positive growth stimuli emanating from the Union Budget and initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive scheme unveiled by the government.

After contracting for two quarters in a row, the Indian economy grew by 0.4 per cent in the October-December quarter amid coronavirus pandemic, official data showed on Friday.

The gross domestic prod-

uct (GDP) had expanded by 3.3 per cent in the corresponding period of 2019-20, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said that "recouping of GDP to the positive territory by posting a growth of 0.4 per cent in the third quarter is a promising sign as it portends the end of the pandemic-induced recessionary phase seen in the first-half of the year".

He observed that one of highlights of the data is the positive momentum seen in investment demand as it grew by 2.6 per cent in the third quarter after being in doldrums for several quarters now.

"This bears testimony to the unrelenting efforts of the government to go all-out to revive investments under the ambit of

Sensex posts worst day in 10 months, sinks 1,940 pts amid global meltdown

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex crashed about 1,940 points to post its biggest single-day fall in nearly 10 months and the NSE Nifty plunged over 568 points to crack below the psychological 15,000-mark on Friday, tracking global selloffs triggered by a panic in bond markets overseas.

Investors also turned cautious ahead of the third quarter GDP data release, besides keeping an eye on simmering geopolitical tensions between

the US and Syria.

At the day's close, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 1,939.32 points or 3.80 per cent lower at 49,099.99 – its worst one-day fall since May 4 last year.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 568.20 points or 3.76 per cent to close the session at 14,529.15 – the biggest single-day drop since March 23 last year.

On the Sensex chart, all 30 constituents ended in the red, with eight scrips logging over 5 per cent drop.

the various measures which formed a part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package," Banerjee said.

"Going forward, we are confident that the growth stimuli available from the Union Budget and the additional mea-

₹ logs worst day in nearly 19 mths, dives 104 paise against \$

Mumbai: The Indian rupee on Friday posted its biggest single-day fall in nearly 19 months, tumbling 104 paise to close at 73.47 against the US dollar as a rout in global bond markets weighed on investor sentiments. Besides, rising geopolitical tensions between the US and Syria also led to weaker appetite among investors in domestic forex markets, analysts said.

asures including the PLI will lead to a sturdy growth path over the recovery horizon," he added.

New rules for social media, OTT require right implementation: Nasscom

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT industry body Nasscom on Friday said the new rules for social media, OTT and digital media players aim to address concerns like grievance redressal, fake news and online safety, but will require the right implementation to ensure that they do not become onerous for the platforms.

There are, however, sections of the industry, including tech firm Mozilla, which felt that certain provisions could "harm" freedom of expression.

Nasscom noted that technology is becoming all pervasive and it is important that there is responsible use and building of technology for all stakeholders government,

industry, start-ups and citizens.

Nasscom also highlighted it is imperative that there is a balance between regulation and innovation as the world is in a phase of accelerated technology shifts.

"...Code aims to address many of the concern areas of grievance redressal, fake news, online safety and parity with existing laws.

"From a user perspective... The option of voluntary self-

verification of user accounts and the right to receive an explanatory notification on removal or disablement of access and to seek remedy against the action being taken by the intermediaries should be helpful," Nasscom said.

PM asks banks to come out with innovative products for startups, fintech

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stressed on increasing credit to businesses to meet the needs of a fast refloating economy and said financial products will have to be tailor-made for fintech and startups.

He said that although the government's endeavour is to promote the private sector, the public sector still needs to have their presence in banking and insurance to support the poor.

Speaking at a webinar on Budget announcements on Financial Services, Modi said to help medium and small businesses during the COVID pandemic, 90 lakh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were given credit worth Rs 2.4 trillion.

"Supporting MSME and startups and expanding credit flow to them is necessary. The government has undertaken reforms and opened up sectors like farm, coal and space. Now it's the responsibility of the financial sector to understand the aspirations of rural and smaller cities and make them the strength of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. "As our economy is growing, and growing fast, credit flow has also become equally important. You have to see how credit reaches new sectors, new entrepreneurs. Now you will have to focus on creation of new and better financial products for Startups and Fintech," Modi said.

Stating that Kisan Credit has helped small farmers and those involved in animal husbandry to come out with the grasp of informal lending, Modi said the private sector now will have to think of innovative financial products for this section of the society.

PTI

Fiscal deficit soars to ₹12.34 lakh cr at end of January

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The central government's fiscal deficit soared to ₹12.34 lakh crore or 66.8 per cent of the revised budget estimates at the end of January of the current fiscal.

The fiscal deficit at the end of January in the previous financial year was 128.5 per cent of the Revised Estimates (RE). In the current fiscal ending March 31, the fiscal deficit is likely to touch Rs 18.48 lakh crore or 9.5 per cent of the GDP.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit stood at ₹12,34,004 crore at the end of January 2021, as per the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA). The lockdown imposed to curb spreading of coronavirus infections had significantly impacted business activities and in turn contributed to sluggish revenue realisation.

The fiscal deficit or gap between the expenditure and revenue had breached the annual target in the month of July during this financial year.

'Bharat Vyapar Bandh' evokes lukewarm response

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The day-long 'Bharat Vyapar Bandh' called by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) evoked a lukewarm response with most shops and commercial establishments open through the day.

The traders' body, however, claimed that shopkeepers supported its nationwide business shutdown call to protest against issues related to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and "unethical business practices of foreign e-commerce companies".

Various markets in the national capital were open on Friday during the Bandh with

many saying that despite supporting the cause, they did not want to suffer another day of losses.

However, CAIT in a statement said the shutdown was a "grand success" as more than 8 crore small businesses belonging to about 40,000 trade associations across the country kept their shutters down and no trading activity took place in any commercial market.

Brijesh Goyal, president of Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI), said most of the markets in Delhi were open but the association extended its support to the nationwide business shutdown.

Traders declare Bandh as success, claim loss of ₹1L crore

New Delhi: A major trade union declared 'Bharat Vyapar Bandh' a success as more than eight crore small businesses belonging to about 40 thousand trade associations were claimed to be closed for business on Friday.

The call for the bandh was given by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

IANS

After petrol & diesel, consumers face cooking gas price rise

New Delhi: Government seems to be in no mood to subsidise the price of common mans cooking gas which like the price of auto fuels petrol and diesel has maintained consistent increase for past few months.

The price of domestic 14.2-kg LPG cylinder was increased by ₹ 25 on Thursday, the third increase in the month of February itself, taking its price ₹794 a cylinder in Delhi.

While the practice of weekly or fortnightly price revision of cooking gas is normally done for non-subsidised cylinders, this year oil companies have maintained almost equal increase in price of subsidised LPG cylinders as well.

IANS

Fuel price hike on hold for 3rd consecutive day

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies on Friday continued with their wait and watch strategy and kept the retail price of petrol and diesel unchanged for the third consecutive day.

