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Cong getting weak, rues G-23

Senior party leaders pitch for strong Cong leadership at Centre

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

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

None of the office-bearers of the Jammu & Kashmir

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Centre caps Covid shot at ₹250 in pvt hospitals

During phase-II of vaccination drive beginning from March 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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DMK-Cong seat sharing hitch in TN

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Over 55% of State's fresh Covid cases from Ranchi in February

District accounts for 647 of 1171 cases

PNS ■ RANCHI

More than 55 per cent of people found infected by the Covid-19 virus in Jharkhand in the month of February were residents of Ranchi, a trend that has swung the Government into action to check the spread of the virus in the State capital, health officials said on Saturday.

As per figures compiled by the National Health Mission (NHM), as many as 1,171 people were infected by the mysterious virus in Jharkhand from February 1 to February 27, and at least 647 of them were residents of the state capital.

Ranchi not only accounts for the highest number of total Covid-19 cases reported so far in Jharkhand, but is also the only district with nearly 300 active cases while all the remaining 23 districts have a double-digit count of active cases, reveals government data.

A bulletin released by the NHM on Saturday morning stated that Ranchi accounted for as many as 277 of the 492 active



A medic collects swab samples from a person for Covid-19 test in Ranchi

PNS

cases of infection in the state. Also, the trajectory of active cases of infection in the district has seen an upward trend after a drop in cases in the first week of February.

As per data compiled by the NHM, there were only 198 Covid patients in Ranchi on February 6. Government figures highlight that the number of active cases here jumped to 277 in the past 20 days – a cause for concern for the health machinery and the district administration.

In the wake of the rise in the number of cases in Ranchi, the district administration has intensified vigil at the airport and railway stations. Besides, the district administration has set up at least 17 new testing centres across Ranchi to ensure that more people are tested and cases of Covid infection don't go unde-

tected.

On Friday, the Government tested swab samples of 948 people in Ranchi and 34 of them were found infected by Covid-19 virus. East Singhbhum also reported 20 cases, but none of the remaining 22 districts reported a double-digit-spikes.

The cumulative tests per million was also lower in Ranchi in comparison to several other districts that have not even reported half as many cases as the state capital. As per government data, the Tests Per Million (TPM) in Ranchi was 1,48,092 by Saturday. The TPM in Deoghar was 1,50,918 and that in Pakur was 1,66,676. Besides, Lohardaga, Latehar, Koderma and even Khunti had higher TPM than Ranchi, indicating that the virus was spreading faster in the state capital.

CAPSULE

8 HELD IN TELANGANA OVER COW SLAUGHTER

Hyderabad: Eight people were on Saturday arrested for allegedly slaughtering 16 cows in Siddipet district of Telangana, police said.

3 COVID-19 DEATHS, 243 CASES IN DELHI ON SAT

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

ASI SHOOTS HIMSELF DEAD INSIDE PCR VAN

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

FIRE AT FACTORY IN PRATAP NAGAR, ONE DEAD

New Delhi: The charred body of a 22-year-old labourer was recovered after a fire broke out at a warehouse in North Delhi's Pratap Nagar area in the early hours of Saturday.

ASSAM: BPF QUILTS NDA TO JOIN CONG ALLIANCE

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

Biden won't sanction MBS over murder of Khashoggi

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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All 728 dists to become unique hubs to boost farm exports

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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

For instance, Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district is to be promoted as Bindi (tikuli) cluster; Deoghar and Dumka in Jharkhand for Peda products hub; Rajouri for spices; Anantnag for trout fish; Ayodhya for Jaggery; Auraiya

for food processing desi ghee; Srinagar for flowers; Budgam for exotic vegetables; East Delhi for namkeens, and South-west Delhi for milk-based products.

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

According to the Ministry, the product chosen in the dis-

trict for promotion, having export potential which will boost farm exports and enhance farmers' income. Besides, also help to provide jobs in rural sector.

The list includes 25 districts of Arunachal Pradesh; 38 districts of Bihar; 28 districts of Chhattisgarh; 2 districts in Goa; 22 districts of Haryana; 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh; 24 districts of Jharkhand; 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir; 31 districts of Karnataka; 14 districts of Kerala; 52 districts of Madhya Pradesh; 36 districts of Maharashtra; 16 districts of Manipur; 30 districts of Odisha; 23 districts of Punjab; 4 districts of Sikkim; 36 districts of Tamil Nadu; 8 districts of Tripura; 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh; and 18 districts of West Bengal.



Former Union Minister and RJD senior leader Jai Prakash Narayan Yadav along with party leaders meet Chief Minister Hemant Soren at his official residence in Ranchi on Saturday

Pioneer photo

HOME THEATRE

Not a patch on the book or original movie



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

Let's talk about the positives first. It starts off on a good note. The opening scene tells you that there is more to come and it is bound to be interesting — murder-crime thrillers are definitely a treat to watch. And this latest Parineeti Chopra film is no different. A girl on the train who watches the life of another woman and reminiscing her own and wishing it was her in place of that girl is normal enough . More so when our life is in shambles and nothing is going right. So far so good. Unfortunately, as the movie progresses it starts to spiral out of control and goes off track. Of course the makers wanted to give a Bollywood feel to the film and hence the song and dance but there

was no need to let it deviate so much. If the makers had gone with the name and copied most of the scenes, they might have stuck true to the book by British author Paula Hawkins 2015 novel of the same name. One doesn't understand the need to go for a twist that doesn't make much sense because there are so many gaps that are difficult to fill. However, if can manage to watch it like any other B-town movie and not look for answers that need to be addressed, The Girl On The Train manages to hold your attention. But there is a condition— one should have neither seen nor read the book by the same or watched the 2016 movie starring Emily Blunt. The character in the Hindi version is played by Chopra. If by any chance one gas done either of the above, it will be a lost cause even if there is a deviation at the climax which is definitely a surprise. — Shalini Sakseena

Guru-shishya parampara is what it's about

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

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

there is no place for egos here. Through the four generations of passing on the tradition of who will lead the next generation of young dancers, Aavartan, which means a cycle, is interesting to watch — that a guru can be jealous of her pupil but manages to over come her insecurities via a story told to her by her guru. Narayan may not be a great actor but there is no doubt where her skills lie — a brilliant Kathak dancer. Those who love classic dance forms, this movie is a treat to watch. To see Narayan dance so beautifully even though she us 70 years old is magical. It just goes to show that one can never take the art form from the artist whatever be the age. The dual towards the climax where she performs is absolutely riveting. One can see clearly why she is still the queen of her art. Watch this one for some excellent footwork by Shovana Narayan. — Shalini Sakseena



Plan Your Day



Pupper Party 4.0

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

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

Ultra Run

Venue: Delta 105, Village Pada,Manesar, Gurugram, India
When: February 28, 2021
Time: 6 pm onwards
A run in the clean and green environs on the outskirts of Gurgaon. Choose your distances from short and sweet 10K to herculean 24hrs ultra run or an experiential night run inside a safe Military themed campus- Delta 105.
Race Categories
Note: Crew supporting participants & accompanying

guests will have to buy Food-Coupons to order meals from the campsite kitchen.
Race Categories (check route map)
63.3Km Ultra Run (Feb 28 6 am start, cutoff 10hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹2,000
Full Marathon (Feb 28 6:15 am start, cutoff 7hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,400
Half Marathon (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000
10Km Run (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000



TELLY TALE

‘I FEEL WAJID’S PRESENCE’
Zee TV has been a pioneer and a trend-setter in shaping television content over the past three decades and is all set to



change the face of music reality shows once again with its latest non-fiction property, the *Indian Pro Music League* (IPML). In what will be a clutter-breaking format innovation, Zee TV is all set to present audiences with the world's first-ever music league championship, starting February 26. While the world of sports has seen several league competitions, this unique music league will have six teams representing different regions of India, battling it out against each other in a musical championship. Each of these six teams supported by leading Bollywood and sports celebrities will have top playback singers as their captains, one reality show star and one fresh voice. The likes of Mika Singh, Kailash Kher, Sajid Khan, Shaan, Ankit Tiwari, Javed Ali, Asees Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, AkritiKakar, Payal Dev, Neha Bhasin, Shilpa Rao have been signed on to captain the 6 zonal teams. During the shoot of the grand premiere episode, everyone was ecstatic to kickstart the reality show. In fact, all the celebrities put their best foot forward and gave some splendid performances on the grand Indian Pro Music League stage. However, it was popular Bollywood composer, Sajid Khan's words that left everyone teary-eyed during the shoot. Sajid, his family, and the whole of Bollywood was dealt a huge blow last year when his brother Wajid Khan passed away suddenly. Participating in the *Indian Pro Music League* was actually Wajid's dream and not having him around made Sajid very emotional, after all, it was also his first reality show without him. On the stage, Sajid mentioned how he missed his brother but also felt his presence on the stage, and hence, he is looking forward to making this show a huge success. Sajid Khan who is the captain of Delhi Jammers mentioned on the stage, "Even when Wajid was hospitalized, he was

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

PACKAGE FULL OF MASTI
Get ready to witness showdowns in the upcoming episodes across &TV shows. In *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai*, Manmohan Tiwari (Rohitashv Gour) finds himself at crossroads with his beautiful Anita Bhabi (NehhaPendse) who is fighting a court case against him. Either way, Mamohan is destined to lose! Whereas, Rajesh (Kamna Pathak) who tire to create a rift between her husband Happu Singh (Yogesh Tripathi) and Beni (Vishwanath Chatterjee) makes matters go out of hand in *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*.



Bringing *aandhi* and *toofan* are the new visitors at Pappu's (Manmohan Tiwari) guest house in *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* with an announcement that there is a pot full of gold hidden in the haveli, followed by an exhausting treasure hunt. In *Santoshi Maa Sunaye Vrat Katahyein*, a time warp takes place bringing Indresh (Ashish Kadian) back to life and Swati (Tanvi Dogra) to justice. But will Asur Rani Paulomi (Sara Khan) give up without a fight? Sharing more on the zesty details of the track, NehhaPendse *aka* Anita Bhabi shares: "If there is one woman who can influence Vibhuti Narayan Mishra (Aasif Sheikh) like Anita does, is Angoori Bhabi (Shubhangi Atre). When Tiwari *ji* tortures Tiliu (Syed Salim Zaidi) under pandit *ji*'s orders, Anita gets furious and files a case against him. When Angoori convinces Vibhuti to fight Tiwari *ji*'s case against Anita herself,things get heated." Kamna Pathak *aka* Rajesh Singh says, "Beni and Happu's *dosti* is *pakk!* But Rajesh has triggered the two of them that will result in an ugly fight. The pair makes efforts to make each other feel jealous and ultimately refuse to talk. *Iss darar ke beech*, will Rajesh and

Kamlesh (Sanjay Chaudhury) be able to patch the two best buds? "Santa Sagar *aka* Sarla shares: "The Gupta family is used to Gudiya's frequent surprises. This time around she brings the previous owners of the house who got displaced a long time ago. They reveal that back in the day they hid a huge pot of gold in the house. After knowing about the treasure, Sarla is determined on finding the fortune." Sara Khan *aka* Asur Rani Paulomi shares: "Swati along with the help of Santoshi Maa (Gracy Singh) has always fought her battles. But will Indresh support her after being emotionally blackmailed by his father Singhasan Singh (Sushil Sinha)? Asur Rani Paulomi will not let Santoshi Maa win and to find out how, the audience must stay tuned!"

WELCOME SARGAM ON SCREEN
Laughter is the best medicine to take stress away, and Sony Entertainment Television is making sure the audience gets a good dose, with the launch of its new show *Sargam Ki Sadhesatii*. The channel is all set to unveil a sitcom that encourages family viewing. Produced by Vipul Shah of Optimistix Entertainment, *Sargam Ki Sadhe Satii* brings forth the Awasthi household with Sargam as the *bahu*, and her unique *sasural* where she is the only woman among men. The shenanigans of the Awasthis from Ghaziabad will throw viewers into giggle-fits, while also warming the hearts with relatable situations. Altogether, the Awasthi family will be seen elevating the most mundane situation — ones that viewers will easily relate to — into a whole lot of fun. The makers have chosen an eclectic cast, led by *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* actor Anjali Tatrari as Sargam and Kunal Saluja as Aparshakti Awasthi. The rest of the key cast members include names such as Darshan Jariwala, Sanat Vyas, Ojas Rawal, Yash Sehgal, Vishnu Bholwani, Akash Makhija, Yash Sehgal and Krish Chugh. Sargam Awasthi is empathetic, rational, intelligent, selfless and a leader in essence, but for someone who becomes a homemaker, she faces two key challenges. Firstly, she does not know to cook, a stereotype that is often associated with a good *bahu*. Secondly, in her earnest desire to balance everything and to be a Jack of all trades at home, she keeps faltering here and there. Comical twists in the story happen as Sargam tries her best to be The Sadhesatii men include Sargam's husband Aparshakti Awasthi *aka* Appu, who is a small-time influencer for the world, but a *jugaadu* hero of his house. An aspiring actor, he is unabashedly disorganised and takes pride in being a multi-tasker. 'Dadaji' Anandil Awasthi, also called 'sympathy seeker' due to his unending love for talking about his 'fake' ailments, is the oldest, but most youthful member of this mad-house. His favourite topic is his bowel movement!

