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DEHRADUN, THURSDAY JANUARY 14, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹2



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# Inoculation sites reduced by half

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From Goa to Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir to down south Kerala, the vaccines against Covid-19 are being ferried to far corners of the country for the vaccination drive that will be launched on Saturday even as the Government on Wednesday reduced the number of inoculation sites to almost half from previous target of 4,895, citing technical reasons.

It means, coronavirus vaccine will be administered in fewer sites than originally decided, at least for the first few days with fewer people getting vaccinated. Earlier, the vaccination was scheduled to take place through Government hospitals — there was to be 4,895 sites across the country.

Sources said that the number has been slashed to almost half. For instance, in Punjab, the number of these sites has been reduced from 110 to 59 for the opening day while Assam has been asked to reduce the number of sites from 74 to 59, sources said. Required cold supply chain has been one of the challenges for the delivery system, especially in the rural areas.

“The Centre asked us to reduce the vaccine centres. Now we have reduced it from 511 to 350. The Centre said, ‘Don’t be in haste,’ Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope told the media. In Mumbai, the number of sites has been reduced from 72 to 50. The numbers have been slashed in Pune also, now vaccination will take place only in 39 sites.

The authorities are hoping to finish the vaccination of 30 crore people belonging to high-

Covid-19 vaccines reaching all centres across India, earlier 4,895 vaccination spots were chosen in country



Medical department workers unload boxes of Covid-19 vaccines from a vehicle at cold storage of a hospital in Srinagar on Wednesday

PTI

risk groups within six months to achieve a critical mass of vaccinated people with around 3 crore health workers and corona warriors to get the shots in the first phase beginning January 13.

On their part, Serum Institute of India has moved about 56 lakh doses of Covishield to 13 cities. Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech said it had successfully transported the indigenous Covaxin, developed in collab-

oration with the ICMR and the National Institute of Virology, to 11 cities. It said it has donated 16.5 lakh doses to the Centre.

“After having received the Government purchase order for 55 lakh doses, the company shipped the first batch of vaccines (each vial containing 20 doses),” Bharat Biotech said in a statement on Wednesday.

It added that the vaccine was sent to Ganavaram, Guwahati, Patna, Delhi,

Kurukshetra, Bengaluru, Pune, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Chennai and Lucknow.

As the vials began reaching their destinations, in readiness for the pan-India vaccination drive that will be launched on Saturday, States firmed up their plans and finetuned logistical details.

In Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said his AAP Government will provide the vaccine free if the Centre fails to do so. He said he has already

## Vaccination trial on local population must for jabs’ nod in India

New Delhi: Any vaccine maker, including Pfizer, which has sought emergency-use authorisation for its Covid-19 shot in India, must conduct a local “bridging” safety and immunogenicity study to be considered for the country’s immunisation programme, a senior government official told Reuters.

appealed to the Centre as there are many people in the country who can’t afford the life-saving jab. In accordance with the national priority list, the Covid-19 vaccines will be given first to healthcare and frontline workers.

The first consignment of about 94,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine reached Bhopal on a scheduled flight from Mumbai, a State Government official said.

From the airport, insulated vans of the health department transported the boxes — which signals India entering a decisive phase in its fight against the pandemic — to the State vaccine centre where Medical Education Minister Visvas Sarang inspected the arrangements. The doses will be dispatched to eight districts from Bhopal.

Kerala, too, received its first Covishield vaccine consignment on Wednesday morning on a Go Air flight that landed at Kochi. Sources in the National Health Mission said of the 4.33 lakh doses of the vaccine, 1,100 will be sent to Mahe, an enclave of Puducherry.

# Farmers burn copies of agri laws on Lohri



Farmers burn copies of the new farm laws as they celebrate Lohri festival during their ongoing protest against the Central Government, at Singhu Border in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers protesting at Delhi borders burnt copies of Centre’s new agriculture laws at all demonstration sites on the festival of Lohri on Wednesday, as a mark of protest against the legislation. Meanwhile, All India Kisan Sangarsh Coordination Committee (AIKSSC) on Wednesday claimed farmers burnt copies of the Act at more than 20,000 spots all across the country.

Many farmer leaders also threw copies of the farm laws in the bonfire created on the premises of the Kisan Andolan office.