Accordingly, petrol continues to be sold at ₹90.93 a litre and diesel at ₹81.32 a litre in the national capital.

Elsewhere in the country as well, fuel prices remained unchanged after oil companies increased the pump price on 13 of the last 18 days.

In the 13 increases since February 9, prices have gone up by Rs 3.98 per litre for petrol while diesel rate has risen by Rs 4.19 a litre in Delhi.

IANS

Rajasthan Skill & Livelihoods Development Corporation
EMI Campus, J.S.A. Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur- 302004 (Rajasthan)
Ph: +91-0141-2705817, 5103248, Fax: +91-0141-5103246, www.rajasthanlivelihoods.org

NOTICE INVITING BID-NIB

Notice Inviting Bid/Bid for Selection of a Competent and Qualified Bidder providing self-defence training to girls/women. The Bid/Bid shall only be submitted through online Bidding system on www.eprocrajasthan.gov.in. The schedule of dates is as follows:
The schedule of dates is mentioned below:

Nature of Project	Procurement of Services for providing Self-Defence Training to girls/Women Through Training Partner for RSLDC
Cost of Bid/Bid Document (Nonrefundable)	Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only)
Bid Processing Fees (Nonrefundable)	Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One Thousand Only)
Estimated Project Cost	Rs. 23.00 Lakh (Including all Expenditures & Statutory Liabilities except GST). GST will be paid if required as per rule.
Bid Security	2% of Project value. But Finance Department latest circular, in lieu of Bid Security Bid Declaration has to be taken in format attached with this Bid Document. As per FD (G&FR Division Dept.) Circular Dated: 23.12.2020 on Rs. 50 Stamp Paper.
Publishing Date and Time for Bid Document	25/02/2021
Document Download Start Date and Time	26/02/2021 from 11:00 am
Bid submission Start Date and Time	26/02/2021 from 11:00 am
Pre-Bid Meeting Date, Time & Venue	2nd March, 2021 up to 11:00 AM
Document Download End Date/Time	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM
Bid Submission End Date & Time	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM
Last date of Submission of Banker's Cheque/Demand Draft for Bid Fee, BID SECURITY, and Processing Fee	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM
Technical Bid Opening Date, Time and Venue	8th March, 2021 Board Room (RSLDC) at 05.00pm
Financial bids Opening Date & Time	Will be intimated later to the Technically qualified Bidders
Websites for downloading Bid Document, Compendium's Addendums etc.	www.livelihoods.rajasthan.gov.in/ www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in/ http://eprocrajasthan.gov.in/
Validity of bids	90 days from the last date of Bid Submission
Period of Contract	3 Months

*This procurement is doing according to provision of RTTP Act 2012 and rules 2013 and other applicable rules, so all provisions of these are applicable for this procurement.
Raj. Samwad/C/2010316 Managing Director, RSLDC

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED


Neelam

General Public is hereby informed that one female **Namely: Neelam, W/o: Deepak Kumar, R/o: N-129/27, Khilona Bagh, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from her house since **18.02.2021** at 12:30 pm. from the area of P.S. Model Town, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 85A dated 18.02.2021** has been registered at P.S. Model Town, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped female is as under:
Age: 20 years, **Height:** 5' 4", **Face:** Round, **Built:** Normal, **Complexion:** Fair, **Wearing:** Yellow colour saree with golden colour blouse and slipper in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>
E-mail ID - cic@cbl.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 **SHO**
Fax No. 011-24368639 **P.S. Model Town, Delhi**
DP/688/NW/2021 Ph.: 011- 27459202, 8750870230

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED


Ravi

General public is hereby informed that one male **Namely: Ravi, S/o Kishan Lal R/o H.No. 71, Karan Vihar, Kirari, Delhi, Age: 25 Years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, wearing White colour Shirt and Blue colour Pant,** has been kidnapped/ missing from his house since **04.02.2021** at 11:00 AM. In this regard a **DD No. 84A, Dated 15.02.2021** has been lodged at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him person, please inform undersigned.
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in **SHO**
Fax: 011-24368639 **P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi**
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641 **Ph.:** 011-27581812, 27581223
DP/692/RD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY


Prashant

General public is hereby informed that one boy **Namely: Prashant S/o Raj Kumar R/o D-287, Inder Enclave-II, Kirari, Delhi, Age 15 years, Height 5'3", Complexion: wheatish, Face oval wearing White colour shirt, Blue colour pant and Green jacket** has been missing since 11.02.2021. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this boy, but no clue has come to light so far.
In this regard a case FIR No. 94/21 dated 12.02.2021 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS Prem Nagar, Delhi.
Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in> **SHO**
Email: cic@cbl.gov.in **PS Prem Nagar, Delhi**
Fax: 011-23011334 **Ph.:** 011-23014046, 23015218 **Ph.:** 011-25489080
DP/699/RD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING


Kajal

General Public is hereby informed that a girl **Namely: Kajal D/o Prahlad, R/o R-2A 73 Mohan Block Gali No.6, West Sagarpur, Delhi** has been missing from house since 20.02.2021 from around 9.30 AM the area of P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No.01A, Dt.: 20.02.2021** has been lodged at PS, Aman Vihar, Delhi. The description of Missing girl is as under:
Name: Kajal, **Father's Name:** Prahlad, **Age:** 18 years, **Height:** 5'3", **Complexion:** Fair, **Wearing:** White colour suit & purple colour salwar
If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in> **SHO**
e-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in **P.S., Aman Vihar, Delhi**
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph.:** 011-24368638, 24368641 **Ph.:** 011-27581812
DP/698/RD/2021 7065036123

GAPIO to be held on 27-28 February 2021

New Delhi: The Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (GAPIO), a non-profit organization, and leading association for the Indian medical diaspora announced the organizing of its annual Global Indian Physicians Congress on February 27th - 28th 2021. The Congress has become an important event in the medical calendar where the exchange of knowledge from subject specialists from across the world takes place. This year's virtual conference will provide an international forum to delegates to share their knowledge and exchange ideas on clinical skill development, solutions to contemporary health issues and modernizing the approach to delivering healthcare. Dr Harsh Vardhan, the Hon'ble Health Minister, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will be the Chief Guest.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Meenu Malik, W/o Subodh Malik, R/o J-3/20, DDA Flats, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019 am the sole owner and possessor of properties Nos. 507 & 509, Vishal Chambers, P-1, Sector-18, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The original Flat Buyer Agreements Dt. 06.04.1998 and 11.04.1998, with endorsements Dt. 01.08.2001 have been misappropriated, qua which I got lodged FIRs Nos. 602/19 and 305/20 at PS Kalkaji. I have received certified copies of the title documents from the builder/promoter. For additional details, you can reach me at meenumalik1@hotmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Smita Bhardwaj is the owner of House Bearing No. 4 area Measuring 60 Sq. Yds., out of Rect. No. 52, Kila No. 18/1 & 18/2, Situated in the area of Village Khureji Khas, abadi of Guru Angad Nagar Extn., Laxmi Nagar, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110092 by virtue of Sale Deed dated 02.07.2018 (Doc. No. 3903) executed by Mr. Rahul Jain and Mr. Kapil Jain son/ legal heirs of Late Naresh Kumar Jain owned by Relinquishment Deed dated 02.04.2018 (Doc. No. 1919). All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan for purchase of the said Property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, P.K.E. CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, 9810083351

COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE
(A statutory Authority of Government of India under Architects Act, 1972)
India Habitat Centre, Core 6A, 1st Floor,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

EXAMINATION NOTICE: NATA 2021

File No./CA/NATA/2021/01 Dated: 26.02.2021

Attention : Students, Parents, Architectural Institutions and all concerned

Subject:- Announcement of dates for First & Second Tests of NATA 2021.