‘I waited for movies, got TV shows instead’

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

■ **What is your role in Ranju Ki Betiyaan?**
I play Guddu Mishra; he is from Muzaffarpur, Bihar. He is someone who is respectful of his father and because of his father's wish to get married to a particular person, even though he doesn't agree to this, he gets married to Ranju (played by Reena Kapoor). She is timid and has no voice of her own. Ranju has four daughters. But my character is of a patriarchal mindset, he yearns for a son who can take his family name forward. Even though he respects his father, he wants to break the norm and achieve what he has wanted to do, dreaming of doing. Even though he has a wife and daughters, he gets married to another with whom he has two sons. His situation is unconventional but with a conventional marriage. This is a bit of dichotomy.
■ **How did you get this project?**
I had earlier done a show for Rashmi Sharma Telefilms titled *Shakti-Astitva Ke Ehsaas Ki*. The show was about a eunuch child. The role that was offered to me was challenging. The show was quite progressive and hence had agreed to do this show. I liked that my role was strong and all the twists and turns that happen are because of me.
■ **What made you play Guddu Mishra?**
Of course, the fact that while my character finds himself in a conventional marriage, the situation is unconventional. Second, the more important one is that the show is about a single working mother; something that is becoming prevalent in our society. More and more people are breaking out and craving a life for themselves. It is encouraging people to believe in their dreams and to strike out and make a living.
■ **Was the fact that the role different from what you had done in the past also the attraction of taking up Ranju...**
More than the character that I was essaying, it was the concept of the show that had me take up the project. The concept is very interesting. I felt that the show is extremely progressive, that it has something to say. The part that has been offered here, I have something to say, there was a certain amount of identifiability here. I thought that the audience would get something out of it.
■ **Do you think that people get impacted by what a show wants to say?**
Yes, it does. When you pick up a subject like *Ranju*.... when one wants to break the mindsets of people, if one tries to approach this aggressively, there is a possibility that one may be rejected. At times, at the cost of looking regressive, you slowly and gently push a thought process



forward and steer him towards a path that is different from the present one. One has to achieve a balance where you don't lose your audience and yet cater them towards progressive ideas.
■ **You started off with films, what was the attraction of venturing into TV?**
After doing films like *Mrityudand*, whatever that came my way after that was not all that exciting. The roles offered were not doing anything for me. I waited for two years to get work. Then came a time when I needed to work and met a person who was making a show, he appeared to be progressive with his ideas. He made the show *Muskaan* (1999). Once I started doing TV I realised that the commitment to TV is very heavy especially with daily soaps. With weekly, one could still do films. Once daily started, it became difficult to do films and TV. But if your character was not pivotal, one could still manage but the minute your role became central to the show, doing anything else, it was unfair to not be committed to one platform.
■ **Is that why you haven't done movies in the recent past?**
The funny part is; it is ironic but the truth is that every time I waited for a movie to come my way and it didn't and I took up a TV show, the very next day of shooting of the TV, I would get an offer of doing a film. I don't know whether it is luck or fate. Also, once you commit to a TV show, it requires full attention and one cannot plan in advance.
■ **You have a film background. Was there ever a time when you wanted to be something else besides an actor?**
Yes, definitely. There was a time when I wanted to be a fighter pilot — the whole idea of having so much power under you! But then my mother threatened and bullied me, I am the youngest of the siblings and since she could not bully them, she did it with me. I agreed not to pursue flying. But I have no regrets.
■ **Is it important for an actor to find a connection with the character he is essaying?**
Actually, what an actor needs to have in his arsenal is to understand different facets of life and society. To be able to understand different thought processes. Also, to be able to understand characters of people. If one is unable to do this, one is just playing a part that people may or may not be able to identify with. One learns a lot from society and people and an actor needs to learn from them.
■ **What next?**
I am open to any form of medium to work in. It is just that whenever it comes my way, I hope I am in a position to take them up. Let's see what is in store.

IN 2020

Road crashes killed 3X more lives than Covid

3,044 people died in road accidents, 1,025 of Covid-19 in 2020

PNS ■ RANCHI

Road accidents claimed almost three times more lives than Covid-19 virus in Jharkhand in 2020 despite several months of lockdown causing a drop in traffic movement in cities as well as highways, figures compiled by Government agencies reveal.

The latest report from the Road Safety Authority states that as many as 3,044 people died in road accidents in Jharkhand from January 2020 to December 2020. As per figures compiled by the NHM, Covid-19 virus claimed as many as 1,025 lives – around one-third of the number of road accident fatalities – in the state until December 31.

In 2020, as many as 4,377 road accidents occurred in the State, highlights data with the Road Safety Authority. While 3,044 people died in these accidents, as many as 3,303 people sustained injuries, the data further reveals. At least 39 per cent of the accidents involved two wheelers, 18 per cent involved four wheelers and 16 per cent involved heavy vehicles.

While Covid-19 caused the highest number of deaths in East Singhbhum, Khunti



File photo

reported the highest number of road accident fatalities in 2020. Ranchi was the second worst-affected in terms of fatalities caused in road accidents and also the second worst-hit in terms of Covid casualties.

The Covid mortality rate in Jharkhand on Saturday was 0.90 per cent against the national average of 1.40 per cent. The state has reported 62 more Covid fatalities in 2021, taking the total count of Covid deaths in Jharkhand to 1,087, reveals NHM data.

As per data compiled by the Road Safety Authority, at least 92 per cent of the road accidents in Jharkhand occurred due to over-speeding, 2 per cent occurred due to drunken driving, 4 per cent due to driving on the wrong side while 1 per cent accidents occurred on traffic signals.

The Government has taken several initiatives recently to put a check on road accidents and save lives of people who sustain injuries in such mishaps. The state Cabinet last

month launched a Good Samaritan Policy, which aims at rewarding life savers in cases of road accidents and allows them to take accident survivors to hospital without having to disclose their own identity to the hospital authorities or the police.

“We are regularly working on new measures to reduce road accidents and fatalities. New policies are also being framed to support families of accident victims through compensation,” said Disaster Management Minister Banna Gupta.

Besides, the Hemant Soren-led Government is also planning to set up trauma centres in all the 24 districts. At present, there is only one level 1 trauma centre at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi, one level 3 trauma centre in Hazaribag, Garhwa and East Singhbhum. And three more level 3 trauma centres are being constructed at Ghatshila, Koderma and Lohardaga.

Villager injured in IED blast in Gumla

Airlifted to Ranchi for better treatment

PNS ■ RANCHI/DALTONGANJ

A villager was seriously injured in an IED blast that occurred in Marwa Karagani under Kurumgarh police station in Gumla district. The injured villager villager identified as Mahender Mahto (23) who got his one leg totally damaged in the booby trap of the Maoists.

Showing a humane face the Jharkhand Police sent a chopper to Gumla and airlifted the man, who fell prey to the booby trap of Maoists when he



Injured villager Mahendra Mahto brought by chopper for better treatment as he was seriously injured in an IED blast that occurred in Marwa Karagani under Kurumgarh police station in Gumla district on Saturday Pioneer photo

went to the jungles to graze his animals.

Additional Director

General of police (Operations) Navin Kumar Singh said police sent a chopper from Ranchi and

Congress holds sit-in against rising inflation

PNS ■ RANCHI

Following the instruction of All India Congress Committee (AICC), Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) held a sit-in near Raj Bhawan in the State Capital on the issue of rising prices of petroleum products along with other daily use items here on Saturday. JPCC Chief cum Finance Minister, Dr Rameshwar Oraon presided over the protest and a large number of the party office bearers participated in the protest.

Speaking on the occasion Oraon said that the State Assembly elections in five states are going to be held soon including West Bengal, Assam, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Puducherry. In such a situation, the price of petroleum products can be decreased by the Central Government for two-three months to get the political mileage in the elections, he added.

“There is no truth in the statement of the Petroleum Minister that the prices are increasing due to increased consumption of petrol and diesel in winter. His statement has come in the wake of the Assembly elections to be held in the coming days in five states which are very crucial for



JPCC president and Finance Minister Rameshwar Oraon addresses people during a protest against price hike at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Saturday Ratan Lal I Pioneer

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP),” said Oraon.

Attacking the Central Government, the party’s State Chief said that there is public anger against rising inflation in the whole Country. The BJP did not have to suffer losses in the elections, so the Union Minister has given this statement only for political gains. It is sure that after the election, the price will increase again, he added.

It may be mentioned here that Rameshwar Oraon is the Finance Minister in the coalition government in the State.

Oraon said that it is the responsibility of the Central Government to control the price of petrol and diesel. “At present, the anti-people government is sitting blindly to

help its businessmen friends. The reality is that the poorest of the poor use petrol-diesel and cooking gas. The economy of the entire Country is affected by the price of petrol and diesel,” he added.

The State Finance Minister also said that an increase in the price of fuels also increases the price of other essential commodities. “In the Congress regime, arrangements were made to control inflation while increasing the income of the people but Narendra Modi’s led Central Government is constantly taking decisions against farmers, labourers and the poor public. Against this, a movement is being run by the party in the entire State,” he added.



Governor Droupadi Murmu alongwith winners of the tableau competition during Republic Day celebrations at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Saturday Pioneer photo

BJP targets coalition Govt on rising crime

Delegation meets kin of Kanke Road double murder victims

PNS ■ RANCHI

The State Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief, cum Rajya Sabha MP, Deepak Prakash, along with BJP Legislative Party Leader, Babulal Marandi, met the family members of the husband and wife who were murdered with a sharp weapon in Tikli Tola on Kanke Road here on Saturday.

Visiting the family members at their ancestral village, Konge, to express condolences the BJP leaders expressed solace and said that in this hour of grief the BJP stands with the aggrieved family.

Expressing disappointment on the incident, Prakash said that the graph of crime has increased rapidly in the State after the formation of coalition Government. “In this Government there has been an unprecedented increase in the incident of atrocities on the tribals. As soon as the Government was formed, starting with the massacre of Chaibasa to the massacre of Gumla-Kamdara, murders are going on unabated. This Government is dominated by criminals; their morale is increasing day by day. Leaders are busy only in the transfer-posting business and criminals are carrying out the incident without any fear. The government is taking the State towards anarchy,” he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Marandi said that the morale of the naxalites and criminals in the State has increased so much that the husband and wife were brutally murdered just 3-4 kilometers away from the Chief Minister’s residence. “In the Government, which has become the so called well-wisher of the tribals, the maximum massacre, killing of tribals is tak-



BJP State president-cum-MP Deepak Prakash, BJP Legislative Party Leader Babulal Marandi and others interact with victim family member of the murder case of wife and husband, at Konge village near Ranchi on Saturday Ratan Lal I Pioneer

ing place. The people of the State are feeling insecure,” he added.

Many BJP workers, including MLA Samri Lal, Ashok Baraik, Aarti Kujur, KK Gupta, Rahul Awasthi, Nakula Turkey, were among those who met the families of the deceased.

Meanwhile, Sant Ravidas’ birth anniversary was celebrated at the party headquarter under the aegis of BJP Scheduled Caste Morcha.

On the occasion of 644th birth anniversary of Sant Ravidas, former Chief Minister and BJP Legislature Party Leader Babulal Marandi lit the lamp and launched the programme highlighting his biography and said that Saint Shriromani Ravidas Maharaj was the symbol of social unity and equality.

BJP State president Deepak Prakash said that the Country is a Country of saints, gurus and Mahatmas. “Sant Guru Ravidas was one of the most famous and influential people who made a huge contribution towards the establishment of the Bhakti Movement. Guru Ravidas was born in Banaras Uttar Pradesh. On this day Magha Purnima took place. He was a great thinker, reformist, and great poet of his time,” he added.

Temp likely to reach 35 degrees in 5 days

PNS ■ RANCHI

Temperature across the State is likely to increase for the next three days. According to the meteorological department, temperature will increase by five to seven degrees Celsius in the next four to five days. During this time, the maximum temperature is likely to be 35 degrees Celsius.

At the same time, minimum temperature is also likely to rise to three degrees Celsius. In such

a situation, people will feel the heat. According to the department, there is a possibility of partial cloud cover in the southern part of the State on March 2 and 3, which includes East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Simdega and Seraikela-Kharsanwa districts. However, no possibility of rain has been expressed by the department in these districts. At the same time, the weather will be clear in other districts as well.

Deputy Director MET

Centre, Ranchi Abhishek Anand said that in the coming four-five days the temperature will increase. During this time, the temperature will increase from five to seven degrees Celsius, which will be up to 35 degrees Celsius by March 2. There is a possibility of further increase in temperature after March 3.

According to the department, on February 27, the maximum temperature was 34 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature was recorded at 18

degrees Celsius. On February 28, the maximum temperature was recorded at 34 degree Celsius and the minimum temperature was 18 degree Celsius.

On the other hand, the maximum temperature is expected to be 34 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature is 17 degrees Celsius. On March 2, the maximum temperature is expected to be 35 and the minimum temperature is expected to be 17 degrees Celsius.

Self dependence in toy industry will have far reaching impact: Singh

PIB holds seminar on Indian Toy Fair 2021

PNS ■ RANCHI

A webinar was organised on Saturday under the joint aegis of the Press Information Bureau, Regional Outreach Bureau, Ranchi and Field Outreach Bureau, Gumla. This webinar has been organised on the first day of the virtual ‘Indian Toy Fair 2021’ to be held from 27 February to 2 March.

