

OPINION 6
ANATOMY OF
UTTARAYANA

WORLD 8
AT LEAST 34 DEAD AS INDONESIA
QUAKE TOPPLES HOMES, BUILDINGS

SPORT 12
SIRAJ ABUSED BY
GABBA CROWD

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 17 Issue 15
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

BHUBANESWAR, SATURDAY JANUARY 16, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

AMIT SALUTES
BRAVE
SOLDIERS
10 VIVACITY



World's largest Covid vaccination drive begins

PM to launch campaign via video conferencing today at 10:30 am; Vardhan says it is beginning of the end of coronavirus pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first phase of the pan-India rollout of world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drive on Saturday at 10:30 am via video conferencing.

The drive involves two vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — developed by AstraZeneca-Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech respectively.

A day before the vaccination drive against coronavirus, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday said the step is "probably the beginning of the end" of Covid-19. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had earlier this month approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

This vaccination programme will cover the entire length and breadth of the country, with a total of 3006 session

sites across all States and UTs which will be connected virtually throughout the exercise.

In the first phase, priority groups and healthcare workers, both in Government and private sectors, including ICDS workers, in all-around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each of the session sites. Adequate doses of both vaccines have been already delivered across the country. India, which reported first Covid case late January last year is currently the world's second worst-hit country with over 1.05 crore cases and over 1.51 lakh deaths. Over, 213,000 cases are currently active.

The phased rollouts will initially vaccinate one crore healthcare and two crore frontline workers, followed by around 27 crore senior citizens and people with co-morbidities like diabetes, hypertension, organ transplants, etc. In all, 30 crore people are going to be inoculated by July this year.

Speaking at the 146th India Meteorological Department foundation day, Vardhan cautioned that even if the vaccination drive is on, there should not be lowering of guard and



Workers prepare for the Covid-19 vaccination drive for frontline health workers at a Govt Hospital in Mumbai on Friday AP

people must follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

"Tomorrow is an important day...It is the last phase of

the battle against coronavirus. I say, this is probably the beginning of the end of Covid now which is going to start tomorrow," Vardhan, who is also

Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Minister, said. The Minister on Friday

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL
CASES: 1,05,41,760
DEATHS: 1,52,086
RECOVERED: 1,01,75,895
ACTIVE: 2,09,399



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	19,84,768	50,336	18,81,088
Karnataka	9,30,668	12,158	9,09,701
Andhra Pradesh	8,85,616	7,138	8,76,140
Tamil Nadu	8,27,614	12,236	8,08,571
Kerala	8,36,884	3,416	7,65,757
Delhi	6,31,884	10,732	6,18,357
Uttar Pradesh	5,95,142	8,543	5,76,519
West Bengal	5,64,098	10,026	5,46,849
Odisha	3,32,949	1,951	3,29,088
Rajasthan	3,14,372	2,744	3,05,953
Chhattisgarh	2,92,612	3,544	2,82,145
Telangana	2,91,118	1,574	2,85,102
Haryana	2,65,964	2,979	2,60,801
Bihar	2,58,289	1,449	2,52,858
Gujarat	2,54,849	4,360	2,43,739
Madhya Pradesh	2,50,429	3,740	2,39,581

also reviewed preparations for the vaccination drive as he visited the Dedicated Covid Control Room which has been set up on the Nirman Bhawan premises of the Ministry.

He scrutinised the working of CoWIN, an online digital platform, which will be used to drive the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the country. It will facilitate real-time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for Covid-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across

national, State, and district levels while conducting vaccination sessions. It will help them track beneficiary coverage, beneficiary dropouts, sessions planned v/s sessions held and vaccine utilisation, said an official from the Ministry.

The platform enables national and State administrators to view & sort data of beneficiaries as per their gender, age & co-morbidity. They can also view the metadata of vaccinations and Adverse Event Following Immunization reported from constituent districts across States and UTs.

295 CASES IN DELHI, LOWEST SINCE MAY 9; POSITIVITY RATE DIPS TO 0.44 PC

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 295 fresh Covid-19 cases on Friday, the lowest in more than eight months, even as city Health Minister Satyendar Jain said the positivity rate has slipped to an "all-time low" of 0.44 per cent.

Farmers-Govt talks inconclusive again

Govt asks unions to create an informal group to discuss finer points of the laws

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The ninth round talks between the farmers and the Government on Friday again failed to end the stalemate over the farm laws. While farmers insisted on the repeal of the laws and legal guarantee of the MSP, the Government asked them to be more flexible in their approach and expressed willingness for necessary amendments.

However, both sides have agreed to continue the dialogue despite the Supreme Court constituting a committee to mediate on the issue.

The next round of talks will be held on January 19, the day the court-appointed committee is likely to start consulting stakeholders to end the impasse. This was the first meeting after the Supreme Court stayed the enactment of farm laws until further orders and appointed a four-member committee to resolve the deadlock over farm laws.

In the meeting that lasted for nearly five hours, including a lunch break, the Government requested unions to create an informal group to discuss finer points of the laws so that a way forward can be found in the wake of the



Representatives of farmer unions leave after the ninth round of talks with the Government over the new farm laws at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Friday PTI

Supreme Court's direction.

Besides their major demands, unions alleged police repression on people associated as well as not associated with the ongoing protests, NIA raids on transporters and arthiyas in Punjab who are supporting farmers' protests and were providing logistic support for the agitation. The farmer representatives have also raised questions on the cases that have been

lodged against the farmers and urged the Government to address this and prevent it. During the meeting, the Karnal incident where agitating farmers ransacked the venue of Manohar Lal Khattar's "kisan mahapan-chayat" came up.

"Talks took place over three farm laws in a cordial atmosphere and detailed discussions took place on some issues, but couldn't reach a

decisive stage. We suggested they can form an informal group of people who can understand the laws better and prepare some concrete proposals, detailing what are farmers' expectations and what clauses are problematic for them, which the Government can consider with an open mind," Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said after the meeting with the farmer leaders.

Prez donates ₹5L for Ram temple

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The fund collection drive for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya kicked off on Friday with President Ram Nath Kovind donating ₹5 lakh.

The President made the contribution to the Ram Jannabhoomi Teerath Kshetra Trust set up by the Government to look after the construction and management of the temple.

"President Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji contributes ₹5,00,100 for the construction of Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya," said Champat Rai, general secretary of the trust.

A delegation comprising Vishva Hindu Parishad's international working president Alok Kumar, Teerath Kshetra Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri, and temple construction committee head Nripendra Misra met the President on Friday to seek his contribution. "He is the first citizen of the country so we went to him to initiate this drive. He donated a sum of ₹5,01,000," he said.

The VHP and associated bodies have launched a fund-raising campaign — Sri Ram Jannabhoomi Mandir Nidhi Samarpan Abhiyan — from January 15 to February 5 where they will reach out to Hindu families in different States.

State reports two more Covid deaths

Total toll nears 1,900

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Covid-19 toll inched towards the 1,900-mark in the State as two more patients succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours while undergoing treatment at Covid hospitals. The fresh deaths were reported

186 new infections detected

ed from Khordha and Sundargarh districts, with which the total toll increased to 1,898 in the State. The deceased of Khordha was a 69-year-old male, who was also suffering from diabetes mellitus. The Sundargarh death was male of 50 years.

Meanwhile, in the last 24 hours, 186 new Covid-19 cases were reported in the State. With this, the State's total case-

load mounted to 3,32,949. Of the total fresh cases detected from 26 districts, 108 were from different quarantine centres and 78 were local contact cases. Sundargarh district recorded the highest 35 fresh cases followed by Sambalpur (20) and Angul (18).

The latest number of total active cases in the State stood at 2,166 while the recovered cases at 3,28,832.

4 fresh +ve cases in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

State capital Bhubaneswar on Friday reported four new Covid-19 positive cases on the day, increasing the city's total tally to 31,780, including 200 active cases. Of the new cases, two were local contacts and two quarantine cases.

One more patient succumbed to the virus on the day, with which the city's total toll rose to 244. However, four more patients recovered on the day, taking the total recoveries to 31,315 in the city.

--In Rourkela-- Man gets lifer for killing 5-yr-old son

PNS ■ ROURKELA

The Court of Additional District Judge-I here on Friday sentenced a person to life imprisonment for killing his five-year-old son in 2019. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on convict Hunda Oram of Bondamunda. In the case of nonpayment of the fine, he would have to undergo an

additional imprisonment of one year. Hunda had murdered his son on June 24, 2019 by slitting the child's throat with a knife as he was suspecting that the boy was not his child biologically.

Police had later arrested Hunda and forwarded him to court. As many as 14 witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

'Desh Ka Mood' Naveen country's best CM



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's Naveen Patnaik has been adjudged as the best Chief Minister in the country as per an ABP News-C Voter Desh Ka Mood survey. Patnaik is followed by Delhi's Arvind Kejriwal at the second spot and Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan Reddy at the third position.

The survey further says that 91 per cent of people in Odisha are happy with the performance of the Central Government. More than 30,000 people from all 543 Lok Sabha constituencies of the country participated in the survey. The answers to survey questions were collected in last 12 weeks.

Pari case HC yet to receive Govt request to monitor SIT

Opposition parties slam BJD

PNS ■ CUTTACK

It is now official that no sitting judge of the Orissa High Court is monitoring the Special Investigation Team (SIT), which is probing into the sensational Pari rape and murder case of Nayagarh district.

Contrary to the State Government's claim, the High Court is now adjudicating a PIL that has sought for a CBI enquiry into the case alleging that the five-year-old girl was murdered by organ sharks, who are apparently protected by Nayagarh MLA and Minister Arun Sahoo.

The High Court recently clarified in response to an RTI query that it is yet to receive any letter from the Government requesting the

Chief Justice to accord permission to monitor the SIT investigation by a sitting judge. The court's reply came in response to the RTI application made by activist Hemant Panda. However, a letter dated November 28, 2020 from a Special Secretary of the Home department to the High Court Registry proposing to set up a court-monitored SIT is circulating on the social media.

Similarly, the Advocate General had also informed the court during the hearing of the PIL that the Government has formed an SIT comprising senior police officers to investigate the case. But it was not clarified whether the SIT would be monitored by the court.

In its December 3, 2020 order over the PIL, the court although had acknowledged that the Government had formed an SIT, the court, nevertheless, in the same order had

asked the Nayagarh SP to file the status report of the investigation. Subsequently, however, the SIT had been submitting status reports of the investigation to the court in sealed covers.

Under these confusing circumstances about the actual position of the SIT headed by senior IPS officer Arun Bothra, opposition parties BJP and Congress have grabbed the opportunity to come down heavily on the ruling BJD for hoodwinking the public in the name of another Constitutional institution like the High Court. "The developments are very shocking," said PCC president Niranjan Patnaik while BJP State general secretary Lekhasri Samantsinghar alleged that the Government has lied on the floor of the Assembly on the issue. Samantsinghar reiterated her party's demand for a CBI probe into the Pari case.

Covid vaccination in State today

PEOPLE BELOW 18 YRS, PREGNANT WOMEN WON'T GET JOB
THOSE UNWELL ALSO DEBARRED

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As per the Centre's guidelines for the vaccination drive starting on Saturday, people aged below 18 years, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers would not be permitted to take the vaccine shots in the State. Reiterating the guidelines, Health and Family Welfare Department Director and Vaccine in-Charge Bijay Panigrahi on Friday said pregnant women, those not sure of their pregnancy and lactating mothers would not be given the vaccine.

Besides, those unwell and hospitalised for any other ailments would be debarred from taking the shot. Moreover, those who have been adminis-



tered with any other vaccine in the last 14 days would not be given the vaccine. People who would have allergic reaction to the previous dose of the vaccine would also not be given the next jab. Vaccination of people with active symptoms of the coronavirus would be deferred for four to eight weeks, Dr Panigrahi added.

As per the information provided by the Union Health Ministry, the adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) include headache, fatigue, fever, body ache, nausea, sweating, cold coughs, among others.

J&K calm but can burst with rage any time: N Command

Lt Gen says J&K situation may flare up as Pak using terror as state policy

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Sounding a word of caution on the prevailing situation in Jammu & Kashmir, GOC-in-C, Northern Command Lt Gen YK Joshi on Friday said the internal situation in J&K, which is stable and under control, has the propensity to flare up at any time.

Interacting with the media persons after paying tributes to the "bravehearts" of the Indian Army on the occasion of Army Day in the Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur, Lt Gen Joshi also claimed that Pakistan has not relented from using terror as an instrument of state policy. Additionally, he went on to say, "We have seen the Chinese belligerence on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). They have tried to alter the status quo which has been contested with resolve



and courage by the Indian Army." "Thirdly, the internal situation in J&K, which is stable and under control, has the propensity to flare up at any time," he said.

Elaborating, Lt Gen Joshi said, "There is also the collusive factor with threats ranging from supplying weapons to sharing of operational practices and so on." Referring to prevailing security scenario, Army commander said that relentless operations on Line of Control backed with a robust multi-agency grid in hinterland has forced deep state in Pakistan to recalibrate its approach to handle this situation.

State got ₹1.25L cr investment despite Covid: CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has received an investment of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore since February 2020 despite the Covid-19 pandemic, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said here on Friday.

Inaugurating the 4th edition of Samba's Brands of Odisha Pride of India virtually, he said his Government is committed to improve the State's business climate.

"Industry-friendly policies, quick clearances and granding of projects have helped us to make us one of the most attractive investment destinations in India. We have received an investment of over Rs 1.25



tion in India. We have received an investment of over Rs 1.25

lakh crore since February 2020 despite the wrath of coronavirus. Our Startup policy is also one of the best in the country," Patnaik said.

He said branding and promotion are essential components of business and industry, he said while citing the success story of a young entrepreneur of the State who could build a brand in the country by understanding people's needs. "The OYO story of Ritesh Agarwal, a young man of our Odisha, is a case in point.

He actually found an easy solution for millions of tourists in hospitality sector. And he

does not own hotels himself. My point is: 'to create a real good brand, one has to truly endeavour to understand people's needs and find easy solutions to them. Money will flow in, brand will be built,' he said. "The younger generation is bubbling with ideas. They must take the plunge into business and industry, create global brands and generate wealth for themselves and the nation," he said.

Sambad Group chairman and Khandapada BJD MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik and Union Minister Dharmendra

Pradhan as "brands of Odisha". "Naveenbabu has attracted entire world by serving people of Odisha with dedication in past 20 years.

Dharmendra Pradhan, being a son of this soil, has proved his excellence becoming a close associate to Prime Minister Narendra Modi besides holding two key posts in the Union Cabinet." Addressing the ceremony, Dharmendra Pradhan said Lord Jagannath is the "Brand of World" for Odia people. "Brand and pride are in the DNA of every Odia people, he observed.

LoP's Wiki page defaced; FIR lodged

Pradipta Naik hints at BJD hand

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

A complaint has been lodged with the Jaipatna police in Kalahandi district in connection with the defacing of the Wikipedia page of Bhawanipatna MLA and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Legislative Assembly Pradipta Kumar Naik. "The page was vandalised by some editor

using vulgar words. Google search of his name shows some unmanly and distasteful words in the Wiki suggestion. As he is the Leader of Opposition in Odisha Assembly, it may be the targeted harassment to him from ruling party," said complainants Saswat Ranjan Thakur and Jagamohan Pattnaik in the FIR. The Wikipedia page was last edited on January 6 at 11.17 am by an editor, namely, 'Florafouna2004'; they said in the complaint.

Terming the act as 'Internet Terrorism', Naik in a statement alleged that it might have been



committed by the IT cell of a rival political party (BJD) as he recently raised questions over various corruptions and irregularities.

Only cops to take part in R-Day events

Students strictly disallowed to participate

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Students would not be allowed to take part in the Republic Day ceremonies in the State this year, the Home Department has written to the district Collectors and SPs and issued guidelines in this regard.

The department has directed the district administrations to ensure that no student and NCC cadet participate in the Republic Day functions. Only police contingents would take part in the programmes.

The decision has been taken in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Home Department's letter stated. After

8:30 am, the National Flag would be unfurled by the chief guests followed by playing of the National Anthem. Only limited numbers of guests would be invited to the celebrations using e-invites, including selected Covid warriors, the letter said. "There will be no participation by the general public in the celebration," it read.

It is imperative that social distancing norms, wearing masks, etc., are followed strictly by the invited guests attending the functions.

The venue must be well-sanitised and a hand sanitiser be made available at all entry points of the venues. The letter further asked the district administrations to organise online essay and quiz contests to mark the occasion.

"Similar guidelines and procedures may also be followed for celebration of the Republic Day 2021 at the block and panchayat levels," it stated.

--Farmers' protest-- 500 Odisha farmers leave for Delhi

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Expressing solidarity with the farmers agitating in New Delhi against the Centre's farm laws, more than 500 Odisha farmers left for the national capital on Friday.

The Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NKS) is among the active farmer organisations, which has been staging stir in Delhi demanding repeal of the farm laws.

NKS chief Akshay Kumar was stationed at the national capital for the last few months and has participated twice in the discussions with the Central Government.

In a meeting held at PMG here on the day, NKS advisor Rabi Das said that with the Odisha farmers joining the protest, the agitation would be further intensified in Delhi. Kumar said the Central



Government is trying to sabotage the farmer agitation on the pretext of a series of discussions.

But this won't be successful. NKS State convenor Seshadev Nanda said the farmers' agitation in Delhi is not confined to people of two or three States. The joining of Odisha farmers proves that.

Among others, Bipracharan Das, Nimai Swain, Rashmiranjan Swain, Manwar Ali, Durgaprasad Dash, Maheswar Jena, Sudharshan Patra and Laxmidhar Pradhan were present at the meeting here.

No end to mining theft in Keonjhar

3 trucks illegally carrying ore seized

REJENDRA K SAHU ■ CHAMPUBA

The Barbil police recently seized three trucks including two carrying iron ore and one manganese, from Lasarda reserve forest under Barbil forest sections. The seizure has confirmed that there is no end to unabated mineral theft in the district. Sources revealed that for effective control over illegal mining and mafias involved in the theft of minerals, the Joda mining circle has five police stations such as Joda, Barbil, Balani, Rugudi and Bamebari. Since November 2019 after the transfer of Forest Range Officer Barbil Madhu Patra, mining mafias have been very active and theft of iron ore and valuable manganese ore is going on unabated. It is alleged due to his strong actions against some mines owners and mafias, Patra had become



an eyesore of the then DFO Keonjhar Santosh Joshi, which is said to be the main reason of his transfer even before completing one year in Barbil.

Besides the Forest department, it is the police which can launch crackdown on mining mafias. But sources said except the Barbil police, no police stations has been able to seize a single truck or mining materials in the area so far. However, thanks to constant vigil by Barbil PS IIC Sushanta Kumar Dash, mining theft could be brought down considerably. It is said that besides the latest

Jagatpur jewellery loot case solved

5 arrested; gold, silver seized

PNS ■ CUTTACK

After nearly 40 days of the incident, the Commissionerate police on Thursday solved the Jagatpur gold jewellery shop loot case and claimed to have recovered 385 grams of looted gold ornaments and 25.5 kg of silver ornaments and arrested five persons in this connection.

"We have also seized a car, two motorcycles, four mobile phones and Rs 12,400 cash from the arrested persons," informed city DCP Prateek Singh, adding that the gas cutter used to cut the iron chests of the jewellery shop at Jagatpur on the outskirts of the city was also seized.

The accused persons had entered into the Basanti Durga Jewellers on the night of December 4 last by digging a hole in the rear wall of the shop.



Cold wave returns; Phulbani coldest a 6 deg

Dense fog in Angul

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The cold wave has returned in the State with minimum (night) temperatures (night) dipping at several stations.

The lowest temperature of 6 degree Celsius was recorded at Phulbani on Thursday night followed by Daringbadi at 8.5

degree, as per the Regional Office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Friday. Sundargarh recorded a temperature of 9 degree, Jharsuguda 7.4 degree C, Sambalpur 11 degree C, Hirakud 12.1 degree C, Sonepur 10.6 degree, Boudh 10.5 degree C, Balangir 10 degree, Titilagarh 11 degree, Bhawanipatna 10.4 degree,

Keonjhar 11.6 degree, Angul 11.6 degree, Koraput 13 degree and Baripada 13.6 degree. Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded minimum temperature of 19 degree C and 17 degree respectively.

Very dense fog was witnessed in Angul while moderate fog at Gopalpur, Malkangiri and Koraput. Besides Cuttack, shallow fog was witnessed at Talcher and Keonjhar.

Another fake Cuttack tobacco unit busted

Chemicals seized; 1 held

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Commissionerate police on Friday busted yet another fake tobacco and pan masala manufacturing unit in Cuttack and arrested a person in this connection. The illegal unit was unearthed at Sasol village

under Sadar police station during a raid. A huge quantity of duplicate tobacco products and chemicals were seized. Besides, packets carrying fake logos of many top brands were seized. Cuttack Sadar police station IIC Sudhansu Bhusan Jena said, "We have seized huge quantity of duplicate tobacco products and different varieties of chemicals procured from Kolkata. The unit was running

in village from 2007." The main accused has been arrested and we are interrogating him. We are probing source of raw materials for making fake tobacco," added IIC.



Flora, fauna survey begins at Chilika

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Chilika Development Authority (CDA) on Friday began the annual flora and fauna survey in the Chilika lagoon to assess the biodiversity of the ecosystem.

Sources said 18 teams have been engaged for the enumeration.

All boat owners' associations and members of primary fishermen cooperative societies (PFCSS) have been requested not to ply boats from 6 am to 12 noon. Visitors have also been requested not to visit the lake during the period. Earlier on January 5,

the annual bird counting had been conducted at the Chilika, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon. As per the census, the

lake has a record number of 11, 05,040 birds this year as against 10,47,968 registered last year.



Sulia Jatra: Animals sacrifice to take place

No shops allowed

SUDHIR MISHRA ■ BALANGIR

Every year on the first Tuesday of the Hindu calendar month of Pausa, the Sulia Jatra is observed by tribals at Khaiguda and Kumuria in Deogano block of Balangir district. This year, it is going to be observed on January 19. On Friday, a preparatory meeting for the festival was held which

was attended by tribal people, priests and members of the Milita Sulia Jatra Puja Committee of Khaiguda and Kumuria and police and health officials.