The Council of Architecture is pleased to announce that the First Test and Second Test of National Aptitude Test in Architecture (NATA) 2021 examination, shall be held on April 10, 2021 and June 12, 2021, respectively.

The NATA 2021 Brochure with important dates for both the tests shall be uploaded shortly on the websites www.nata.in and www.coa.gov.in. The NATA portal shall also be operational in due course to facilitate students to apply for registration of First & Second Tests.

The candidates desirous to appear for NATA 2021 are advised to refer to the said websites for latest updates.

New Delhi Registrar

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EX. ENGINEER (E&M)BP
100 MGD BHAGIRATHI WATER TREATMENT PLANT GOKALPURI : DELHI-110094

STOP CORONA: MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE, WEAR MASK, KEEP HANDS HYGINIC
-PREES Short Tender Notice - N.I.T. No. 06 (2020-21) /Re-invite

S. No.	Description of work	Date of Uploading on E-Procurement solution/Tender ID	Estimated cost/Earnest Money & Tender Fee	Date of Opening of Tender
1.	Shifting of part of Jal Vihar main 1200 mm dia into G.K. main 1200mm dia at Vikas Marg under Bhagirathi plant.	26-02-2021/ 2021_DJB_200598_1	Job work/ Rs. 51800/- & Rs. 500/-	04-03-2021 at 03.15 PM

For further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) **Sd/-**
Advt. No. J.S.V. 447 (2020-21) **EE (E&M) BP**

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Home Finance

Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051
Corporate Office: RPG Towers, Andheri Kurla Road, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (East), Mumbai-40005
Branch Office: Plot No. 7, 2nd Floor, Block-N, Sec-18, Noida UP-201301

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Jeevish Kumar (Borrower), Monu (Co-borrower) NINOD00001267807	Flat No.C-1907, 19th Floor, Oasis Venetia Heights Plot No.HRA 12.A, Group Housing Sector, Surajpur Site C (Extension) Phase-II Greater Noida 201307. Bounded By: East- Flat No. C-1901 & 1902, West- Other Property, North- Staircase, South- Lift & Passage/ Date of Possession- 24-Feb-21	30-01-2020 Rs.29,80,792/-	Noida-B

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: 27-02-2021 **Authorized Officer**
Place: Noida-B **ICICI Home Finance Company Limited**



RANVEER SINGH

Rohit sir (Shetty) and I were delighted to return to shooting full on high-octane action. Rohit was joking with me that he had been itching to get back to shooting an elaborate action sequence with cars blowing up and guns firing since a long time, and I totally shared his sentiment.



AVINASH TIWARY

An actor can only choose what is offered to him. So, it seems like the films that have come to me reflect the kind of work that I have always wanted to do. It is not a conscious choice of doing something. There is nothing by intent here but I am just fortunate that I get to do the roles which most actors will be envious of.



PRIYA BANERJEE

The second season of the forthcoming series *Bekaaboo 2*, is full of twists and turns. My character Kashti is very close to my heart. It made me push my boundaries and discover more within myself. It made me grow professionally as well as personally. I cannot wait to see what the show is going to look like.



ALY GONI

During *Bigg Boss 14* my intention to play for my friends was good. I'm that way in the outside world, too. For me, relationships matter a lot. It never crossed my mind that playing for my friends will make my game strong. I was just being true to myself. I never looked at it from the game point of view.

KELLY MARIE TRAN

It is so exciting to be the first Southeast Asian Disney Princess. It is a big deal. It feels like a really big honour and a big responsibility at the same time, and I want to do justice to it. I'm really grateful.



ENCOUNTER 45 MINUTES

ON THE EDGE OF *JUNGLE BOOK*

Experiencing the wild can have a surprisingly calming effect, realises **SAIMI SATTAR**

This was damaged by a tusker which had taken affront to a tiger having dared to cross his path," said Bhagwati Prasad Dhyani, gesturing to the remains of a magnificent column at the Vatanvasa Gate which marks the entry into the 301.17 sq km of the Kalaghar Tiger Reserve lies in the Lansdowne division of the Pauri district of Uttarakhand. It is a part of the 1,286 Corbett National Park where Dhyani has been working as a *Van Daroga* with the Uttarakhand Forest Department since 2003. While the big cat got away, the gate which proclaimed the existence of the feline species — with a photograph — within the Kalaghar Tiger Reserve was not as lucky. He gestured to the building next to the gate and said, "I was standing on the roof top and crouching. It was a sight, both scary and magnificent at the same time, which surpassed much of what I've seen." Incidentally, Dhyani, while walking home one day, encountered a tiger less than three feet away. He just stood and waited. "The truth is just like any other animal which is a prey for the carnivores, humans too can't react or even say a word when we are face to face with any of the big cats. We are stunned into silence," he said. The tiger walked away and Dhyani lived to recount the tale. As he continued to regale us with incidents of his close encounters with the wild kind, we spotted a fox quickly making its way into the depths of the forest.

This unexpected meeting with Dhyani set the tone for our entire trip especially since the time we crossed Kotdwar. Even before we reached Vatanvasa gate which demarcates the starting point of the jungle safari, we'd lost count of the number of times wild fowls had crossed our path, screeching and scrambling as the car came careening down the road. On the way there were also scattered hutments enclosed by electric wires to ensure that the wild animals did not gatecrash as uninvited guests at a family dinner.



HIT THE ROAD

The four of us had started much before dusk from Delhi but, since we were more focussed on having a good time rather than reaching the destination at any fixed time, we finally arrived at the resort in the late afternoon. But if you are the kind of traveller who doesn't care much to stop at scenic spots to soak in the views during a journey, it can take about seven and a half hours. It was fascinating to watch the sunlight make patches on the surface as it streamed in through the tree covers as the car ploughed its way through the wooded road. It was akin to chasing clouds in the sky, which has been one of my favourite past times since childhood. It smelled green due to the dense trees, which was a sensorial delight and an immediate mood lifter for a city-slicker.