Inaugurating the webinar discussion, Additional Director General PIB-ROB, Ranchi Arimardan Singh said that the role of children starts with toys. “In a way, life starts with toys only. Children had different types of toys at different levels of development, from getting teeth to walking. Along with the change in time, toys have also changed. Earlier wooden toys were used more; today plastic toys have replaced them. By organizing events like ‘Bharat Toy Fair 2021’, the Central government is giving a platform to toy manufacturers through which their products will be promoted not only in the country but also abroad. Under the ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign, local materials are being used in toy manufacturing, thereby creating employment opportunities and increasing local business. The concept of making India self-reliant in the field of



Additional Director General PIB-ROB, Ranchi Arimardan Singh alongwith other speakers on the first day of the virtual webinar on ‘Indian Toy Fair 2021’ organized by the joint aegis of the Press Information Office, Regional Outreach Bureau, Ranchi and Field Outreach Bureau, Gumla on Friday Pioneer photo

toy industry by the Prime Minister will have a far-reaching impact. Such skills are also being promoted through various media mediums to encourage them,” he said.

Dr. Mahendra Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Central University of Jharkhand, said that the promotion of toy manufacturing sector is a commendable step of the Central Government. “This area can be developed by organizing events like Toy Fair. Entrepreneurs will also be attracted to this sector by organizing such an event. The toy industry also has an important role in the economy. Many types of toys are exported from India. It is therefore necessary that there is a proper marketing platform for the toy industry, so that we can reach and hold in international markets. Organizing fairs becomes

important for the widespread promotion of toys,” he said.

Sabhyata Rani Singh, Assistant Professor, Fine Arts, Faculty of Education, Jamshedpur Women’s College, said that toys not only help in mental and intellectual development of children, but also develop creativity in them. “We can also say that toys lead to all-round development of children. Taking care of the environment, eco-friendly toys are now being made so that children as well as the environment are not harmed. Children are being constantly taught about how to make eco-friendly things such as handicrafts, mask making, glass painting toys etc. Children are more attracted by the beauty and appearance of toys and they begin to understand easily and they also develop their intellectual development quickly,” she said.

Manoj Kumar (selected

participant from Ranchi for India Toy Fair 2021) while addressing the webinar said that India Toy Fair is getting a very good response. He said that soft toys are not harmful to children as they treat them as their friend. The toy industry today employs many people. There are many talents in our country, but there is a lack of self-employment. Kumar is connected with this field by training many people and appealed to the youth to become job seekers rather than self-employed. Many women can earn money by joining this industry in the free time of the afternoon. He further said that one of the good things in the field of toy manufacturing is that we also use waste material which also leads to waste management.

The webinar was coordinated and conducted by Regional Publicity Officer Mahvish Rahman. Regional Publicity Officer Gaurav Pushkar assisted in coordination. Apart from experts in the webinar, researchers, students, officer-employees of PIB, ROB, FOB, Doordarshan and All India Radio and officers and employees of other states also participated. Artists and members under the Song and Drama Department, PTC of All India Radio, Stringer of Doordarshan and Editor and Journalists were also involved. The webinar was also broadcast live on YouTube.

brought the man to Ranchi, who has been admitted in the Medica hospital. Singh said that Gumla SP had asked for this airlifting and that the headquarters did as fast as it could.

The ADG said that the IED blast which damaged one leg of a villager went off exactly at the same location where one CRPF jawan had a similar brush with the IED.

Singh said nothing can be any more cowardice of the Maoists than this kind of destroying the poor innocent in the landmines as Maoists must stop it without any more delay.

He said that Mahto was in the jungles to graze his pet animals never knowing that he would have this end with his leg.

He said that Latehar and Chatra police have launched poster wars on the Maoists warning them to shun land mines.

Singh said it is time that common people must raise their voice against the dastardly use of the IED by the Maoists for their own safety.

The ADG ops said the Maoists are so scared of the police even in the jungles and rocks that they want a ring of the IEDs to keep themselves safe but the same are taking the toll of the limbs and lives of the poor. Sources said there has been loss of three lives of the civilians in the booby trap of the Maoists. Two of them are in the Chatra district while one in the Latehar district.

INBRIEF

CM PAYS HOMAGE TO SAINT RAVIDAS

Chief Minister Hemant Soren has greeted the country and the people of Jharkhand while paying homage to Saint Shriromani Guru Ravidas on his birth anniversary. The Chief Minister said that Gurujii’s great ideas still work to create awareness among the society. “Let us all pledge to discharge our responsibilities in removing the evils and illiteracy spread in the society,” he said.



WEBINAR ON ‘IMAGINING TOMORROW’ AT BIT

Aerospace Society organised a webinar on the topic “Imagining Tomorrow through Engineering” Saturday. The webinar commenced with a welcome note by the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Anand K. Sinha, followed by a brief introduction about Aerospace Society. The moderator and faculty advisor of Aerospace Society, Dr. Priyank Kumar welcomed the guest speaker Dr. Vivek Lall, Chief Executive of US defense and nuclear giant, General Atomics Global Corporation. The guest speaker proceeded with the presentation session, showing the engineering marvels developed by his company to give a glance to the participants about how engineering is working in modern industries. Following this, a Q&A session was conducted to which Dr. Vivek Lall responded with ease. The webinar concluded by Tarun Raghav, President of Aerospace society, thanking the guest speaker, the faculty advisor and the Dean of Student Affairs.

CBI HOLDS RAJ BHASHA CONFERENCE

All India Rajbhasha Conference was organised in a digital form by the Central Bank of India (CBI). This was the 10th official language conference. Secretary, Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Dr. Sumit Zarathi, was present at the Delhi Zonal Office of the Bank as the Chief Guest at the programme. The Conference was chaired by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Bank, Pallava Mohapatra along with the Executive Director of the bank, Alok Shrivastava and General Manager Rajbhasha, Smriti Ranjan Dash and all the Field General Managers, General Managers, Senior Regional Managers and Regional Managers from every corner of digital country were present.



JPPC VOWS TO TRANSFORM SWARNAREKHA RIVER

JPPC president Aditya Vikram Jaiswal today visited the Swarnarekha River in Chutia locality of the city and expressed concern over the filth prevailing in the Swarnarekha River. Jaiswal was present along with the Professional Congress team on this occasion. He said that a special campaign will be launched by the Professional Congress to save the Swarnarekha River. He said that the condition of Swarnarekha River is very bad today. The river has been transformed into a drain. There is a lot of dirt everywhere. He said that people’s life can be happy only because of good environment and cleanliness. The Professional Congress has pledged to save the Swarnarekha River as well as to make it clean and beautiful. Jaiswal said that Swarnarekha river is the identity of Ranchi, it is very important for us to save it. We need to take a resolve to save the Swarnarekha River.



TILIN ALL INDIA ESSAY CONTEST LIST ANNOUNCED

The Learning Network, a Ranchi based learning & development venture, today announced the names of the 22 contestants whose essays have been shortlisted in Group A (Classes 6 to 8) and Group B (Classes 9 to 10) of the TILIN All India English Essay Writing Contest 2020. The contest witnessed contributions of several high-quality essays from students from over hundred cities. Initially 724 essays were shortlisted during the first review and subsequently 80 essays during the second review (based on select quality parameters). From among these, 22 essays (in two groups) were finally shortlisted after a comprehensive review and evaluation based on content, grammar, flow, structure, ideation, spelling, handwriting, clarity etc. The final awardees would be notified in the first week of March from amongst the shortlisted students after due verification and corroboration of the authorship / authenticity of the essays. The list of the shortlisted contestants was released separately by Kamakshi Raman, Executive Director (HRD), Management Training Institute, SAIL, Ranchi; Dr. Ram Singh, Principal, Delhi Public School, Ranchi and Vijaya Jadhav (IAS), Director of Urban Administration, Urban Development & Housing Department, Govt. of Jharkhand. Ranchi.

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(Free Coaching, Schooling, Fooding, Boarding, All India Test Series at Ranchi Centre for Group 1 and Free coaching and residential facility for Group 2.)
Applications are invited from Wards of Land Oustees/Villagers living within 25 Kms. of command areas of C.C.L/ And other Residents of Jharkhand.
Gross Annual Income of Parents/Guardians should not be more than Rs. 6,00,000/- (Rupees Six Lakhs) for Group I.
No Income Criteria for Group II: However, Gross Annual Income of Parents/Guardians less than Rs. 6,00,000/- would be given preference.
Tentative Date of Examination - 13.06.2021 or 20.06.2021
Selection for scheme "C.C.L-Ke-Lal" & "C.C.L - Ki - Laadli" will be on the basis of entrance test and merit list will be prepared on the basis of marks of entrance test and performance in 10th Board.
The selection procedure will commence from the date of declaration of results. Application forms can be filled easily through online mode by visiting www.cclcsr.in.
FOR COMPLETE DETAILS and ADMISSION FORMS, PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.cclcsr.in> CONTACT (From 11am to 3 pm) 7595949218/8987452551/9304535911/ 9431334459 OR OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGERS OF AREAS OF CCL, SD & CSR DEPARTMENT, DARBHANGA HOUSE (Ranchi)

Founder’s Day to spread message of ‘Sustainable Tomorrow’

32 roundabouts and heritage buildings to be illuminated

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The Steel City is all decked up to pay tributes to the founder Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata on his 182nd birth anniversary on March 3. The celebrations commemorate the vision of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata after whom the steel city took its name nearly a century ago. The theme this year is ‘Agile today for a Sustainable Tomorrow’. Chairman of Tata Group N Chandrasekaran will participate in the celebration. Addressing the media on Saturday at Beldih Club,



Chanakya Chaudhary, said that due to pandemic the celebration has been curtailed to ensure social distancing. The founder's statue and some areas in Jubilee Park have been illuminated. The illumination is not open for public viewing like

in the past but it is just a symbolic. “In all the events we are making it sure that there is no mass gathering. Inside works too there will be no floats. Even the contingents paying floral tributes will also be in less in numbers,” informed the vice

president. He further said: “It is our privilege and responsibility to carry forward the legacy of our Founder, J N Tata. His passion and resolve for a sustainable tomorrow still resonates in everything that we do today.

We are proud to celebrate this vision on his 182nd birth anniversary.” This year, the celebrations will be subdued in view of Covid-19. However, the spirit to pay homage to the Founder is intact and there will be few programmes organised with limited physical participation to mark the occasion. The Founder’s Day celebrations at Jamshedpur Works will be live streamed for employees as well as for a select group of Jamshedpur citizens. In view of the pandemic, the sporting activities at JRD Sports Complex will also be restricted to “no contact” sports like running, long jump and race walk. Senior GM (Jamshedpur Town Operation), Tata Steel Utilities and Infrastructure Services Limited Dhananjay Mishra informed that on March 2 Chairman will inaugurate Nawal Tata Hockey Academy. The company has also illuminated 32 roundabouts and 13 heritage buildings as part of the celebration. The lightings will be done from March 2 to March 5. At postal park in Bistupur Chairman will pay tribute. Founder’s Day was first instituted by Tata Steel on March 3, 1932. It was D N Madan, Chief Accountant, Tata Iron and Steel Company, who first conceived the idea of observing and celebrating an annual gathering to commemorate the birth anniversary of JN Tata Founder’s day provided him with an opportunity of expressing his regard for the memory of the genius to whose faith and adjustment, energy and perseverance, the works, the towns and the environs of Jamshedpur bear enduring witness.

City’s first cycle track to come up near airport road

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The city will soon have its very own dedicated cycling track. The first of its kind track in the city is being developed on airport road in Sonari connecting to CH Area. The 1 kilometre cycle track is being developed by Tata Steel Utilities and Infrastructure Services Limited. The track is expected to be ready in the next two months. In its next phase, the company is planning on making similar

cycle tracks in different locations. Senior GM (Jamshedpur Town Operation), Tata Steel Utilities and Infrastructure Services Limited Dhananjay Mishra informed during his visit to Chandigarh he got the idea to have a similar track in the city. The idea is to make people continue with cycling, together to have a united feeling. With growing passion about fitness in the Steel City, cycling has brought together the young and old to pedal long and wide across the city.

National Science Day at NML: Science teachers felicitated

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur jointly with The Jharkhand Chapter of the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI) celebrated the National Science Day with great pomp and show. Dr. Rajendra Joshi, Founder and CEO, RI Instruments & Innovation Pvt Ltd, and Managing Director RINZTECH NZ LTD, New Zealand was the Chief Guest of the function. In addition to NML Scientific and technical staff more than 50 researchers participated in the programme through online platform with the direct telecast in YouTube.