According to Paramjeet Singh of Samyukta Kisan

Morcha, around one lakh copies of the three agri laws, were burnt at the Singhu border alone.

Lohri is widely celebrated in Punjab and Haryana to mark the harvesting of rabi crops. People traditionally celebrate it by circling around bonfires, throwing food items — peanuts, puffed rice, popcorn, etc — into the fire, singing folk songs, dancing and feasting.

“The celebrations can wait. We will celebrate all these festivals the day our demand of the repealing of these black laws are met by the Centre,” said 65-year-old Gurpreet Singh Sandhu who hails from Haryana’s Karnal district.

“This Lohri is filled with

struggle,” said Rajbir Singh, a 34-year-old farmer from Punjab’s Barnala. “It is minus the fun, the song and the dance we used to have back home on Lohri. But I am happy to be here and celebrate it with my family of farmers this time.”

“Today, we have burned the copies, tomorrow the Centre will burn them. They have to, we will make them do it,” he added.

Several bonfires were lined up at the Delhi-Haryana border stretch, the nerve centre of the farmers’ agitation. The protesting farmers raised slogans, sang songs of resistance and hope as they orbited the bonfire, burning copies of farm laws and praying for the success of their protest.

# In desi push & IAF boost, ₹48K cr OK’d for 83 Tejas

## Induction into IAF scheduled for 2026

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boost to indigenisation drive in defence manufacturing, the Government on Wednesday approved a ₹48,000-crore deal for producing 83 Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

The induction of these aircraft will give a much-needed push to the IAF’s efforts to modernise and stabilise its dwindling fighter jet strength. While the sanctioned strength is nearly 40, the IAF has now only about 30 squadrons. One squadron has 18 to 20 jets.

If the production schedule is on time, the fleet of 83 jets will start coming into the IAF by 2026. A contract between the IAF and the HAL is expected to be inked next month. At present, the IAF has 18 Tejas



manufactured by the HAL and these jets are operating from the IAF base in Sullur, Tamil Nadu.

Given the current security scenario where the armed forces have to be ready to face the possibility of fighting a two-front war simultaneously with Pakistan and China, the IAF urgently needs to shore up its number of fighter jets.

The Defence Ministry said the Union Cabinet approved procurement of 73 Tejas (LCA) Mk-1A fighter aircraft and 10 Tejas Mk-1(LCA) trainer aircraft at the cost of ₹45,696 crore

along with Design and Development of Infrastructure sanctions worth ₹1,202 crore.

The MK-1A variant is an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured state-of-the-art modern 4 plus generation fighter aircraft. This aircraft is equipped with critical operational capabilities of Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Missile, Electronic Warfare (EW) Suite and Air to Air Refuelling (AAR) would be a potent platform to meet the operational requirements of the IAF.

## Delhi schools to reopen for Classes 10, 12 from Jan 18

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of CBSE board exams, the Delhi Government has allowed all schools outside Covid-19 containment zones here to reopen for Classes 10 and 12 from January 18, officials of the Directorate of Education said on Wednesday.

However, it made clear that physical attendance is not compulsory and students will attend schools only with consent of parents.

Schools in Delhi would reopen after a gap of 10 months since March 2020 due to the pandemic followed by the lockdown.

“Keeping in view CBSE board exams, permission is being granted for schools to reopen for Classes 10 and 12 from January 18 for practicals, project work and counselling. Students will be called with parent’s consent and will not be bound to come,” Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted.

# 150-metre-long, 30-ft-deep cross-border tunnel found

## Sand bags with Karachi markings found, high alert sounded in area

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The foot soldiers of the Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday detected a 150-metre long and 25 to 30-feet deep cross-border tunnel, the third in recent months, in Bobiya area of Samba sector in the Jammu region.

The tunnel originated from the Pakistani side of the international border and was detected by a BSF patrol party during its special anti-tunnel drive. The drive was launched following intel reports about presence of such tunnels in the Samba and Kathua sectors of Jammu frontier.

A high alert has been sounded in the entire border belt to find out whether the same under-construction tun-



nel has been used by the terrorists to sneak inside the Indian territory with the help from the Pakistani rangers.

Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, NS Jamwal, who himself rushed to the spot, told reporters that it was a matter of investigation whether the tunnel was put to use by the Pakistan-based infiltrators to sneak inside the Indian territory.