WHAT LIES INSIDE

The part through which we were travelling is in the Pauri Garhwal region which encompasses 70 per cent of the Corbett Tiger Reserve while the remaining 30 per cent in Kumaon, where Jim Corbett — the legendary tiger conservationist — lived. With a mix of elevation

and plains, varied temperatures and several water bodies as well as sparse human settlements, this side holds out promises of frequent sightings and keeps them — sometimes making people fearful.

LANDING GROUND

At Vanvasa Resort in Juee village, home for the next three nights, I met another visitor, Sudheer Gusain, who recalled that while driving, early in the morning, he was practically sandwiched in between two elephants. "In those five seconds, a thousand thoughts raced through my mind. Whether I should wake my three friends and run while leaving the vehicle behind or park quietly in one corner or speed off and more," he said. He chose to step on the horn and the gas to make a quick getaway as he knew that elephants, when angry, could be extremely dangerous.

Vanvasa, which means abode in the forest, actually lives up to the idea that went in naming it. It is an existence that is unhurried, almost a step back in time. Mobile connectivity is low and there are no TVs in the rooms to ensure that the real world does not encroach upon the cocoon that you are lulled into — how-

ever temporary. The chirping of birds rather than incessant honking of horns makes for a pleasant distraction. The faint rustling of trees creates an ambience which is so relaxed that it makes you sink deeper into its comfort even though it is faintly unfamiliar or buried deep into a nostalgic past of a city slicker in her 40s.

One evening I decided to catch up with the hotelier, Satender Rawat, who much like me had spent much of his adult life in the capital, before deciding to step back and connect with the land of his ancestor. This property spread over 30 acre, powered by his vision, foregoes commercial gains in favour of ensuring that each of the cottages and one villa has unobstructed view of the mountains. "Three more rooms are coming up and eventually I plan to have 40," said Rawat for whom it is clearly a passion project. A clear indication of the same are the more than a 1,000 variety of trees carted from Meerut, Kolkata and even Bengaluru. Rawat showed me around pointing out each of the trees by its common and botanical names. When I asked him about the number of gardeners, he answered with an impish smile, "Just one. He's standing in front of you. The rest

water the plants. Transplanting full-grown trees takes a minimum of six months but it adds to the experience of the visitors."

On the last day of our stay, we accompanied a steward, Soori — who looks older than his 45-years, thanks to his grey hair, but is surprisingly agile on his feet — to see a huge water tank being constructed to supplement the existing water resource. A tiger pugmark near the tank, which is about three km away from the resort, was the real attraction. An amazing raconteur, Soori told us about the goings-on in the surrounding villages, pointed out herbs and imparted local wisdom.

On our way back, we competed to test our physical fitness at the outdoor adventure sports area. It was here that Rawat, who by that time had come to check upon our well-being, told us that he calls Soori his 'local reporter' — clearly for a reason — and promised us that the journalist fraternity had more up its sleeves. He was hinting at Soori's talent which is not limited to story-telling. At night, on a day when the resort which is usually full-up was deserted as it was the mid-week after a long weekend, Soori entertained us by singing Garhwali and Nepali songs which was accompanied by energetic dancing in the gazebo attached to the dining area. Equipped with a keyboard, a TT table and more, it doubles up as an activity area where, in the evening, there is a magic-tricks show for children and a musical one for adults. It was in the gazebo that Rahul Mukherjee and Frank, the in-house singers, entertained us with a mix of slow, romantic and fast-paced songs every evening.

The fourth morning, after a leisurely breakfast of *Bichchu buti ka saag*, a local delicacy, and potato spring onion gravy cooked in Garhwali style, we hit the road on our way to the capital. And while I carried the fond memories of the place and the people, I also left a part of me behind. Till we take abode in the forest...again.

Photo Courtesy: Panikaj Kumar

CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES



Kriti juggles between shoots

After wrapping her shooting schedule for Farhad Samji's *Bachchan Pandey*, Kriti has already started the shoot of her next horror-comedy, *Bhediya*'s Mumbai schedule. Directed by Amar Kaushik, the film will also star Varun Dhawan.

With shooting back to back for her films, it looks like the actress has no time to spare. Confirming the same, a source revealed, "Kriti has been keeping extremely busy with her hectic schedule and is working hard to balance all her forthcoming projects. In between *Bhediya*, she will also shoot for a song for her film, *Mimi*. To be all prepared and ready, the actress is rehearsing every night post her shoot."

Recently, the actress created quite a stir on the internet with her sexy biker look for her film *Ganapath* directed by Vikas Behl where she will be seen opposite Tiger Shroff. Having a packed slate for the year, the actress is all set to surprise her fans and audiences on screen.

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES

Ticking many boxes

On the sixth anniversary of the film *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, producer-director MANEESH SHARMA and SHARAT KATARIYA remember their disbelief and joy when the film bagged a prestigious award and connected well with the audience. By TEAM VIVA



Producer Maneesh Sharma and director Sharat Katariya were in sheer disbelief when they won the prestigious National Film Awards for Best Feature Film in Hindi for *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* (DLKH). On the sixth release anniversary of the film starring Ayushmann Khurrana and Bhumi Pednekar, the duo opened up about their journey into making this fresh, timeless romance.

DLKH was your first film as a producer at YRF. What made you take the plunge as a producer?

Maneesh: Some take the plunge, others are tripped into the pool. I am definitely the latter. Producing films was nowhere in my scheme of things but I had not anticipated the plans of Aditya Chopra. *Shuddh Desi Romance* had just released and I was prepping for another film. One fine day, a conversation initiated by Adi led to me becoming a producer pretty much overnight. C'est la vie! (such is life)

Did you expect this reaction to the film while you were writing it?

Sharat: No, one is not thinking any kind of (such thing), one is always unsure and is trying to write with the best possible ideas. There was no expectations. Yes, I was overwhelmed by the reaction but never expected it like that.

As a producer, what are the kind of stories that you want to tell?

Maneesh: Irrespective of which role I am engaged in a film with — producer, director or story writer — I rely a lot on my instinct. It's a lot to do with what feels right at that stage of life and you click with a narrative or a character or a genre and you back your instinct and commit to investing your time and energy to the process. So far, that's mostly worked for me, I guess.

What do you think is the USP of the film that it became a hit?

Sharat: Honestly, I don't know. I saw the film a year after it was released, again,

at a film festival with the audience. I still don't know what worked with the audience, but I am assuming that may be the comedy or the characters. I really don't know what was new in it because when I hear the word 'fresh', I can't figure out exactly what was fresh in it? I can't break it down for myself. If I could, I would do that again.

When you and Sharat were teaming up for the film, what were your expectations?

Maneesh: All we really hoped was for the audience to connect with the grounded and nostalgic quality of the narrative. The love and warmth the film has received overtime, does validate our conviction. Each film has its own mea-

sure of ambition. This one did tick many of the boxes.