While welcoming the gathering Dr. Indranil Chatteraj, Director, CSIR-NML briefed to the audience about the importance of the research work being conducted by Dr Joshi and his team towards the development of low cost instrument in our country. He mentioned about the importance of the theme of this year’s science day, which is ‘Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work’. He



was enthusiastic about revival of gatherings specifically on science day after the long dry period of COVID crisis. While delivering the welcome address Dr. Arvind Sinha, Chairman Jharkhand Chapter of NASI, where he enumerated the different societal work NASI is engaged in across India. Dr. Sinha requested the science teachers in promoting the overall interest of students in science. He also congratulated the three winners of Best Science Teacher Award -2021. The chief guest, Rajendra Joshi delivered the lecture on

“Cost effective Raman and Fluorescence spectroscopy in India”. In his lecture, Dr. Joshi deliberated on the importance of Raman Effect and had a simplistic approach while explaining the fundamentals of Raman Effect to the audience, specially the younger ones. He emphasized on the different applications of Raman spectrometer. He elaborated on his teams work on innovations in the field of graphene oxide based biosensors. On behalf of Jharkhand state chapter of NASI the chief guest gave away the “BEST SCIENCE TEACHER AWARD-

2020-2021 for Jharkhand State to three teachers namely – Sumit Kumar Gorai (TGT) Delhi Public School Bokaro Steel City, Asheesh Mishra (PGT), Atomic Energy Central School, Jaguguda and Ramanuj Kumar (PGT), Kendriya Vidyalaya, Tatanagar. All the three awardees gave away the brief presentation. Dr. RK Sahu, Sr. Principal Scientist, CSIR-NML, presented the vote of thanks and expressed his appreciation to all the members of the organizing team for untiring effort in making the programme a success.

Int’l motivation speaker to open school for tribal kids in Dhanbad

PANKAJ KUMAR ■ DHANBAD

International motivation speaker Dr Parin Somani would open a school for tribal kids in Dhanbad. Talking to media persons in Dhanbad she said that education is the missing link amidst the tribals who despite being low in education have saved their tradition and culture amidst growing urbanisation. Somani visited tribal areas of Damodarpur locality besides Bhuda gulgulia basti to study the requirements of the tribals here. Dhanbad MLA Raj Sinha who too was present with Somani assured to extend support in the project. He hailed the offer of Somani of school building for vocational training as well as education for women and children. Somani said that the move is to protect the tribal art and culture.

Review of progress of MDA campaign in Bokaro

PNS ■ BERMO

Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro Rajesh Singh held a review meeting on Saturday at the confidential office room to review the progress of the Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign conducted under the Filaria Eradication Programme. Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Singh, Civil Surgeon should be sent to the team again at the place where there is no coverage. So that the missing people can be given medicine. DC directed all NGO representatives to enhance the team’s capacity and ensure that they work on the basis of micro plan. Singh, while directing Civil Surgeon Dr. Ashok Kumar Pathak, said that by sending his team to the offices of BSL Plant, Electro Steel, IEL Gomia, Dalmia Cement and CCL, all the staff members along with all their family members were dispensed with



medicine and be able to complete the goal. He should involve the Superintendent of Labour in this work so that all the laborers of the district can be fed medicine and also asked to extend the Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign for the next five days. Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Singh directed the Civil Surgeon to promote in urban areas and we have also to do better in the remaining days. So that we can accomplish the goal and go one step towards eliminating Falaria from the root. He asked everyone to send a report every day after the completion of the daily work. It may be noted that a Mass Drug Administration

(MDA) campaign is being carried out to eradicate filariasis in the district. The campaign has started from 22 February itself. For the first three days, booths were fed with DEC and albendazole drugs. At the same time, people have to go door-to-door for the rest of the day to feed DEC and Albendazole medicine. Now it has been extended for the next five days, which will be fed door to door DEC and Albendazole medicine. District Malaria Officer NP Singh, WHO Dr. Manoj Kumar, Dr. BD Ashish Kumar of BBD, Representative of NGO and Sanjay Kumar of Scout Guide and other representatives of PDI were present on the occasion.

Drop gate near Netarhat School irks villagers

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Villagers are irked by a drop gate fixed by the Netarhat Awasiya Vidyalaya management that passes through the campus of the school, said sources. They said the villagers find this drop gate a kind of curb on their day to day movement. Sources said villages namely Aadhey, Bartoli Butwa Toli Mohan Paath, Paseeri Paath etc have demanded withdrawal of the drop gate. The villagers’ contest this road is a survey road since long and in public use over the decades. Principal of the Netarhat Awasiya Vidyalaya S K Singh said the apprehension of the villagers that there is any curb on their use of the road is misplaced and misunderstood. The Principal said this drop gate is to check tourists’ vehicles that often negotiate this road and care not a fig for the speed. He said that the students are there as it is their

campus and hence their safety is the prime concern. Singh said this month alone one lost life when a rash biker hit our boundary wall of the Shanti Ashram hostel and it was a sheer luck that there was no student then present there when this accident by rash driving took place. Reminded that villagers are sore that with this drop gate tourists find it hard to reach the Sunset point to which Singh said this is untrue as there is already a well used road to reach the Sunset Point. Sources said the Principal had well informed about this fixing of drop gate to the SDO Mahuadanr copy of which has been sent to the principal secretary to the Chief Minister principal secretary to school education and literacy department and DC Latehar underlining the indispensability of the drop gate in the back drop of accidents and collision right on the campus of this school.

Day-long demonstration against petroleum price hike

PNS ■ DUMKA

A day-long sit-in demonstration was organized by the District Congress Committee, Dumka on Saturday at local Veer Kunwar Singh Chowk against the unexpected price hike of Diesel, Petrol and LPG. The programme was presided over by the District Congress President Shyamal Kishore Singh. While addressing the programme, Minister of Jharkhand, Badal, who was present in the programme, said that the Prime Minister of the country has taken the initiative to harass the common people of the country and is ready to go to any extent to benefit some of his favourites. “For the first time in the history of India, petrol has exceeded the value of more than Rs 100 per liter and Narendra Modi’s dumb deaf government at the center don’t want to listen to the people of India,” he said. He said that today the country is going through a terrible phase and the assets of the



country are being sold at a quarter to one price. The price of which should be two thousand crores is being sold for 200 crores. Badal said that this king is patting himself on the relief work done during the Corona period. The Congress gave one rupee a kilo of rice to the poor. “The scheme to provide relief to the poor, in 2013, UPA Chairman Sonia Gandhi and then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh fulfilled the promise made by Sonia Gandhi to realize the dream of former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi,” he said.

This government did not even spare the names of the iron man Sardar Patel. They also named the ancient stadium named after the iron man Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, he said. Addressing the programme, District Congress Dumka President Shyamal Kishore Singh said that the Congress workers will not sit silent until the Bahupriya Prime Minister is ousted from power on the strength of the people of this country. No matter what we have to give for this, the history of India was, and will remain.

Man killed as coal mine caves in

PNS ■ GIRIDIH

One person, aged about 35 year, was killed on Saturday when a portion of a coal mine caved in at Domchanch in Giridih district of Jharkhand, about 180 km from Ranchi. The man, who was killed, was allegedly indulging in illegal mining when the incident occurred in the afternoon on Saturday. Police said that several persons went to extract coal from the abandoned mines. People did not inform the police about the incident as the victim was allegedly involved in illegal activity. Unlawful mining is rampant in Giridih. More than a dozen people have died in related accidents in the past decade. Police sources said that a youth was killed in a landslide on Saturday at Simariadhora area within limits under Mufassil police station area of Giridih. The deceased has been identified as Bablu Mian a resident of Simaria Dhaudha.

Centre: Enforce Covid appropriate behaviour



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday advised States and UTs — Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana and Jammu & Kashmir — to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour by dealing firmly with violations and ensure effective surveillance in case of potential super spreading events so as not to let the situation go out of hand. These States and UTs have been reporting a high Covid-19 active caseload or an increasing trend in new cases in the last week, noted Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba while chairing a high-level review meeting with Chief Secretaries of States/UTs. “They were advised not to lower their guard, enforce Covid appropriate behaviour and deal firmly with violations. It was strongly underlined that they need to follow effective surveillance strategies in respect of potential super spreading events,” the Union Health Ministry said in a statement. The need for effective testing, comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation of positive cases, and quick quarantine of close contacts were also strongly emphasised. During the review meeting, States were advised to undertake vaccination on priority in districts reporting higher cases and monitor strains and clustering of cases for early hotspot identification

and control. They have also been asked to improve the overall testing in districts reporting a reduction in testing, and increase RT-PCR tests in districts having high antigen testing. The States and UT were directed to focus on surveillance and stringent containment in selected districts reporting reduced tests/high positivity and increased cases. They have also been advised to carry clinical management in districts reporting higher deaths and promote Covid-appropriate behaviour to ensure effective citizen communication to not let complacency set in, especially in light of the vaccination drive entering the next phase. Maharashtra reported the highest daily new cases at 8,333, followed by Kerala with 3,671 while Punjab reported 622 new cases in the last 24 hours. In the last two weeks, Maharashtra has shown the highest rise in active cases from 34,449 on February 14 to 68,810 currently, the Ministry said. They informed about the enforcement of Covid appropriate behaviour by levying heavy fines and challans, reviewing the surveillance and containment activities closely with the district collectors, and other steps being taken in line with the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Two co-accused of Munawar Faruqui walk out of jail

Indore: Two persons involved in organising a comedy show of stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui were released from the Central jail here on Saturday, after spending nearly two months behind bars. The Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court had granted interim bail to Sadaqat Khan (23) and Nalin Yadav (25) the day before. They had sought bail referring to the Supreme Court’s order of February 5 granting bail to Faruqui (32) in the same case. Khan and Yadav walked out of the jail after completing the legal procedure. Upon release in the evening, both said they have full

faith in the judiciary. Khan is a civil engineer while Yadav is a budding comedian himself. The high court had granted interim bail to two other accused, Prakhhar Vyas and Adwin Anthony, in the case on February 12. Faruqui and others involved in organizing the show in Indore were arrested on the night of January 1, following a complaint by Eklavya Singh Gaud, son of local BJP MLA Malini Laxman Singh Gaud. The MLA’s son had alleged that objectionable comments were made about Hindu deities and Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the show. PTI

Cong getting weak, rues G-23

From Page 1 Meanwhile, Azad, who reached Jammu on Friday said the Congress party will contest the coming Assembly elections in four States and a Union Territory with its full might. He said, the fight is not over yet. “I may have retired from Parliament but not for the politics”, Every time I received this treatment I have bounced back,” he thundered. Addressing the ‘Shanti Sammelan Azad said, “Be it Jammu or Kashmir or Ladakh, we respect all religions, people and castes. We equally respect everyone, that is our strength and we will continue with this”. “In the last 5-6 years, all these friends did not speak any less than me in Parliament over Jammu & Kashmir, its unemployment, stripping off of statehood, finishing off industries and education, implementation of GST”, the former Rajya Sabha MP added. Raj Babbar also addressed the event and emphasised that the G-23 leaders want the Congress party to be strong. People say “G23”, I say Gandhi 23. “With the belief, resolve and thinking of Mahatma Gandhi, this nation’s law and Constitution was formed. Congress is standing strongly to take these forward. ‘G23’ wants Congress to be strong,” he said.

Biden won’t...

From Page 1 It leaves no doubt that as the prince continues in his powerful role and likely ascends to the throne, Americans will forever associate him with the brutal killing of a journalist who promoted democracy and human rights. Yet even as the Biden administration released the findings, it appeared determined to preserve the Saudi relationship by avoiding direct punishment of the prince himself despite demands from some congressional Democrats and Khashoggi allies for significant and targeted sanctions. Questioned by reporters, Secretary of State Antony Blinken defended the approach. “What we’ve done by the actions we’ve taken is not to rupture the relationship but to recalibrate it to be more in line with our interests and our values,” he said. “I think that we have to understand as well that this is bigger than any one person.”

Centre caps Covid...

From Page 1 All the private health facilities which will serve as Government Covid Vaccination Centres has also been asked to strictly follow norms of due process, quality and safety including integration with the National Co-Win technology platform. “All private health facilities must also have adequate space, adequate cold chain arrangements, adequate number of vaccinators and support staff and adequate arrangements for addressing Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI),” said the official.

National action plan to boost toy industry: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

tainment and psychology.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

"The 19th Home Secretary Level Talks (HSLT) between India and Bangladesh were held virtually today in the backdrop of 'MujibBarsho' and 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation War and establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The Indian delega-

tion was led by Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Home Secretary.Sh. Mostafa Kamal Uddin, Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh led the Bangladesh delegation.

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

ED attaches ₹84.40 cr assets of Kanva group of companies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The accused individuals and the entities had collected ₹ 650 crore from the public and total attachments in the case is about ₹340 crore.

The attached assets are situated at Nelamangala, Koratagere, Chikkabalapura, Srirangapatana and Bengaluru in Karnataka and at Madakasira in Andhra Pradesh.

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

EC freezes Assam Govt order on transfer, posting of police officers

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to keep in abeyance Assam Government's decision of transferring and posting over a dozen police officers after the announcement of poll schedule.

The poll body has written to chief secretaries and chief electoral officers of five States—West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry—going for the polls, drawing the particular provisions of model code of conduct to the party in power and immediate enforcement of the MCC.

According to the EC, the Assam Government ordered the transfer of 12 IPS and 6 APS officers on the day the election schedule was announced. The Commission, therefore, decided to keep the transfer/posting of these police officers in abeyance till further orders. In West Bengal, the poll body replaced the top cop in charge of law and order for the State. Jag Mohan, who was previously DG (Fire Services), has been named as the new ADG and IGP (Law and Order), replacing Jawed Shamim "with immediate effect and in the interest of public service". Shamim will now take over the DG (Fire Services) position.