The Sulia Jatra would be held adhering to the Covid-19 guidelines with emphasis on social distancing, use of masks and avoiding large gatherings.

Asked about the traditional sacrifice of animals and birds at the Jatra, Balangir Sub-Collector Nayak said that it would be allowed for ritual purpose of the tribals. "We have

decided not to observe the Sulia Mahotsav like previous years. Only Sulia Jatra will be held. No shops will be opened there. In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the concerned guidelines will be followed with emphasis on social distancing, use of masks and other measures," he said.

Animal killing as per the rituals of tribals would be observed, also said president of Milita Sulia Jatra Puja Committee of Khaiguda and Kumuria Maya Pradhani to the media after the meeting.

Judo coach Murmu a TIZCEZ member

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Judo coach Kandan Murmu has been nominated as a member of Talent Identification Zonal Committee for East Zone (Judo) States covering West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Andaman & Nicobar Island.

Presently, Murmu is working as Judo coach in KISS and KIIT University and also is technical secretary OSJA, general secretary Mayurbhanj District Judo Association, National Referee and Judge and National 3rd DAN Black Belt holder. For the achieve-

ment, Murmu expressed his gratefulness to founder KIIT and KISS, MP Khandamal Dr Achyuta Samanta, CEO, OSJA, Gitanjali Panda, secretary OSJA PC Mishra, KIIT and KISS Sports Department, Odisha State Judo Association, SAI, Khelo India, DSYS, Odisha Government, Judo Federation of India, Mayurbhanj District Judo Association, besides my parents and well wishers.



Have regional parties raised levels of political violence?



GOURANG CHARAN PARIDA

Has Odisha become a politically violent State? It may be a sweeping question now, but it has gathered strength after a recent double murder case of two BJP workers in Mahanga block. Opposition parties, including the BJP and the Congress, allege that it is a political murder and the miscreants allegedly have links

with the ruling BJD. They apprehend that the State may soon witness a West Bengal-like political scenario of violence. But the BJD, unsurprisingly, trashes this jibe and contends that law will take its own course and the culprits will be nabbed and punished as it is an individual murder crime. However, perception persists that politics cannot thrive without crime as politicians can use all available methods to grab power. Violence is just part of it.

In early part of Independent India, there was not much of political violence. The Gandhi legacy of nonviolence was very strong then. Politics was seen as service to the people and violence considered as an unethical act, contrary to the political morality. But when politics became a profession to acquire power and accumulate wealth, it disowned all Gandhian principles. In July 1993, the

Government of India formed a five-member committee headed by NN Vora, the then Home Secretary, to take stock of all available information about the criminal activities having links with and protected by Government functionaries and political personalities.

The committee gave its report in October 1993 mentioning that criminals had become a law unto themselves. Even in smaller towns and rural areas, musclemen had been ruling the roost. Hired assassins had become parts of organised crimes.

The nexus between criminals, police, bureaucracy and politicians had come out clearly in various parts of the country. The criminal justice system, essentially designed to deal with the individual crime, seemed not to be so effective. The Vora committee report was a brave document with an aim to cleanse the politics. But there was a question left by its

members in it if the Government would be serious to pursue the matter to make a crime-free political state. And the question does not look misplaced now.

Violence in politics continues unabated. Some unscrupulous practitioners of art of politics generally do not hesitate to stoop low to resort to violence when they find that they cannot achieve their desired dreams by the acceptable methods.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) confirms that there has been a substantial rise in the rate of political violence in different States. The occurrence of such violence relates mostly to electoral process. Vora, in this regard, has unravelled two amazing concepts of nexus between politicians and criminals. One is criminalisation of politics and another is politicisation of crime. Criminalisation of politics happens when the party

tickets are given to criminals because they seem to have significant influence over the society. The party sees it as a winnability criterion of the candidate. And the people in turn vote them due to their strongman image with the belief that their leaders can satisfy their demand by hook or by crook. On the other hand, the politicisation of crime has been an old feature in polity. When politicians extend their patronage and shelters to criminals to get their work done, crime becomes politicised. It paves the way for involvement of politicians in crime.

Both criminalisation of politics and politicisation of crime are inextricably linked. They are integral parts of the electoral system now; and in both the parts, money and muscle power are used to influence the electorates. And democracy ultimately becomes the casualty. Some analysts claim that political violence

became little rampant in India after the new Panchayati Raj system came into force in the 1980s. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments made the elections to the panchayats and the urban local bodies mandatory on a regular basis. More financial powers were given to the panchayats.

India since then boasts of being the world's largest representative democracy. There are more than 30 lakh grassroots representatives directly elected by the people, a third of them being women.

There has been huge decentralisation of powers. Democracy has reached the doorsteps. Winning a panchayat election also is now viewed as a great personal achievement. There is lure of money power. There is equally a threat of muscle power. Political violence has now started from the doorsteps also. Undoubtedly, with each local body election, political violence

leads to group clashes, communal and caste-based violence, arson, loot, burning of houses, reprisals and, sometimes, murders.

The vested interest groups, including contractors and liquor mafia, get active in fanning the violence. There is a sense of quid pro quo. And the elected representatives dance to their so-called unholy kingmakers, look to their personal interests and support their dirty acts including violence. When politicians support the criminals, the crime's politicisation becomes complete.

There is a new study now showing some other factors as reasons for political violence. One of the factors is the regional political parties, which are said to have raised the levels of violence. These parties look to be better-equipped to bring good governance to the people. They contest the elections on a platform that appeals to a geographically-concentrated pop-

ulation based either on language or ethnicity or both. There are several States, where the presence of national parties like the BJP or the Congress is marginal or where they depend heavily on alliances with the dominating regional parties. The North Eastern states' politics moves this way.

There is, therefore, an outcry now to cleanse politics of violence and make it crime-free. Despite some combating guidelines, some politicians with dubious criminal records manage to enter the Parliament and the Assemblies. Hence, there is a need of enhanced awareness and democratic participation, which can create the right condition for decriminalisation of politics. And all politicians, including those of Odisha ought to take it as a mission too.

(A Gandhian author and columnist, lawyer, Puri; Phone: 9861469328)

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Mystery in Sundargarh Gaon Sathi's severed body parts found in pond

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH
Mystery shrouded the death of a youth, whose chopped body parts with a severed head were found from a pond at Bhawanipur village under the Sundargarh Town police limits on Friday. The deceased was identified as Ramesh Singh, the Gaon Sathi of Kirei gram panchayat in the district. As per reports, Ramesh had gone for a feast with a co-villager after returning from his office on January 13. He called up his family and informed that he would be late to come back home. As he did not return that night at all, his family members lodged a complaint at the Sundargarh Town police station. Later next

evening, locals were stunned to see a stray dog carrying a human hand in its mouth. A few hours after, the locals found some other chopped-off body parts near the pond in the locality and informed police. Early on Friday morning, police along with a scientific team and fire personnel reached the spot for investigation. After a while, the cops recovered a severed head, a leg and a hand from the pond. Search was on to find other parts of the body. Ramesh's family members alleged that some miscreants have killed him and chopped his body before dumping it in the pond. Meanwhile, police have detained two persons of the village for interrogation in connection with the incident.

Bharatiya Bikash Parishad submits memo to Government

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR
The Bharatiya Bikash Parishad (BBP) led by its president Surendra Panigrahi submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, the Principal Secretaries of the Department of Home and Urban Development, the RDC (Southern Range), the Ganjam district Collector and the BeMC Commissioner protesting the decision of the Government to impose a fee of minimum Rs 30 to a maximum of Rs 4,000 per month from each house for collection of domestic garbage and waste materials. While the people of entire State and of Ganjam district in particular are passing through severe fiscal trauma since last ten months on account of unprecedented Covid-19 pan-

BeMC's garbage collection fee opposed

demically leading to the loss of job and business, how the BeMC and district administration became so inhuman in taking such a decision, the Parishad questioned. Each house owner in the city is already paying house hold tax at an increased rate and it is the responsibility of the BeMC to collect garbage free of cost, the Parishad said. When the Government is not collecting any garbage fee from the residents of the four other Smart Cities of the State, why Brahmapur denizens would pay it, the Parishad questioned. The Parishad alleged that the BeMC and the district administration on the sheer pretext of generating revenue, has reportedly given contract to a firm, Pratyush, for cleaning and sanitation work of the city



without tender for last about five years. The firm though shows on record that in each ward a team of 35-40 staffs have been deployed for cleaning and sanitation work, but the ground reality is something different. Though the firm has actually engaged 15 employees in each ward, it claims the wages of 40. There is no one to supervise or monitor their

work. There is a clear nexus between the Health unit staff of the BeMC and the firm; as a result, the taxpayer is made a victim, the Parishad alleged. The Parishad, therefore, demanded that the BeMC and the district administration immediately introduce the biometric system for taking the attendance of staffs actually engaged by the contractor.

INBRIEF

STIR AGAINST WORSENING BALANGIR LAW & ORDER



Balangir: Members of the Sachetana Manch on Friday came in a procession and submitted a memorandum to the Balangir district SP through the Town police station Inspector in-Charge alleging that the law and order situation is deteriorating in the town and police remaining a silent spectator. They demanded strong action against the culprits.

2 QUINTAL GANJA SEIZED, 1 HELD IN KORAPUT

Koraput: Police seized over two quintals of cannabis from a vehicle on NH-26 in the Semiliguda area of Koraput district and arrested one person on Thursday. The seized contraband was being transported in a Bolero from Pottangi to Jeypore. Acting on a tipoff, the Semiliguda police conducted a raid at Mill Chhak near Chirag Dhaba and seized 229 kg of ganja from the vehicle. A person was arrested in this connection. The accused was forwarded to a local court on Friday, police said.

PREPARATORY MEET FOR PPT HIGH SCHOOL REUNION



Paradip: A preparatory meeting for the reunion of Paradip Port Trust (PPT) High School's 1984 batch was held at Golf Course here on Wednesday. The batch mates unanimously decided that the upcoming friends get-together would be conducted in Paradip. All the old friends would be invited for the event. The meeting was coordinated by Nalini Sahu, Manoj Behera, Sasanka Acharya, Pramod Sahoo, Sushant Barman, B. Pani and others.

FAKIR MOHAN JAYANTI HELD AT PALLAHARA

Pallahara: The 178th birth anniversary of Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati was observed in the court campus here. Sub-Collector Sadasib Behera presided while Tehsildar Swagat Das was chief guest and BDO Rabinarayana Majhi guest of honour and educationist Dr Kishore Chandra Pradhan chief speaker. Dr Pradhan highlighted the contributions of Fakir Mohan to Odia literature. ADPRO Dhukhabandhu Majhi, Librarian Rabintra Behera, Janardan Sahu, Netrananda Mahakul, Bhimsen Sahu, Jagabandhu Behera, Sankar Dehury, lawyer Bishnu Das, journalist Raghunandana Acharya, Hemanta Das and Susil Samal were present.

Bargarh cops crack 19L robbery case

Three held; ₹18.24L, ornaments recovered

RAKESH JOSHI ■ BARGARH

The Town police on Friday cracked a major robbery case, in which Rs19 lakh and gold ornaments had been looted at gunpoint from a house in Ward-5 of Bargarh town, by arresting three persons. The accused were identified as Vikash Matari of

Saharpada, Ashok Rana and Sushanta Bhuje of Beheratikra in the town. One Ankit Rekhani had lodged a complaint with police that he was away from home for some business work on January 12 and his mother was alone. The same night three miscreant entered his home, brandished guns and decamped with cash of Rs 19, 07, 000 and some gold ornaments. Later, Ankit had lodged a report with the Bargarh police. Later, the police under the supervision of Bargarh SP formed a special team under the leadership of IIC

Sadananda Pujari. Including the IIC, the squad comprised eight officers comprising Sub-Inspectors Sanaya Nayak and Soumyakanta Baliarsingh. Acting on a tipoff, the team conducted raids on a place and arrested the trio. During interrogation, they confessed to the crime. Rs 18, 24 lakh, diamond, gold, silver ornaments were recovered from their possession. Police said they have also seized a motor cycle, a knife, two mobile phones and two masks from the trio's possession. Further investigations are on, said Bargarh SP Padmini Sahoo at a Press meet here.

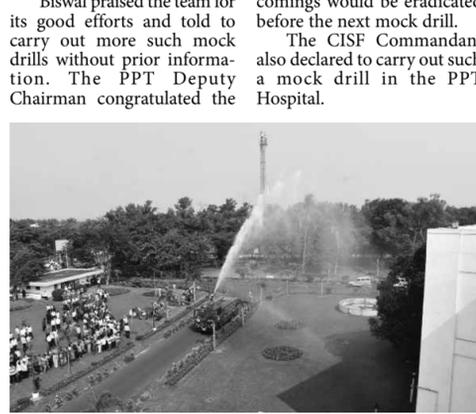
Fire mock drill conducted at PPT

PNS ■ PARADIP

A fire mock drill was conducted by the CISF Fire Wing, PPT, under the guidance of CISF Commandant M Biswal in coordination with safety professionals of the Paradip Port Trust on Friday. All the fire tenders were deployed for the purpose. RN Panigrahi and PK Kar were the observers from the PPT. PPT Deputy Chairman AK Bose and all HODs and employees witnessed the mock drill. At the end, Deputy Commandant, Fire, Dhyansingh informed various methods adopted by the fire wing team to combat fire and evacuate victims. Panigrahi praised the team for its skill, timely efforts and coordination to combat the fire and pointed out

the short comings observed during the drill for further improvement. Biswal praised the team for its good efforts and told to carry out more such mock drills without prior information. The PPT Deputy Chairman congratulated the

CISF team and safety personnel for their exemplary mock drill and assured that the shortcomings would be eradicated before the next mock drill. The CISF Commandant also declared to carry out such a mock drill in the PPT Hospital.



Lift ban on 'Natak' performance: Ganjam artists

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The general body meeting of the Maa Kureishuni Loka Kala Directors' Sangh was held in the premises of the Maa Kureishuni Shakti Peetha at Ganianala on the outskirts of the city on Wednesday. Advisor of the Sangh Dr Tirupati Sahu presided over the meeting. Among others, many senior artists of south Odisha and representatives of different art and cultural organisations participated.



Joining the event as chief guest, Dakshin Odisha

Baristha Kalakar Sangh secretary Subash Chandra Sahu Roshan in his address urged upon the members of the Sangh and the artist fraternity to sink their differences and work unitedly to protect the heritage and traditional art and culture of the region, besides safeguarding the interests of the artists of south Odisha. Speaking on the occasion, Guru Damayanth Maharana, Guru Damodar Badtiya and Guru Duryodhan Swain in their address explained the

core objectives of formation of the Sangh and highlighted the various emerging issues of the artists. The speakers urged upon the Government to lift the ban on performing of "Nataka" in Danda Yatra of Ganjam district. The ban was imposed keeping in view the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the situation has become normal, the artists requested the Government to reconsider its decision and lift the ban. Sangh president G Rajendra Reddy delivered the

welcome address. Among others, Shankarsan Behera, Pintu Mahapatra, Rama Chandra Pradhan, M Mohan, Gajendra Swain, Binaya Pradhan, Hari Pradhan, Gopal Sethi, Ramesh Chandra Swain, Banaj Kumar Sahu, Bulu Sahu, Simanchal Sahu and Bhagaban Dakua actively participated in the deliberations. The artists suggested for continuous performance of Nataka for 15 hours in a performance. Sangh secretary Pratap Chandra Pradhan offered the vote of thanks.

Students felicitated at Bidya Jyoti event

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Bidya Jyoti Sammana Samaroha organised by Bharosa was held at Ganjam town recently where about 50 meritorious students were given certificates and medals for their achievements. Former Assembly Deputy Speaker Rama Chandra Panda addressing the gathering said that the primary school was an important phase of students' career where the mind and attitude of the students are moulded to make them good citizens. Thus, teaching being a sacred job, the teachers have great responsibility to fulfill this national objective, he told. Among others, Grasm Industry DGM Rabindra Mohanty, Er Binod Chandra Padhi, trade union leader Sankar Das were present. Girish Kumar Acharya offered vote of thanks while 'Bharosa' president Durga Madhab Panigrahi welcomed guests.

Joda Parishad holds get-together

Felicitates corona warriors

PNS ■ CHAMPUSA

The Joda Bikash Parishad held a Bandhu Milan at Lahanda on bank of Sona river near Bileipada of Keonjhar on Wednesday. The speakers referred to different achievements of Parishad and hoped that it would work more the development of Joda. Parishad president Niranjan Bahidar said how different social organisations and social media played their roles during corona period. Chief guest Joda Senior Citizen Services Association president Santosh Patnaik and guests of

honour Dushasan Sahoo and Nilamani Mohanty felicitated social organisations like Sirdi Sai Mandir, Sawan Kripal Ruchai Mission, Mining Area Truck Owners' Association, The World Vision which served the foods to needy people during corona. Besides, journalists, who worked as corona warriors

were also honoured. Sushanta Kumar Barik, Secretary had sought the co-operation of all people of Joda so that Joda Bikash Parishad can serve better in future. Parishad joint secretary Manindra Sundar Barik and executive member Subash Bihari, among others, coordinated event.



Odia poems' collection released at Khariar

PNS ■ NUAPADA

Panchamruta, a collection of Odia poems penned by Sanatan Mahanty was released at Khariar on Thursday. A get-together of poets and literature lovers was held on this occasion which was presided over by retired teacher poet Balabhadra Mahanty. Writer Shrikant Chatterjee was chief guest. Sanatan Mahanty said, "It is a collection of 81 poems written at different times of my life and are reflections of my feelings about this life and creation." At the outset, retired Odia Professor Bijaya Barik spoke succinctly

'Scientific community helped Covid mgmt' Webinar organised by NAS, ILS

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

India's scientific and research community has made a significant contribution towards effective management of Covid-19 pandemic in the country, said Union Secretary, Biotechnology, Dr Renu Swarup. She inaugurated a webinar on topic Covid-19 management through science and technology, jointly organised by the National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Life Sciences,

Webinar organised by NAS, ILS

Bhubaneswar. Dr Swarup commended the efforts of the Indian scientists in testing efforts as well as various research initiatives on diagnostics, therapeutics, genome sequencing, vaccine development and creation of facilities and resources for promoting further research and developments in finding lasting solutions for Covid-19. She commended the academic and industry partnerships in making effective use of resources and making India self-sufficient in manufacture of diagnostic kits, PPEs and vaccines etc in record time. Former Secretary Biotechnology Dr Manju Sharma addressing the meeting mentioned that scientific community had a major role to play in communicating science

based factual details for benefit of the public. President NAS Prof G Padmanaban opined that untiring efforts of scientific community have made possible to reach development and delivery of vaccines in a record time. Director, Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar, Dr Ajay Parida highlighted research and development initiatives of institute in response to Covid-19 diagnostic, genome surveillance and creation of platforms for drug and vaccine testing. Director, RCB, Faridabad Dr Sudhanshu Vrat; Director, RMRC, Bhubaneswar Dr Sanghamitra Pati; Dr Ishan Patro from Jiwaji University, Gwalior & Director, NIPGR, New Delhi Dr Subhra Chakraborty spoke with others.

In Nayagarh Petrol bomb hurled at filling station

PNS ■ NAYAGARH

A major mishap was averted after unidentified miscreant hurled a petrol bomb at a filling station at Singapada under the Khandapada block in Nayagarh district in wee hours of Friday. Fortunately, timely action by the the petrol pump staff prevented a major mishap. As per reports, one Banambar Majhi (21) of Patharaganda village under Gadiasahi Panchayat had come to the filling station on Thursday night to buy petrol in a bottle. However, the staffs refused to give same leading to an

B'kanika dolphin census tomorrow

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Forest personnel of the Bhitarkanika National Park are going to launch a day-long enumeration drive of dolphins on January 17. The drive would be undertaken from Dhamra to Mahanadi mouth within the Bhitarkanika mangrove wetland, informed Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division DFO Bikash Ranjan Dash. The census would help provide basic information about migrating behaviour of Irrawaddy dolphins as well as other species. For the seventh consecutive year, the dolphin census drive is going to be held at the Bhitarkanika National Park.

2 liquor shops evicted from Govt land

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The district administration sealed and evicted two IMFL liquor shops operating illegally on Government land on the Khodasingh main road side and Khodasingh embankmen in Ganjam district on Friday. Local women organiza-

D'kanal SBI ATM loot accused held

PNS ■ DHENKANAL

Police arrested the prime accused of the Dhenkanal SBI ATM loot case from Baleswar district and produced him before court on Friday. The

2 liquor shops evicted from Govt land

tions had alleged that due to the shops law and order situation was deteriorating in the area and the drunkards were creating nuisance. They requested the district administration to shift the concerned shops from those areas. Acting on the complaint, Brahmapur Sub-Collector V Kirti Vasanan, SDM Sweta Kumar

In Nilgiri Tusker on rampage, damages houses

PNS ■ BALESWAR

As a tusker intruding into the Nilgiri area of Baleswar district is on a rampage, the villagers are living in fear. The elephant, which came from Jharkhand, has damaged at least three houses besides devouring stored grains and grown fruits and vegetables. The tusker has badly damaged the house of Balabhadra Singh of village Gopalpur. Similarly, it has damaged the houses Birabhadra Singh and Radhamohan Singh besides damaging the house of the Forest Committee at

In Nayagarh Petrol bomb hurled at filling station

Naranpur. The tusker, after crossing the Sono river, initially entered into the Gopalpur Reserve Forest before coming to the Tinkosia forest. The animal, which was chased away by villagers with the help of forest personnel, is currently in the Kathpal forest. The Forest Department authorities said that their personnel are maintaining a strict vigil on the movement of the tusker in assistance with Sabuja Bahini volunteers and police and compensation for house damages and crop losses and damages would be provided as per Government's guidelines.

Honest State poll officials get EC shield ahead of polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in five States, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday stepped in to protect officials assigned to the election duty to ensure free, fair and impartial elections. Taking note of victimisation of the officials on flimsy grounds after the election is over, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday said States and Union Territories will need its approval before initiating disciplinary action against the chief electoral officers and other officers up to the joint chief electoral officer during their tenure and also up to one year from its expiry.



the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for proper discharge of his/her duties.