The film gave a new pairing (Ayushmann-Bhumi) to people who have now had a hatrick of hits. Why do you think people have loved them ever since?

Sharat: It's just their talent nothing else. It's their talent of getting into the skin of the character and becoming the characters they've asked for, for any film that they do. And I'm sure that is why their films and performances work.

What was the first thing you and Sharat said to each other when you won the National Award for the film?

Maneesh: *Kya baat kar raha hai!* (What are you saying?)

What was your reaction when you won the National Award for the film?

Sharat: I have very fond memories. I'll tell you bit by bit what happened. My first reaction was like Oh God! I won't be able to work the whole day now. First, it wasn't sinking in but it sank when there were multiple phone calls, post which I remember calling Maneesh. I told him that the film has won a National Award, not just for the film but also for the best singer (Monali) and Varun (Grover) for the best lyrics as well. So, he was also equally surprised. And then phone calls started coming in non-stop. This has never happened to me in my life. It was really an overwhelming experience.

Broaden your horizons

Working in the teleplay *Gidh* made actor SANA JAFRI push her creative boundaries

Director and producer Kanwal Khoosat's teleplay *Gidh* revolves around two women protagonists bound together by their shared miseries of life in a patriarchal society. The teleplay starring Sana Jafri, Rasti Farooq, and Adeel Afzal delves into the life of Saleema and an unexpected visitor Salma who claims to be her sister-in-law.

As the plot unfolds, both the women share the trials of their respective lives which they had to undergo because of the same man — Junaid, Salma's brother, and Saleema's husband. Together, they decide to do put an end to their suffering. What in fact transpires changes one of their lives forever, but not in a predictable way.

Sana says, "Working with Kanwal has been definitely the best experience of my life because she brought out the creative aspects in me that I didn't even know could translate onto the screen. Each line that Kanwal wrote had two or more meanings and it was tough to express them all without actually saying what the character was going through."

The teleplay format, she says, was tricky because she is a trained theatre actor but Kanwal blended the two genres and translated them harmoniously for the small screen.

Kanwal also helped her to push her creative boundaries.



Sana adds, "We rehearsed the teleplay just like we do in the theatre and that process was very helpful. Also, the fact that we were a team of five women helped. Whenever we got stuck creatively, our art director, Kanwal, myself, Rasti, and our assistant shared our real-life experiences which helped us move forward. This ensemble of five amazing women who had so much to share with each other really helped me as an actor."

(The teleplay will stream on Airtel Spotlight on February 28 at 2 pm and 6 pm.)

JUKEBOX 45 MINUTES



Picture this: Six teams, representing different regions of India, battling it out against each other in a musical championship. Each of these teams are supported by leading Bollywood and sports celebrities like Bobby Deol, Rajkumar Rao, Shradha Kapoor along with Shakti Kapoor and Siddhanth Kapoor, Riteish and Genelia Deshmukh, Govinda along with Sunita and Tina Ahuja and Suresh Raina. Also, the teams have two top playback singers as their captains along with one reality show star and one fresh voice. Doesn't this resemble the concept of IPL (The Indian Premier League), a professional Twenty20 cricket match contested by different teams representing various states of India?

While we've seen many sports leagues over the past few decades, Zee TV's latest show — *Indian Pro Music League* — is the first ever music league reality show which infuses the competitive energy of sports into music with super matches, league matches and so on. While Shilpa Rao is the captain of Mumbai Warriors, Shaan and Aakriti Kakar head Bengal Tigers, Asees Kaur leads Punjab Lions and Sajid Khan commands Delhi Jammers. All the captains came together to speak about the show.

Since people have always enjoyed and embraced this format in sports, can we expect the same response for music? Aakriti feels that people are going to take

A MUSICAL BOUT

While we've seen many sports leagues over the past few decades, *Indian Pro Music League* is the first ever reality show which infuses the competitive energy of sports into music with super matches, league matches and so on.

By AYUSHI SHARMA

some time to understand the concept. "Even we took a while. But it's going to be a lot of fun. Shaan and I will make sure that we just don't keep singing our own songs because that will become mundane. Our goal is to give a different spin to each song. There are different themes to almost every episode. There are various categories and genres given to us. Singers Mika Singh, Kailash Kher, Sajid Khan, Shaan, Ankit Tiwari, Javed Ali, Asees Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, Payal Dev, Neha Bhasin, Shilpa Rao will don the hat of captains of the six zonal teams. I am sure it's going to be a huge hit," she says.

Sajid adds, "*Wahan bat aur ball chalta hai, yeha pe sur aur taal, drum and guitar chalega*. Even though cricket is like a religion in India, I feel people can still live without it, but music — I don't think so."

Aakriti always loves to be challenged. She says, "There's a bit of a challenge because I am a



judge on *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* on Zee Bangla. There I am judging the contestants and here, I am the one who is going to be judged. It's like practicing what you preach, so it shouldn't come across as a hollow claim. And actually that's where the fun is."

Shilpa shares, "Music is one thing that you like... be it in any form. It has that universal connect with people. The whole point of this format is to get 18 artistes of the same stature and six new talents on one stage, which is the biggest task for any of us."

Ask her if Shilpa finds it challenging, she instantly says, "What? To be yourself? No! That is the least challenging thing for me. The only test is to be a better performer on a daily basis and be a better version of yourself. When you are competing with yourself, that's the real challenge to be in."

Asees hopes that just like IPL is a big success in our country, this show carries the same magic!

Usually in a music reality show there are different teams fighting to win. Here, there is an involvement of various states and their representation. Has this made the show more personal for the audience as well as for the singers? Well, Aakriti tells us that initially when she was approached for the show, she had the option of choosing two-three teams because she's a Delhi girl, who is a Punjabi, born and brought up in Mumbai. She especially chose Bengal because "the kind of love I've received from the state is just unbelievable. My connection with Bengal has been very strong since the beginning."

Shaan explains that representing states is a very superficial part of the show. "For instance, MS Dhoni represents Chennai but it's not like he was born in Chennai or he has any connection with the state. It's a voting-based show so it's become very difficult if you just leave it at 'everyone votes for everyone'. It also becomes even more subjective then. I am a Bengali, so I have been given a team titled Bengal Tigers. Mikaji (Singh) is Punjabi so he has been given Punjab Lions. But if we talk about Kailashji (Kher), he has got Mumbai Warriors but he is not from Mumbai. So we were just given these choices just for the sake of representation and to give a superficial colour," shares Shaan.

Sajid and Shilpa tell us that the show depicts different cultures and a variety of music from various states. "The show's mantra is *Music Uncha Rahe Hamara*. So at the end, it all comes down to one thing i.e. music. It doesn't matter who took the trophy. It's a win for music," they say.