In a letter, the EC said "...the particular provisions of Model Code of Conduct relating to the 'party in power' which inter alia says that the party in power whether at the Centre or in the States concerned, shall ensure that no cause is given for any complaint that it has used its official position for the purposes of its election campaign".

"The Ministers shall not combine their official visit with



electioneering work and also shall not make use of official machinery or personnel during the electioneering work." There shall be a total ban on use of official vehicle by any political party, candidate or any other person connected with election (except officials performing any election related official duty) for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel during elections. The government transport including official air-crafts, vehicles, machinery and personnel shall not be used for furtherance of the interest of the party in power," the EC said in its communications.

The EC also stated that public places such as maidans etc., for holding election meetings, and use of helpads for air-flights in connection with elections shall not be monopolised by itself. Other parties and candidates shall be allowed the use of such places and facilities on the same terms and conditions on which they are used by the party in power," it said.

The EC further points out that rest houses, dak bungalows or other government accommodation where elections have been announced or are taking place can be given to the political functionaries who are provided security by the State in Z scale or above or equivalent by various State Governments or

the Central Government under provisions of their laws, on equitable basis.

"This shall be subject to condition that such accommodation is not already allotted or occupied by election related officials or Observers. Such political functionaries shall not carry out any political activity while staying in the Government Guest Houses/Rest Houses or other Government accommodation etc," it said.

The poll body further said that no advertisements shall be issued in electronic and print media highlighting the achievements of the government at the cost of public exchequer. "If any advertisement has already been released for telecast/broadcast or publication in the print media, it must be ensured that the telecast/broadcast of such ads on electronic media is stopped forthwith and that no such ad is published in any newspapers, magazines, etc., i.e. in print media, from today itself and it should be immediately withdrawn," it said.

The MCC is a set of rules put in force by the Election Commission of India to guarantee free and fair elections. It is a set of norms that have evolved with political parties consenting to abide by the principles embodied in the said code.

'Hunar Haat boon for Vocal for Local plan'

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The number of visitors is likely to go above 16 lakh in the next two days, he said. This "Hunar Haat" will be concluding on March first, 2021. The 10-day "Hunar Haat" was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

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



craftsmen.

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

Naqvi said that indigenous handmade products such as Applique work, dry flowers, jute-cane, brass products, wooden and clay toys, Ajrakh Block Print, Blue Art Pottery, Pashmina Shawl, Khadi products, Banarsi Silk, Wooden Furniture, Chikankari Embroidery, Chanderi Silk, Lac bangles, Rajasthani jewellery, Phulkari, Oil Painting, Leather products, Khurja pottery, Sandalwood artefacts from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Jute products from West Bengal, rare antiques made of glass, mats and carpets etc were available for sale and display at the "Hunar Haat".

Naqvi said that the visitors also enjoyed traditional deli-

cacies from every region of the country at "Bawarchikhana" section.

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

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

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

The "Hunar Haat" is available on virtual and online platform <http://hunarhaat.org> and on GeM Portal also where the people of the country and abroad can buy products of indigenous artisans and craftsmen digital/online.

Next "Hunar Haat" will be organised in Bhopal (12 to 21 March 2021); Goa (25 March to 04 April); Kota (9 April to 18 April); Surat (23 April to 2 May).

NIA files chargesheet against four in human trafficking case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Saturday filed a chargesheet against four persons in a case relating to human trafficking in the guise of running placement agencies before the NIA Special Court, Ranchi under various Sections of the IPC, Provisions of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015.

Those charged are Panna Lal Mahto, Sunita Devi (absconding), Gopal Oraon and Shiv Shankar Ganjhu.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 07/2019 at AHTU police station in Khunti, Jharkhand on July 19, 2019 in which the accused Panna Lal Mahto, aged about 37 years, of village Ganaloya under Murhu police station, Khunti was arrested for running a Human Trafficking network in Jharkhand and New Delhi.

The NIA had taken over the investigation on June 13 last year after re-registering the case as RC-09/2020/NIA/DLI.

"During investigation, it was revealed that Panna Lal Mahto, the kingpin of human trafficking racket, along with his wife, Sunita Devi, was operating a Human Trafficking network in the guise of six Placement Agencies in Delhi. They used to traffic poor and innocent minor boy and girls from Jharkhand on the pretext of providing them jobs in Delhi and neighbouring States. However, the victims were exploited and were never paid the promised remunerations," the NIA said in a statement.

During the investigation, two other accused Gopal Oraon and Shiv Shankar Ganjhu, both residents of Khunti district were arrested. Both were close associates of the kingpin Panna Lal Mahto, and were actively involved in trafficking vulnerable persons from Jharkhand, it said.

Investigation has also revealed that both were owners of three Placement Agencies in Delhi, involved in human trafficking racket. Another accused Sunita Devi, wife of arrested accused Pana Lal Mahto, is absconding.

Statins reduce Covid severity: Research

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

"Our study is one of the larger studies confirming this hypothesis and the data lay the groundwork for future randomized clinical trials that are needed to confirm the benefit of statins in Covid-19," said Aakriti Gupta, cardiologist at NewYorkPresbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center and one of the co-lead authors of the study published in the Nature

Communications.

"If their beneficial effect bears out in randomized clinical trials, statins could potentially prove to be a low-cost and effective therapeutic strategy for COVID-19," adds co-lead author Mahesh V Madhavan, cardiologist at New York - Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

Gupta, Madhavan, and the study's leadership group are cardiologists who cared for hospitalized Covid-19 patients in the spring and summer of 2020 when the first wave of the pandemic swept through New York City. "We observed that patients who got very sick and required hospitalization had high rates of hyperinflammation and clotting," says Elaine

Wan, the Esther Aboodi Assistant Professor of Medicine in Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology and a cardiac electrophysiologist at NewYork Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, one of the study's senior authors.

"As cardiologists, statins naturally came to mind," Gupta says. "In addition to their well-known cholesterol-lowering effect, statins are known for their anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant and immunomodulatory properties."

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

The Pioneer ready to undergo major facelift

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"I am here as a representative of the court and my main objective is to keep *The Pioneer* group as a going concern. I've no score to settle or no axe to grind. I want the cooperation of everyone to make *The Pioneer* a vibrant brand again, both in Hindi and English," Verma said during the course of an exchange of idea session. He added that he expected the company operation to return to normal in a short while.

The IRP assured the employees that their priority would be look into a range of



serious issues flagged by them regarding their remuneration and staff shortage. "I will do everything possible to create a proper atmosphere so that everyone can contribute to the revival of the company," he said.

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

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

Govt should shed its 'arrogance', reduce fuel taxes: Congress

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Addressing a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said the government should immediately roll back the additional taxes of ₹23.78 and ₹28.37 per litre on petrol and diesel respectively, which will help bring down fuel prices.

He quoted Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's words as Gujarat Chief Minister to urge the government to reduce the high tax components on petroleum products. Singhvi said the common man is already hurt due to rising inflation and joblessness amid a decline in the economy post-pandemic.

The PM may ignore the Congress' demand, but he should at least listen to his own words as Gujarat CM during the UPA regime at the Centre, or may heed RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das's advice that the rising fuel prices will have a cascading effect, the Congress leader said.

One Dist One Focus Product list finalised

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said that the list of One District One Focus Product (ODOFP), which will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the various schemes, has been finalised. The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country. Fruits have been identified for 226 districts, the highest in the list while vegetables for 107 districts and spices for 105 districts are at the second and the third position in the list. The chief food crop paddy has been identified for 40 districts while wheat for 5 districts.

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in consultation with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has finalised the products for One District One Focus Product, said an official statement. The list of products have been finalised after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). These products will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the Government of India schemes, to increase the value of the products and with the ultimate aim of increasing the income of the farmers. These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme (PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme) of the Ministry of

Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoter and micro-enterprises. Many products also include convergence of resources and approach from the other departments. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will support ODOFP from its ongoing centrally sponsored schemes such as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). The implementation of ODOFP by State Governments will benefit farmers and provide support for realizing the expectations of value addition and subsequently enhancing agricultural exports.

Hyundai i20 wins Indian Car Of The Year 2021

Indian Motorcycle Of The Year goes to the Royal Enfield Meteor

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Car Of The Year (ICOTY) 2021 and the Indian Motorcycle Of The Year (IMOTY) 2021 awards were announced at a glittering ceremony here in Delhi.

The winner of the ICOTY was the Hyundai i20 and the IMOTY award went to the Royal Enfield Meteor. The ICOTY award, which is celebrating its 16th year this year is well-established as India's top car award and similarly IMOTY is India's leading two-wheeler award.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Yogendra Pratap, Editor of Auto Today and the Chairman of the ICOTY jury said that ICOTY will always remain as India's top car award and not just because of

its name, "the fact that we partner with multiple publications which look at various aspects of



motoring, some are targeted at enthusiasts and other are targeted at practicality.

This in addition to the independent judges who come from various other publications and almost all of us have been evaluating cars for at least a decade makes this award the most influential in India.

Our judges have over 350 years of combined experience evaluating cars and because we are not part of a 'single' publication, I believe ICOTY

carries much more weight with Indian automotive manufacturers as well."

Speaking to The Pioneer, Aspi Bhatena, Editor of Bike Magazine and Chairman of the IMOTY jury said that the award was proof of how Indian manufacturers have progressed. "In all the years we have given this award, we have not given it to a 'lemon', all our winners have enjoyed immense commercial success and some like the 2019 winner, the Royal Enfield Interceptor have had immense global success."

At a function held at the Andaz attended by the senior management of several automotive companies, both awards firmly established themselves as India's leading and most credible awards for the industry.

'Improved economic environment to boost FY21 credit growth'

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Improved economic environment in 2HFY21 and the Centre's focus on higher spending especially on infrastructure will give a boost to FY21 credit growth, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.

The agency's February 2021 edition of its credit market tracker showed an upgrade to its FY21 credit growth estimates to 6.9 per cent from 1.8 per cent.

Accordingly, the agency said that amid the pandemic, the credit offtake in the banking system has remained muted, which led to lesser issuances of certificates of deposits (CDs).

"The CD issuances for January 2021 increased for public sector banks, whereas that for private banks have remained muted.

Concurrently, the CD yield across maturities was confined to a narrow range, amid subdued issuances. Similarly, the issuances of commercial paper (CP) by corporates have fallen, due to a lesser requirement amid fewer rollovers.

"The CP yields however have largely seen an upward revision, owing to the Reserve Bank of India's announcement of the restoration of liquidity management operations."

Besides, demand from fund houses for corporate bonds and short-term funds has increased by "Rs 52 billion and Rs 10 billion, respectively".

On the other hand, the agency said that CP issuances by non-banking financial companies and housing finance companies have remained encouraging, both in terms of total amount and volumes.

PM asks toy manufacturers to use less plastic, more eco-friendly material

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday exhorted toy manufacturers to use less plastic and more eco-friendly and recyclable material in a bid to increase the share of the domestic industry in the global market.

Inaugurating the first India Toy Fair, the Prime Minister said, "We have to become Aatmanirbhar in the toy sector and also cater to the global market."

Observing that India's share in the USD 100 billion global toy market is very small, and 85 per cent of the toys in the country are sourced from abroad, Modi said there is a need to change this situation.

"In the field of toys, India has tradition and technology, India has concepts and competence. We can take the world back towards eco-friendly toys. Through our software engineers, computer games can

bring the stories of India to the world," he said.

While referring to the traditional toy industry, the Prime Minister underlined the need for promoting Handmade in India.

If there is a demand for Made in India today, then the demand for Handmade in India is also increasing equally, he said, adding "today people do not only buy toys as a product, but also want to connect with the experience associated with that toy. So, we have to promote Handmade in India as well".

The Prime Minister appealed to the manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology and psychology, using less plastic and more of such things that can be recycled.

Referring to the initiatives of the government, Modi said the country has now graded the toy industry in 24 major sectors.

Govt sets 50 lakh users threshold to define 'significant social media intermediary' under IT rules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has fixed fifty lakh registered users as the threshold for defining 'significant social media intermediary', which will have to adhere to additional obligations and compliance under the new IT rules that seek to crack down on misuse of social media platforms.

The new rules, announced earlier this week, require 'significant social media intermediaries' to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India.

They will have to publish a monthly compliance report and details of the contents removed proactively.

At present, the country has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook subscribers, 21 crore Instagram clients, while 1.75 crore account holders are on microblogging platform Twitter"...The Central

Government hereby specifies fifty lakh registered users in India as the threshold for a social media intermediary to be considered a significant social media intermediary," the notification said.

Earlier on Thursday, the government announced the tightening of the rules governing social media and streaming companies, requiring them to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressal officers and assist investigations.

The move aims to make social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram - which have seen a phenomenal surge in usage over the past few years in India - more accountable and responsible for the content hosted on their platform. Social media companies will have to remove contentious content flagged by the government or court orders within 36 hours and take down posts depicting nudity or morphed photos within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, as per the latest intermediary rules.

Gold Bond Scheme 20-21 to be issued at ₹4,662/gm

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The new series of Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 will be opened for the period March 1-5, 2021.

The issue price of the Bond during the subscription period shall be Rs 4,662 per gram.

The Settlement date under the Series XII scheme had been fixed for March 9.

The Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow discount of Rs 50 per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply online and the payment is made through digital mode.