In a letter addressed to the cabinet secretary, DoPT secretary, chief secretaries and chief electoral officers of all States and Union Territories on Thursday, the EC said it has noted some incidents of "victimisation" of CEOs and additional, joint, deputy and assistant CEOs in the post-election period.

The Commission has noted some incidents of victimisation of CEOs, Addl/Joint/Deputy/Assistant CEO in the post-election period. Many a times they are targeted for political vendetta by charging them with disciplinary cases on flimsy grounds for their earlier tenures in the State Government after the completion of their tenure. An environment of fear is created to convey that the upright, steadfast and sincere officers can be taken to task at any time, on the flimsiest of the grounds," the EC noted. It said in such a scenario, these officers are not only "demotivated but also their morale is greatly reduced, which severely affect their efforts to ensure free and fair elections." "Left to go unfettered, it causes a situation where officials are reluctant to join as CEOs and those who are inducted face the uncertainty of fair treatment in post-election phase," it observed.

"Commission is sanguine in the expectation that all concerned shall strictly adhere to this regimen in letter as well as in spirit," EC said in a communication sent to Cabinet secretary, all state/UT chief secretaries, DoPT secretary

The preparations for the Assembly polls in five States—Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam are on. The terms of the assemblies in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam will end on May 24, 2021, June 1, 2021, May 30, 2021, June 8, 2021 and May 31, 2021 respectively.

The Commission designates a CEO for state and union territories in consultation with the respective governments. Chief electoral officers are essentially an extension of the Commission in the states and union territories to carry out multifarious election related functions of the Commission. Once appointed, the CEO comes under direct control, superintendence and discipline of the Election Commission and remains on deputation to Election Commission.

In its direction, the EC said not reduce facilities such as vehicle, security and other facilities/amenities provided to

LAC crisis: No one should test patience of India, says Army chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of warning to China, Army Chief General MM Naravane on Friday said no one should test the patience of India. He, however, reiterated that the nation is committed to resolve the current impasse through dialogues.

He also said a "befitting" response was given to China when it tried to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Addressing the Army Day parade, Naravane said a "befitting response" was given to the "conspiracy" to make unilateral changes on the border and that the sacrifice of the Galwan heroes in eastern Ladakh will not go waste.

"We are committed to resolve disputes through talks and political efforts but no one should make any mistake of testing our patience," he said.

"I want to assure the country that the sacrifice of the Galwan heroes will not go waste. Indian Army will not allow any harm to the country's sovereignty and security," the Chief said.

Twenty Indian Army personnel including the commanding officer were killed in a brawl with the Chinese troops on June 15 last year in the Galwan valley. It marked the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades.

Though it suffered casualties in the hand-to-hand combat that day, China is yet to disclose the number of its soldiers killed and injured. Reports indicate that more

than 35 Chinese soldiers were also killed in the clash.

Stressing the point that India favoured talks to resolve the dispute leading to disengagement and de-escalation at the LAC now on for the last nine months, Naravane said eight rounds of military talks were held between India and China to bring the situation under control.

"Our efforts will continue to find a solution to the current situation on the basis of mutual and equal security, basis of mutual and equal security," he said.

Referring to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, the Chief said the neighbouring country continues to provide a safe haven to terrorists.

More than 300-400 terrorists are ready to infiltrate, he said.

"There was an increase of 40 per cent in the ceasefire violations last year which is the proof of Pakistan's sinister plans. There were also attempts to smuggle weapons using drones, he added. Naravane said more than 200 terrorists were killed by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir in different operations last year.

On the issue of modernization, he said the army is taking concrete steps. Outlining some of the procurements undertaken in the last few months in the backdrop of the stand-off at the LAC, Naravane said under emergency and fast-track schemes, the Army procured equipment worth about ₹5,000 crores and signed contracts worth ₹13,000 crores in the last year under capital procurement.

Covid vaccines only for those above 18, says Health Ministry



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the approval given by the country's top drug regulator which said that Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech's Covaxin could be administered to those above 12 years of age, the Union Health Ministry, in a recent communication, has said that both shots are recommended and approved for people above 18 years of age.

Sources said that the Ministry, in a letter issued on January 14, provided comparative details of the two vaccines - Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and University of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield which is being manufactured by Serum Institute of India - approved by Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

The factsheet has details of the vaccines, which will be distributed to cold chain points and vaccination centres for ready reference.

However, in the letter, the Ministry says that both vaccines are recommended and approved for people above 18 years of age. This contradicts the earlier DCGI approval which said that Bharat Biotech's Covaxin could be administered to those above 12 years of age.

The Health Ministry's letter - under the subhead 'Precautions and contraindications for COVID-19 vaccination' reads: "1. Authorised age group: Under the EUA, COVID-19 vaccination is indicated only for 18 years and above. 2. Co-administration of vaccines: If required, COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines should be separated by an interval of at least 14 days. 3. Interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines is not permitted: Second dose should also be of the same COVID-19 vaccine which was administered as the first dose."

EC ready to share voters' list with Govt for job plan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) will extend "full assistance" to the Government in identifying targeted beneficiaries at the polling station level for the Covid-19 vaccination drive, but wants health authorities to delete the data once the inoculation exercise is over.

The EC after detailed deliberations, wrote back to the home secretary on January 4, saying it has decided to render "full assistance" in the vaccination drive. But asked the government to ensure that the data is strictly used for the limited purpose for which it has been sought, the sources said.

On December 31 last year, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora requesting the commission's help in identifying people above 50 years of age at the polling station level. On the issue of data security, the home secretary wrote that the Government is complying with the current best practices for ensuring cyber security. He has assured the poll panel that the data will be used only for the purpose of vaccination, the sources said.

The commission also said that the data should be deleted by health authorities once

the vaccination exercise concludes, they said. Some senior EC officials will be in touch with nodal officers of the Union home ministry and the Union health ministry to settle day-to-day issues, the sources said.

Last month, officials of the Union health ministry and the Niti Aayog had met the EC top brass seeking their help in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine given the poll panel's robust network at the booth level. The letter by the home secretary is a follow up to the meeting, the sources said.

According to guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccination drive, the latest electoral roll for Lok Sabha and assembly elections will be used to identify the priority population over the age of 50 years. Twelve identity documents, such as Voter ID, Aadhaar card, driving licence, passport and pension document, will be required for beneficiary identification.

According to the government, the shots will be offered first to an estimated one crore healthcare workers, and around two crore frontline workers, and then to persons above 50 years of age, followed by persons younger than 50 years of age with associated comorbidities.

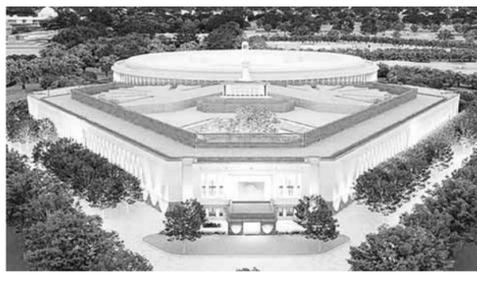
However, pregnant and lactating women should not be administered the shots as they have not been part of any anti-coronavirus vaccine clinical trial so far, the health ministry said. "Interchangeability of Covid-19 vaccines is not permitted. Second dose should also be of the same Covid-19 vaccine which was administered as the first dose," the letter written by Manohar Agnani, Additional Secretary in the Ministry.

According to the officials, 95 per cent of the 1.1 crore doses of Covishield vaccine purchased by the Government have been delivered and shipped to nearly 60 consignee points across India in last two days. Similarly, of the 55 lakh doses of indigenously developed Covaxin of Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech ordered by the Centre, the first tranche of 2.4 lakh doses have been dispatched to 12 States.

Construction work of new Parl building starts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The construction work of the new Parliament building started on Friday, a day after 'Makar Sankranti', considered auspicious.



submitted an affidavit that it would not start construction, demolition and tree transplantation until the court gave its judgment.

"Excavation work has started at the site where a sufficient number of labourers have been engaged to ensure that the project is completed on time", officials said. The site of the construction is adjacent to the existing Parliament, which was completed in 1927.

The new building is being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd. The project is estimated to cost Rs 971 crore. Tata Projects Ltd. said despite the 35-day delay in the commencement of the construction work, it is confident that it will be able to deliver the project on or before time.

The project was scheduled to start in December last, but construction and demolition at the site was put on hold while legal challenges to the project were pending with the apex court. On December 7, the Supreme Court allowed the ground-breaking ceremony to take place after the government

Parliament building on December 10 last year.

Earlier this week, a 14-member heritage panel gave its approval to the new Parliament building while also giving the go-ahead to the Central Vista redevelopment project. The Supreme Court had asked the Centre to seek prior approval from the panel and other relevant authorities before starting the construction of the new building.

The construction work could not start earlier as the government had assured the Supreme Court that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decided the pending pleas on the issue.

CBI conducts searches in ₹340-cr bank scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday conducted searches in connection with investigation of two separate cases related to bank fraud involving an amount of about ₹340 crore.

The agency has registered a case on a complaint from State Bank of India (SBI) against a private company Naftogaz India Private Limited based at Delhi/Noida and others including its CMD and unknown public servants/persons for causing an alleged loss of about ₹219.81 crore to SBI.

"It was alleged in the complaint that the said accused firm has cheated the SBI by way of diversion of bank funds, fraudulent transactions, criminal misappropriation, submission of false stock / debt statements etc.," the CBI said in a statement.

In the complaint, the SBI alleged that the company was incorporated in 2005 starting as EPC contractor for exploration, drilling, extraction and production of mineral oils,

natural gas and petroleum products. The alleged fraud came to light when Forensic Auditors submitted a report on February 18, 2020 for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2014.

Searches were conducted at three locations including Delhi / NCR at the office and residential premises of the borrower company and other accused persons, it said.

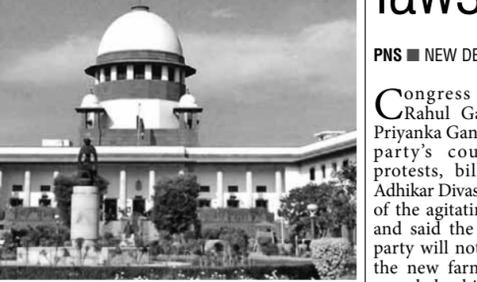
The other case was registered on a complaint from Punjab National Bank (PNB) against a private company Hari Har Overseas Private Ltd, Narsing, Karnal (Haryana) engaged in rice milling activities at Karnal and others including its directors/guarantor and unknown public servants/persons for causing an alleged loss of about ₹121.75 crore to the bank.

It was alleged that the said accused had fraudulently sold its stock as well as machinery, which was hypothecated to the bank. It was further alleged that the accused had not deposited the sale proceeds with the bank.

SC seeks reply from Centre, 61 firms on PIL duty evasion in iron ore exports to China

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought responses from the Centre and 61 iron exporting firms including Essar Steel and Jindal Steel & Power on a PIL seeking a direction to the CBI to register an FIR and probe the alleged duty evasion by them in exporting iron ore to China since 2015.



has been taking place as these companies have been exporting them without paying 30 per cent export duty.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde took note of the submissions of lawyer and PIL petitioner M L Sharma that the companies be prosecuted for alleged evasion of export duty by declaring wrong tariff code to export the iron ore under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

"Issue notice," said the bench which also comprised Justices Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The PIL said the ministries of commerce and finance control and regulate the export policies and decide as to under which Harmonized System (HS) Codes each good will be exported.

It said the government had set up a firm with the name of KIOCL to use low grade iron ore and export them under the "duty free Tariff HS code 26011210 which is

exclusively prescribed for KIOCL."

The PIL said under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, "tariff HS CODE NO. 26011100 was prescribed to export "all other kind of iron ore" subject to payment of export duty at the rate of 30 per cent."

The firms were wrongly allowed to export iron ore using the tariff code being used by KIOCL and as a result crores of rupees have been cheated by them, it said.

Won't relent until farm laws are repealed: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi led the party's countrywide protests, billed Kisan Adhikar Divas in support of the agitating farmers and said the grand old party will not relent till the new farm laws are repealed which invited sharp reactions from Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

On the day when yet another round of talks between the Government and farmers unions remained inconclusive, Rahul alleged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not respect farmers and wants to tire out those protesting against the new agriculture laws.

Tomar hit back at Rahul for his remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said even the leaders of his

own party do not take the Gandhi scion seriously and laugh at his remarks. Addressing the media after the meeting with the farmers, Tomar said Gandhi's statements and actions are laughed at even within his own party.

"The Congress manifesto in 2019 itself had promised these reforms and therefore, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi should tell us whether they were lying then or are lying now," said the Agriculture Minister.

Sitting at Jantar Mantar protest site, Rahul alongwith his sibling and party general secretary Priyanka said farmers will not relent till the laws are repealed. The duo was joined by party MPs in their demonstration against the legislations. "The talks are being held only

Climate change-induced temp behind low diet quality, malnutrition among children: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than traditional causes such as poverty, inadequate sanitation and poor education, it is the climate change-induced higher temperatures which is majorly contributing to low diet quality and malnutrition among young children in many parts of the world, researchers have found after assessing diet diversity among one lakh kids under five in 19 countries.

"Certainly, future climate changes have been predicted to affect malnutrition, but it surprised us that higher temperatures are already showing an impact," said lead author Meredith Niles, an assistant professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont and a fellow at the university's Gund Institute for Environment.

The study published in journal Environmental Research Letters, found that the negative effects of climate - especially higher temperature - on diet diversity are greater in some regions than the positive effects of education, water

and sanitation and poverty alleviation - all common global development tactics.

Of the six regions examined - Asia; Central and South America; North, West, and Southeast Africa, five had significant reductions in diet diversity associated with higher temperatures.

Researchers focused on diet diversity, a metric developed by the United Nations to measure diet quality and micronutrient intake. Micronutrients, such as iron, folic acid, zinc, and vitamins A and D, are critical for child development. A lack of micronutrients is a cause of malnutrition, which affects one out of every three children under the age of five. Diet diversity is measured by counting the number of food groups eaten over a given time period, as per the study.

The researchers found that on an average, children had eaten food from 3.2 food groups (out of 10) - including meat and fish, legumes, dark leafy greens and cereal greens - in the previous 24 hours. By contrast, diet diversity in

emerging economies or more affluent countries such as China have been more than double this average (6.8 for children 6 and under).

"Higher rainfall in the future may provide important diet quality benefits in multiple ways, but it also depends on how that rain comes," said co-author Molly Brown of the University of Maryland. "If it's more erratic and intense, as is predicted with climate change, this may not hold true."

"Diet diversity was already low for this group," said UVM co-author Brendan Fisher. "These results suggest that, if we don't adapt, climate change could further erode a diet that already isn't meeting adequate child micronutrient levels."

The researchers had used 30 years of geo-coded temperature and precipitation data, and socioeconomic, ecological, and geographic data.

The disturbing findings does not bode well for the future generation with a UNICEF report already pointing out that some 144 million children worldwide are stunted by malnutrition.

SCBA ex-president urges SC to resume normal functioning

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior advocate and former SCBA president Vikas Singh has requested Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde that the Supreme Court, which has been hearing cases virtually in view of Covid-19 for past several months, resume "normal functioning" at the earliest.

"Recent turn of events have created a situation whereby the interests of the Bar are being neglected and the Bench is taking unilateral decisions with regard to the functioning of the institution," he said.

Bar and Bench are the two main pillars on which the system of justice stood, the for-

mer Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president said in a letter to the CJI on Thursday.

Singh said: "In my view when the entire country is opening up, of course with sufficient safeguards, I see no reason why the Supreme Court which is the foundation of our democratic polity should not resume full normal functioning by putting in place sufficient safeguards for the said opening."

"While the judges and the court staff are completely protected being away from the areas where the lawyers, litigants and media come, till date no effort has been made to even think of a method where-

by the number of people entering the Court is restricted and normal functioning of courts starts on that basis".

He added that the largest stakeholders in the functioning of the Supreme Court were the litigants for whose benefit this entire institution had been created and while the issue of the pandemic was looming large in this country, the litigants could not be ignored by the non-functioning of the SC in a proper manner.

While pointing out the band-width issues for allowing mentioning, he also said that any technological shortcoming could not be an impediment in this vital activity.

Sasikala faction, ADMK merger chances brighten

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Possibilities of VK Sasikala (the jailed former aide of late Jayalalitha) joining hands with the AIADMK led by Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy and his deputy O Panneerselvam got brightened on the auspicious occasion of Pongal which was observed with gaiety across Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

The initial signals of such a scenario came from S Gurumurthy, Tamil Nadu's leading political commentator and chief editor of Thuglak, the popular magazine launched by late Cho Ramaswamy. Sasikala who has been convicted for four years in a disproportionate wealth case will come out of the Bangalore jail anytime after January 27, according to S Pandian, her lawyer.

"If there is a realignment of forces and there is unity, it is always good. But the final word is with the party leadership," said Vaigaichelvan, former Minister and AIADMK's spokesman.

Termining the Dravidian political parties and other fringe parties as the major threat faced by Tamil Nadu and India, Gurumurthy said it was the

responsibility of all patriotic people in the State to ensure the defeat of the DMK and its allies. "The DMK is an embodiment of corruption, favoritism, communalism and anti-nationalism. Though the AIADMK too is corrupt, it has got certain positive characteristics. The AIADMK is nationalistic as envisaged by party founder MGR and his chosen successor Jayalalitha. But the DMK is a family owned enterprises which has made corruption its hallmark," said Gurumurthy while addressing a public meeting held late Thursday evening to mark the 51st anniversary of the magazine Thuglak.

He said he was borrowing the words of Arun Shourie who asked all non-Congress political parties in 1989 to come together to defeat the Rajiv Gandhi Government. "Those were the days when the Government at the Centre was enmeshed in corruption charges. Military deals involving purchase of Bofors, HDW ships, Scorpene sub marines and the Fairfax controversy were plaguing the Rajiv Gandhi led Government. The opposition parties were divided and were confused over aligning with the rival parties. It was then that Arun Shourie who was the

editor of Indian Express told then that their house was in fire and not to waste time waiting for Ganga water to douse the flames. Shourie told them to make use of even drainage water to douse the fire," said Gurumurthy.

He explained that his friend Rajinikanth opted out of the political race only because of ill health. "You should remember that we don't have an alternate leader to take over from Rajinikanth if there is more deterioration in his health. We cannot afford to lose Rajini," said Gurumurthy.

What stood out in his speech was the comments he made about judiciary. "Most of the judges, from trial courts to the apex court, are having allegiance to the persons who appointed and promoted them. The case involving former IT minister and DMK leader Dayanidhi Maran is an ideal example.

ED grills Eknath Khadse for 7 hours in land scam

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday grilled senior NCP leader and former Minister Eknath Khadse in connection with a questionable land deal in Pune, for seven-long hours.

Khadse—who was to have appeared before the ED on December 30, but had sought time to do so because of his indisposition—arrived at the investigation agency's office at 11 am. After a seven-hour-long grilling, he stepped out of the ED's office at around 6 pm.

Talking to media persons after the first round of questioning, Khadse said: "I coop-

erated fully with the ED today and will continue to do so even in future. I have replied to all their questions and provided all evidence required in the matter. I will continue to provide whatever information they require from me."

Sixty-eight-year-old Khadse, who had quit the BJP and joined the NCP on October 23, had said soon after joining the Sharad Pawar-led party that "if the BJP unleashes ED against me, then I will release CDs against the BJP leaders".

Responding to the ED's summons, Khadse had earlier said: "The land in the MIDC deal has been transferred in the

name of my wife. I have absolutely nothing to do with this land deal. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Pune, the Anti Corruption Bureau, Nashik, Income Tax department and a judicial committee headed by retired Bombay HC judge Dinkar Zoting, had looked into the allegations against me. Now the ED has summoned me for questioning. I will appear before it," Khadse had said.

It may be recalled that on June 4, 2016, Khadse had resigned from his post as the State Revenue Minister over irregularities in the purchase of a plot of land at Bhosari in Pune district.

65-year-old man booked for raping 2 minors in Pilibhit

Pilibhit (UP): A 65-year-old man has been booked for allegedly raping two sisters at a village here, police said on Friday.

An FIR was lodged against Satnaam Singh (65) on the charge of rape on Thursday after a probe into it by Circle Officer Pramod Kumar, Superintendent of Police Jai Prakash said. The two girls, aged 15 and 13, worked at Singh's place and were allegedly raped by him for a year, police said.

The victims' family alleged

that they have trying to lodge a complaint in this regard for the past one month but police did not listen to them.

They approached officials at Purnanpur tehsil and informed them about it after which an FIR was registered on Thursday. The SP said a probe has also been ordered against the area SHO for not taking the case seriously. The SP said in their complaint, the girls' family did not give any date of the incident and alleged that they were being raped for the past year. **PTI**

New bailey bridge to restore traffic on Jammu-Srinagar highway

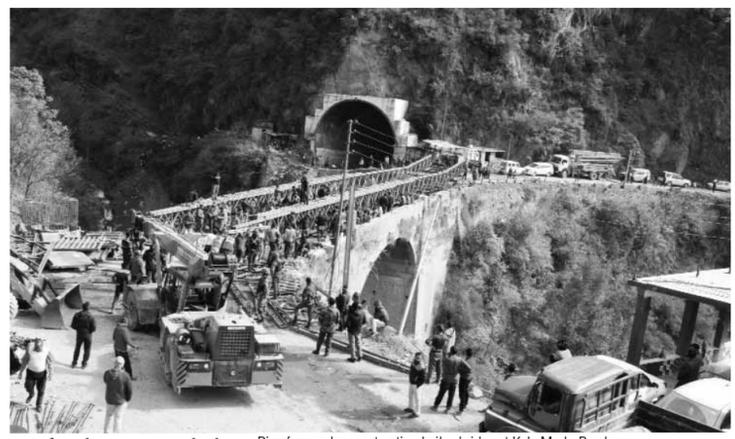
MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Vehicular traffic and movement of security convoys, which remained suspended along the 300-Km long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway since January 3, is set to be restored from Sunday with the completion of 120-foot-long, 40-ton bailey bridge near Kela Morh in Ramban district in a record time of three days.

After the mandatory testing of the bailey bridge the road link would be thrown open to rush essential supplies to the Kashmir valley. Braving intense cold wave conditions, men and machinery of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are working round the clock to complete the job at hand.