Sharing details of the oper-

ation, Jamwal said, “During an anti-tunneling drive the vigilant troops of BSF detected a tunnel in BOP Bobiya Area in Samba Sector around 10.30 am on Wednesday.”

He said the tunnel was detected about 90 metres from zero line and about 20 meters from the fence on our own side.

IG BSF told reporters that the exit on Indian side was reinforced with sand bags which carried markings of a Karachi based unit.

## SC issues notice on Govt plea against decriminalising adultery in forces

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a notice on a plea of the Centre which urged that the 2018 judgment of a five-judge constitution bench decriminalising adultery under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) be not made applicable to the armed forces.

Attorney General KK Venugopal said under the relevant rules of armed forces, adultery is a ground for court martial for unbecoming conduct and therefore armed forces should be exempted from the purview of 2018 verdict of the Constitution bench.

A bench comprising Justices RF Nariman, Navin Sinha and KM Joseph, after issuing the notice to the PIL petitioner one Joseph Shine and others on the Centre’s plea, referred the matter to Chief Justice SA Bobde for setting up of a five-judge Constitution Bench which can clarify the position.

## CAPSULE

### GOVERNMENT DEFERS NATIONAL POLIO DRIVE

New Delhi: The National Polio immunisation programme, as part of which children in the age group of 0-5 years are administered polio drops, has been deferred “till further notice” by the Centre citing “unforeseen activities”.

### MARKETS

SENSEX 49492.32 (-24.79)

NIFTY 14564.90 (+1.40)

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SILVER 65,820.00 (-86.00)

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# Dhoni’s poultry plan goes for a toss as 2,500 Kadaknath die of bird flu

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian cricket team skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni’s dream of Kadaknath breed chicken farming at his sprawling farm in Ranchi has been hit by the bird flu outbreak in Madhya Pradesh.

Nearly 2,500 Kadaknath chickens of a poultry farm died of bird flu or avian influenza in Jhabua’s Rudipanda village under Thandla tehsil on Wednesday. Dhoni’s firm had placed an order for the supply of 2,000 Kadaknath chicks to the village hatcheries.

According to officials, nearly 2,500 Kadaknath chickens have died of bird flu in Jhabua district, which has GI-tag for Kadaknath. In August 2020 Dhoni’s farm managers had got in touch with the

poultry farm through the Krishi Vikas Kendra (KVK) and MP Kadaknath mobile phone app. Dhoni’s farm managers had also credited advance sums for the supply of the chicks.

The black-winged and tan-blooded “Kadaknath” chicken is known for its high iron content and low cholesterol, and sells at a much higher price than other varieties. “Now, transportation of chicken from the infected area has been banned for three months,” officials said.

Bird-flu cases have been detected in Indore, Mandsa, Agar, Neemuch, Dewas, Ujjain, Khandwa, Kargone, Guna, Shivpuri, Rajgarh, Shajapur, Vidisha, Bhopal, Hoshangabad, Ashoknagar, Datia and Barwani districts so far.



## All municipal corps ban sale, storage of poultry or processed chicken meat in Delhi

New Delhi: All the three MCDs — North, South and East — on Wednesday imposed a ban on sale and storage of poultry or processed chicken meat by shops and restaurants with immediate effect in view of the bird flu situation in the national Capital.

## Central Vista project work to begin tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The construction of the new Parliament building will start on January 15, considered an auspicious day as it falls a day after “Makar Sankranti”. The heritage panel on Monday approved the construction under the ambitious Central Vista redevelopment plan.

The new building is being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd. Sources said that Tata Projects started mobilising machinery and other items.

The redevelopment project of the Central Vista envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a common central secretariat, revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, new PM Residence and PMO, and a new VP Enclave.

## Mandatory publishing of notice for interfaith marriage now optional, rules Allahabad HC

Lucknow: In a judgment that is likely to bring relief to inter faith couples, the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday declared as optional the mandatory publication of notice of intended marriages under the Special Marriage Act, saying it violated the Right to Privacy.

It would also affect the couple’s freedom to choose marriage “without interference from state and non-state actors”, Justice Vivek Chaudhary said.

Justice Chaudhary said it shall now be optional for the parties to the intended marriage to make a request in writing to the marriage officer to publish or not to publish such a notice.