KVIC's e-market portal achieves ₹1.12 crore turnover in 8 months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The e-market portal unveiled by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has achieved a gross turnover of over Rs 1.12 crore in just eight months of its launch, the MSME Ministry said on Saturday.

"Launched on 7 July 2020, Khadi e-portal has delivered orders to over 10,000 customers out of the 65,000 people who visited the e-portal till date. KVIC has also delivered more than 1 lakh articles/commodities to these customers," an official statement said.

During this period, the average online purchase has been recorded at Rs 11,000 per customer. MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari has lauded

Khadi's successful e-commerce venture saying this provided a wide marketing platform for various khadi and village industry products to a larger population. He said e-marketing of Khadi is proving to be a game-changer. Gadkari also said the effort should be to reach a turnover of Rs 200 crore per year. KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said all expenses incurred on operating Khadi e-portal are borne by KVIC.

"While in case of other e-commerce sites, product cataloguing, packaging and dispatch are the responsibility of the respective sellers;

KVIC has a policy that the Khadi institutions and PMEGP units are exempted from any such financial and logistical burden," Saxena said.

Fuel prices resurge after 3-day break

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Country's petrol and diesel prices continued its northward march on Saturday, after a three-day break, taking its retail rates to unprecedented levels and burning holes in the consumers pockets.

Oil marketing companies raised the pump price of petrol and diesel by 24 paise and 15 paise per litre on Saturday.

With this, petrol is now priced at Rs 91.17 a litre and diesel Rs 81.47 a litre in the capital.

Across the country as well the petrol and diesel prices increased between 20-30 paise per litre depending on the level of local duty at the state level.

RAJASTHAN STATE FOOD & CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LTD.
Head Office : 5th floor, Kisan Bhawan, Lal Koti, Tonk Road, Jaipur-302015, Phone: 0141-2744692, 0141-2744649, Fax No. 0141-2741924, E-Mail: rsfcso@gmail.com, CIN : U63023RJ2010SGC033489
No. :- F10(101)RSFCSC/ICDS/tender/2020-21/18947 Dated :- 26/02/2021
e-Bid Notice
e-Bids are invited for transportation work of Food Grain, wheat, Rice & Dal under ICDS in (14) Districts Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Bharatpur, Bikaner, bundi, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Sirohi, Udaipur, Barmer, Nagaur, Sawaimadhopur, Bhilwara & Chittorgarh for one year from the date of agreement. If the tenders of those districts where they are in process, are finally cancelled by the date of uploading this tender, those districts should also upload the new tender. The Bid shall be submitted only through online tendering system at concerned districts on the website www.eproc.raajasthan.gov.in. As detailed below:
UBN No. :- FCS2021SLOB00053

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

For details visit our Website <https://sppp.raajasthan.gov.in/http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in>
Raj.Samwad/C/20/10320 General Manager (Adm.)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Tasleem w/o Late Riyajuddin R/o H. No. 3 B, Gali No. 4B, Aram Park, Shastri Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case F.I.R. No. **189/14 U/s 420 IPC PS. Geeta Colony, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Tasleem** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Tasleem** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person **Tasleem** of F.I.R. No. **189/14 U/s 420 IPC PS. Geeta Colony, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 06.04.2021
By Order
Sh. Vinod Joshi
DP/82/Crime/2021 LD. MM, East - 02
-Court Matter Karkardooma Court, New Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one Girl **Name: Ayushi D/o Yogender R/o H. No. 753, Village bakhthiyarpur, Delhi, Age: 17 Years, Height: 5'2", Built: Thin, Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Red Colour Jarsi & Blue Colour Payjama** has been missing since 29.01.2021 from the area of P.S. Alipur, Delhi.
In this regard a FIR No. 51/21, dated 30.01.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this Girl but no clue has come to light so far.
Any person having any information or clue about this Girl kindly inform to the following.
SHO PS. Alipur, Delhi Ph. 011-2720 2265 DP/789/JN/2021
E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph: 011-24368639 Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) namely: **Rishi S/o Ranbir Singh R/o C-52, Amar Colony, Nangloi, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of PS Nangloi, since 16.12.2020. In this regard FIR No. 73/21 U/S 363 IPC dated 10.02.2021 has been registered at **PS. Nangloi, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far.
His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, Age: 17 years 6 months, Height: 5'8" ft., Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Wearing: Blue Jacket-Blue Payjama and White shoes in feet.
Any person is having information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following:-
SHO P.S. Nangloi, Delhi Ph. No.: 011-25947225 Mob. No. 7065036127 DP/684/OD/2021
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Ph. No.: 011-24368638/24368641 Fax No.: 011-24368639

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person (depicted in the photo) name: **unknown**, residence and family is **unknown about 40 years of age** was found dead at park Nigam Bodh Ghat, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. **4-A U/s 174 CrPC** dated 24.02.2021 has been lodged in Police Station Kashmir Gate, Delhi.
His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, Age: 40 years, Height : 5'5" ft., Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Face: Long, Wearing: White Shirt & Black Pant
Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or Telephone Numbers.
SHO P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi Ph. No.-011-23967889 Mob. No- 8750870123
DP/972/N/2021

Govt finalises products under scheme to increase farmer income, exports

New Delhi: The Government on Saturday said it has finalised a list of products from agriculture and allied sectors that will be promoted in a cluster approach in 728 districts across the country as part of its effort to boost farm exports and enhance farmers income.

The agriculture ministry, in consultation with food processing industries ministry, has finalised the products for 'One District One Focus

Product' (ODOFP), an official statement said.

Inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have also been taken to prepare the list.

"The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country," the statement said.

A Treat for All Ages at the 34th Garden Tourism Festival 2021

New Delhi: People from all age groups have been enjoying the 34th edition of the Garden Tourism Festival.

The event was graced by His Excellency, Walter J. Lindner-German Ambassador to India. Over the first week of the event, visitors were seen experiencing the floral arrangements, and unique displays of hanging baskets, dahlias, cut flowers, recycled floral display and tray gardens. Many were keen on gaining experience to create their own home gardens and were seen

interacting with buyers at the Garden Bazaar while purchasing products.

With the objective to create awareness about the environment and showcase the rich floriculture of Delhi, the three-week extravaganza is themed '#Colours of Nature this year.

Unlike a three-day format that was being followed previously, Delhi Tourism has extended the festival to three weeks, to give a safe, socially distanced and memorable experience to its visitors.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Corporate Identity No. UA40109UP2001SGC029887/2358, V.C.V. Gabor Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001, Telephone:- 0135-2763672-76, Fax: 0135-2760289, Website : www.uktenders.gov.in
E-TENDER NOTICE (NIT)
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd., Dehradun invites e-tender for purchase of following items as detailed below :-

Sl. No.	Tender Specification No.	Name of Item	Quantity (in Nos.)	Estimated Cost (₹)	Average Yearly Turn Over of Preceding Three Financial Years (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)	Cost of Tender Document Including GST (₹)	Date & Time of Prebid conference in online mode	Last Date & Time of online request for Tender and submission of Tender in online & offline mode	Date of opening of Part-I of Tender in online & offline mode
1.	CCP-II/ 33/2020-21	9 KV 10 KA Lightning Arrester	8408	2.920 CRORE	4.380 CRORE	5.840 LAKH	17 700.00	08.03.2021 at 11:30 Hrs.	22.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.	23.03.2021 at 15:30 Hrs.
2.	CCP-II/ 34/2020-21	30 KV 10 KA Lightning Arrester	1000	1.130 CRORE	2.260 CRORE	2.260 LAKH	11 800.00	22.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.	23.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.	at 15:45 Hrs.

For further details, please visit our website www.uktenders.gov.in
No. : 101/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated: 27.02.2021
Superintending Engineer Corporate (Contract & Procurement-II)
SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION Use L.E.D. Bulb to Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912)
Pay Electricity Bill Online 24x7 from www.upcl.org (For information on Electricity theft, Informer may report to Toll Free No. 1800 180 4185 / Fax No. 0135-2760911)

WESTERN RAILWAY
PROVISION OF MULTI SECTION DIGITAL AXLE COUNTER
Tender No.: SG 217_2_285_286_288_WA dated 25/02/2021. Executive: Sr. DSTE(S) MMCT. Name of Work: Provision of Multi Section Digital Axle Counter by Replacing Old AC Track Circuit and ABB make AFTCS in Bandra - Kandivli section of Mumbai Suburban Division of Western Railway. Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 8.93,19,553.19. EMD: Bid Security Declaration Required. Cost of Tender Form: ₹ 0/-. Completion Period: 12 Months. Validity of Offers: 45 Days from the Date of Opening. Type of E-Tender: Open E-Tender. Time & Date for Closure for Submission of E-Tender Documents: At 15.00 hrs. on 26/03/2021. Time & Date for Opening of E-Tender: After 15.30 hrs. on 26/03/2021. Particular Office Where E-Tender Open: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer(S), 2nd Floor, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. The tender can be viewed at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>
0685
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Myanmar police deploy early to crank up pressure on protests

AP ■ YANGON

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

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

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

There were arrests Saturday in Myanmar's two



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

AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Myanmar's UN envoy dramatically opposes coup in his country

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

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

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

GLOBE TROTTER

42 ABDUCTED FROM NIGERIAN SCHOOL FREED

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

COVID CASES CONTINUE TO RISE IN PAKISTAN

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

IRAN EXPECTS 2,50,000 JABS FROM CHINA

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

GERMANY'S LEFT PICKS 2 WOMEN TO LEAD PARTY

Berlin: Germany's Left has picked two women to lead the anti-capitalist party into this fall's national election. A party convention on Saturday elected Janine Wissler and Susanne Hennig-Wellsow as co-leaders.

UKRAINE SEES SECOND FATAL OXYGEN BLAST

Kyiv: An explosion in a Ukrainian hospital where Covid-19 patients are being treated has killed one person and injured another, authorities said on Saturday. The emergencies service said that the explosion occurred in an oxygen pipe.

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

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

President Joe Biden protected US personnel, facilities: White House

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

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

The strikes came in the

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

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

Attackers strike gas pipeline in eastern Syria, causing fire

Damascus: Attackers struck a gas pipeline in eastern Syria on Saturday, leaving it ablaze but causing no casualties, state news agency SANA reported, the latest incidence of sabotage against Syria's oil and gas infrastructure.

As in the past, no one claimed responsibility for the attack. Syria's nearly 10-year conflict, which has killed about half a million people, has also badly affected oil and gas fields,

many of which are outside government control.

SANA said the attack occurred in the area known as Abu Khashab in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour that borders Iraq.

Sleeper cells of the Islamic State group are known to be active in the area and have targeted government forces and US-backed Kurdish fighters in eastern Syria. **AP**

Pakistan experts: Religiosity fostering rise in militancy

Islamabad: Terrorists attacks are on the rise in Pakistan amid a growing religiosity that has brought greater intolerance, prompting one expert to voice concern the country could be overwhelmed by religious extremism.

Pakistani authorities are embracing strengthening religious belief among the population to bring the country closer together. But it's doing just the opposite, creating intolerance and opening up space for a creeping resurgence in militancy, said Mohammad Amir Rana, executive director of the independent Pakistan

Institute for Peace Studies. "Unfortunately, instead of helping to inculcate better ethics and integrity, this phenomenon is encouraging a tunnel vision" that encourages violence, intolerance and hate, he wrote recently in a local newspaper.

"Religiosity has begun to define the Pakistani citizenry," Militant violence in Pakistan has spiked: In the past week alone, four vocational school instructors who advocated for women's rights were travelling together when they were gunned down in a Pakistan border region. **AP**

Officials: 400 escape, 25 dead after Haiti prison breakout

AP ■ PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

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

Some believe on Thursday's jailbreak at the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison in northeast Port-au-Prince was to free gang leader Arnel Joseph, who had been Haiti's most wanted

fugitive until his 2019 arrest on charges including rape, kidnapping and murder.

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

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

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

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



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CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com.

RO NO. 173

Date: 27.02.2021

TENDER NOTICE

Office of Executive Engineer (M&G), Dhalpur Power House invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No.: 25/EE/M&G/DLR/2020-21

Name of the Work: Repairing and overhauling of damaged thrust bearing oil coolers.

Estimated Cost: (Rs) 13,00,000/- Only (GST Extra)

Date of availability of bid document: 27-02-2021 from 17:00 Hrs

Last Date for submission of tender: 20-03-2021 up to 16:00 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvn.com.

Executive Engineer (M&G)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was admitted in LNJP Hospital, Delhi. During treatment doctors declared him dead on 17.02.2021 in the area of PS Kotwali, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 77A u/s 174 CrPc, Dated 17.02.2021** has been lodged at **P.S. Kotwali, Delhi**. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 35 years, **Height:** 5'5"

Feet, Complexion: Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Green Colour T-Shirt, Black Colour Lower and Bare Footed.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.



S.H.O

P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.

Ph. No. 011-23977100, 23953442

DP/962/N/2021

WFP: Security protocols, leaks a focus of Congo probe

AP ■ ROME

A UN investigation into the attack on a humanitarian convoy in Congo that killed the Italian ambassador, his bodyguard and driver will look into whether the long-planned mission's security protocols were followed and whether information might have leaked to the unknown gunmen involved in the ambush.