Chief Engineer of Project Beacon of the Border Roads Organisation, Brigadier IK Jaggi along with Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Nazim Zai Khan Friday supervised the bridge construction work on ground zero.

Briefing media persons Brigadier IK Jaggi said "More than 50 percent of the work on



Pic of an under construction bailey bridge at Kela Morh, Ramban

120 foot long, 40 ton bailey bridge has been completed and the left over work is expected to be completed on January 16. After mandatory testing the local authorities are hoping to throw open the road link for movement of traffic on January 17.

Brigadier IK Jaggi said, "we had launched the construction work of the 120 foot long bailey bridge at the loca-

tion on January 14 and by Saturday evening we will complete the task". He said, due to the collapse of the retaining wall of the existing bridge a 28 meter long gap was created. He said, "we have covered the gap using a 120 foot long span as it is considered safe to restore the link".

"we have put all the resources available for completing the bridge". "Work is going on war footing as all men and machinery have been put to use. We are sure that by tomorrow evening the Bailey bridge will be completed and ready for traffic" he added.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Nazim Zai Khan said,

construction of Bailey bridge is nearing to completion at Kela Morh and a trial run would be conducted tomorrow before starting the movement of vehicles on the bridge.

He said that the construction of Bailey bridge is going on round the clock and Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has completed more than 50 percent of bridge launching work till early Friday morning.

Due to prolonged suspension of traffic movement on the strategic highway the common people are facing many hardships. Convoy movement of security forces was also affected due to suspension of traffic.

Initially, the traffic on the National Highway was suspended on January 3 following a fresh spell of snowfall. After remaining closed for six long days the traffic was partially restored on January 9 to clear the rush of stranded vehicles and essential supplies. A day later the traffic was suspended again after a retaining wall of a bridge collapsed near Kela Morh in Ramban district on January 10.

NCP MIN RAPE CHARGE ROW Pawar softens stand, says let the law take its course

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what came to his party's Minister accused of rape Dhananjay Munde, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Friday softened his stand over the accusation of rape made by a woman against Dhananjay Munde after two more political leaders alleged that the woman was trying to honey trap them, and said that the police be allowed to investigate the matter.

Ruling out indirectly any possible action against Munde at the party level, Pawar said: "Since allegations have been made against the woman who has complained against Munde, we have come to a conclusion that the police be allowed to do a comprehensive probe into the matter. We are confident that the police will do a good job. Hence we will not interfere in the probe. All we have suggested to the government that ACP-level be woman be asked to conduct the probe".

On Thursday, Pawar had termed the charges made by a woman were "serious" and said that he would take a call on the issue, after consulting his senior party's important colleagues. "The charges are serious...the matter is with the police...it is also in court...they will decide, however, we as a party would have to decide on it. I will speak to my colleagues and decide," Pawar had said.

Alluding to his yesterday's comment, Pawar said: "Yesterday when I had commented on Dhananjay Munde issue, I said that the issue was serious. But by then, certain facts were not in the public domain. I came to know that there was a similar complaints against the same lady by different political party leaders," Pawar said.

In effect, Pawar was referring to the statements made by BJP leader Krishna Hegde and MNS leader Manish Dhuri, who had come in indirect support of Munde by claiming that the woman who had made

allegations of rape against the NCP minister had tried to "honey-trap" them.

In a related development, Maharashtra's Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said: "Law will take its own course. Everyone is same before law...santri or mantri...the matter would be investigated as per law".

Munde has been accused of rape by a singer Renu Sharma, with whose sister Karuna Sharma the minister has admitted to have been in a relationship and sired children.

After Pawar distanced himself from the controversy by saying that the charges against Munde were "serious", Munde had on Thursday received support from an unexpected quarter, as Hegde and Dhuri trained their gun on the woman who had accused the minister of having raped her sister.

"Renu Sharma has been calling me, messaging me and coaxing me since 2010 to have a relationship with her. This harassment went on to the point of stalking. Through my sources I found out that she is a dubious person who is setting up a honey trap. I totally avoided meeting her," BJP leader Krishna Hegde had said in his complaint lodged with Senior Inspector of Amboli police station Kamte.

On his part, MNS leader Manish Dhuri had said separately: "The woman (Renu Sharma) who has now complained against Munde had obtained my telephone number. She used to follow me. She tried many times to get to close to me. Having realised that she had honey trap several influential people, I tried to distance myself from her.... If I had got involved with her, I would have become another Dhananjay Munde".

Meanwhile, having come under fire various quarters, Renu Sharma - who has accused Munde of rape - said that she would take a step back if all wanted her to do so.

Kerala to offer 2 million jobs in 5 yrs: Min

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M)-led LDF Government in Kerala would create "at least" two million jobs for the unemployed people in the State in the next five years, according to Thomas Issac, Minister of Finance.

Presenting the fifth and last budget of the Government led by Pinarayi Vijayan in the State assembly on Friday (Kerala goes to the polls to elect a new legislative assembly by April 2021), Isaac said despite the non-cooperation from the Centre, Kerala has done exceedingly well in the last five years.

"The changes that has happened in the global employment market and the superb expertise gained by Kerala in controlling the Covid-19 pandemic has helped us to address the problem of unemployment. We are opening a digital platform in February 2021 to launch the massive employment generation programme. This would be a trend setter for the rest of the world," disclosed Issac in his record-breaking budget speech which he read out in 3 hours 20 minutes.

All people in the State would get a minimum monthly pension of Rs 1600, said the minister. "Every household would be given laptops and free internet connection. Poor sections of society would continue receiving food kits free of cost. The government would generate eight lakh jobs in 2021-2022 itself. Those desiring to set up business ventures would be given loans to buy computer and allied instruments for their office work.

The minister who has a PhD in changing life style of coir workers in the State has allocated Rs 112 crore for the coir sector in the State. "We will create two lakh jobs in agriculture sector. We will also make Kerala free of fallow land," said Issac.

There are no new taxes in the budget proposals. The minister has promised soft loans to all homemakers in the State to buy smart gadgets to simplify and minimise their workload in kitchens.

Mumbai cops seize 345 kg ganja worth ₹5.2 cr, arrest 1

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a second major drug haul in less than a week, the Mumbai Police on Friday seized 345 kilograms of Ganja (marijuana) worth around Rs 5.2 crore and arrested one person in connection with the seizure.

Six days after the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized 200 kilograms of ganja and imported drugs like "OG Kush" (a strain of cannabis indica) in raids conducted in Mumbai's north-western suburbs, the Mumbai police raided a small flat at Chandivali's Sangarshnagar locality in north-east Mumbai and seized huge quantity of drugs.

Acting on a tip-off, the Mumbai police raided a small flat in building no. 10 of the Slum Redevelopment Authority complex at Sangharsh Nagar area of Chandivali and seized 345 kilograms of Ganja (marijuana) worth around Rs.5.2 crore.

"After examining the CCTV footage in the area, we have arrested one - Ashok M. Metre (39). We have arrested him and booked him under the NDPs Act," Deputy

Commissioner of Police (Zone 10) Maheshwar Reddy said.

Following the seizure of drugs, the Saki Naka Police are keeping a close watch on the illegal activities in the area.

Friday's was the second major drug seizure in less than a week. On January 9, the NCB personnel had seized 200 kilograms and arrested three persons Karan Sajani, a British national, and two others Rahila Furniturewala and Shaista Furniturewala.

The drugs, seized from Khar and Bandra areas in north-west Mumbai, included ganja, imported contraband like "OG Kush" (a strain of cannabis indica), and curated marijuana. Some of the seized drugs had been sourced from the United States.

Subsequently on January 12 (Tuesday), the NCB arrested Ramkumar Tiwari, one of the brothers who own "Muchhad Paanwala" shop at Kemps corner in south Mumbai in connection of cannabis-related drugs seizure.

A day later, the NCB arrested Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik's

son-in-law Sameer Khan in connection with a drugs case.

Sameer's arrest came at the end of a day-long questioning of him in connection with a drugs case in which three arrests, including that one of the owners of famous "Muchhad Paanwala" shop, have been made so far.

Sameer was placed under arrest by the NCB after it questioned him in connection with a google pay transaction of Rs 20,000 between him and one of the arrested accused Karan Sajani, a British national.

Earlier on Tuesday, the NCB had arrested "Muchhad Paanwala" shop's co-owner Ramkumar Tiwari was arrested in connection with the same drugs case. The NCB said that it had seized "half a kg of cannabis-related drugs" at a warehouse in Mumbai. The allegation is that it was Sajani who provided drugs to Tiwari.

Started in 1977, Muchhad Paanwala is one of the most famous paan shops in Mumbai, which is frequented by celebrities and which takes orders on its web site.

5,624 new corona cases in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: As many as 5,624 more persons tested positive for coronavirus in Kerala on Friday while 4,603 patients recovered from the disease, Health Minister KK Shailaja's office said in a statement here.

The state's test positivity rate is 8.94 per cent. A total of 67,496 COVID-19 patients are under treatment in various hospitals.

Ernakulam recorded the highest 799 new cases and Kasargod the least 97 cases on Friday.

A total of 23 more fatalities took the state's death toll to 3,415, the statement added.

In all, 58 positive cases have come from outside Kerala, whereas 5,110 others tested positive through contact. The source of contact of 394 persons is unknown.

As many as 62 Kerala health workers also tested positive on Friday -- including 14 in Kozhikode, 10 in Pathanamthitta, 9 in Thiruvananthapuram, six in Thrissur, four each in Ernakulam, Palakkad, Wayanad, and Kannur, three each in Kollam and Idukki, and one in Malappuram.

In all, 2,02,080 persons are under observation, including 1,90,999 in home or institutional quarantine, and 11,081 in various hospitals in Kerala. vTwo new hotspots declared on Friday -- Puthupariyaram (Containment Zone ward 12) in Palakkad district and Manalur (Ward 18) in Thrissur district -- took the total to 419 in Kerala. **IANS**

Haryana Medical Services Corporation Limited
(A Government of Haryana Undertaking)
Bays No. 59-62, Sector-2, Panchkula,
Phone: 0172-2590608
Notice Inviting Tenders (NIT)
HMCSCL invites e-tenders for two years Rate Contract for 5 Part Differential Hematology Analyzer, Cryostat on the website www.etenders.hry.nic.in. Please see corrigendum if any regarding these tenders on the website www.etenders.hry.nic.in only.
Managing Director,
HMCSCL, Panchkula
RO NO. 1422

Office Project Manager, Construction Unit
Uttarakhand Peyjal Sansadhan Vikas Evam Nirman Nigam
Ghiringanikhal, Rankhet, Distt. Almora
E-Mail: pjmrnir@rediffmail.com Fax & Ph. No.: 05966-220690
Lno. 07 / Camp Haldwani/ Date: 13.01.2021
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Rankhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for the following works.
Sl. No. Name of Work Cost of Work
1. Construction of A.N.M Center and appurtenant work at Mathikhan, Distt Almora. 32.78 Lacs.
The tender form can be downloaded from e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 13.01.2021 at 17:00 hrs. to 18.01.2021 at 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or obtained from office or phone no. 05966 220690 of office of tender inviting authority.
PROJECT MANAGER

WANTED
General public is hereby informed that one suspected person namely **Unknown**, Age about 20-21 yrs., Height 5', Wheatish complexion, Thin built, Long face, black hair, wearing shirt and pant is involved in case **e-FIR No. NDD-NAV 000061/19 dated 09.10.2019 U/s 380 IPC PS North Avenue, New Delhi.**
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the suspected person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this suspected person may kindly inform to the following.
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
Ph: 011-23014046
011-23015218
S.H.O., PS North Avenue, New Delhi.
Ph: 011-23093040, 23093294
DP/186/ND/2021

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E - TENDER NOTICE NO. ELKS/SRE/T-13 dtd. 08.01.2021
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on web site www.ireps.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-
Open Tender No. ELKS/SRE/T-13
Name of work Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of 06 Nos. EOT cranes with standby spare for one years in Electric Loco shed, Saharanpur
Date of Closing/Opening 02.02.2021
Approx. Cost. 17,25,986-00
Earnest Money 34600.00
Completion period 01 Year
Validity period 45 days
Cost of tender form Free of cost
1. The required Earnest Money will only be accepted through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. upto tender closing date and time i.e. 02.02.2021 at 11:00 hrs. Manual payments through demand draft, bankers cheque, deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. Offers which are not complying above will be considered invalid. 2. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders. 3. Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions. 4. Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule. 5. For details, please log on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in
118/21
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified accused (depicted in the photo), **Namely** : Unknown **S/o** : Unknown, **R/o** : Unknown, is wanted in case FIR No. 31/20 u/s 420/34 IPC dated 06.08.2020 registered at PS North Avenue, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-
Age : about 20-25 Years, **Height** : 5'2", **Complexion** : Wheatish, **Face** : Long, **Built** : Thin, **Hair** : Black **Wearing** : Shirt and Pant.
Any accused person is having any information/clue about this wanted person, may inform SHO, North Avenue, New Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
SHO
Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. North Avenue, New Delhi
Fax No. 011-24368639 New Delhi Distt., Delhi
DP/191/ND/2021 Ph. No. 011-23093040, 23093294

Privacy matters

You wouldn't want anyone else seeing what you do online, would you? But they already do



WhatsApp's new privacy policy is in essence providing Facebook a way to monetise messages on the messaging app. At one level, it makes sense since users of the messaging app are getting a free service, and Facebook's algorithms go through your messages just like Google's algorithms go through every email you send and receive on Gmail. And most of us do use Google's service for email and the tech giant's search for everything and we post about our lives on Facebook and Twitter, so to suddenly cry 'wolf' about the new privacy policy does little but to expose our hypocrisy. Could Facebook and WhatsApp have handled it any better? Yes, they should have; many Indians will migrate

to other messaging platforms and apps over the coming weeks and some of them, at least for now, assure privacy. But with applications like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, there is something called the 'network' effect; it is difficult to use a service that few of your friends and relatives use, so while many people will download Signal and maybe even use it for some discussions that they'd rather nobody else sees, WhatsApp is unlikely to suffer much in the long term other than a bruised ego. It is more than likely that many groups, after discussing the new privacy policy threadbare with huge doses of misinformation, have gone back to their regularly scheduled "Good Morning" and "Good Evening" messages.

At a level, this comes down to our understanding of privacy as a people. In such a crowded country, the concept of personal privacy as understood in the western world does not simply exist. If one is really concerned about privacy, they should probably use better hardware devices, the iPhone for example, instead of Chinese-brand Android devices and pay for better messaging and email services. There has to be a realisation that there is a price for 'free services' because, as the saying goes, "You can't have your cake and eat it too". There is a cost to privacy when it comes to technology and when notions of personal privacy are so limited to begin with, teaching Indians about the need to keep things private is a difficult task. In many western countries, for example, it is a given that without the permission of a guardian, the pictures of children cannot be published; in India we do not think twice before doing such a thing. Remember, Indian cricket player Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka — among the most photographed couples in the country — had to very recently make an appeal to the paparazzi to refrain from taking pictures of their newborn daughter. The simple issue was the pesky photographers who often cross the fine line between the demands of the "profession" and intrusion of privacy. On the other hand, citing the case of the western world, is the instance of Hollywood actor George Clooney, who sued a member of the paparazzi brigade and his publication for climbing over the walls of the actor's villa and clicking photos of his child. Privacy is a luxury in a crowded nation and if we want it, we have to pay for it, such as living in a large house with a boundary wall. If we want luxury on the internet, we have to be willing to pay!

Virus shadow over R-Day

No chief guest at this year's parade; the number of attendees as well as pageantry scaled down, too



The devastating Coronavirus pandemic has upended all our lives and nothing is the same again. Not the global economy, nor the way we socialise, nor the education and the healthcare systems nor the way we work, conduct business or even celebrate. If there has been a major disruptive force in living memory, it is the outbreak of the accursed virus. And now, in a historical first since 1966, India will celebrate its Republic Day without a Head of State as the chief guest to showcase its military prowess to. The pesky virus has ensured that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was supposed to attend the iconic Republic Day parade, had to bow out after he announced a fresh lockdown in the UK over the

new strain of the Coronavirus that has affected thousands of people there and reared its ugly head in India, too. The complete lockdown for England's 56 million people could last until mid-February, hence the Prime Minister was needed back home. This was supposed to be Johnson's first bilateral outing after the UK's departure from the European Union in December. But the contingency back home needed his urgent attention, so he had no choice but to cancel his visit that was expected to bind the Indo-UK relations even closer. The trip to New Delhi was being seen in the diplomatic circles as the UK's post-Brexit tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region, in which India is an important player. In fact, on December 15, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who visited New Delhi as a prelude to Johnson's trip, announced a closer collaboration with India on an enhanced trade partnership, and he also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss a 10-year roadmap for a new era in the UK-India ties. Apart from trade, the two democracies are also seeking closer collaboration on tackling the Coronavirus pandemic, climate change, enhancing defence cooperation so that they can better address key issues like terrorism and maritime security.

A disappointed India, which had been "looking forward to Johnson's visit", tried to fill the gap on the dignitary podium by approaching leaders in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan, but lockdowns and various COVID-related issues made it impossible for others to step in. As it is, the parade this time had been restricted to a limited few from the masses instead of the thousands who used to throng it earlier. Even the marching contingents will be fewer and they will sport face masks and face shields, and the general distance between members in each of the contingents has been expanded from two to three feet. Even the number of dignitaries will be less and only a limited number of people will be invited; and they too will be seated far apart in order to maintain social distance. The highlight of the parade this year is expected to be the felicitation of the "Corona warriors". A few hundred people who have been in the frontline from the field of medicine — such as staff nurses, paramedics, doctors and sanitation staff — have been selected and they will be given certificates of appreciation on the occasion to show the nation's appreciation for the work they have been doing in battling the virus. This whittling down of the pomp and show that is usually associated with the R-Day parade makes one wonder why we never thought of this before? Each year, India spends hundreds of crores in organising the mega event. So this begs the question: Where is the justification in a poor country like India spending so much money on impressing the world's leaders when millions are dying of malnutrition and living below the poverty line in the nation? Would this money not be better spent on ramping up our healthcare and educational infrastructure? Or skilling the nation's *beti* and fighting crimes against women? If we can decrease our disease and hunger burden and increase our per capita income, it would really be something to showcase to the world. Else, we should adopt the Gandhian principle of leading a simple life.

Anatomy of Uttarayana

Makar Sankranti is an event of the sidereal solar calendar while Uttarayana is a matter of tropical solar reckoning



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Makar Sankranti marks the Sun's entry into Makar *raashi*, identified with the sign of Capricorn. The reference here is merely to the apparent motion of the Sun resulting from Earth's yearly revolution. Annually, there would be a dozen such Sankrantis, because of the Sun's transit across 12 signs of the celestial zodiac. No other Sankranti enjoys religious significance, though each of them marks the beginning of a new month in the sidereal solar calendar. In India, several States like Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana and so on follow a sidereal solar calendar. Several other States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh-Telangana in addition to the Hindi-speaking belt follow the luni-solar calendar.

In the luni-solar calendar, the months are based upon a lunar cycle of 29-1/2 days, resulting in a year length of 354 days. Therefore, it has to be adjusted against the solar year by insertion of intercalary month (*Adhimasa*) every three years. The luni-solar calendar, besides being expressly followed in several parts of India, is also implicit to the solar calendar because of its religious significance. All Hindu religious festivals including *vrats*, *parvas* and most *jayantis* are determined as per the 354-day lunar calendar. This results in a drift of dates for religious festivities and austerities (within a bracket of 25 days) *vis-a-vis* the Gregorian calendar.

Why is Makar Sankranti celebrated with such great fanfare even in parts of India where the writ of solar calendar does not run? This is due to a belief that Makar Sankranti marks Uttarayana (literally meaning sun turning north). Uttarayana is a function of a tropical solar calendar like the Gregorian calendar. Tropical calendar has zero connection with zodiac background. It stands on four pillars — Vernal Equinox (March 21), Summer Solstice (June 21), Autumn Equinox (September 21) and Winter Solstice (December 21). In the two equinoxes, the day and night are of equal length all over the world. In June solstice, the day is longest across the northern hemisphere, shortest in the southern. In December solstice, the day is shortest in the northern hemisphere and longest in the southern. This interplay of 'light and shadow' is due to the fact that the axis of Earth's rotation is inclined to the plane of Earth's revolution at 23.5°. As a



result, different zones of the globe receive direct light whereas others pass into shadow. This, in the extreme, results in six months of day and six months of night between one equinox to the other in alternating polar zones — the Arctic and Antarctic.

In winter, the sun travels low across the sky in the northern hemisphere. On December 21, the declination is the least and the Sun is directly overhead the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5° S) at the local noon. The trend is, however, reversed on the morrow of Solstice. The Sun, figuratively speaking, turns northwards. Thus, as per one belief, December 22 should be the real Uttarayana. A common factor, coincidental at first sight, is the name Capricorn. On December 21, the Sun is overhead the Tropic of Capricorn, an imaginary line; and on January 14 it enters the Sign of Capricorn. However, we realise that it is more than mere coincidence when the same thing is repeated in the summer. While on June 21 the Sun is directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, it enters the Sign of Cancer on July 16. The gap is 24 days.

Now, 24 days seems to be the new common factor. What explains this 24 days' time lag that links the name of a tropic (an imaginary line) with a constellation? The secret might lie in the factor called "precession of equinoxes" or "axial precession" called *ayana-chalan* in Sanskrit. The axis of the Earth is not exactly stable but describes a conical motion. This motion, similar to the wobble of a spinning top, results from the Sun's

“ WE GET THE SEASONS FROM THE SUN, NOT FROM THE ZODIACAL BACKGROUND. THUS, MEASURING SEASONS FROM THE ZODIAC SIGNS BY IGNORING THE EFFECT OF PRECESSION (THE NIRAYANA CALENDAR) IS NOT THE BEST WAY. ”

gravitational pull acting differently at the equator from the poles. The conical motion would be complete in 28,500 years during which the North Pole would point at several different stars — like Thuban, Polaris and Vega. During the same interval the point of the equinox, where the plane of revolution intersects the plane of

rotation, goes round the entire zodiac. The amount of precession is 50" (less than 1/60th of one degree, when one segment of zodiac is of 30 degrees).