# US lawmakers seek to hold Trump accountable for January 6 storming

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Top American lawmakers on Wednesday sought to hold Donald Trump, the outgoing president, accountable for storming of the Capitol Hill by his supporters on January 6.

“Every moment Donald Trump is in the White House, our nation — its freedom — is in danger. He must be held to account for the attack on our capitol that he organised and incited. I solemnly urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying article,” Congressman James McGovern said on floor of US House of Representatives.

McGovern brought to the House Floor H. Res. 24, the article of impeachment against



Trump.

The article charges the president with “Incitement of Insurrection” for his actions on January 6, 2021, when he delivered a speech inciting his supporters to lay siege to the United States Capitol.

This riot temporarily halted the counting of Electoral College votes and led to the deaths of five people, including a Capitol Police Officer.



# Bird flu spreads in more areas of Haryana

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

The increasing number of deaths of crows, pigeons, egrets and other birds being reported on a daily basis at Najafgarh wetlands, Basai wetlands, Sultanpur wetlands in Gurugram is triggering panic over the possibility of bird flu outbreak. The wildlife officials have been asked to dispose of dead birds immediately after death as a part of precautionary measures, said Sultanpur National park (wildlife) Inspector Rajesh Chahal.

Talking to ‘The Pioneer’ over the phone, Chahal said that samples of dead birds were collected and sent for examination to the laboratory at Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Jalandhar. Some samples of dead crows sent at RDDI, Jalandhar have been suspected of bird flu. The second confirmatory report was sent to a laboratory in Bhopal’s National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Reports are awaited. However, no death of migratory birds has been reported so far but a caution has been

sounded and the health department is on alert, he said, adding that teams of the Wildlife Department are keeping round-the-clock vigil.

He further said that a meeting has been called on this issue on Thursday and officials of Municipal Corporation, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and district administration will attend.

Chahal further said that a bird-flu outbreak has been confirmed in Delhi with test results showing that birds died of the flu.

The officials of the Forest and wildlife department have been receiving reports of deaths of birds in the area on a daily basis over the last one week and so.

Team members have recovered two or three dead birds at different places in Gurugram triggering a bird flu scare and samples were already sent for testing to a wildlife lab in Punjab.

Earlier, dozens of crows and egrets were found dead in Tau Devi Lal Biodiversity and Botanical Park, Sector 52 and nearby areas. The dead birds have been buried with all precautions and people have been

urged to remain vigilant about such incidents. Officials have also asked to remain alert and ensure a constant vigil near places such as water bodies, zoos and poultry farms, he added.

Another official said that neighbouring State Delhi have recently reported avian deaths due to the disease.

Increasing number of deaths of birds in Gurugram areas triggered panic among the locals as they feared the possibility of the bird flu outbreak in the area.

When contacted Haryana Chief Conservator of Forests (wildlife) ML Rajvanshi said that deaths of some birds have been reported in Rohtak and Hisar recently and reports of dead crows were sent to lab in Jalandhar to confirm whether bird flu has spread to Rohtak, Hisar as well.

However, reports received negative in Narwana, Rohtak and Hisar on Wednesday. Teams have been told to report back if fresh bird carcasses are found.

He further said that no casualty has been reported so far in the wetlands of Sultanpur Lake and Bhindawas where

## 37,695 poultry birds at Barwala culled

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A total of 37,695 poultry birds at Barwala culled in the first-five days of the culling exercise in Barwala-Raipur Rani region after samples of some birds in two poultry farms at Kheri and Ganauli villages in Panchkula district tested positive for the H5N8 strain of avian flu on January 8.

Haryana State Department of Animal Husbandry Joint director LC Ranga on Monday told The Pioneer that the culling oper-

ations are going in Poultry Farms within one kilometre radius of two Epicenters. A total of 7770 poultry birds were culled at Narender Poultry Farm. Also 182 infected curtains, 1210 gunny bags and other farm waste was destroyed by burning at Nature Poultry Farm, Dandlawar. A total of 1340 eggs have been destroyed during the same period, he added.

The team members of the District Task Force along with officials of Animal Husbandry have been working on a war footing for the last five days to

complete the culling exercise of 1.66 lakh poultry birds as per the instructions of the Government of India, Ministry of Animal Husbandry. It will take at least a week or so to complete the culling of 1.66 lakh poultry birds, he added.