The deputy communications director of the World Food Program, Greg Barrow, told an online briefing Friday that the February 22 mission to bring Ambassador Luca Attanasio to a WFP school feeding program in eastern Congo had been in the works since 2020.

Advance planning and security meetings as well as security briefings took place up to the moment the seven-member team took off from Goma, in Congo's east, in a two-car convoy bound for the program in Rutshuru, he said.

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

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

"They agreed on the importance of making progress in peace

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

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

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

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

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

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL
NEW DELHI BENCH, COURT-3
COMPANY PETITION NO.CAA. 8/ND/2021
IN
COMPANY APPLICATION NO. CA(CAA)-4/(ND)/2020
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013
AND
PETITION UNDER SECTION 230 TO 232 AND OTHER APPLICABLE
PROVISIONS OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013 READ WITH THE COMPANIES
(COMPROMISE, ARRANGEMENT & AMALGAMATION) RULES, 2016.
AND
IN THE MATTER OF:
SCHEME OF MERGER
OF
M/S FERN PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070
AND
M/S LEMCOM MERCHANTS PRIVATE LIMITED
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070
AND
M/S TECHNO BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070
WITH
M/S UNIPACK MULTIPRODUCT PRIVATE LIMITED
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070
.....Transferee Company

Notice of Petition for Hearing
A petition under Section 230-232 of the Companies Act, 2013, for approval of Scheme of Amalgamation of M/s FERN PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company 1), M/S LEMCOM MERCHANTS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company 2), M/S TECHNO BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company 3), with M/S UNIPACK MULTIPRODUCT PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferee Company) was presented jointly by the companies on the 20th day of December, 2020 and the said petition is fixed for hearing before Principal Bench of National Company Law Tribunal on 24th day of March, 2021. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition/application/reference should send to the petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the petitioner's advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition/application/reference. Where he seeks to oppose the petition/application/ reference, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition/application/reference will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Sd/-
Iswar Ch Mohapatra
Advocate for Petitioner
8/43, LGF, South Patel Nagar,
New Delhi-110008

Dated 25/02/2021
Place: New Delhi

‘Who defines a good cricket surface?’ questions Ashwin

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

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“There is a video doing the rounds where Virat Kohli is talking in South Africa and he says I am not here to talk about the pitch. That is how we have been taught to play cricket, that’s why I say let them sell thoughts, buying is our choice,” he added, similar to the tweets he had put out on Friday.

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

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

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

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

Ashwin has stopped thinking about landmarks long back

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I am looking to get better as an individual and cricketer. That’s probably one of the reasons why I am really, really happy and I am enjoying my game and probably the best I have done in the last 15 years.

I would like to continue this phase and not think about too much else,” the bowler added.

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

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



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

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

He said it was all about adapting.

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

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

Motera likely to escape ICC ‘Red Eye’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Bumrah released from Test squad



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

for the final Test at Motera.

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

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

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

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

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

Shikha axed for SA series



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is also young seamer Simran Dil Bahadur, who is part of the T20 Internationals team. Left-arm spinner Yastika Bhatia has made way for Ekta Bisht in the 50-over squad while Veda Krishnamurthy, after a prolonged lean phase, has been dropped from both squads.

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

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

Back to back hundreds for Shreyas

PTI ■ JAIPUR

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

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

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

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

He found able partners in Sarfaraz Khan (30) and



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

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

Chasing 318, Manender Singh (40) and Mahipal Lomror (76) tried to take the game deep with their 101-run third-wicket stand, but medium pacer Akash Pankar broke the partnership after trapping Singh in front of the wicket. Shardul castled Lomror to leave Rajasthan at 160/4.

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

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

PRERAK SLAMS 174

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

but it proved too little in the end.

In other games, Services beat Haryana by 112 runs and Bengal win by 82 runs against Jammu & Kashmir.

UK, ASSAM WIN

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

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

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

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

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

Gayle returns to Windies T20I side

PTI ■ ST JOHN’S

Veteran batsman Chris Gayle has returned to the West

Indies squad for the first time in nearly two years for the three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka, beginning on March 3.

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

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

year hiatus.

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

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

the 50-over World Cup that year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Covid case changes NZ-Aus T20I schedule

AFF ■ AUCKLAND

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

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

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

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



Wednesday, will go ahead but without spectators.

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

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

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

The Magic of Mandu

Mandu's geographical location is what made it such an important city. It prospered greatly under the Sultans of Malwa for nearly 200 years

2

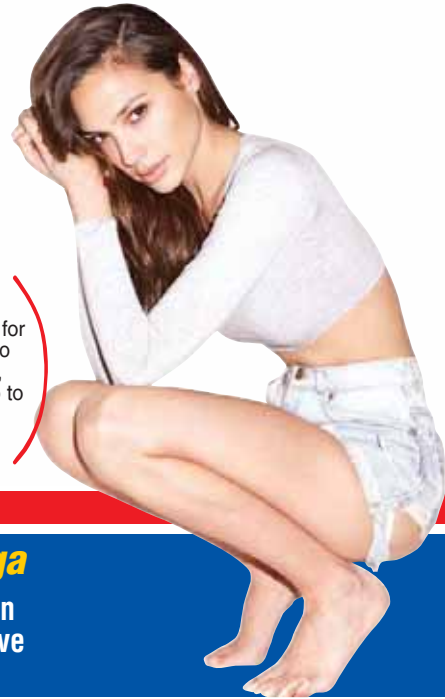


4

Attaining the state of Yoga

In the state of *Yoga*, mind enters an infinite domain having no distinctive existences

It is so important for girls and boys to have a female, strong superhero to look up to
— Gal Gadot



As the pandemic brought the world economies to a halt/slowdown, different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. DISHA CHHABRA shares top 5 lessons from senior leaders across industries



LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM TURBULENT TIMES

In the last one year, our lifestyles and habits have changed forever. The way we live, eat, play, work is all altered. The resulting lockdowns of countries has brought national economies to a standstill. Salary and job cuts are happening throughout the world. Lives versus livelihood is a constant debate. No one living in these times has experienced a crisis that can be remotely equated to this one. And things are still unfolding.

When we are not going out to eat out but cooking more at home; when we prefer services at home rather than going out; when we need high speed internet to work from home, when masks are the new fashion statement; all these changes in our behaviour shape the way different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. Covid-19 has impacted every sphere of the corporate world.

The pandemic has had a varied impact on different industries. Across the globe, there have been industries where revenue has gone negative; for some it has even gone down to zero. Industries like travel which relied on people physically moving around even needed to refund future bookings. Entertainment like physical events, movie ticketing, are in the same category. It is not sure when revenue is going to return. Some of these industries fall in the bucket of 'putting off for the future'. For example, people are putting off the visit to the hairdresser and are likely to go back when the crisis eases. These industries are shifting their present revenues into the future. The immediate focus is on cash conservation.

During this crisis, we have all indulged in some kind of hoarding. Be it toilet paper in the western countries or Maggi noodles in India; industries selling products which are essentials and non-perishable are seeing their future revenues brought forward as people buy for the next quarter and at some point in future, the present day spends will impact the future spends.

On the other end, being stuck and home and having a lot of time at hand; people are finding time to take up new hobbies; cooking, gardening and other isolation friendly activities. Baking banana breads became a huge trend. Companies that help provide these virtual classes or sell the raw materials one needs for these activities are attracting a large share

of discretionary spends of customers. This is new revenue for the companies but not necessarily brought forward from the future. However, the growth that these industries are seeing may not sustain once people begin to step out for leisure and entertainment.

And then there are big winners in this crisis. Industries like video conferencing, online grocery delivery, digital payments have seen a huge spike in adoption and have reached levels they would have otherwise expected to reach in order of months to years. These are likely fundamental customer behaviour changes and expected to stay even when the crisis eases. These industries are not only making a lot of revenue during the crisis. And when the crisis is over, the new normal of these industries will be at a higher level. These are industries that are mostly constrained on their supply side to handle the exponential growth in demand.

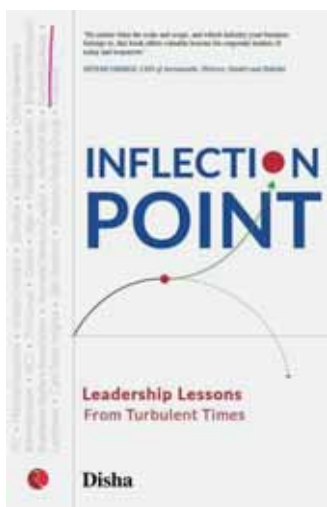
Few years down the line, leadership and business lessons from this crisis will be taught as crisis management case studies in B-schools. Which of these lessons will be permanent armours for future leaders for dealing with any crisis? And do the learnings differ depending on which side of the revenue curve a company finds itself. Does leadership need to be reactive? Here are the top 5 lessons coming directly from senior leaders across different industries and organisations.

LESSON 1: NIMBLENESS

Ever since the world reported its first case, every day has been a roller coaster ride. Situations on the ground have evolved rapidly. Every day has been different from the previous one.

A week before, leaders were checking the sales numbers and reviewing their 2020 plans. A week later, supply chains were disrupted and businesses asked to temporarily shut until further notice. A day before, all our employees were safe. A day later, an entire department got infected. The time horizon of major events was severely shortened.

In a crisis situation, dealing with uncertainty needs less planning, more execution. This is not the time to draw a product roadmap, a 5-year vision or long-term strategies. Leaders are embracing speed, mitigating the short to mid-term consequences to stabilize the situation and stay afloat. COVID-19



THE PANDEMIC HAS HAD A VARIED IMPACT ON DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES. ACROSS THE GLOBE, THERE HAVE BEEN INDUSTRIES WHERE REVENUE HAS GONE NEGATIVE; FOR SOME IT HAS EVEN GONE DOWN TO ZERO. INDUSTRIES LIKE TRAVEL WHICH RELIED ON PEOPLE PHYSICALLY MOVING AROUND EVEN NEEDED TO REFUND FUTURE BOOKINGS. ENTERTAINMENT LIKE PHYSICAL EVENTS, MOVIE TICKETING, ARE IN THE SAME CATEGORY. IT IS NOT SURE WHEN REVENUE IS GOING TO RETURN



has delivered a crash course in agility for organisations of all stripes.

LESSON 2 - INNOVATION

It is said that innovation and creativity love crises and constraints. Crisis brings out constraints and makes innovation almost a forcing function. Leaders often leverage consultants to get a fresh, outside perspective on their organisations to find opportunities to innovate. A crisis can have much the same effect, putting the spotlight on vulnerabilities, problem areas; great and small, that we've been ignoring or are just plain unaware of. When a crisis hits, we are forced to confront the truth about how our systems work (or don't). The places where things could be done better or more efficiently become glaringly obvious. All of a sudden, opportunities for innovation are staring us in the face.

The current crisis is bringing a whole new set of innovations. Services like medicine, education, industrial plant set ups are all going digital. Google and Apple are collaborating on contact tracing. Dunzo is working with brands to get the products delivered at one's doorstep. ITC's personal care team deserves recognition for introducing a range of new health and hygiene products for households. Its hospitality team curated a gourmet menu, which recreates the ITC dining experience for our customers in the comfort of their homes. While these are just a couple of examples, leaders across industries continue to strive to change and innovate to ensure that they deliver nothing short of excellence in their products and services to our customers, despite the pandemic.

LESSON 3: EMPLOYEE WELL BEING

While it may sound obvious, crises are crises because people suffer. In a situation where emotions and anxieties run high, leaders connect with employees and other stakeholders and acknowledge the personal and professional challenges they are going through. Impactful leaders convey their vision in a manner that the employees feel aligned, motivated and rallied against.

Effective crisis management requires integrity, accountability, and moral courage. Thoughtful, frequent, and empathetic communication signals that the leaders share with their organization show they care and are together in the journey that employees go

through. These messages are delivered with "bounded optimism" — hope combined with realism.

LESSON 4: RISING ABOVE SELF INTEREST

What makes a leader is not just thinking about self but for the larger community. Be it giving back to the community in cash or kind or even gestures where one takes care of people who are not directly on the organization's payroll but on the frontline; leaders showcase how it is not enough if the organization alone progresses. No true leader sees crisis as a time to carve out a competitive advantage; definitely not at the cost of a struggling competitor. Compassion is leadership, leadership is compassion — compassion not just for self but for everyone else, especially ones where one has no self-interest whatsoever. If anything, the crisis will make leadership more humane and above self-interest.

LESSON 5: BEING OPEN TO FAILING

In times of crisis, the acceptance of failure and moving on from there to the next step and the next is a critical leadership trait. These are times when given the dynamicity of the situation, decisions need to be made based on the limited information available and many times in decentralized manners. Fail fast is more important than learning and waiting to make the right decision. Different business models are prototyped and many of them may not work. It's ok. Leaders move on.

There are often external circumstances beyond one's control. Leaders are kind to yourself and to their teams. They repivot as many times as necessary. They collaborate with competitors. Leadership is not about the outcome — it is about the process. Even a decision of shutting down the business may look like a failure looking outwards. But the process of arriving at that decision, accepting, communicating and executing the failure can demonstrate leadership. Being open to failure is the biggest lesson from turbulent times.

The onus of leadership lies with each one of us. We all need to lead ourselves, our loved ones, our societies, organisations and countries out of this and every crisis.