We get the seasons from the Sun, not from the zodiacal background. Thus, measuring seasons from the zodiac signs by ignoring the effect of precession (the Nirayana calendar) is not the best way. The sidereal or Nirayana year (365 d 06 hrs 09 m 10 s) is 21 minutes longer than tropical year (365 d 05 h 48 m 46 s). A sidereal year, therefore, would disengage from the seasons twice as fast as Julian calendar (which assumed year length to be flat 365 d and 6 hrs) did before being reformed by Pope Gregorian XIII in 1582.

"The difference between the sidereal and the tropical year is 20.4 minutes," says Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "which causes the seasons to fall back nearly one lunar month in about 2,000 years, if the sidereal solar year is to be taken as the standard of measurement" (*The Orion*, P.19). This would explain the mystery of the lost 24 days. Possibly two millennia ago, the Sun went overhead in the southernmost tropic when it entered the sign of Capricorn. In the ancient times, Uttarayana and Sun's entry into Capricorn would have coincided. That is no longer true.

Tilak (1856-1920), however, hinted at a different possibility on Uttarayana. Known as a tough politician, he was also a noted Sanskrit scholar who found time to delve deep into Hindu astronomy to reconstruct Vedic history. It is reflect-

ed in his books like *The Orion, or, Researches Into The Antiquity of the Vedas* (1893) and *Arctic Home in the Vedas* (1903). In his book, viz., *The Orion*, the author says that Uttarayana is susceptible to two meanings. Tilak states: "It might mean 'turning towards the north from the southernmost point' or it may indicate 'the passage of the Sun into the northern hemisphere, i.e. to the north of the equator'. If we adopt the first meaning, Uttarayana and the year must be held to commence from the winter solstice while, if the second interpretation is correct, Uttarayana and the year must have commenced with the vernal equinox." Citing the *Rig Veda*, Tilak says: "The facts that the central day of annual *satra* was called *vishuvan*, the Vasant or spring was considered the first of the seasons and the *agrayaneshitis* or the half-year sacrifices were required to be performed every Vasant (Spring) and Sharad (autumn) clearly show that the second interpretation is more likely to be correct (*The Orion*, P.22)."

Tilak, thus, maintained that Uttarayana was the vernal equinox (March 21). He further believed that the six-month period from vernal equinox to autumn equinox, when the Sun moves along the northern latitude, is Devayana (way of the gods) in the *Rig Veda* and from autumn equinox to vernal equinox Pitrivana (way of the dead ancestors) as mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher. The opinions expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not respect the farmers. The Congress is with farmers and will support them till these laws are withdrawn.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

United States so far, at least the current administration, is doing all it can to hamper any chance for dialogue between Iran and the Persian Gulf countries.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

I think every film mattered, right from my first film, because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. My entire journey has been special.



Actor Kiara Advani

It is great to be coaching the young players of the West Indies and trying to guide them as we prepare for the World Cup at home.



West Indies Under-19 coach Floyd Reifer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ensure accountability

Sir — The Government must frame stringent laws to hold politicians accountable for corruption in the country. It is often seen in cases of corruption or malpractices in any Government department that the officials are usually taken to task by agencies like the CBI and ED while politicians belonging to the ruling dispensation, who are no less involved in the fraud, walk away scot-free.

Our politicians, with their unchecked involvement in corrupt practices, have tarnished the reputation of our country. Over the past four decades or so, we have seen many cases of corruption. It will not be an exaggeration to say that most of the politicians are corrupt to the core and are involved in the dirty game of power and money. They have unaccounted money stocked in foreign banks or assets disproportionate to their income.

It is high time for all political parties to think about this serious issue and join hands for making legislations that are more effective in curbing corruption by the politicians.

Seetharam B
Telangana

India should provide vaccines to poor nations

As India is all set to launch the world's biggest vaccination drive on Saturday, many countries look towards it with hope.

Apart from inoculating millions of countrymen, India should also provide the COVID vaccine vials to its neighbours and poor countries across the globe, either free of cost or on concessional rates. India's commitment to serve humanity is second to none and we, as a nation, have always helped those in need.

It's beyond doubt that the chariot of self-reliant India is touching new heights everyday and the days are not far when we will become the torch-bearer of humanity and development. The manufacturers of the vaccines — Bharat Biotech (Covaxin) and Serum Institute of India (Covishield) — should take the lead and work out a plan with the Centre for exporting the vaccine to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and so on. This will go beyond their realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and be a true service to the mankind. We, as a nation, cannot fail those who look towards us for help during the COVID crisis. India must tread cautiously and care about its global image. If the



immunisation drive turns out to be successful, India will set an unprecedented example in the world's history. It will emerge as the world leader and its reputation will increase manifold.

The Opposition parties and leaders, who have unequivocally criticised the Modi Government during the initial phase of vaccine development, should also rise above politics.

Aman Jaiswal
Delhi

Accept demands in toto

Sir — The Modi Government must immediately repeal the three farm laws that are the bone of contention between the Centre and the farmers. Although the Supreme Court has put a stay on these legislations but the farmers are not contended and the situation can turn volatile anytime.

The cultivators are not ready to settle for anything less than revocation of the laws and a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The NDA Government must realise that 70 per cent of the rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. They also constitute a large proportion of the BJP's vote bank and if they

turn against it in the next elections, it will severely mar the party's prospects of making it to the power corridors. Farmers are a peace-loving community and their leaders have clarified that the tractor rally on January 26 will take place only at the Haryana-Delhi border.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Army is our pride

Sir — On Army Day, we must remember those who choose to die for the nation. The sad part is that today's youth doesn't know about the stories of courage and valour that have shaped India's destiny saved us from enemies. Those who are ignorant about their past cannot shape their future.

It's time to remember our heroes like Field Marshal KM Cariappa, who was the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and all the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) awardees like Major Somnath Sharma (first winner of the PVC), Naik Jadunath Singh, Lt Rama Raghoba Rane, Company Havildar Major Piru Singh and many others who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. India's history is incomplete without its military history and our soldiers are our real heroes. We are safe because they are guarding our borders and fighting our enemies. We must pay our tribute to them on such occasions.

N Soumik
Bhubaneswar

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A shot at halting the virus' march

Vaccines take over six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be vital to continue with COVID protocols during the vaccination period and beyond



RAJINDER DHAMIYA

India begins its first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive from today. History is being created as it marks an important milestone in the pandemic's trajectory which began almost a year ago when three students returning from Wuhan were found to be COVID positive in Kerala. Since then, we have lost more than 1.51 lakh people and over 1.05 crore individuals have tested positive in India. The year 2020 was indeed a long one as lives were lost and livelihoods vanished as business closures, job losses and salary cuts became the norm. Politics overtook science in many countries and they eventually paid the price in terms of preventable deaths and sickness just because of a delay in instituting Corona protocols like masking, social distancing, hand hygiene and restriction of movement. As I had highlighted previously in these columns, the cold and pollution resulted in a surge in Coronavirus cases in India and globally, too. However, many mathematical models have been proved wrong in terms of hypothetical projections of the number of cases as well as the timelines of the pandemic's trajectory. Experimental therapies were tried in order to save lives, some of which failed to generate scientific evidence while others were withdrawn fearing more risk than benefit through their use. The learning curve continues as the contagion rages on and new mutations are being reported from different parts of the globe, keeping science and scientists on their toes. Consequently, physical distancing has led to social isolation for many, especially the elderly and vulnerable populations like people with disabilities and comorbidities. This has resulted in significant mental health issues. Social isolation is indeed a major risk factor not only for the psychological repercussions it has but also for those suffering from ailments. The approval of two Coronavirus vaccines and their rollout from today is a major step towards combating the pandemic in India and may be the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 outbreak. Covaxin and Covishield will be used during the initial phase of the inoculation drive and a priority group of three crore people will get the shots. The vaccination programme will use Co-WIN, an online digital platform developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for the shot. This digital platform will assist programme managers across all levels while conducting inoculation sessions.

This drive is a welcome step in the right direction and the Coronavirus shot is indeed a gift for mankind in the midst of this humanitarian crisis. Vaccines have historically saved lives from many deadly diseases in the past. A vaccine for the Coronavirus becoming available in less than a year seemed impossible at one time. However, it has become possible because of global efforts and collaborations by scientists and nations. Consequently, these shots have been developed in record time and have shown remarkable efficacy with safety. But India's vaccine campaign poses a major challenge in getting a substantial number of the population inoculated in view of scepticism and the undercurrent of vaccine hesitancy. So far these jabs have protected people from getting the virus, thereby preventing morbidity, hospitalisation and subsequent mortality. This is important not only for countries like ours with an inadequate and inequitable public health system but also for nations with a robust health infrastructure.

It is widely understood that a person protected by a vaccine or a natural COVID-19 infection acts as a dead end for the virus' transmission and an unprotected person who has not been inoculated or had the infection becomes a facilitator. We need most of the population to be vaccinated to break the chain of transmission. The shot will prevent the disease for sure in most of the vaccinated people but whether it will prevent the spread of the virus is still unclear. There is evidence, though not strong, that some of these shots do prevent the spread of the virus. Epidemiological methods reveal that we need at least 60 to 70 per cent of the population to be immunised either through jabs or natural infection to halt the transmission of the virus and develop "herd immunity." So how do we tackle these challenges with the vaccine rollout now becoming a reality? First we need to vaccinate as many people as possible by allaying fears and convincing citizens about the benefit of the vaccine not only for them but also for the community. The vaccine needs to be made as easily available as possible, keeping priorities in place. Plus, the importance of concise communication to the masses cannot be underestimated as is highlighting and stressing scientific facts over misinformation and myths prevalent on social media. It must also be anticipated that people may become complacent during the vaccination drive or after getting the shot. All vaccines take at least six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be critical to continue with all COVID protocols like before during the vaccination period and months or years after completing the two dosages of the shot. We will need to continue the new normal with all public health measures in place along with lasting change in our behaviour. The shot is here but we will have to live with the virus even after this. Vaccines will save lives and livelihoods but the virus is here to stay.

(The writer is Head of Neurology Department, Lady Hardinge Medical College and SSK Hospital. The views expressed are personal.)

MAY GOD GIVE OWAI SI STRENGTH. HE HELPED US IN BIHAR AND WILL HELP US IN UP PANCHAYAT AND ASSEMBLY POLLS AND ALSO IN WEST BENGAL.

—BJP MP
SAKSHI MAHARAJ

POINT COUNTERPOINT



PEOPLE OF UP AND WEST BENGAL HAVE ALSO SEEN THROUGH THIS NEXUS AND WILL NOT LET THIS MATCH-FIXING GO THROUGH.

—CONGRESS LEADER
JITIN PRASADA

Curb regulatory overreach

Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences



ABHAY RAJ MISHRA

Since time immemorial, human civilisation has maintained social order by framing rules and regulations which are implemented through various mechanism of imparting justice to people. Justice by its very nature represents something that is just and right. What is just may depend on the context but being fair, impartial and right is essential to the idea of justice. Professor Henry Sidgwick, a 19th century British jurist known for his ethical theory had opined that the best indicator of a nation's political success is to see how it administers justice.

In primitive societies punishment was targeted to evoke fear by subjecting offenders to brutality. This was supposed to act as a lesson and deterrent for others. However, with development and social evolution, punishment is now a subject of human rights with greater focus on reforming the wrongdoers, instead of tormenting them.

India as a welfare State has also adopted a reformative approach where the primary aim is to rehabilitate the offender. For instance, then IG (Prisons) Kiran Bedi took her reformist vision to Bihar Jail in 1993 and initiated a programme for the welfare of the inmates in the notorious prison, totally transforming the conditions inside Tihar. The reform policy had several aspects like changing prisoners' attitudes through education, meditation and yoga; imparting vocational skills; making the prison administration accountable; involving prisoners through mobile petition boxes, various panchayats and daily mass *sabhas*; providing a better diet and improving living conditions; assisting addicts through drug addiction centres and undertrials through legal aid cells. Similarly, the introduction of the Model Prison reforms by the Government in 2016 was a major step which brought uniformity in laws, rules and regulations governing prisoners.

However, there remains a major gap when it comes to the structure and uniformity of sentencing guidelines. Despite this being raised by various committees from time to time, neither the legislature nor the judiciary has issued any structured sentencing norms. The Malimath Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System that was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, in its report submitted in 2003, emphasised the need to introduce sentencing guidelines in order to minimise uncertainty in awarding sentences. A few years later the Madhav Menon Committee, too, reasserted the need for a sentencing policy in India. In 2010, the then Law Minister stated that India was planning to establish a "uniform sentencing policy" on the lines of the guidelines followed in the US and the UK. However, no progress has been made in this direction till date. Instead, the recent amendments proposed in the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2020, (COTPA 2020) signal a movement in the reverse direction.

COTPA 2020 amendments prescribe new excessive penalisation for petty street vendors or hawkers selling tobacco products. Exemplifying this is a seven-year imprisonment or a fine of ₹1 lakh for violations which involve immense subjectivity. Further, these violations are proposed to be made cognisable offences, which means police officers have the unilateral power to arrest these vendors, without a warrant or permission of a court and a bail will require appearance in front of a Magistrate.

These violations include selling tobacco products to a person below 21 years of age and selling

“WHILE THERE IS NO DEBATE ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TOBACCO AND AN ONGOING REDUCTION IN ITS USE SHOULD BE PURSUED, SHOCKINGLY DISPROPORTIONATE DRAFT RULES MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE SYSTEM AND CREATE A LEGAL PARADOX. THEREBY RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LAW-MAKING PROCEDURE IN THE COUNTRY”



tobacco within 100 meters of an educational institute. Even selling loose cigarettes, which has been an age-old system, is going to abruptly become a crime attracting a jail term.

In a country where an 18-year-old is a legal adult with the right to vote or marry, this is regulatory overreach. A section of these petty retailers sell their goods on foot and we don't have a fixed definition of educational institutes which can vary, from a school to a private tuition centre. This proposal makes petty retailers look like heinous criminals who will be subjected to the whims and fancies of local police officers, many of whom can be compulsively corrupt.

Compared to other sentences and imprisonments prescribed under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), these are disproportionate and excessive. For instance the law prescribes a maximum punishment of six months' jail for sale of adulterated drugs (IPC 275); up to six months in prison for rash or dangerous driving (IPC 279); maximum two years for rioting (IPC 147); three years for extortion (IPC 384); three years for voluntarily causing hurt with a dangerous weapon (IPC 324); five years for voluntarily throwing acid (IPC 326B) and seven years for kidnapping (IPC 363).

This move has rightfully caused widespread consternation among small retailers who are being made to look like criminals. The potential social harm caused by the sale of a *bidi* or a cigarette to an 18-year-old adult with fundamental rights to make informed choices, does not equal to the acts of kidnapping or throwing acid or even sale of adulterated drugs which can kill or maim. If tobacco is a legal product with the Government earning hefty revenues, how can selling it to lawful adults become a

crime? This raises pointed questions on the process behind the framing of such rules. Is it the poor quality of research by bureaucrats drafting such proposals where they did not compare this with other existing provisions? Or is there an emotional overdrive to control tobacco consumption too fast? These retailers also sell other items of daily consumption like tea, water, juices, soft drinks, biscuits, savoury items and confectionary besides tobacco products. Their presence on every street corner forms the very character of India's urban retail activity and is a sign of self-reliance and microentrepreneurship among people at the bottom of the pyramid.

The critics of the Government might draw controversial conclusions and say this is a larger move to attack unorganised retailers and kill micro retail activity to benefit large business groups or networks seeking organised retail activity. NGOs might even term it a bid by foreign firms to push more international tobacco into India through smuggled and illicit products at the cost of Indian tobacco farmers. However, this is a clear case of loss of balance that legislators and the judiciary need to maintain while framing sentencing guidelines. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment, which is disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences. Otherwise the belief of the people in the rule of law will erode.

In the past there have been instances of disproportionate sentencing being overturned by the judiciary. In the *Soman vs. State of Kerala* case, 2012, the Supreme Court reversed the imprisonment sentence imposed on the accused by the High Court, who was a liquor retailer charged with selling spurious

alcohol which eventually led to the death of six people. Here the Supreme Court observed that: "Giving punishment to the wrongdoer is at the heart of the criminal justice delivery, but in our country, it is the weakest part of the administration of criminal justice." The court cited the need to consider a combination of three factors while directing the quantum of sentence: Proportionality, deterrence and rehabilitation, among which the principle of proportionality assumes highest prominence. A sentence must be commensurate with the seriousness or gravity of the crime. Here, the seller was the last and the weakest link in the supply chain of adulterated liquor comprising of an illicit manufacturer, the distributor and finally the retailer. Hence the court felt that reduction of the sentence from five years of imprisonment to three years was a fair decision.

While there is no debate on the harmful effects of tobacco and an ongoing reduction in its use should be pursued, shockingly disproportionate draft rules make a mockery of the system and create a legal paradox, thereby raising questions about the law-making procedure in the country. Such rules, affecting the livelihoods of many, need more debate and should be reviewed by expert committees comprising of judicial experts, socialists and industry representatives, before being put up for public review. If allowed, these will adversely affect the sense and sensibilities of judges who will have a dilemma while pronouncing sentences, given their disproportionate nature as compared to other crimes.

(The writer is president, not-for-profit organisation PRAHAR. The views expressed are personal.)

Biden holds promise for US-Taiwan relations

At the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with an increasingly aggressive China



SUDHIR SINGH **SUMIT KUMAR**

Just days before the US Congress certified President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lifted the long-standing restrictions on dealing with Taiwan. These "self-imposed restrictions", which were introduced decades ago to appease the mainland Chinese Government were declared "null and void" by Pompeo on January 9.

This allows US officials to engage with their Taiwanese counterparts on the same footing with

which they deal with functionaries of other countries.

While the latest development has elevated US-Taiwan relations to a new height, it is still to be seen whether Biden follows the trend or reverses the trajectory of bilateral engagement that has been achieved under the Donald Trump era.

Some experts, diplomats and commoners are speculative that the Biden Administration could backpedal US-Taiwan relations and instead favour China. Their apprehensions are not without a reason, as they cite a statement made by Biden in the US Senate in 2001 when he said that "Washington is not willing to go to war over Taiwan's unilateral declaration of independence."

However, it would be unfair to form an opinion about his foreign policies just based on some isolated statement. It is pertinent to recall that Biden had supported the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. Even in 2020 he was among the first global leaders to congratulate Taiwanese

President Tsai Ing-wen on her reelection and said: "You are stronger because of your free and open society. The United States should continue strengthening our ties with Taiwan and other like-minded democracies." Biden has also supported US legislations providing arms and defence equipment to Taiwan under the outgoing President Donald Trump's Administration.

We should also keep it in mind that Biden had used strong words against China during his election campaign. He termed the communist nation a "thug" and even accused Trump of being too soft on China. Further, in an article published in a journal, Biden said: "We're a Pacific power, and we'll stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region," and "that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan." This, in turn, makes it aptly clear that Biden is fully conscious of the changing geostrategic, security and econom-

ic environment largely due to China's expansionist tendency.

Furthermore, some appointments made by Biden should indeed be viewed as a good signal for the East Asian nation. For instance, Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State-designate, has held talks with Taiwanese diplomats and in a tweet, Blinken mentioned that "stronger economic relations between the US and Taiwan will support our shared democratic values and our common commitment to regional peace and stability."

At the same time, the existence of Taiwan as an independent and vibrant democracy is also in the interest of the US for various reasons. First, Taiwan's geo-strategic location in the South China Sea (SCS) prevents Beijing from dominating sea trade routes. China controlling Taiwan would embolden Beijing to establish its dominance over the SCS and eventually it would pose a serious threat to East, Southeast Asia and the US. China can further assert its territorial

claim more aggressively against the Philippines, Vietnam and some other countries in the region.

Second, Taiwan is one of the leading export-based economies in the world. Taiwan succumbing to China would only accentuate Beijing's imperialist tendency. Third, at the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with China. Fourth, while the recent attack on the Capitol Hill in Washington has bemused several countries across the world, the disappearance of Taiwan as an independent country would prove to be a big blow to the idea of democracy.

Taiwan can contribute significantly towards promoting the emergence of a strong supply chain free from the clutches of China. While Taiwan runs leadership training courses for the officials of the Pacific islands, its timely medical support to the rest of the world and its success in controlling the spread of COVID-19 have won the hearts of the international community.

But Taiwan could have certainly helped immensely had it been a member of the World Health Organisation.

The global perception about China has changed significantly in recent years as Beijing has become more repressive internally and aggressive internationally. China's repressive measures against peaceful protestors in Hong Kong and its attempt to cover up the outbreak of the contagion have finally ended the delusions about China's peaceful rise. It is all because of these factors that there exists a strong bipartisan understanding among US leaders about strengthening ties with Taiwan.

Now, the time has come when not only the independent existence of Taiwan should be a global concern, but efforts should also be undertaken to enable it to contribute to world affairs in an effective manner. For its pursuance, the US should take initiatives to sign the Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan, which in turn would propel other

countries to institutionalise their economic ties with it. The process will eventually not only reduce Taiwan's economic dependence on China, it would also integrate Taiwan into the regional and global economic groups.

The US should also take initiatives to include Taiwan into the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). Since the East Asian country has fostered a strong relationship with India, Japan has already expressed its concern for the independence of Taiwan and Australia is facing an assertive China, Washington can explore the means of providing a role to Taiwan in this QUAD grouping.

While it becomes logical for the Biden Administration to sustain the momentum of the bilateral relationship, only time will tell if this transition leads to anticipated transformation.

(Singh is Professor at Delhi University while Kumar is former fellow at National Chengchi University, Taipei.)

Capitol rioters included highly trained ex-military and cops

Washington: As President Donald Trump supporters massed outside the Capitol last week and sang the national anthem, a line of men wearing olive-drab helmets and body armor trudged purposefully up the marble stairs in a single-file line, each man holding the jacket collar of the one ahead.

The formation, known as "Ranger File," is standard operating procedure for a combat team that is "stacking up" to breach a building — instantly recognizable to any U.S. Soldier or Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a chilling sign that many at the vanguard of the mob that stormed the seat of American democracy either had military training or were trained by those who did.

An Associated Press review of public records, social media

posts and videos shows at least 21 current or former members of the U.S. Military or law enforcement have been identified as being at or near the Capitol riot, with more than a dozen others under investigation but not yet named. In many cases, those who stormed the Capitol appeared to employ tactics, body armor and technology such as two-way radio headsets that were similar to those of the very police they were confronting.