He further said that the instructions were issued to the local residents to not roam around the affected poultry farms, in which culling operation is to be executed. The operation will continue until at least 1.66 lakh poultry birds are culled in the area.

about the birds or aquatic species and habitat, and local riparian residents had been roped in to keep an eye on any abnormal behaviour of water fowls.

The officials have been asked to create awareness that any sighting of a dead bird by

thousands of migratory birds have arrived for their annual sojourn.

The Wildlife officer further said, “We are on the alert. Our teams have been keeping a watch 24x7 on a rotational basis. A group of individuals who provide extra information

## Farmers in Punjab burn copies of farm laws on Lohri

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Several groups of farmers in Punjab on Wednesday burnt copies of the Centre’s three farm laws at several places on the festival of Lohri as a mark of their protest.

The harvest festival of Lohri is celebrated in Punjab, Haryana and other parts of north India. Bonfires are an important part of the festivities.

Protesting farmers owing allegiance to different farm bodies held protest at many places in the state and burnt copies of new agriculture laws. Farmers also shouted slogans against the BJP-led Centre and slammed the government for

not acceding to their demands. They demanded that the new farms laws should be repealed.

Farmers including women under the banner of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee held a protest at Pandherkalan village in Amritsar. “We burnt the copies of the farm laws as a mark of protest against these legislations,” said committee’s general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher in Amritsar.

Similar protests are also being held at other places in Amritsar. “Until the Centre accepts all the demands of farmers, our agitation will continue,” said Pandher.

“We will not accept these

farm laws as they are not in the interest of the farming community and the government should repeal these legislations,” said a protester.

Farmers also burnt copies of the new farm laws at many places including Hoshiarpur, Sangrur and Kapurthala in the state.

Farmers, who have been camping at the Delhi borders, are demanding a repeal of the farm laws and a legal guarantee to the minimum support price for crops.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the implementation of controversial new farm laws till further orders and decided to set up a 4-mem-

ber committee to resolve the impasse over them between the Centre and farmers’ unions protesting at Delhi borders.

**AAP DEDICATES STATE LEVEL FUNCTION TO MARTYRED FARMERS IN LUDHIANA**

To pay homage to the farmers who were martyred in the farmers’ agitation, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) held a state level function on Wednesday in Ludhiana on Wednesday.

The Lohri program was dedicated to the martyred farmers and was presided over by the party’s state president and MP Bhagwant Mann.

### DVC POWER DUES

## Centre deducts ₹714 Cr from J'khand's account again

### STATE LIKELY TO GO TO COURT TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

PRANAV PRATYUSH ■ RANCHI

The Union Power Ministry has deducted ₹714 crore from Jharkhand’s account with the Reserve Bank of India towards clearing the dues of power generation company Damodar Valley Corporation, said Finance Minister Dr Rameshwar Oraon on Thursday.

Ironically enough, the State Government, through a Cabinet decision on January 6, has already decided to exit the tripartite agreement signed

with the RBI and Power Ministry, which enabled the Power Ministry to pay the dues of DVC from the RBI account of Jharkhand. And, the Power Ministry had issued a letter for payment of the second installment on January 6 itself.

Sources said that the State government had, a day before, has written to the Ministry of Power and RBI that Jharkhand has decided to come out of the tripartite agreement and thus the second installment towards the dues should not be deducted from State’s account

with the RBI.

The Union Ministry of Power had issued a letter to the RBI Governor asking him to deduct ₹714 crore from the Jharkhand government’s account under the tripartite agreement to recover DVC dues of ₹2,114.18 crore and deposit it in the Central Government account. Under the terms of the agreement, the first installment was ₹1,417.50 crore deducted in October 2020 last year. After this, a notice was given on December 20 for deduction of the second

installment for non-payment of dues by the Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam (JBVNL).

Talking to *The Pioneer*, Finance Minister Dr Rameshwar Oraon said that the Centre is deliberately troubling the State, because it could not ensure a double engine government here. “It was a one sided agreement, from which we decided to part ways. Now, when they (BJP) have nothing to do they are spreading misinformation about crime and other fake issues,” he said.

# Delhi Govt’s International Edu Conference 2021 kicks off

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government’s International Education Conference 2021 kicked off with a panel discussion on ‘Get Children Ready for Formal Learning’ led by policy experts from Finland, Germany and India.