The writer is a corporate professional and author of 4 books. Her latest book, Inflection Point – Leadership Lessons from Turbulent Times, has been published by Rupa Publications



The canopy facing the Narmada from where Roopmati looked at the river; Hoshang Shah's tomb; Jami Masjid

Though the cemetery is not easy to locate and gets only few visitors, it is very well maintained. So next time you visit Ranchi, do make time to visit this piece of history. As reads a message at one of the resting places: *Thoughts go back to bygone days. Life moves on but memory stays.*

Lankan Civil War and human rights violation

The Mahinda Rajapaksa Government in Sri Lanka is in trouble again. The horrors of the three decades of Lankan Civil War are revisiting the Government. The two brothers — Mahinda and Gotabaya — are holding the two crucial posts, Prime Minister and President, respectively.

Earlier, Mahinda served as the President from 2005 to 2010, when Gotabaya was the Defence Secretary. During this period, both the brothers crushed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and put an end to the longest Civil War in the country.

However it was the leadership of former Lieutenant Colonel Gotabaya, who finally led the Lankan Army to the successful war against the dreaded LTTE leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran in 2009. It was good that an ethnic terror movement came to an end that took the lives of many in the past. And the armed forces of this tiny island nation and its political leadership breathed a sigh of relief. Prabhakaran's torture regime was over with his killing in May 2009 at the hands of the Lankan Army.

This had not only shattered the command structure of the Tamil Tigers, but also pushed the outfit to the brink of closure. The organisation had lost both its firepower and manpower. The Lankan Government forces too had received severe casualties though the forces received abundant supply of arms from China.

The end of the war brought the most vital question to the fore — the massive violation of human rights by the Lankan Army. Though the Rajapaksa Government had justified the war, the humanitarian concerns emerging from the number of dead, missing and post-war rehabilitation of the Tamil civilians exposed the extreme level of brutalities that the Lankan forces resorted to.

Both the Rajapaksa brothers turned out to be heroes among the majority Sinhalese population, but questions of the violation of fundamental rights of the Tamils in the North and Eastern part of the country remained unanswered.



And this has been haunting the Rajapaksa Government since the end of the Civil War and now also with the returning of the duo to power.

Sri Lanka is facing a new UN Resolution at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), calling on the human rights abusers to account and asking the country's Government to deliver immediate justice to the victims. Britain and others have circulated a draft of the resolution among the members of the UNHRC.

It is expected to be adopted at the end of the four-week Spring Session of the UN's top human rights body. The session began on February 22 in Geneva.

Both the Tamil Tigers and the Lankan Army were accused of massive violations of human

rights during the war. Therefore, the UN human rights office blames both for carrying out unparalleled brutalities against the innocent civilians during the war.

Germany and Canada are among the six countries that formed the core group along with Britain to bring the resolution on Lanka. Lord Ahmad, Britain's Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, said: "The victims from all communities of Sri Lanka's brutal Civil War are, a decade later, still awaiting justice for loved ones murdered or missing and dealing with the repercussions of violence and conflict".

He further commented that the current resolution moved by his country in the UNHRC is a vital step towards reconciliation and peaceful

relations among all of Sri Lanka's diverse communities and faith groups. This will bring an added pressure on the Lankan Government, but then how Colombo will respond may only decide the future of the families of the victims.

UN Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet has submitted her report on Sri Lanka to the UNHRC. While introducing the report to the Council, she said the effect of the conflict on thousands of survivors from all communities was devastating.

She highlighted that 12 years after the end of the armed conflict in Lanka, the domestic efforts to ensure justice for victims have failed.

Further she stated, "Despite commitments made in 2015, the current Government, like its predecessor, has failed to

pursue genuine truth-seeking or accountability processes... Moreover, the systems, structures, policies and personnel that gave rise to such grave violations in the past remain and have recently been reinforced".

This has put the Rajapaksa Government in the dock. All efforts are on to pressurise Colombo so as to offer justice to the families of thousands of victims and missing persons in this devastating war.

As per the records made available by the international media and human rights agencies, the war killed about 1,00,000 people, including 40,000 Tamil civilians, massacred by the Lankan Army in the final onslaught.

However, the Rajapaksa Government completely denies these allegations. An estimated 1,50,000 people were

trapped on the coast at the end of the war. Besides thousands went missing and the Lankan security forces were blamed for the disappearance of the Tamil rebels who either surrendered or captured.

Recently in a meeting with a UN envoy, Lankan President Gotabaya acknowledged for the first time that more than 20,000 people who disappeared during the country's Civil War were dead.

Further his office released a statement that steps would be taken to issue death certificates for those missing. This has certainly dampened the hopes of those who were expecting a positive response from the Government.

Sri Lanka, the island nation, had witnessed the scourge of terrorism for about three decades. The terror fuelled by the monstrous LTTE had claimed many lives, including the civilians, soldiers and high-profile political leaders within and outside the country.

The LTTE under the leadership of Prabhakaran was simply running a parallel Government in the North-Eastern parts of Lanka. Today, the Tamils and other minority groups like the Muslims and Christians are alleging massive violation of human rights by the Lankan forces in the final war against the LTTE in 2009. But the international community must not forget the reign of terror brought by Prabhakaran and his team over innocent civilians across the island.

The LTTE, formed on May 5, 1976, by Prabhakaran was once used to be the only terror group in the world possessing its own military. Its political headquarters was in Kilinochchi, situating at a distance of 200 miles north of Lanka's capital city of Colombo. And this military consisted of three distinct branches — the Tigers (Infantry), Sea Tigers (Sea Wing) and Air Tigers (Air Wing). It had gradually emerged as the most lethal and well-organised terror group.

In fact, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in its report published in January 2008, stated that the LTTE was one of the most dangerous

and deadly extremist outfits in the world and the world should be concerned about the outfit as they had inspired networks worldwide, including the al-Qaeda in Iraq. The brutal tactics and the employment of child soldiers by the LTTE were causing concerns across South Asia in its heydays.

Further some reports indicate that women were also forced to join the organisation. Only after seven years of its formation in 1983, the organisation opened its Women's Front of the Liberation Tigers under the leadership of Vithusha. Like many other African terror groups, the LTTE used to recruit children for combat forces.

As per the estimates of the Sri Lankan Directorate of Military Intelligence, as much as 60 per cent of the outfit's fighters were below 18 years. It was also revealed that the fighters of the Tamil Tigers who were killed in the war were mostly between 9 and 18 years.

These were some of the harrowing episodes of the LTTE that rightly underlines how the terror organisation was simply twisting and undermining the epithets of basic human rights. Initially, it seemed to be an endless saga of terror, violence, torture and a parallel state run by an authoritarian leader.

Today the Tamils are calling for accountability and justice for the crimes committed during the Civil War by the Lankan forces. It is hard time for the Rajapaksa duo to respond to the Tamil minority in their country and to the world Tamil diaspora on this sensitive issue. What is expected from Colombo is quick redressal of the grievances of the minorities in the North and Eastern part of the country.

It is time to accept the responsibility of war crimes on the part of the Lankan Government. It is time to heal the wounds. Else, relationship between the Sinhalese majority and rest of the minority communities, particularly with the Tamils, would further deteriorate.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Wastewater surveillance for detecting early spread of Covid

Sewers or sewage treatment plants can provide near real-time outbreak data as they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health

The ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), has been declared as a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2020).

Several research studies across the globe have confirmed that SARS-CoV-2 ribonucleic acid (RNA) has been detected in faeces of not only symptomatic but also asymptomatic patients. It has also been seen that sewers or sewage treatment plants (STPs) can provide near-real-time outbreak data because they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population.

Thus, wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) is a promising approach to understand the prevalence of viruses in any given wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) catchment population.

A densely populated country like India will require constant vigilance to contain Covid-19 infection hot spots, unless and until either a vaccine is proven to be effective or herd immunity is achieved, to combat the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health.

This could help the timely

determination of whether there are Covid-19 carriers (both asymptomatic and symptomatic) in an area to enable preventive measures such as rapid screening and quarantine, even before the residents of that city have been tested.

In India, the pandemic steadily rose from April 2020 with peaking in mid-August 2020. The cumulative confirmed cases have significantly lowered at present.

Several research groups across the globe have reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. In Switzerland, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) researchers, working in association with the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG) on wastewater sampling and analysis developed a study in March 2020, which acts as an early warning signal for spread of SARS-CoV-2 in communities. Similarly, in April 2020, sewage sampling across greater Paris (France) for more than one month, researchers have detected a rise and fall in novel coronavirus concentrations that correspond to the shape of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak in the region.

Other researchers have also reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in countries such as: Australia (Ahmed et al, 2020),

Cyprus (Michael-Kordatou et al, 2020), Ireland (Cahill et al, 2020), Italy (La Rosa et al, 2020), Japan (Haramoto et al, 2020), South Africa (Street et al., 2020), The Netherlands (Dutch Water Sector, 2020), Spain (Chavarria-Miró et al, 2020), USA (Peccia et al and Hart & Halden et al, 2020), and India (Kumar et al and Arora et al., 2020).

For effective dissemination of knowledge created by the current research efforts, and to empower collaboration on a global scale for wastewater-based epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2, there are various ongoing initiatives such as the European Union's NORMAN - SCORE Joint Initiative (Sewage Analysis CORe group Europe) (score-cost.eu/), COVID-19 WBE Collaborative (covid19wbec.org/), Biobot Analytics (biobot.io/), NSF Research Coordination Network (RCN) (sites.nd.edu/rcn-wastewater-sarscov2/), COVIDPoops19 (https://twitter.com/COVIDPoops19?s=20), Global Water Pathogen Project (GWPP) (waterpathogens.org/) and others.

In IIT Gandhinagar, India, Kumar et al, 2020, for the first time, detected the presence of three SARS-CoV-2 genes (ORF1ab, N and S virus) in wastewater. The samples were collected in May 2020 from Old Pirana WWTP in Ahmedabad

(Gujarat) to understand the application of WBE surveillance in India.

The WWTP has a capacity of 106 MLD receiving effluents of Civil Hospital treating Covid-19 patients. The number of gene copies was found comparable to that reported in the untreated wastewaters of Australia, China, and Turkey and lower than that of the USA, France, and Spain. A similar study was conducted by researchers of Dr B Lal Institute of Biotechnology (Rajasthan) with samples from hospital wastewater as well as from WWTPs of Jaipur, which has been a pandemic hotspot (red zone) since April 2020.

To analyse the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in the community wastewater of different catchments in Chennai city in India, a group of scientists led by Chakraborty et al from SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Mu Gamma Consultants Pvt Ltd (MGC) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) jointly implemented an intensive wastewater surveillance study, the first-of-its-kind in the southern region of India.

The study entailed partial lockdown and post lockdown survey along the wastewater discharge points in Adayar and Cooum Riverine belt flowing through the densely populated region of Chennai to

develop an early signalling spread of Covid-19 in communities during partial and post-lockdown periods in 2020. This study gave interesting insights for informing policy actions.

The wastewater surveillance study in Chennai has the potential for replication in other Indian cities like Delhi as well as upscaling it for larger geographic areas covering a large population. Also, it could potentially be one of the bases for scientifically informed decisions to implement public health intervention strategies consistent with legal and ethical considerations in India.

At present, Delhi has 41 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with a cumulative treatment capacity of 3,149 MLD. Out of 41 STPs, 32 STPs (2,775 MLD) are operational and 9 STPs (373 MLD) are non-operational. Also, importantly, 75 per cent of pollution is contributed by three major drains

(Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara) out of all the drains falling into the river Yamuna. Given the current sewage management scenario of Delhi, a wastewater surveillance study (similar to the one conducted by SRM IST, MGC and TERI in Chennai) can be taken up in the national Capital to track the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the wastewater samples from major drains

falling into the Yamuna river and select STPs.

The advantages of wastewater surveillance in Delhi will include the monitoring of wastewater samples from sewage treatment plants and major drains of the Yamuna river in Delhi can help in estimating the number of infected individuals, and hence provide robust scientific evidence for informed decision making at the policy level.

This is an early, cost-effective, unbiased community-level indicator of the presence of Covid-19 and of "hot-spots" within a community. It will support risk mitigation decisions for the communities, and guide decisions about where and when to impose or relax more targeted restrictions on movement and activity. It will help alert asymptomatic infections in the community through real-time community sewage detection could be determined.

It will be very useful for positioning resources and triggering public actions for improved health outcomes. It will also alert second and subsequent waves, and develop preparedness towards outbreak of other pandemics in the future.

To track any resurgence of Covid-19, national wastewater surveillance programmes are being implemented in various countries like the USA,

Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Pakistan. The same can be planned for India. In the past, WBE has played an important role in the eradication of polio in 2011 in India, and at present, wastewater surveillance continues at 52 WWTPs and unregulated catchment areas for detection of poliovirus.

This surveillance network can be a viable resource for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in the country, including the national Capital Delhi.

There is a need to identify the key issues and challenges related to the development of validated methodological protocols for the quantitative analysis of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater.

The data generated from the SARS-CoV-2 wastewater monitoring system in Delhi might be used to show a roadmap for tracking disease, intensifying testing, re-introducing public orders related to social distancing or quarantines (if needed), and even lifting restrictions once a cessation of infection is confirmed.

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