Experts in homegrown extremism have warned for years about efforts by far-right militants and white-supremacist groups to radicalize and recruit people with military and law enforcement training, and they say the Jan. 6 insurrection that left five people dead saw some of their worst fears realized.

"ISIS and al-Qaida would

drool over having someone with the training and experience of a U.S. Military officer," said Michael German, a former FBI agent and fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. "These people have training and capabilities that far exceed what any foreign terrorist group can do. Foreign terrorist groups don't have any members who have badges." Among the most prominent to emerge is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and decorated combat veteran from Texas who was arrested after he was photographed wearing a helmet and body armor on the floor of the Senate, holding a pair of zip-tie handcuffs. Another Air Force veteran from San Diego was shot and killed by a Capitol Police officer as she tried to leap through a barricade near the House chamber. AP

Amid cacophony since Capitol siege, key officer stays silent

Washington: In the week since a mob laid siege to the U.S. Capitol, the House has impeached President Donald Trump.

Dozens of people have been arrested nationwide over participation in the riots. Politicians and business leaders are loudly condemning the violence.

Twitter and other social media sites have banned Trump and thousands of other accounts.

Yet amid all the noise, a Capitol Police officer hailed as a hero for confronting the insurrectionists and leading them away from Senate chambers has remained silent.

Officer Eugene Goodman isn't saying whether he thinks he saved the Senate, as many of the millions

More than 100 individuals arrested for Capitol Hill riots, says FBI

Washington: US security agencies have arrested more than 100 individuals for their criminal activities in last week's siege of the Capitol and are monitoring "an extensive amount of concerning online chatter" ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20, FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

The violence on January 6 by outgoing President Donald Trump's supporters temporarily halted the counting of Electoral College votes and resulted in the deaths of five individuals, including a police officer.

"We and our partners have already arrested more than 100 individuals for their criminal activities in last week's siege of the Capitol and continue to pursue countless other related investigations," Wray said during a meeting with Vice President Mike Pence.

"And those help not only prevent those

individuals from any effort to repeat that kind of activity but also should serve as a very stern warning to anybody else who might be inclined to try to engage in that activity," he said.

Wray also said that law enforcement was aware of and monitoring "an extensive amount of concerning online chatter" ahead of President-elect Biden's inauguration next week, but added that authorities were having to sift through "what's aspirational versus what's intentional."

The FBI, he said, is looking at individuals who may have an eye toward repeating that same kind of violence that was seen at the Capitol Hill last week.

"I mean, from January 6 alone, we've already identified over 200 suspects. So we know who you are, if you're out there, and FBI agents are coming to find you," he said. PTI

Rare sedition charge gains interest after Capitol attack

New York: A Civil War-era sedition law being dusted off for potential use in the mob attack on the US Capitol was last successfully deployed a quarter-century ago in the prosecution of Islamic militants who plotted to bomb New York City landmarks.

An Egyptian cleric, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, and nine followers were convicted in 1995 of seditious conspiracy and other charges in a plot to blow up the United Nations, the FBI's building, and two tunnels and a bridge linking New York and New Jersey.

Applications of the law making it a crime to conspire to overthrow or forcefully destroy the government of the United States have been scant. But its use is being considered against the mob that killed a police officer and rampaged through the

US Capitol last week. Michael Sherwin, acting US attorney for DC, has said "all options are on the table," including sedition charges, against the Capitol invaders. AP

as early as Inauguration Day, raising the specter of the Senate trying the previous president even as it moves to confirm the incoming president's Cabinet.

GOP leader Mitch McConnell, who says he's undecided, is one of several key senators to watch, along with Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, who is set to take the Senate reins as his party reclaims the Senate majority.

Others to watch include GOP senators up for reelection in 2022 and several Republicans who have publicly backed impeachment. AP

GOP senators in spotlight as 2nd impeachment trial looms

Washington: For a second time, Republican senators face the choice of whether to convict President Donald Trump in an impeachment trial. While only one GOP senator, Utah's Mitt Romney, voted to convict Trump last year, that number could increase as lawmakers consider whether to punish Trump for his role in inciting a deadly insurrection at the Capitol.

Whatever they decide, Trump is likely to be gone from the White House when the verdict comes in. An impeachment trial is likely to start next week,

Biden announces \$1.9 trillion Covid stimulus plan to revive US economy

Washington: US President-elect Joe Biden has announced a USD 1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package to tackle the economic fallout from the pandemic, including direct financial aid to average Americans, support to businesses and to provide a boost to the national vaccination programme.

The relief package, announced on Thursday, includes USD 415 billion focused on combating the COVID-19 pandemic, over USD 1 trillion in direct aid to individuals and families and USD 440 billion in assistance to businesses.

It includes USD 1,400 in additional stimulus cheques to Americans, an extension for key unemployment programmes from mid-March to the end of September and an increase in weekly additional unemployment assistance from USD 300 to USD 400 and increasing the federal minimum wage to USD 15 an hour over time.

Biden's proposal also sets aside USD 20 billion for a national vaccination programme and USD 50 billion to scale up coronavirus testing.

"It's not hard to see that we are in the middle of a once-in-several generation economic crisis within a once-in-several generation public health crisis. A crisis of deep human suffering in plain sight. And there is no time to wait," Biden, who is set to be sworn in as the 46th President of the US on January 20, said in a televised address from his hometown, Wilmington in Delaware.

"We have to act and act now. This is what the economists are telling us. More importantly, it is what the values we hold in our hearts as Americans are telling us. A growing chorus of top economists agree that, in this moment of crisis, with interest rates at historic lows, we cannot afford inaction," he said. PTI

Indonesian divers find parts of crashed plane's black box

Jakarta: Divers found parts of the cockpit voice recorder on Friday as more personnel joined the search for wreckage and victims from an Indonesian plane that crashed last weekend in the Java Sea with 62 people on board.

The aerial search for the crashed Sriwijaya Air jet was being expanded as well, said National Search and Rescue Agency mission coordinator Rasmay, who uses one name.

More than 4,000 search and rescue personnel are supported by 14 airplanes, 62 ships and 21 inflatable boats. They are using an underwater metal detector and remotely operated vehicle to search for human remains, the cockpit voice recorder and more wreckage. AP

Biden picks familiar faces for top roles at FEMA, CIA

Washington: President-elect Joe Biden is nominating New York emergency department commissioner Deanne Criswell to serve as the Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator and has tapped former CIA deputy director David Cohen to return to the agency in the same role he served during the Obama administration.

The picks, along with a trio of other new nominations confirmed to The Associated Press by the Biden team, come as the president-elect is putting a premium on experience, and perhaps familiarity, as he looks to fill out top positions at federal agencies with less than a week to go before his inauguration.

Criswell, who also spent more than five years in top posts at FEMA during the Obama administration, is the first woman nominated to head the agency, whose primary responsibility is to coordinate responses to major disasters inside the United States that require federal attention. Nancy Ward served as the agency's acting administrator in the early months of the Obama administration before his pick, Craig Fugate, could be confirmed.

Cohen, who was deputy CIA director from 2015 to 2017, has traveled the world for years tracking money flowing to terror groups, such as the Islamic State group, and other bad actors on the international stage. AP

North Korea holds huge military parade as Kim vows nuclear might

Seoul: North Korea rolled out developmental ballistic missiles designed to be launched from submarines and other military hardware in a parade that punctuated leader Kim Jong Un's defiant calls to expand his nuclear weapons programme.

State media said Kim took center stage in Thursday night's parade celebrating a major ruling party meeting where Kim vowed maximum efforts to bolster his nuclear and missile program that threatens Asian rivals and the American homeland to counter what he described as U.S. Hostility.

During the eight-day Workers' Party congress that ended Tuesday, Kim also revealed plans to salvage the nation's economy amid U.S.-led sanctions over his nuclear ambitions, pandemic-related border closures and natural disasters that wiped out crops. AP

Iran's Guard holds ballistic missile drill amid tensions

Tehran (Iran): Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard forces on Friday held a military exercise involving ballistic missiles and drones in the country's central desert, state TV reported, amid heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear program and a U.S. Pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic. In the first phase of the drill Friday morning, the Guard's aerospace division launched several surface-to-surface ballistic missiles against simulated enemy bases, state TV reported. AP

At least 34 dead as Indonesia quake topples homes, buildings

Mamuju (Indonesia): A strong, shallow earthquake shook Indonesia's Sulawesi island just after midnight, toppling homes and buildings, triggering landslides and killing at least 34 people.

More than 600 people were injured during the magnitude 6.2 quake, which sent people fleeing their homes in the darkness on Friday. Authorities were still collecting information about the full scale of casualties and damage in the affected areas.

There were reports of many people trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes and buildings.

In a video released by the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, a girl stuck in the wreckage of a house cried out for help and said she heard the sound of other family members also trapped. "Please help me, it hurts," the girl told rescuers, who replied that they desperately wanted to help her.

The rescuers said an excavator was needed to save the girl and others trapped in collapsed buildings. Other images showed a severed bridge and damaged and flattened houses. TV stations reported the earthquake damaged part of a hospital and patients were moved to an emergency tent outside.

Another video showed a father crying, asking for help to save his children buried under their toppled house. "They are trapped inside, please help," he cried. Thousands of displaced people were evacuated to temporary shelters. The quake was centred 36 kilometres (22 miles) south of West Sulawesi province Mamuju district, at a depth of 18 kilometres (11 miles), the US Geological Survey said.

The Indonesian disaster agency said the death toll climbed to 34 as rescuers in Mamuju retrieved 26 bodies trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes and buildings.

The agency said in a statement that eight people were killed and 637 others were injured in Mamuju's neighboring district of Majene.

It said at least 300 houses and a health clinic were damaged and about 15,000 people were being housed in temporary shelters in the district. Power and phones were down in many areas.

West Sulawesi Administration Secretary Muhammad Idris told TVOne that the governor's office building was among those that collapsed in Mamuju, the provincial capital, and many people there remain trapped. AP

Ugandan Prez reported leading in early election results

Kampala (Uganda): Uganda's electoral commission said on Friday that President Yoweri Museveni led in Thursday's election based on results from roughly a third of polling stations, receiving 65 per cent of ballots while top opposition candidate Bobi Wine had 27 per cent. Final results are expected Saturday afternoon.

Wine, a popular singer-turned-lawmaker half the president's age, alleged that the vote in the East African country was rigged. "Whatever is being declared is a total sham," he told reporters, while there was a heavy police presence near his home. AP

Nepal approves AstraZeneca's India-made Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use

Kathmandu: Nepal has granted emergency approval for AstraZeneca's India-made Covishield vaccine against the novel coronavirus that has claimed nearly 1,950 lives in the country. The decision to grant the approval for the vaccine was taken on Friday, Nepal's Department of Drug Administration (DDA) said in a statement.

"Conditional permission has been granted for emergency use authorisation of Covishield vaccine against COVID-19 in Nepal," the statement said. Drug major AstraZeneca has partnered with the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, for the supply of the vaccine to the Indian government and also to a large number of low and middle-income countries.

The vaccine, developed with the University of Oxford, is made from a virus which is a weakened version of a common cold virus (adenovirus), that has been genetically changed so that it is impossible for it to grow in humans. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Sunish Kumar Sharma is the owner of Property No. E-16, measuring 250 sq. yds. Block-E, situated at Resonance Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi; by virtue of Sale Deed dated 19.03.2019, Registration No. 4747, executed by Mr. Salish Malik who was owner of the said property by virtue of conveyance deed dated 26.07.2019, has lost / misplaced Relinquishment deed dated 16.10.1988, and some pages of another Relinquishment deed executed by Mr. Din Royal Malik, also perpetual lease deed is in mutilated condition. All persons are hereby informed that Mr. Sunish Kumar Sharma want to take loan against the said property from HDFC Bank Ltd, if anybody has any objection upon the said property & its ownership Title & Mortgage kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 200, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mayapuri, New Delhi-15 Ph. 914119257-28, kumarassociatesadvo@gmail.com

WANTED PERSON

General public is hereby informed that a male namely unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown is wanted in FIR No. 31/20 dated 06.08.2020 u/s 420/34 IPC was registered in P.S. North Avenue, New Delhi. During the course of investigation photograph of the accused person was developed based on CCTV footage. The description of the accused person is as under:-

Name: Unknown, Age: 20-25 Years, Height: 5'8", Face: Long, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Thin, Wearing: Pant and Shirt.

If anyone have any information about this wanted person please inform PS North Avenue, New Delhi.

Web: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 SHO
Police Station, North Avenue, New Delhi
DP/188/NDD/21 Ph.: 011-23093040, 23093294

SORIL INFRA RESOURCES LIMITED
(CIN : L52190HR2005PLC077960)

Extract of the consolidated unaudited financial results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020 (Rs. in crores)

Particulars	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
Total income	50.42	142.65	64.54
Net profit for the period (before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items)	5.40	23.20	5.67
Net profit for the period before tax (after exceptional and/ or extraordinary items)	5.40	23.20	5.67
Net profit for the period after tax(after exceptional and/ or extraordinary items)	4.98	18.95	4.39
Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax))	4.99	19.22	4.94
Paid-up equity share capital	31.50	31.50	31.50
Earnings per share before extraordinary items (face value of Rs. 10 per equity share)			
*EPS for the quarter/ nine month are not annualised)			
- Basic (Rs)	1.58 *	6.02 *	1.39 *
- Diluted (Rs)	1.58 *	6.02 *	1.39 *
Reserves/ (excluding revaluation reserve) as per audited financials of the previous year March 2020			208.83

Note to the financial results:

- The above results have been reviewed by the audit committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 15 January 2021. These financial results have been subjected to a limited review by the statutory auditors of the Company.
- Key standalone financial information of SORIL Infra Resources Limited:** (Rs. in crores)

Particulars	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
Total income	43.59	113.69	52.21
Profit / (loss) before tax	2.73	7.13	0.34
Net profit / (loss) after tax	2.73	6.77	0.34

- The above presentation is an extract of the detailed format of quarter/ nine month financial results filed with the stock exchanges under regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarter/ nine month financial results are available on the Company's website (http://sorilinfraresources.com) and on the website of BSE (http://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (http://www.nseindia.com).

Registered Office: Plot No. 448-451, Udyog Vihar, Phase-V, Gurugram - 122016 For and on behalf of Board of Directors
Place : Gurugram Anil Malhan Executive Director
Date : 15 January 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the 02311 Howrah Jn - Kalka Superfast Special Train will be revised w.e.f. 22.01.2021 as under:-

Train No.: 02311		STATIONS
ARR.	DEP.	
----	21:55	HOWRAH JN
NO TIME CHANGE BETWEEN HOWRAH JN - PT DEEN DAYAL UPADHYA JN STATIONS		
09:08	09:10	MIRZAPUR
10:40	10:50	PRAYAGRAJ JUNCTION
12:10	12:12	FATEHPUR
13:30	13:40	KANPUR CENTRAL
14:40	14:41	PHAPHUND
15:28	15:33	ETAWAH
16:10	16:12	SHIKOHABAD JUNCTION
16:30	16:32	FIROZABAD
17:05	17:10	TUNDLA JUNCTION
NO TIME CHANGE BETWEEN ALIGARH JN - KALKA STATIONS		
03:00	----	KALKA

For details related to stoppages/accommodation of trains etc. passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Security Helpline No. 182 Integrated Helpline No. 139

Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY**
Your Convenience - Our Concern
Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमण्डल-1, पड़रौना
अति अल्पकालीन पुनर्विनिर्माण आर्म्त्रण सूचना संख्या - 03 SBD / 2020-21
(राष्ट्रीय / राजकीय स्तर)
(केवल ई-टैन्डर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

- कार्य का विवरण -

युक्त	कार्य का नाम	प्रायकलित राशि (लाख रु० में)	अग्रघन की राशि (लाख रु० में) (ऑन लाईन न्यूय फिजिकल/ मैनुअल मोड में सुगतीय)	परिमाण - डिपन का न्यूय (अप्रत्यर्पीय) (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में सुगतीय) रु० में	बेल्डॉन को देय बिड प्रोसेसिंग फी (अप्रत्यर्पीय) (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में सुगतीय) रु० में	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
01.	चन्द्रपुर रिटायर लाईन पर कटाव निरोधक कार्य ।	1325.50	23.26	10,000.00	5,900.00	15-05-2021
02.	पीपीओ तटबंध के कि०मी० 28.00 से कि०मी० 35.00 के बीच कटाव निरोधक कार्य ।	1211.66	22.12	10,000.00	5,900.00	15-05-2021
03.	जी०एच० तटबंध के कि०मी० 0.23 से कि०मी० 0.835 के बीच एवं कि०मी० 1.56 से कि०मी० 2.16 और कि०मी० 2.66 से कि०मी० 3.16 के बीच कटाव निरोधक कार्य ।	536.45	10.73	10,000.00	5,900.00	15-05-2021

- निविदा आर्म्त्रण सूचना निराल करने की तिथि : दिनांक - 12.01.2021
- निविदा कामजात डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की तिथि (सिर्फ वेबसाइट) : दिनांक 19.01.2021 से दिनांक 23.01.2021 के 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
- ब्री-बिड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि : दिनांक-21.01.2021, 3.00 बजे अपराह्न में, मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण, जल संसाधन विभाग, गोपालगंज ।
- तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक 27.01.2021 समय 3.30 बजे अपराह्न । (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
- वित्तीय बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : स्थान पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में घोषित की जायेगी (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
- निविदा खोलने का स्थान : www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर
- निविदा की वैधता अवधि : 120 दिन
- विज्ञापनवृत्ता का पदनाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमण्डल-1, पड़रौना । मोबाईल नं० :- 7463889135
- विशेष जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in एवं www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है ।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमण्डल-1,
पड़रौना

PR. No. 011090 (WRD) 2020-21

खात सम्पत्ती-संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सूझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है ।

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC & ITS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

India took 'very decisive' steps: IMF MD

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has praised India for taking "very decisive" steps to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its economic consequences and asked the country to do more this year to support an accelerated transformation of the economy.



Participating in a global media roundtable on Thursday, the chief of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted a less bad outlook for India in the upcoming World Economic Update due to the

At the same time, she said that one of the aspects of India's reforms that are still lagging is on gender equality

deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it," Georgieva said. The IMF is scheduled to release its World Economic Update on January 26. Talking about India, she said it was a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of the population with people clustered so closely together.

"Then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns. What we see is that that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before Covid in India, meaning that economic activities have

been revitalised quite significantly," she said.

"What the government has done on the monetary policy and the fiscal policy side is commendable. It is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets. Emerging markets on average have provided six per cent of the GDP. In India, this is slightly above that. Good for India is that there is still space to do more.... If you can do more, please do," Georgieva said.

According to the IMF Managing Director, 2021 is the year to use that space.

"But use it wisely in a more targeted manner and to support an accelerated transformation of the economy. Because what we see is amazing how much faster structural change takes place. And policymakers ought to be leaning forward in this environment to support this structural transformation and to cushion the impact it has on those

that are on the losing side of it," she said. Georgieva said that she is impressed by the appetite for structural reforms that India is retaining.

"We welcome that. No question those reforms, and actually that applies very much to South Africa... Will determine competitiveness in the future. We need higher productivity. We need more vibrant and inclusive economies. And they are not going to fall from the sky. There have to be reforms that support them," she said.

Welcoming the fact that India does not give up on structural reforms, she said: "And I'm saying, yes, do it! Because the world change is accelerating and economies have to be agile and adaptable to change... We have to be constantly leaning forward."

At the same time, she said that one of the aspects of India's reforms that are still lagging is on gender equality.

Sensex slumps 549 points on profit-taking; posts weekly gain

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices sank deep into the red on Friday as concerns over stretched valuations and a bearish trend in global markets triggered across-the-board selling.

Investors preferred to book profits at higher levels despite a good start to the earnings season, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 549.49 points or 1.11 per cent to finish at 49,034.67. The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 161.90 points or 1.11 per cent to 14,433.70.

Tech Mahindra was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.35 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, ONGC, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, HDFC and HUL.

Only four Sensex components closed with gains — Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Auto and Bajaj Finance, spurring up to 3.84 per cent.

Sensex advanced 252.16 points or 0.51 per cent while the Nifty rose 86.45 points or 0.60 per cent.

Global equities were on the backfoot on Friday even as US President-elect Joe Biden unveiled his widely-anticipated USD 1.9 trillion stimulus package as investors fretted over possible tax hikes and higher interest rates.

"Markets began circumspect amidst weak job data in the US even as Joe Biden unveiled details of the \$1.9 trillion rescue package. Friday's afternoon trade saw profit taking in IT stocks despite the biggies putting out positive commentary with large deal wins as MCAP to GDP crossed 100 per cent, leading to volatility," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

Sector-wise, BSE oil and gas, IT, realty, capital goods, utilities, energy, power and consumer durables indices fell up to 2.43 per cent, while tele-

com rallied 3.68 per cent. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap indices skidded up to 1.25 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended on a positive note, while Seoul and Tokyo were in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading in the negative territory in early deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.77 per cent lower at \$55.42 per barrel.

Farm Bills have potential to represent significant step forward for agri reforms: IMF

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The IMF believes the farm Bills passed by the Indian Government have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms, but a social safety net is needed to protect those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to the new system, a spokesperson of the global lender said here.

Gerry Rice, Director of Communications at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said the new measures will reduce the role of the middlemen and enhance efficiency.

"We believe the farm bills do have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms in India," Rice said at a news conference in Washington on Thursday.

"The measures will enable farmers to directly contract with sellers, allow farmers to retain a greater share of the sur-

plus by reducing the role of middlemen, enhance efficiency and support rural growth," he said. "However, it is crucial that the social safety net adequately protects those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to this new system," the spokesperson said responding to a question on the ongoing protests by farmers against the laws in India.

This can be done by ensuring that the job market accommodates those that are impacted by the reforms, he said.

And of course, the growth benefits of these reforms will depend, critically, on the effectiveness and the timing of their implementation, so need to pay attention to those issues as well with the reform," Rice said.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at several Delhi border points, demanding a complete repeal of the three farm laws and legal guarantee of minimum sup-

Economy likely to contract up to 7.5% this fiscal, may see 9-11% growth in FY22: Arvind Virmani

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is likely to contract in the range of 5-7.5 per cent this fiscal but will see a growth of 9 to 11 per cent in FY 2021-22, former chief economic adviser Arvind Virmani said on Friday.