The panel with its focus on early childhood education and formal education ran through four key discussions - school starting age, pre-academic and social skills, addressing early learning gaps, and implementing NEP’s recommendation of ensuring foundations and school readiness. This invigorating panel had revered education experts like Dr Divya Jalan, founder member of Action for Ability Development and Inclusion (AADI), Sebastian Suggate (Germany), senior lecturer in education at the University of Regensburg, Tuuli Makinen (Finland), a preschool educator.

“In the context of New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Delhi Government should work on setting up a cadre of specially trained foundational stage teachers and make

them the most important part of the school system,” said Venita Kaul, professor and director of School of Education Studies and founder-director of Center for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED), Ambedkar University at the session.

The session was moderated by Mythili Bector, teacher-former principal and present in-charge of Primary and Library branch of Directorate of Education, Government of Delhi. The session opened with introductory remarks by Lucy Crehan (UK), author of ‘Cleverlands’ and an international education consultant.

Makinen, an educator from Finland talked about prioritising teacher training, and emphasised the need for teachers to be prepared with all aspects of child behaviour in their classrooms. Makinen added, “It is important to appreciate teachers and teachers training. I also feel play-based education and learning by doing should be added to the curriculum. In the early years of teacher training in Finland a lot of theoretical knowledge is provided. At the same time, enough play-based practices are taught too. That practical knowledge creates the real change, that is most helpful,” she said.

On addressing the learning gaps, especially in education for special

needs children, Jalan said that in India, lack of information for caregivers and parents has been the biggest hurdle.

“They need acceptance, and a lot of support. But things are changing as they’re demanding inclusive schools and services,” she said.

“It is important to understand the gaps in education and experiences in the life of a special needs child. Experiences shape their understanding and therefore, teaching techniques need to be more varied and creative to enhance learning,” Jalan said. Kaul, professor and former head of Department of Preschool and Elementary Education, NCERT also highlighted the importance of having a comprehensive curriculum for students aged 3 to 8.

“In the light of NEP which talks about seamless transition into primary education, there needs to be a comprehensive curriculum for ages 3 to 8. It will come handy to teachers, and serve as a guiding framework to work with. Unless they are extremely well-trained, they won’t be able to think for themselves,” she added.

Kaul also talked about the role of anganwadi workers’ future. She said, “The focus should be on blended training for Anganwadi workers. Their workload needs to be reassessed too since their role is not just limited to teaching,” she added.

# Samples from zoos, breeding centres collected in Himachal

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

After the outbreak of bird flu in Himachal Pradesh, the state’s Department of Animal Husbandry has collected swab and blood samples of birds of different species from the state-run zoos and breeding centres for testing.

The joint teams of Department of Animal Husbandry and Wildlife Wing of Forest Department have collected the samples from birds in zoos and breeding centres in the state. The samples were collected as a precautionary measure after the directions of the State Government.

As many as 4742 migratory birds have fallen victim to the deadly avian influenza- H5N1 at Pong wetland in Kangra district.

Apart from this, more than 230 native birds were also found dead in various parts of the state since the outbreak of bird flu. These included crows, vultures, pigeons, common myna among other native species.

“The State Government has launched an active surveillance in zoos, breeding centres and wildlife sanctuaries in the state.

Samples from birds in zoos and breeding centres have been collected and sent for bird flu testing as a prevention and control measures,” said a senior official of Wildlife Wing of Forest Department, Himachal while talking to The Pioneer.

The official said that samples from birds are collected from zoological parks at Kufri, Renuka and Gopalpur and aviaries (pheasants) at Sarahan and Chail. While some samples are already tested negative, few reports are still awaited, he said.

There are bird species namely Red Jungle Fowl, Peafowl, Pigeons, Pheasants, among others at these zoos.

The breeding centre for the threatened Cheer Pheasant at Khadiyun, Chail, which is also their natural habitat, currently has around 56 birds being raised in enclosures. The Sarahan Pheasantry known as Western

Tragopan Conservation Breeding Centre has about 45 Tragopans, a species notified as vulnerable on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list of threatened birds globally.

Amid the bird flu alert and nationwide effort to contain its spread, ten states namely Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat have reported cases of avian influenza.

In Himachal, hundreds of migratory birds have been found dead each day at the Pong wetland since December 29. On January 4, the samples of dead birds were tested positive for avian influenza- H5N1.