(The show airs on Zee TV every Saturday and Sunday at 8 pm.)



Return to real experience

Actor GULSHAN GROVER says that films in theatres will bring back the festivity

Veteran actor Gulshan Grover says he has respect for OTT platforms but theatres define the festive experience of watching films, and it is something that has been missing over the past year.

"For almost a year now, we have been watching films and series on OTT in our homes. We have been watching content from across the world. The OTT has its own advantages but we also want to get out there and want to have a real experience of watching a film," said Grover at the trailer launch of the forthcoming film *Mumbai Saga* in Mumbai.

About filmmakers who have gone ahead and released films amid COVID protocol, he added, "It's a gutsy and courageous move from producers and entertainers that we care for the audience. Accepting the idea of 50 per cent capacity in theatres is a big step for financiers, producers and actors because the numbers are going to be counted."

The Sanjay Gupta directorial *Mumbai Saga* is set in the eighties and the nineties. It chronicles the changing landscape of Mumbai when mills were being replaced by malls and highrise buildings.

"We have respect for OTT platforms. They are here to stay and they will be an integral part of our lives, but when you release a film on OTT there is no festivity, no celebration, no noise. There is no getting together of people, no one calls you and expresses his enthusiasm of watching the film," Grover said.

"The festivity was missing, the publicity was missing, the excitement was missing. So, it all comes back. As for competition among producers, there is no competition at the moment. They all want to get to a theatre somehow or the other. (Industry) People will make way for others and will celebrate success of other producers," he added.

Mumbai Saga features John Abraham, Emraan Hashmi, Suniel Shetty, Kajal Aggarwal, Rohit Roy, Anjana Sukhani, Mahesh Manjrekar, Prateik Babbar, Amole Gupte, Samir Soni, Shaad Randhawa and Gulshan Grover. The film is set for a theatrical release on March 19.

—IANS

DRAMA 30 MINUTES

Romance and revenge

Director AARAMBHH M SINGH says that *Jamai 2.0* features thrill, drama, suspense and mystery. By AYUSHI SHARMA



booming with content driven projects, how do think a show like this will work?

Well, because this is content driven show too. It is high on emotional quotient and has been written in sync with today's time.

□Your experience of working with Nia, Ravi and Achint...

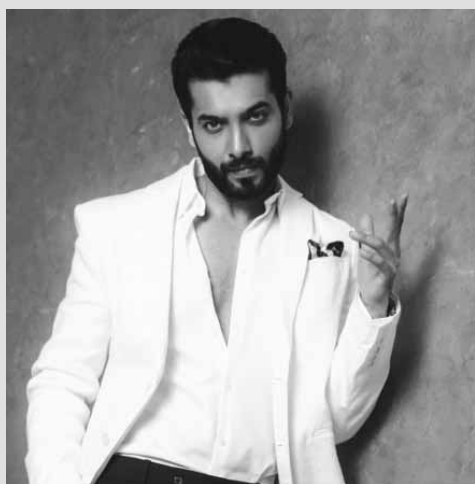
It has been really great. Working with Achint has been a dream come true since I have grown up watching her. Ravi's energy and dedication towards his work is rare in today's actors and Nia surprises me with her spontaneity. I can promise that this season will make audience laugh and cry at the same time.

□We don't see much of masala content these days, instead there's a surge in the realistic genre like biopics, real-life events. What type of content, according to you, will prevail in the post-COVID era?

One thing which has changed during COVID times is viewership of the audience. People have started consuming more and more OTT content. They want to be safe and secure, and watch shows from the comfort of their homes, rather than heading out often. That has brought surge of demand for new shows for sure. But there can't be one particular set of genre that will prevail because the audience differs. They love to be spoilt with various choices. Also, I do agree that we are moving towards more realistic content these days. Its demand has been increasing rapidly. I feel people need encouragement and want to watch inspiring stories, thus, biopics have a huge scope of going forward.

□What are your forthcoming projects?

While *Jamai 2.0* has been released yesterday, I am finishing my edit for another webshow, a psychological thriller, which will be on air in March on ALTBalaji.



'My mood dictates my fashion'

Actor Sharad Malhotra, who recently achieved two million followers on Instagram, has often floored fans with his fashion choices. His jackets, particularly, are a huge hit with his admirers.

"I love jackets. I'm particular about what I wear and my mood sort of dictates my choice of clothes. Keeping it simple yet fashionable is what I prefer. My choice is governed by comfort. Having a fashion designer wife is a plus (laughs softly). Ripci (his wife) is my go-to person, every time I need any help," says Sharad.

Recently seen in the show *Naagin 5*, the actor is right now planning his next career move.

"I am reading scripts and discussing projects. I have liked two to three things but have not signed up on anything as of now. Talks are on, let's see what falls into place," he claims, adding that he is open to TV, films and web shows. He has been

approached for music videos, too.

"An artiste just needs a platform and an audience. I don't want to restrict myself into just one medium but explore everything that is challenging and exciting that comes my way. I enjoy performing different characters having different shades. If the story and my part are good enough, I can even perform on the streets and entertain my audience. I value the art more than everything else," he says.

He recently went to Dubai with his wife to rejuvenate. Talking about his holiday, he says: "Holidays gets the best out of me. This time around things were different. We all were stuck at home, not sure when we could go for a vacation. So this holiday was special. I love visiting Dubai not just because of how beautiful and welcoming it is but also for my fans in the city."

—IANS

Approximately seven years ago, *Jamai Raja* aired on television and since then, the show carved its name in the memory of the viewers. It ended following an effective three-year run. Now, its second installment *Jamai 2.0* is back on the digital platform Zee5 with a bigger plot twist. Excerpts:

□How did you conceptualise the show? How is it different from the first installment?

Since it is a second season, the story line has been carried forward. The producers of the show, Viniyard Films came up with the story line for this season based on the research

done by the OTT platform post first season. I was shared the brief of what audience was expecting from season two and I worked around it. I feel season one was more action oriented while season two kept the emotional quotient and love at the forefront. We have focussed on Ravi (Dubey) and Nia's (Sharma) chemistry, while ensuring that Achint Kaur's character doesn't lose its shine since it has been the encashing point from day one. Her character brings the required edge to the show.

□An insight into the storyline...

It's a story of two lovers torn between romance and revenge...

Sidharth (played by Ravi) is looking for Roshni's (played by Nia) brother who had killed his sister 10 years ago... Roshni discovers it and chooses to side with her brother, who she believes is innocent. Thus, they find themselves at loggerheads. It's a fight where there is no winning. It's either love or family. Sid has always shown that he is in love with Roshni but we wonder if his feelings are real or simply a part of his plan. What will Sid and Roshni choose is the suspense of the season.

□The story of revenge is not a novel theme, what made you sure that the audience would not skip the

second season of the show?