Addressing a virtual event organised by industry body PHDCCI, Virmani said in the upcoming Budget, the government should come up with policies to accelerate India's economic growth.

"In the post pandemic Budget, policy reforms (are) needed for accelerating India's economic growth..." he said adding that the economy is likely to contract to 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent in FY2020-21 and grow 9-11 per cent in the next fiscal," he said.

The Union Budget for FY2021-22, the eighth of the Narendra Modi-led government, is scheduled to be presented in Parliament on February 1, 2021.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be presenting her third Budget. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected the Indian economy to contract 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal while the National Statistical Office (NSO) estimates the contraction at 7.7 per cent. Virmani further said that India can't become 'Aatmanirbhar' with the 20th century Direct Tax Code (DTC). "There is a need to simplify direct taxes and indirect taxes for MSMEs. We can't have 21st century Aatmanirbhar with 20th century DTC... We need 21st century Direct Tax Code," he said.

The eminent economist also emphasised that there is a need of 15 per cent uniform GST rate for 75 per cent of goods and services.

Noting that production-linked incentive (PLI) was actually a very good scheme, Virmani said the government should promote employment generating exports.

Exports enter positive zone after 2 months, up marginally to \$27.15 bn in December

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports grew marginally to \$27.15 billion in December while imports surged 7.56 per cent, increasing the trade deficit to \$15.44 billion, official data showed on Friday.

Imports during the month were estimated at \$42.59 billion, with inbound shipments of gold rising sharply by 81.82 per cent to \$4.48 billion.

"The trade deficit for

December 2020 was estimated at \$15.44 billion as against the deficit of \$12.49 billion in December 2019, which is an increase of 23.66 per cent," as per the government data.

Exports growth was in the negative territory in October and November.

The data revealed that exports of petroleum products contracted 35.35 per cent to \$2.34 billion in December, while that of readymade garments shrank 15.05 per cent to

\$1.19 billion. However, exports of electronic goods rose by 16.51 per cent to \$1.25 billion and of chemicals by 10.79 per cent to nearly \$2 billion.

The outward shipments of rice, tea, spices and oil meals too were higher in December 2020 compared to the same month last year. Cumulative value of exports for the period April-December 2020-21 was \$200.80 billion as against \$238.27 billion during the same period last year, down 15.73 per cent.

Forex reserves up by \$758 m to lifetime high of \$586.082 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$758 million to reach a record high of \$586.082 billion in the week ended January 8, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week ended January 1, the reserves had increased by \$4.483 billion to \$585.324 billion.

In the reporting week, foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, rose by \$150 million to \$541.791 billion. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The gold reserves climbed by \$568 million to \$37.594 billion, weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

After remaining unchanged during the last week, the special drawing rights

RPF returns bag with valuables to owner

Kolkata: On Thursday at about 09.25 am, an on duty RPF staff at Mahanayak Uttam Kumar station found a bag lying unclaimed on passenger's chair in the station's UP Platform and it was brought to the RPF post of this station. After opening the bag in front of all RPF officials, several bearer cheques amounting to ₹1,43,299, one ATM card, one Aadhar card, one Voter card, one Pan Card, one money purse and agree-

ment papers of building constructions were found therein. A mobile number was also found from the money purse containing in the bag.

The mobile number was dialled and the owner was contacted. He came to the RPF post. After proper verification and observing all official formalities, the bag was handed over to him. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the RPF officials for recovery of his bag. **PNS**

Office of Municipal Commissioner NAGAR NIGAM HARIDWAR

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)

Nagar Office of Municipal Commissioner, Nagar Nigam, HARIDWAR on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites item rate re-tenders through e-tendering, from Eligible Bidders for Implementation of ICT Enabled Solid Waste Management and Toilet Cleaning and Monitoring System during Maha Kumbh 2021.

Detailed eligibility criteria, EMD, ITB, and other terms & conditions of the re-tender document can be seen at <https://uktenders.gov.in>. Any amendment in future against the re-tender shall be uploaded on <https://uktenders.gov.in>.

Document Download Start Date	16.01.2021 at 1000 hrs
Proposal Due Date	22.01.2021 up to 1500 hrs
Opening of Technical Bids	22.01.2021 at 1600 hrs
Cost of Tender Document	INR 5900/-

Municipal Commissioner, Nagar Nigam Haridwar

SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that this boy (depicted in the photo) namely: **Sonu Kumar S/o Virender Mehto R/o E-515 DDA Colony Khayala, Delhi** has been missing from the area of Keshopur Mandi since **05.01.2021 at 01:15 PM**. In this regard FIR No. **06/2021 Dated 05.01.2021** has been lodged at **PS. Tilak Nagar, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far.

His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, **Age:** 14 years, **Height:** 5'3" ft., **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **ID Mark:** A mole on upper lip, **Wearing:** Blue Jeans & Cherry Colour Jacket and Cloth Shoes in feet.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped boy may kindly inform to the following:-
SHO Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **P.S. Tilak Nagar, New Delhi**
E-mail: cbi.gov.in **Ph.:** 011-25409290
Tel. No.: 011-24368638/24368641 **Mob. No.:** 8750871130
Fax No.: 011-24368639 **DP/319/W/2021**

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of female **Name:** Unknown, **D/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** approx. 35-40 years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Wheatish, **ID:** Having Tajmahal Tattoo on right hand, **Injury:** on forehead, **Wearing:** Green colour saree, blue colour warm inner and lower, purple colour shawl and black colour rubber shoes, who was found at vacant DDA land between Sanskriti and Baghban Apartment, Sector 28, Rohini, Delhi. In this regard a case **FIR No. 09/21 Dated 08.01.2021** has been registered at **P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi**.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
Sd/- SHO P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi
Tel.: 011-27821047, 27822207
DP/737/ON/2021

PNIT NO (e-TENDER): e-PT-III/EE/RDSD/2020-21 DATED-11/01/2021

The Executive Engineer, RD Store Division, Gurkhabasti, Agartala invites e-tender for procurement of ISI marked (IS: 1786:2008) TMT bar (3600 MT) as per specification of DNIT from eligible bidders upto 3.00 PM of 01/02/2021. For details visit website- <https://tripuratenders.gov.in> and contact at M-9774488585. Any subsequent corrigendum will be available in the website only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer RD Store Division Agartala

NOTICE

Company Name: Heidelberg Cement India Ltd. Reg. Office: 9th Floor, Infinity Tower "C" DLF Cyber City Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana - 122002. Notice is hereby given that the certificates for the under mentioned securities of the company have been lost/ misplaced and the holder of the said securities has applied to the company to issue duplicate certificates

Name of the holders	Kind of Securities and face value	Folio No.	Certificate No.	Disactive Numbers From To Total No.
Anup Padmakar Joshi	Shares of Rs. 10/- each	J001806	409	747202 747301 100
		J001806	8268	1163543 1163592 50
		J001806	57593	3402219 3402278 60
		J001806	139909	14336803 14336902 100
		J001806	133910	14336903 14336927 25
				335

Any person who has a claim in respect of the said securities should lodge such claim with the company at its registered office within 15 days from this date, else the company will proceed to issue duplicate certificates without further intimation.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Dy. CSTE/CW/Northern Railway, DRM Office, 2nd floor, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet system from experienced & established contractors having sufficient experience in similar nature of work and satisfying minimum eligibility criteria on the prescribed form for the following work:

Name of work	"S&T work for alteration of PI at Kathua and Madhopur Punjab stations and associated telecom work at adjoining stations in c/w doubling across Ravi Bridge section over Ferozpur Division of Northern Railway".
Approximate cost of the work	Rs. 66.35 Lakh
Earnest money	Rs. 1,32,700/- (Rupees One Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Seven Hundred only)
Completion period	06 (Six) months
Date, Time & Place for submission and opening of tender	Tender will be available on www.ireps.gov.in website from 18.01.2021 at 11.30 Hrs. on 10.02.2021 and will be opened on 10.02.2021 after 11.30 hrs. Tender can be uploaded from 27.01.2021 at 11.30 hrs. on 10.02.2021 and will be opened on 10.02.2021 after 11.30 hrs.
Address from where tender form can be purchased	E-Tender document cost - Nil. The detailed e-tender notice and document will be available on Northern Railway website i.e. on www.ireps.gov.in from 18.01.2021 at 11.30 hrs. on 10.02.2021, bidders are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which, they would require to obtain class III digital certificate (if already not obtained) issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document.

No.: 178-Sig/CW/32/96/PI-I Date: 15.01.2021 125/2021
Serving Customers with a Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Balbir Saran S/o Sh. Ram Swarup R/o D-4/4035, Vasant Kunj, Delhi have lost the original Plot Buyer's Agreement dated 3rd April 1986 of property no N-1/40, DLF City Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana.

Any person finds the above said original Plot Buyer's Agreement, may please contact the undersigned.

Balbir Saran (Owner) S/o Sh. Ram Swarup R/o D-4/4035, Vasant Kunj, Delhi Mob: 9910174035

IN THE COURT OF SH. AASHISH GUPTA, ACJ/CCJ/ARC (South East) Room No. 203, Second Floor, Saket Court, New Delhi.

SS- 104/20 MR. ACHYUTANAL GUHA & ANR. VS. THE STATE

Memo of Parties:-
1. Mr. Achyutanal Guha S/o Late Mr. Arunoday Guha 4-C, DDA, SFS Flats, B-Block, East of Kailash, Srinivasapuri, S.O. South Delhi, New Delhi-110065.
2. Mrs. Milan Mala Sarin W/o Mr. Sudhir Sarin 313 Jalvayu Tower, Sector-56, Gurugram, Haryana-122011Petitioners

VERSUS
State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi)
Through SDM, DM Office Road, National Park, Old Gargi College Building, Ambar Colony, Lajpat Nagar-IV South-East Delhi New Delhi-110024

Whereas, on application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Mr. Achyutanal Guha & Anr. successor of Late Smt. Pranati Guha for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased. And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 06.02.2021 at 10.00 A.M. Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice if any person has objection to the grant of succession certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear & file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time. Given under my hand and seal on 05.01.2021.

(AASHISH GUPTA) ACJ/CCJ/ARC (South East) Room No. 203, 2nd Floor Saket Court, New Delhi

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Nidhi Bakshi/ Rajnish Bakshi/ Puneet Sharma/ Travel World International/ LBDEL00002713905	F-3/11, SF, Sec- 15, Rohini, Delhi./ January 12, 2021	August 18, 2020/ Rs. 30,09,620/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : January 16, 2021 Place: Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Yaarii Digital Integrated Services Limited (Formerly known as Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited) (CIN: L51101HR2007PLC07999)

Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020 (Rs. in Crores)

Particulars	3 months ended 31 December 2020			Year to date figures for current period ended 31 December 2020			3 months ended 31 December 2019		
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
Total Income from Operations	56.07	164.39	77.51	56.07	164.39	77.51	56.07	164.39	77.51
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(28.62)	(76.07)	18.70	(28.62)	(76.07)	18.70	(28.62)	(76.07)	18.70
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	132.28	296.13	264.18	132.28	296.13	264.18	132.28	296.13	264.18
Equity Share Capital	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87	17.87
Earnings per Share (EPS) before extraordinary items	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92
Earnings per Share (EPS) after extraordinary items	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92

SHORT CIRCUITS



RANDEEP HOODA
Portraying a super cop like Avinash Mishra in my debut web series *Inspector Avinash* is exciting as well as challenging at the same time. I am thrilled to start the year with this series, a cop-thriller based on real events. I am looking forward to present a thorough entertainer to the audience with this one.



MAANVI GAGROO
Third season of web series *Four More Shots Please* is feeling extremely positive. After receiving so much love for season two, it almost feels like we owe this season to our fans. Apart from that, having lived through lockdown and not seen each other for so long, there's been a beautiful sense of togetherness that's crept in.



YASH TONK
It feels great to be back shooting for a television show again. Set in the traumatic backdrop of pre-Partition, *Kyun Utthe Dil Chod Aaye* narrates the story of three young women who dared to dream the impossible in the 1940s. My character Lala Brij Kishore is an innocent yet aggressive person, who is at odds with everyone.



SIDHARRTH SIPANI
If you are disciplined with your work, everything eventually falls in place and you are happier. You need to follow your passion and do whatever makes you happy. Everything gets easier with time. There are days when your body gives up, but you need to keep going on. Don't ever give up, that is the only way.



SELENA GOMEZ
My Spanish single titled *De Una Vez* is the beginning of something I've wanted to explore for long. I hope you love it as much as I do.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES



The increasingly unsustainable use of marine resources for economic activities, fishing, boating, tourism etc, has hurt the health of our oceans, seas and coasts. However, the wake of Coronavirus and the lockdown has turned out to be an opportunity to revive the marine ecosystem. To throw light on the varied and vast marine ecology, Sony BBC Earth has brought a show called *Blue Planet Revisited*. The two-part series celebrates marine life from all corners of the globe, exploring the challenges facing the ecosystems and wildlife in two key locations — Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Bahamas. As the breeding season gets underway, the series focusses on the action following whales and their calves, turtles and their hatchlings and the scientists who know our oceans best. It is packed with insight and spectacle. Incredible shark dives in the Bahamas. The underwater dawn chorus of the Great Barrier Reef, home to 600 different kinds of coral and more than 1500 species of fish.

THE DEEP DIVE

Marine biologist NAYANTARA JAIN feels that shows like *Blue Planet Revisited* are needed to dispel myths around animals and help people explore marine life. By TEAM VIVA

Can you tell us about your journey as a marine biologist and what led to resource marine conservation India?
I learned how to scuba dive when I was 16. I think a lot of what drove me towards learning diving was the incredible nature documentaries that I've watched before, like the original *Blue Planet* and *Oceans* and all the BBC documentaries, narrated by Sir David Attenborough. Watching them really inspired me to learn how to dive. And once I started diving, because I was very passionate about it that I became a scuba diving instructor. After working as a scuba instructor for a few years, I realised how our life on lands were impacting the ocean and especially coral reef ecosystems. That's when I became very passionate about conservation, and that's what led me to study marine biology and then work with Reef Watch.



Tell us about the various initiatives undertaken by Reef Watch Marine Conservation India?
We have two sort of key field placements. One is in the Andaman Islands, and the other on the coast of Karnataka, to the West coast of India. In the Andaman, we work a lot with coral reef restoration and conservation. So, we have various ongoing projects where we are looking at different ways to regrow and repair the damaged reef areas. In another mainland, on the West coast, the work that we're doing is to do with injured and stranded marine megafauna, like sea turtles, dolphins and even whales. We have a lot of them on our ports, even on the mainland, and a lot of them often get stranded on land, either dead or sometimes alive and injured. So, we have a project where we look after the injured or ill megafauna that come up to our coast and study the ones that was

wash up dead.
What is your take on the show *Blue Planet Revisited*? Do you think shows like these help people understand oceans and its life better?
Yes, and this is one of the main reasons I am associated with the channel, to talk about this show, because my own journey began very much with shows like these. A lot of what I knew before I did my masters on the subject, a lot of what I knew about the ocean and the animals that live in it came from shows like this. Such shows also help dispel a lot of myths and bring things into the right perspective for a lot of people. One of the episodes of the show is about sharks. I believe they are one of the most misunderstood animals on our planet today... so many people are terrified of sharks. I was just telling somebody earlier that when I worked as a full time

instructor, the question I was asked most frequently was, 'are there sharks in these waters and are they going to attack me?' Shows like this and nature documentaries teach people a lot about these animals. They teach them which animals are dangerous and which ones are not. They create a lot of excitement and curiosity, leading to more people exploring these spaces in real life. It's wonderful to have such shows. One of my greatest dreams is to make a documentary about India's coast specifically.
Can you tell us about some of the astonishing encounters in your journey underwater? What keeps you going in this field?
One of my most memorable diving experience ever, was when I got to do something very similar to what they have shown on this show about the sharks in the Bahamas. A few years ago I got to dive in Galapagos Islands, which is another sort of shark sanctuary we have on our planet today. So, I got to dive with hundreds of different species of sharks. And, I could see these really powerful, magnificent beings swimming around me — I can never forget that moment in my life. So, it was really cool to see something similar like that on a particular episode of the show.

and marine world, especially in India?
I've been working as a diver and then as a conservationist for the past 10 years. Over the years, I have seen a lot of damage to our oceans. Areas that boasted of a lot of sharks are completely fished out of it now. I've seen a lot of coral reefs being degraded over the years. There's an increasing amount of litter and plastics on our coastline and waters. It is very concerning, but the silver lining here is that I've seen a surge of young children concerned about the environment. They get in touch with me, wanting to be marine biologists or wanting to come and volunteer with the organisation or know how they can organise a beach clean-up in their city. Indians are coming in to learn how to dive and surf and just interact with the ocean more. This is really encouraging. Right now, the interest of youth in all of this is rising and if more people connect with the ocean and want to preserve it, things can change for good. We still have coral reefs in the Andaman. We still have sharks in our ocean, we still have whales in the sea, and we can have sea turtles along the coastline. So, this is really the time for us to act. If we as a society realise the importance of a healthy ocean and come together we can bring about a change.
(The show airs on January 23, 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

What is the future of our islands

STUDIO TALK 30 MINUTES



THE GREY STORY

The investigative documentary, *What Killed Maradona?*, is a celebration of the astonishing talent of a flawed football icon and the influences that led to his demise

Genius, legend, addict. A lifetime of highs and lows. For decades it was drugs that kept him playing but wrecked his life off the pitch. Diego Maradona rose from street urchin to become a footballing god. But he was never to see out his later years, dying at just 60 years old. The cause of death was given as a heart failure, but what really killed Maradona?
After his untimely death, *What Killed Maradona?* pieces together the extraordinary life of a man who was addicted to drugs off the pitch, but who also relied on a cocktail of pharmaceuticals to maintain his world-beating performance on the pitch. It also reveals how this lethal lifestyle, that began when Maradona was just a child, eventually became the perfect prescription for his death.
Maradona's story is one of genius and trauma, from the humblest of beginnings in a Buenos Aires shanty town where he would play football with his friends for hours on end, to becoming a football superstar known and feted around the world.

But his poverty-stricken childhood left him at a disadvantage and despite his prodigious talent on the pitch throughout his junior playing career, Maradona received treatments to build up his physique, which had been hampered due to his impoverished background. His younger years were filled with constant medical intervention.
As a foretaste of the controversy that would later engulf his life, Maradona's infamous 'hand of God' goal came against England, as he led his country to victory at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, as well as to a place in the final, four years later. He broke the world transfer record joining Italian club Napoli for £6.9m but as Maradona's income rose, so did the pressure to support a growing number of dependents off the pitch, as well as the intense fame and adulation of his fans. He started to show the signs of addiction to alcohol and cocaine, as well as prescription medicines.
A preliminary autopsy, widely reported by Argentine

media, reveals pulmonary oedema caused by heart failure, but the lifetime of pressure, addiction and abuse of his body have all helped lead him there.
Issac John, Digital Head, APAC - Discovery, said, "It's been our constant endeavour to make the sports fan experience immersive sports stories that showcase both, the hardships and glories of being at the pinnacle as well as the not-so-often talked about aspects of stardom. The show is one of those stories that presents the greyer shades of a legend whose game inspired the dreams of many of today's superstars in the world's favourite sport of football."
With testimonies from those who knew him best including Jon Smith football's original 'super-agent', who represented Maradona; Fernando Signorini Maradona's former trainer, and Giuseppe Bruscolotti, former captain of Napoli and teammate of Maradona, the show reveals how this lifestyle led to his untimely demise.
(The show is streaming on discovery+.)

CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

My journey has been special: Kiara

Actor Kiara Advani made her Bollywood debut in 2014 with *Fugly*, which was a no-show at the box office. However, she was later seen in hits such as *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Lust Stories*, *Kabir Singh* and *Good Newwz*. The actor cannot name a particular role as gamechanger in her career, but credits all her work for the success she enjoys today.



"For me, I think every film mattered, right from my first because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. People also say *Kabir Singh* and *Lust Stories* but every film has been a turning point in my life. So, I can't think of just one film, my entire journey has been special," Kiara said.
The actor, whose latest release is *Indoo Ki Jawaani*, has a string of releases coming up. She will be seen in the *Sidharrth Malhotra*-starrer *Sher Shah*, *Bhoolo Bhalaiya 2* with Kartik Aaryan and the star-studded *Jug Jug Jeeyo*.
—IANS

IMMERSIVE 45 MINUTES

Just keep going

Actor **JAVICIA LESLIE** talks about carrying the mantle as the new **Batwoman**, the importance of the character being a lesbian and having a conversation with her mother about her sexual orientation



When Javicia Leslie moved to Los Angeles, she frequently rode down the popular Sunset Boulevard to view the row of erected TV and film billboards for inspiration. As an aspiring actor, she often parked underneath her favourite ones to study before an audition.

For years, Leslie made this her routine in hopes of one day seeing her image on full display in Hollywood. Her dreams ultimately became reality when the 33-year-old actor — who starred on CBS's *God Friended Me* and Carl Weber's *The Family Business* on BET+ — recently saw a billboard of herself donning the black-and-red Batwoman suit.

Leslie will star as the caped crusader on CW's *Batwoman*, which premieres its second season on January 17. She succeeds Ruby Rose, becoming the franchise's first Black actress to portray the superhero, and will be featured as an avowed LGBTQ+ character.

In *Batwoman*, Leslie plays the role of Ryan Wilder, who spent years as a drug runner while dodging Gotham police. Her character has lethal hand-combat skills but is viewed as a kindhearted person who lives in a van with a plant. In a recent interview, Leslie spoke about carrying the mantle as the new Batwoman, the importance of the character being a lesbian and having a conversation with her mother about her sexual orientation.

◆ **What compelled you to study for your roles under billboards?**

I needed that visual to remind myself of what the end goal was and what I really wanted. It just motivated me. It was fun. Sometimes, I'd study until I fell asleep. Like I had to wake up and drive back home.

◆ **So this is something you manifested?**

I feel like everything I'm living right now, I've spoken into existence. From the

very beginning to the detail. Even with *Batwoman*, I did an interview in May and was asked what role I wanted to do next, and I said, "I want to play a superhero." ... The following month, I got the audition. I didn't even know they were looking to cast a new Batwoman. So, I truly believe in manifestation.

◆ **What does being DC's first Black female lead superhero mean to you?**

I always just remind myself that my purpose isn't for me. My purpose is to empower other people. God brought me here for a reason. He put me in this position for a reason. With that, it's nothing to fear because I know this will empower someone to see a Black female superhero. You don't get to see it often. It's so epic. I grew up on Batman and Catwoman and the Joker and Penguin. Now, to see blackness in that, I think it's very inclusive and empowering.

◆ **What's the importance of this character to be a lesbian?**

It's important to have representation in general. Fans of DC represent everyone, whether it's about race, whether it's LGBTQ+. I think what I love so much about my show is that every character is really a great representation of every-

◆ **Before telling your mom about landing the Batwoman role, you informed her about your sexual orientation as a bisexual. How was that conversation?**

I never had a fear of talking to my mom about anything. It's to the point where I don't have to talk about a lot of things. She already gets it. She already knows. So when we had a conversation, she was like "I am your mother. There's nothing you can tell me that I didn't already know." She's my best friend, very supportive.

◆ **How did your character Ryan endure being homeless?**

That may seem like the bottom to some people, but that was the top of what she's been through. To even have her own van and take care of herself, that meant something to

her. She comes from foster care and abusive foster homes and people not caring for her. The one person that cared about her was murdered in front of her. I think what may seem like nothing to someone else is a lot to her. She holds onto and cherishes it.

◆ **How did your character's circumstances mold them?**

I think that if there is anything that roots the darkness in her, it's probably a little bit of revenge. The vengeance she has for the ones that killed her mother. That is enough. How can you truly fight for what's good if you can't forgive? How can you truly be on the right side if vengeance is what empowers you?

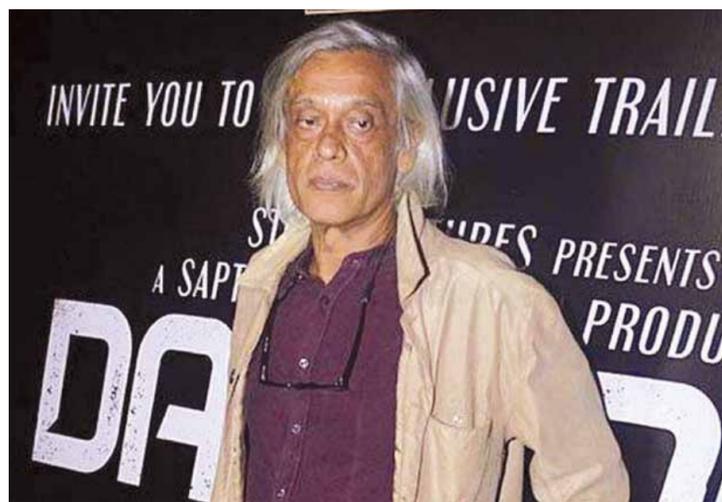
◆ **What do you want people to take away from your career so far?**

There's so many times where I could have said "This is hard" and walked away. But you must keep going. One of the things I live by is that if you follow your passion, you'll find your purpose. I think God puts passions in us for a reason. ... You must find your purpose in anything you want and speak it into existence. Then you need to have the work ethic to support it.

—AP



ENCOUNTER 15 MINUTES



Value it more

Filmmaker **SUDHIR MISHRA** feels that films these days are judged like political essays with no regard to the craft of storytelling

Filmmaker Sushir Mishra feels films these days are judged like political essays with no regard to the craft of storytelling.

"There is a lack of political understanding yet everything is about politics. Films are judged like political essays. Cinema has no place. Craft has no place. What is happening?," Mishra tweeted on Friday.

"Cinema is, plucking an idea out of the air, about apparently nothing but then it becomes about so much more. About your life and mine. About your world and mine," he added.

Mishra entered Bollywood as a director with *Yeh Woh Manzil To Nahin* in 1987. He added strokes of diverse stories on the cinematic canvas, with *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi*, *Chameli*, *Inkaar*, *Khoya Khoya Chand* and *Calcutta Mail*,

over the years, besides the OTT-released film *Serious Men* and the web series *Hostages*.

His most recent project *Serious Men* was an adaptation of Manu Joseph's eponymous book. The film featured Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and narrated the story of a father who wants to create a bright future for his son.

Meanwhile, the filmmaker had shared that the pandemic has left an everlasting impact on his life. "I don't know this whole experience of the pandemic. I've lost a bit of my swag. When I saw myself terrified, holding my father in my arms and running towards an ICU, and then watching him die, that has done something. I don't know what exactly. It will show in my next (project)," he said earlier.

—IANS

DIALOGUE 30 MINUTES

Amit salutes soldiers on Army Day

Actor Amit Sadh, who plays Kargil war hero Major Deependra Singh Sengar in a forthcoming web series *Jeet Ki Zid*, offered his best wishes to the brave officers of the Indian Army on the occasion of Army Day on Friday.

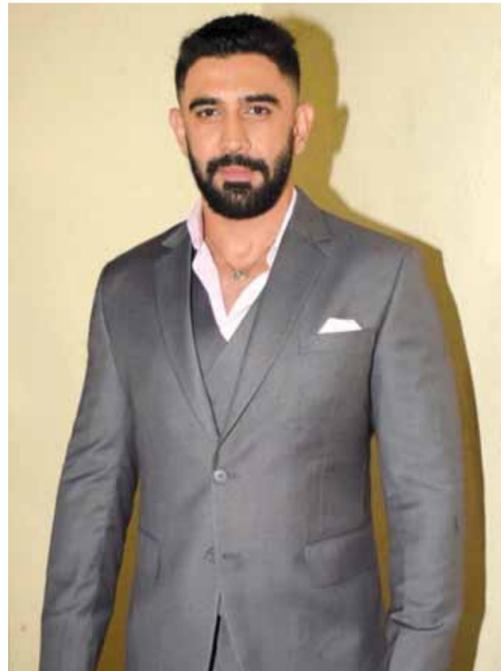
"Every Indian soldier is a shining example of valour and courage. They are the sole reason that every Indian citizen can sleep peacefully. There is nothing that can even come close to the selfless work our Indian Army does to protect us. I offer my best wishes and salute the brave officers of the Indian army. I feel honoured to have essayed the role of Major Deependra," said Amit.

The series, which also features Amrita Puri and Sushant Singh, is directed by Vishal Mangalorkar and produced by Boney Kapoor, Arunava Joy Sengupta and Akash Chawla.

The makers of the show got expert help from Special Forces consultants and mission choreographers Colonel Ashok Galoth and Major Arjun Galoth on the show.

"I am a part of a project which shows the dedication and sheer will of the Indian Army. I am glad that the makers reached out to us and took our suggestions to help create this show. It was indeed a fulfilling experience," said Colonel Ashok Galoth.

Major Galoth shared that Major Deependra's story is not



only an "inspiration for us, but for the entire world." He added, "We have helped the team in our own little way with the basics of our routine, but the actual credit goes to the ones

who thought of creating an entire web series on such an inspirational story."

(The series is slated to premiere on January 22 on Zee5.)

—IANS

Important to pick varied roles: Swara

Actor Swara Bhasker says picking roles that span across genres has always been important to her.

"Picking roles that span across genres and varied character graphs has always been important to me. Whether it was as the sultry Shanoo (*Rasbhari*), the amiable Beanie (*Bhaag Beanie Bhaag*) or now the freespirted Mausam in the horror comedy *Aapkey Kamrey Mein Koi Rehna Hai*, I've enjoyed portraying all," Swara said.

The actor will soon be seen in the horror comedy which also stars Sumeet Vyas, Naveen Kasturia, Amol Parashar and Ashish Verma.

"I think this show will hit the right notes of laughter and unexpected drama," Swara said about the series, the trailer of which released on Friday.

Her co-star Sumeet said, "Horror comedy is a genre that I've really come to enjoy — be it as an actor who is playing a role in the narrative or for that matter — even watching such stories. It was fun to work with such great artists for this project and I believe that the comedy of errors for these four friends and their newly acquired, unexpected roommate who is a ghost will make for a fun watch."

Naveen feels the "bite-sized series is a melange of fun, comedy, horror, and entertainment. In the midst of content that is heavy on crime and drama, this will leave you with goosebumps and a healthy dose of laughter."

The series shows the journey of four friends in their newly-rented apartment that is haunted. The show, directed by Gaurav Sinha, will release on MX Player on January 22.

—IANS



Inexperienced attack keeps Oz in check

Debutants Natarajan, Washington shine as Australia score 274/5 courtesy Labuschagne ton

PTI ■ BRISBANE

The incredible underdog fairytale of Thangarasu Natarajan got better with his twin strikes on debut headlining a commendable effort from an inexperienced Indian bowling attack, which reduced Australia to 274 for 5 despite a stylish hundred from Marnus Labuschagne on the opening day of the final Test here.

The Indian attack, with a collective experience of 3 Tests and 10 balls and 11 wickets in its kitty, was pitted against the injured Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah.

After 87 overs, the two Tamil Nadu rookies Natarajan (20-2-63-2) and Washington Sundar (2-4-63-1) could hold their heads high for a lion-hearted effort on a good batting pitch in the absence of the injured Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah.

If tall off-spinner Washington set up a nice little trap to get rid of Steve Smith (36 off 77 balls), Natarajan forced centurion Labuschagne (108 off 204 balls) and Matthew Wade (47 off 85 balls) to miscue their pull-shots after a 113-run stand which threatened to put India in a spot.

At stumps, Tim Paine (38) and Cameron Green (28) had added 61 runs for the sixth wicket and the visitors would need a few quick wickets to keep the first innings total within a manageable range.

The distance between Palayampatti, a non-descript village in Tamil Nadu's Salem, to Australia's modern city Brisbane is 9035 km on a google map.

But add the hardships of a daily wage mother trying to put



Shardul Thakur hugs Washington Sundar after he dismisses Australian opener Marcus Harris on Day 1 of fourth Test at Gabba

food on table, being called for suspect action early in his career, not being privileged enough to get a paternity leave (his daughter is already three months old), it's a million miles emotionally that Team India's favourite Nattu has traversed.

Getting Labuschagne, who was on a rampage, with a short delivery ensured that Australia didn't finish the day with a score close to 350.

For someone, who was supposed to be a net bowler, India's Test Cap No 300, did well

enough on the first day despite not exactly being a natural. He also knows that he doesn't have the express pace to trouble batsmen (his average speed is 130 plus).

He bowled full during his first two spells and made the length shorter when the ball got old and that's how he induced Wade and Labuschagne to go for those pull shots.

Nobody would have blamed a Natarajan or a Shardul or "leader of the attack" Mohammed Siraj (19-8-51-1),

all of whom toiled manfully throughout their multiple spells in a battle of unequals.

The inexperience was palpable as Thakur (18-5-67-1) bowled a lot of full pitched deliveries which Labuschagne pounced on in the second and third sessions during an innings that had nine boundaries.

If all the injuries weren't enough, Navdeep Saini (7.5 overs) now seems to be in trouble as he has sustained a groin niggle moments after his skipper Ajinkya Rahane dropped a

dolly at gully when Labuschagne was on 37.

By far, Australia's most consistent batsman in the series, Labuschagne batted in two gears during the day.

In the first session, he faced 82 balls and sedately moved to 19 but in the next 113 balls, scored another 82 runs to reach his fifth hundred in 195 balls.

4th Test, Day 2
Live from 5:00am IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

He trusted the bounce, hit some lovely drives and was also ready to pull anything that was short.

During his partnership with Smith, the former Australian skipper was the aggressor but Washington, a specialist batsman till 2016 and now a front-line off-spinner, with the help of his seniors — skipper Rahane and his deputy Rohit Sharma — laid a beautiful trap.

Washington had bowled three maiden overs prior to lunch and the fidgety Smith, who is always looking to get a move on, fell for the leg trap that

Saini complains of groin pain



Brisbane: The injury-plagued Indian team took another hit on Friday when pacer Navdeep Saini was forced off the field during the fourth and final Test due to groin pain and taken for

scans. The 28-year-old Saini had bowled five balls of his eighth, and the innings 36th, over during the second session when he had to walk off the field because of the pain. With this, his further participation in the match, which began this morning, has been thrown into serious doubt.

"Navdeep Saini has complained of pain in his groin. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team," read a short statement from the BCCI on the one-Test-old bowler's condition. "Navdeep Saini has now gone for scans," added a brief update that came after the initial note. PTI

was set for him.

Rohit stationed himself at short mid-wicket for a whiff at Smith plays on the on-side.

They were banking on the extra bounce that they had seen

Washington generate with the white ball.

The plan worked as Smith flicked one straight into Rohit's hands just few minutes after the lunch.

Labuschagne disappointed at not getting 'big score'

PTI ■ BRISBANE

A fifth Test hundred in his kitty against a "very disciplined" bowling attack but Australia's Marnus Labuschagne was still a disappointed man on the opening day of the fourth Test here as he was not

enough for him. Australia ended the day 274/5, thanks largely to Labuschagne's 108 off 204 balls. The 26-year-old said he should have done more.

"...I think, I am definitely disappointed not going on and getting a really big score, which would have put us in a better position as a team," Labuschagne said at the virtual post-play press-conference.

"Any Test century, it doesn't matter who it is against or against what opposition, you want to make sure you are scoring hundreds and probably for me (it was) today it was disappointing that (I) did not

end up making that a really big hundred," he stressed.

However, he credited the Indian bowlers for being disciplined early on and hardly giving away any scoring opportunities.

"...Indian bowling attacks, they are very disciplined and doesn't matter who is bowling, they are very planned, they are very strategic and we saw that today with their bowling attack."

"They were disciplined early and did not give us many of those scoring opportunities in the first session," the right-handed batsman said.

Siraj abused by Gabba crowd, called grub

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was targeted for abuse by a section of the crowd on the opening day of the fourth Test, a newspaper here reported, claiming that he was called a "grub" by some spectators.

The reported incident happened a few days after Siraj was racially abused by spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the third and fourth day of the drawn third Test. That had led to an expulsion of six people from the stands and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia to the visiting team.

On Friday, a report in the Sydney Morning Herald quoted a spectator as saying that a

section of the crowd at the Gabba targeted Siraj.

"The guys behind me have been calling — shouting — both Washington and Siraj grubs," a spectator named Kate was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"It started targeted at Siraj and it was a chant similar to the SCG one (in which fans sung to the tune of Que Sera, Sera but substituted the lyrics with Que Shiraz, Shiraz).

"But this time it was Siraj. I suspect it's not a coincidence that it's Siraj being targeted post the SCG stuff."

According to the newspaper, at one point, a man in the crowd was heard yelling, "Siraj, give us a wave, give us a wave, give us a wave. Siraj, you bloody grub."



Injured Hanuma Vihari on Friday left for India after being ruled out of the ongoing fourth Test in Brisbane. Vihari has sustained a grade 2 injury during the final day of his match-saving 23 and will now require rest, followed by intense rehabilitation which rules him out of England series. BCCI/Twitter

Sundar ready to bowl even 40-50 overs

BRISBANE: Washington Sundar, prior to his unexpected Test debut on Friday against Australia, had bowled over 285 overs in first-class cricket and after dismissing Steve Smith, the Tamil Nadu off-spinner is ready to bowl 50 in an innings if that's what the side wants of him. India's T20 specialist off-spinner was asked to stay back by the team management to help as a net bowler but injuries to key players, including senior pro Ravichandran Ashwin, landed him in a mouth-watering duel with Smith which he won hands down. "I have always felt that my skills are very good with red ball. I have bowled a lot of overs in first class cricket and first division league in Chennai as well. I was just waiting for this opportunity and last couple of months, we were here, I did get to bowl a lot of overs and improve upon my skills," the shy bowler said after first day's play. PTI

Captain Root's 168* puts Eng ahead in 1st Test

AFP ■ GALLE

England captain Joe Root hit an unbeaten 168 as his side built up a lead of 185 over Sri Lanka on a rain-hit second day of the opening Test.

England were 320/4 when rain halted play in Galle. Root and Dan Lawrence, who scored 73 on his Test debut, built a 173-run partnership after the tourists resumed the day on 127/2.

Root, who is batting with Jos Buttler (7), hit his 18th Test ton and kept up the pressure on the home bowlers despite losing overnight partner Jonny Bairstow for 47 early in the day.

"I think the things could happen very quickly as the game moves forward, generally does here. It is really important that we make the most of this first innings lead that we have got now," Root told reporters.

"We will be really ruthless. I have spoken about this ahead of the series and make it count and put them under pressure. That way try and bat just once."

After a full opening day in the empty stadium in Galle, rain started falling just before the start of the second day and wiped out the final session.

Root started the day on 66 and passed 100 soon after lunch with a single off Dilruwan Perera. He raised his bat and hugged Lawrence. It was the star batsman's highest Test score in more than a year after going through 2020 without a century and said he felt "good" to make it count.

"Generally when I get a hundred I make it really



Root said of the Essex batsman.

"Showed exactly why he deserves an opportunity to

play and it's the start of something very special for him."

Earlier Bairstow became left-arm spinner Lasith

Embuldeniya's third victim, caught at gully. The wicket ended a 114-run third-wicket stand for the tourists.

ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସମିତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ପାଇକମାଲ
PANCHAYAT SAMITI OFFICE, PAIKMAL
At/Po-Paikmal, District-Bargarh, Odisha, Pin-768039 E-mail :- ori.paikmal@nlc.in

Letter No. 100 Date:- 15.01.2021

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFS)
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. PS- 01/2021 DT:- 15.01.2021

On behalf of Panchayat Samiti, Paikmal invites percentage Rate bids in Double Cover system for the construction of works as detailed in the table, from the Class of Civil Contractors as mentioned in table. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the Bid.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approximate Value of work (in Lakh) (Excluding of GST 12 %)	Period of Completion	Class of Contractor	Bid Security	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Last date of receipt of Bid
01	Construction of CDPO building at Block Office premises.	1926841	240 days	C&B	1% of Estimat cost	6000/-	03.02.2021
02	Construction of Jatri Waiting Room near Lion Gate of Nrusinghnath Temple with provision of Drinking Water Supply	1453467	180 days	C&B	1% of Estimat cost	6000/-	03.02.2021
03	Beautification and Lighting of Streams at Nrusinghnath Temple	1256021	180 days	C&B	1% of Estimat cost	6000/-	03.02.2021
04	Construction of Toilet Complex near Nallah of Nrusinghnath Temple	826749	120 days	C&B	1% of Estimat cost	4000/-	03.02.2021

- The Bid documents will be available in the Office of the Panchayat Samiti, Paikmal from 20.01.2021 to 03.02.2021 at 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM in the Official days.
- All corrigendum and Addendum will be published in the Notice Board of Panchayat Samiti, Paikmal.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.

Block Development Officer, Paikmal

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, NAYAGARH
NAYAGARH (ODISHA), PIN-752069
e-Mail :- nacnayagarh@yahoo.co.in
Tender Call Notice No. 112 / Dt. 15.01.2021
E- Procurement Notice No. MUNLNGR-3/2020-21

1	Name of the Work	: Civil Works
2	No of Works	: 02 Nos.
3	Value of Work	: Rs.73,95,829/- to Rs.88,27,225/-
4	Class of Contractor	: B & A
5	Period of Completion	: 180 days
6	Date of Publication	: 19.01.2021
7	Date and Time of availability of document in the portal.	: From Dt. 20.01.2021 at 10.00 AM to Dt. 29.01.2021 up to 5.00 PM
8	Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in portal	: Dt.29.01.2021 up to 5.00 PM
9	Last date of Submission of original documents in this Office	: On or before 5.00 P.M. on 04.02.2021 by Registered Post / Speed Post / Drop Box available at Municipality Office
10	Date and Time of opening Technical Bid	: Dt.05.02.2021 at 11.00 AM at Municipality Office, Nayagarh
11	Date and Time of opening Financial Bid	: Dt.08.02.2021 at 11.00 AM at Municipality Office, Nayagarh

Sd/-
Executive officer
Nayagarh Municipality

Further details can be seen from e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Corrigendum for Cancellation of tender to Bid Identification No. SEMC/MDHKD-01/2020-21
A-466
The tender invited vide this office Bid Identification No. SEMC/MDHKD-01/2020-21 is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Superintending Engineer
Mechanical Circle(Med.I.P)
Hirakud, Dist-Sambalpur

OIPR-32403/11/0006/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NAYAGARH
E-Mail:- nayagarhrw_2@yahoo.in

O-894
"e" Procurement Notice for Road & Building works
Identification No. Online Tender / 04 / RWD - II / 2020-21

1.	Name of the work	::	Construction of Road works.
2.	Total Number of works	::	6 Nos
3.	Approx. Estimated cost	::	Varies from Rs. 0.88 lakh to Rs. 25.87 lakh
4.	Class of Contractor	::	D, C & B Class of Contractor
5.	Period of Completion	::	2 (Two) Months

6. Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No of Works	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Date & Time of opening of tender
			From	To	
Executive Engineer, R.W. Divn-II, Nayagarh	Online Tender / 04/RWD-II/2020-21	6 Nos (Six Nos)	25.01.2021 AT 10.00 A.M.	02.02.2021 Upto 5.00 P.M.	03.02.2021 At 12.00 Noon

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25106/11/0006/2021 Executive Engineer R.W.Division-II, Nayagarh

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. E.E. JSPR(R&B)- 21/2020-21.

B-642

- Name of work : Road (Civil) works for the year 2020-21.
- No. of Works. : 01 (One) no
- Estimated cost : Above Rs.5.00 lakhs up to Rs.50.00 Lakhs (Approx)
- Period of completion : Work wise mentioned in NIT
- Class of contractors : (CIVIL) "D", "C", "B".

Other details as follows :-

- Date & time of availability of bid documents in Portal:-19.01.2021 at 11.30 A.M.
- Last date/ time for receipt of bids in Portal 03.02.2021 up to 05.00 PM.
- Opening of Bid documents : 04.02.2021 at 11.30A.M..
- Procurement Officer: Executive Engineer, Jagatsinghpur (R&B) Division, Jagatsinghpur.

With
E-Mail address:- eerbjspr@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website tendersorissa.gov.in

Executive Engineer
Jagatsinghpur (R&B) Division
OIPR-34093/11/0023/2021