There are limited genres and only seven types of stories form archetypes that have engaged human attention for centuries. It's the characters which make the story different from one another and pull the audience to watch it. *Jamai 2.0* already has its success formula. The audience has loved Ravi, Nia and Achint since the TV show days and that's the reason when the OTT platform decided to experiment with TV crossover web show. Their obvious choice was *Jamai* being the most successful show on television.

□At a time when the OTT space is

It's all about confidence, Axar on Test outings

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

It was a long wait for Axar Patel and it didn't help that everyone around him had just one question for the past three years — "Why aren't you in the Indian team?"

But Patel was unfazed as he knew, his time would come.

"I think it's all about confidence," said the 27-year-old from Anand in Gujarat who wanted to be a mechanical engineer growing up but was prodded into trying his hand at cricket by a school friend.

With his record 11 wickets in the Day-Night third Test against England, the left-arm spinner finally found his big moment in International cricket, seven years after he made his India debut in an ODI against Bangladesh.

Since that day, he has been in and out of the team with the spin all-rounder's spot firmly with Ravindra Jadeja.

In this series too, he made it because Jadeja was out injured. He hadn't been in the national team since 2018 and made his Test debut in the second game against England last week in Chennai.

"I have been out of the team for three years and at that time, I used to think about the areas of my game which need to be worked upon. So, I was working on my bowling and batting," he told Hardik Pandya in a bcci.Tv interview, thoroughly enjoying his good time.

"When you are out of the



team, many people, friends keep asking you 'why aren't you in the team despite doing well?' These things keep coming in the mind," said the bowler who has 152 wickets in 41 first-class game at an impressive average of 25.25.

"So, I told myself 'just wait for the right time and whenever

I get an opportunity I will give my 100 per cent."

Asked by Pandya if he finds Test cricket easy, Axar replied: "Everybody asked me that question. When it goes your way then you think it's easy but when you miss a full toss, you actually realise how easy it is."

Patel said he would aim to

continue in the same manner in front of his home crowd in the fourth and final Test against England, starting here on March 4.

"(The Day-Night Test) was my second Test and first in Motera. It's a special feeling to play and perform before the home crowd. My efforts would be to do the same," Patel said.

Towards the end of the light-hearted interview, India skipper Virat Kohli also made an appearance and appreciated Patel's performance in Gujarat.

"Ae Bapu taari bowling kamaal chhe! (Bapu, your bowling is wonderful!)," Kohli said.

EXPECTED WICKET TO HOLD UP LITTLE LONGER

England head coach Chris Silverwood on Friday played down talks of lodging any formal complaint to the ICC regarding the Motera pitch but said he had expected the surface to hold up a little longer after his team lost the third Test against India inside two days.

"First and foremost, just to follow up from what Joe (Root) said yesterday, he got five for 8, but at the same time whatever the pitch did or didn't do, India ultimately played better than us on that surface, probably pushed us to the extremes of which our players haven't experienced before," he said during a virtual press conference.

"We did expect the wicket to hold up a little longer than it did," he added.

Eng guilty of thinking too far ahead: Bell

PTI ■ LONDON

Former batsman Ian Bell has slammed England's much-debated rotation policy, saying they were guilty of thinking too far ahead and have gone wrong with the constant chopping and changing in a "big" Test series like India.

England fell to an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat in the third Test to go down 1-2 in the four-match series against India, while also getting knocked out of contention from the ICC World Test Championship



(WTC) final in June. "I think England have been guilty of thinking too far ahead

of having a squad for the Ashes when actually this is bigger than the Ashes, this is probably as big as the Ashes," Bell told ESPNcricinfo.

"Why are we rotating in the biggest Test series you are playing in? For me that's where England have gone a bit wrong," he added.

The 38-year-old, who featured in 118 Tests for England, feels for the English players for whom the tours to India and Australia can make or break careers.

"These tours, certainly for

Englishmen coming to India or going to Australia are the pinnacle. They make your careers, you look back and if you win in those conditions they are remembered for a long long time," Bell said.

"For me, India are going to come to England in the summer. If they are 2-0 or 1-0 up will they rotate? I know for a fact that when India come in the summer they won't be rotating their best bowlers or their best players or leave somebody out. They want to win."

Padikkal scores another ton in Karnataka's win



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Young opener Devdutt Padikkal continued his sensational form, smashing a second successive century to lead defending champions Karnataka to a nine-wicket win over Kerala in the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Friday.

Chasing Kerala's 278, Karnataka cantered home with 27 balls to spare with the Royal Challengers Bangalore opener hitting 13 fours and two sixes in an unbeaten knock of 126 from 138 balls.

He got a fine support from Krishnamurthy Siddharth (84-ball 86 not out; 5x4, 3x6) as they toyed with the Kerala

Delhi to host Vijay Hazare knockout

Mumbai: The knockout matches of the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21 will be played at New Delhi from March 7," stated a mail sent from the BCCI secretary's office to all the affiliated state units on February 25.

As per the BCCI website, the pre-quarter final

knock-out stage of the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21 will be played at New Delhi from March 7," stated a mail sent from the BCCI secretary's office to all the affiliated state units on February 25.

As per the BCCI website, the pre-quarter final

(Eliminator) will be played on March 7, while the quarter-finals will be played on March 8 and March 9.

The two semi-finals will be staged on March 11 while the summit clash will be played on March 14.

attack in their match-winning 180-run undefeated stand. Fresh from his 152 against Odisha, Padikkal carried on from where he left and put on a 99-run opening stand with skipper Ravikumar Samarth (62).

The 20-year-old, who also has two half-centuries, now leads the Vijay Hazare run chart with 427 runs from four matches at an astounding average of 142.33.

The big win took Karnataka to the top of the Group E table ahead of Uttar Pradesh, who beat Railways by 70 runs in Alur and Kerala on net run-rate.

FOUR FOR BARODA

In Group A game in Surat, skipper Krunal Pandya's unbeaten 133 formed the cornerstone of Baroda's 13-run win over Chhattisgarh in an Elite Group A game, even as Arit Sheth blazed away to a 16-ball 51.

Opting to bat, Baroda rode on Pandya's

hundred and Sheth's big-hitting to post 332/6 after a top-order failure, and then restricted the opposition to 319/9 to record their fourth win on the trot. The left-hander smashed 20 fours and three sixes in his whirlwind 100-ball knock while forging a 139-run stand for the fifth wicket with Vishnu Solanki (78 off 99 balls, 8x4).

JHARKHAND LOSE

In Group B matches in Indore, Tamil Nadu ended Jharkhand's three-match winning streak with a convincing 67-run win.

At Holkar Stadium, Prabhsimran Singh hammered 167 (140 balls, 13 fours, 9 sixes) to power Punjab to a four-wicket win over Vidarbha. While Madhya Pradesh handed Andhra a 98-run defeat.

Jharkhand is on top of the standings with 12 points, followed by Punjab, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh with eight points. Vidarbha lies in last place with 4 points.

BCCI considers 4-5 IPL venues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI is looking at four to five venues for conducting the next edition of the Indian Premier League with Mumbai as a single host not looking feasible anymore following a surge in Covid-19 cases in and around the city.

Earlier, there were discussions that Mumbai, with four stadiums — Wankhede, Brabourne, DY Patil and Reliance Stadium, will be a good option to create a single bio-secure bubble and hold the eight-week long tournament.

However, the Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra has worsened with a spike in cases.

"There is still a month left for the IPL to start but obviously some decisions need to be



taken. It will be risky to have a single city IPL in Mumbai if there is steady rise in cases that's happening right now," a senior BCCI official said.

"So cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Kolkata will be ready to host matches. Ahmedabad, in all likelihood, will host the play-off and final match of the IPL," he said.

The IPL is scheduled to start in the second week of April.



Deepak upstages world champ Zoirov

New Delhi: Asian Silver-winner Deepak Kumar (52kg) on Friday stunned Olympic and world champion Shakhobiddin Zoirov of Uzbekistan to storm into the finals of the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Deepak clinched one of the most memorable wins of his career with a 4-1 win over more

fancied Zoirov, who had claimed the 2019 world championship title beating India's Amit Panghal. Zoirov is also a Silver-medallist from the Asian Games and the championships.

However, former youth world champion Jyoti Gulia (51kg) and Bhagyabati Kachari (75kg) bowed out of the women's competition. **PNS**



I became a cricketer accidentally: Ashwin

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Called a modern day legend by his captain Virat Kohli, ace Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin says he is actually an accidental cricketer, who is living a dream with over 400 Test wickets under his belt.

Ashwin reached the milestone in the Day-Night third Test against England, which ended here on Thursday with India winning by 10 wickets inside two days. Ashwin picked up seven in the match to take his overall tally to 401.

"I accidentally became a cricketer. I am actually a cricket lover who went on to become a cricketer. I am living my dream here, I never imagined that I will wear the Indian jersey one day and I will play," Ashwin told bcci.Tv in an interview but did not elaborate on the remark.

According to Ashwin, being in the Covid-19 lockdown made him realise just how lucky he was to play for India. "And every time I finish playing a game and if I give that winning result for the team, I just feel I am being given a blessing, but the Covid times made me feel how lucky I am to actually play for India."

"Even when I came back after the IPL, I never thought I will play in Australia, so that is what I said, everything has been a gift, for the love with which I play the game, the game is giving me back enough and more lau-

rels," he added.

Ashwin, who also became the second fastest bowler to reach the 400 Test wicket-mark after Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan, said that he watched a lot of old videos of great individual performances in the lock-down helped improve his understanding of the game.

"I used to watch a lot of footage even before, but the understanding of the game has gone one notch higher...During the lockdown, I was watching a lot of cricket from the past, especially Sachin's hundred in Chhapauk, all sort of stuff on Youtube," recalled the 34-year-old Chennai-born player.

Jofra Archer became Ashwin's 400th wicket during the second day of the third Test here, which India won by 10 wickets and he said it was only when the batsman had opted for DRS, he realised that he had reached the landmark.

"Initial feeling is quite empty to be honest, because we were under immense pressure...For me I was actually in the moment, only after he (Archer) had taken the DRS, I realised the 400th that happened," he said. "...After they flashed 400 Test wickets on the board, the entire stadium was up, everybody was clapping, I don't know, I cannot put a finger and say how I feel about it, the last three months have been a complete fairy-tale," he added.

SINGLES

WOMEN'S CRICKET SEASON FROM MARCH 11

NEW DELHI: The women's domestic cricket season will begin with a 50-over tourney from March 11, the BCCI has informed its affiliated units. The tourney will be held across six venues — Surat, Rajkot, Jaipur, Indore, Chennai and Bengaluru. The teams will have to assemble by March 4 and will need to have three Covid-19 negative before entering the respective bio-bubbles. Each of the five elite groups will have six teams each, while the plate group has seven. The quarter-finals will be held on March 29, and semi-finals on April 1. The final will be played on April 4.

CAS REDUCE UMAR AKMAL BAN TO 12 MONTHS

KARACHI: Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal will be able to resume his cricket career after the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) reduced his suspension to 12 months and imposed a fine of 42.50 lakh Pakistani Rupees on him for breaching the Anti-Corruption Code. The CAS announced its decision in a consolidated order on the appeals filed by Umar and the PCB. Umar was initially suspended from all cricket activities on February 20 last year for not reporting approaches made to him for spot-fixing in the PSL. On Friday, the PCB said that Umar will now be eligible to reintegrate into competitive cricket subject to deposits of fine, which adds up to ₹19.62 lakh in Indian currency, and undergoing the program of rehabilitation under the PCB Anti-Corruption Code.

YUSUF PATHAN ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

NEW DELHI: Out-of-favour India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan, who made a name for himself as a power-hitter, on Friday announced retirement from all forms of cricket, saying time has come "to put a full stop to this innings of my life." The 38-year-old Pathan was part of the inaugural T20 World Cup-winning Indian team in 2007 and also the one that triumphed in the 2011 ODI World Cup at home.

PIETERSEN TO CAPTAIN ENGLAND LEGENDS

MUMBAI: Former England batsman Kevin Pietersen will lead the England Legends while Khaled Mahmud will captain the Bangladesh Legends in the Unacademy Road Safety World Series, starting in Raipur from March 5. Former cricketers Matthew Hoggard, Owais Shah, Monty Panesar, Nick Crompton are some of the other key members in the England side. The Bangladesh Legends squad comprises players like Nafees Iqbal, Abdur Razzaq and Mohammed Rafique.

HENDERSON SIDELINED AFTER SURGERY

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson faces a long spell on the sidelines after undergoing an operation on the groin injury he sustained in last weekend's Merseyside derby loss against Everton. Liverpool has not put a timescale on the midfielder's recovery but said he will be out until at least April in another blow to its fading Premier League title defense.

SWIATEK VS BENCIC IN ADELAIDE FINAL

ADELAIDE: Second seed Belinda Bencic battled for almost three hours before seeing off 16-year-old Coco Gauff in three sets on Friday to reach the final of the Adelaide International. Bencic set up a final showdown against French Open champion Iga Swiatek with her 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 win. Swiatek had a much easier passage to the final, beating Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-2.

AGENCIES

आस्था, अध्यात्म एवं संस्कृति का त्रिवेणी संगम

राजिब माघी पुन्नी मेला

27 फरवरी - 11 मार्च 2021

पहला स्नान - 27 फरवरी, माघी पुन्नी

दूसरा स्नान - 06 मार्च, जानकी जयंती

तीसरा स्नान - 11 मार्च, महाशिवरात्रि

श्री भूपेश यादव माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़