The bird flu has been reported for the first time at Pong Lake, which hosts more than one lakh winged guests during winter season. This year also, around 60000 migratory birds had reached the wetland for their winter sojourn.

The senior official said that 105 migratory birds of different species were reported dead from Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary till January 13 afternoon. The death toll of migratory birds at Pong has reached 4742 due to bird flu, he said.

There is a significant reduction in mortality numbers of migratory birds at Pong in the last 24 hours. The rapid response teams of wildlife wing continue to comb the Sanctuary area extensively for collection and cleaning the area of dead birds and disposing the carcasses as per protocol, he said.

The daily monitoring of control and containment operations is being done by the office of Principal CCF (Wildlife).

The Department is ensuring that all the field staff involved in these operations are provided with personal protective kits and biosafety measures are followed as per protocol.

Sufficient stock of protective kits, sanitizers and disinfectants are also being maintained to meet out any exigency, he added.

# Haryana receives 2,41,500 doses of Covishield vaccine

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Health Department is all set to start the process of administering Covid-19 vaccine from January 16 as the Department received 241,500 doses of Covishield Vaccine on Wednesday as a part of Covid-19 vaccine roll out.

The vaccine reached Haryana from Pune and Deputy Commissioner, Panchkula Mukesh Kumar Ahuja, Haryana, National Health Mission, Director Administration Dr BK Rajora and SEPIO, Dr Virender Ahlawat were present to receive it. Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Rajeev Arora said that the Health Department received 241,500 doses of Covishield Vaccine at Chandigarh International Airport on Wednesday. The vaccine was taken to the State Vaccine Store in Kurukshetra where it was handed over to Civil Surgeon Kurukshetra Sukhbir Singh and DIO (District Immunization Officer), Dr Anupama Singh, he added.

Arora said that around 113 Immunization Session Sites have been identified across the state and the Health Care Workers will be administered the vaccine first. “Each Session Site will administer a vaccine to 100 beneficiaries by the Vaccinators. The information in this regard has already been uploaded on the CoWIN portal. Soon messages will be sent to the beneficiaries regarding the administration of vaccine,” he said.

Stating that the entire exercise of conducting the dry run proved to be beneficial, Arora said that after conducting the dry run it came to light that one vaccinator can administer the vaccine to 100 beneficiaries. At each session site a five-member team of vaccinator officers will be deputed, who will ensure that social distancing norms are adhered to.

“The messages of each beneficiary will be checked before giving the vaccine. The beneficiary will wait after the administration of the vaccine and will be guided on the precautions to be taken,” he added.

# Free Covid vaccine for Delhiites: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Wednesday announced that Covid-19 vaccine will be administered free of cost to the residents in the national Capital.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, “I am happy that the vaccine will start getting administered on January 16. We will provide free vaccine to the residents of Delhi if the Centre fails to do so.”

“The vaccine will first be given to Corona warriors such as health and frontline workers. I hope that the struggle of the last year will come to an end and hope that people will get some relief from the Corona pandemic,” he said.

The chief minister further said “I want to appeal to everyone to not spread any misinformation on the vaccine. I believe that the Central government along with the scientists have followed all protocols and safeguards before bringing this vaccine.”

“I had appealed to the Central government that ours is a poor nation and a pandemic like this has hit the nation after 100 years, since 1918 when the Spanish Flu hit humankind. There are a lot of people who would not be able to afford the vaccine. I appealed to the Centre to provide free vaccine to all the people of the country. If the Centre fails to do it, the Delhi government will provide free vaccine to all the residents of Delhi,” he added.

The city government has finalised 89 sites to roll out the COVID-19 vaccination drive in the national capital from January 16.

## Family of Covid warrior in Delhi gets ₹1 crore

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday handed a cheque of ₹1 crore to the family of late Dr Hitesh Gupta who died due to Covid-19 while being on duty.

Dr Gupta, a resident of IP extension was working in Karkardooma dispensary run by the Delhi Government. He succumbed to the deadly novel coronavirus in November 2020 after a long struggle from Coronavirus.

While meeting the family of Dr Gupta at their residence,

Kejriwal expressed his gratitude for his sacrifice for the people of Delhi.

The Chief Minister also said that the Delhi government will do whatever it can to support the family of Dr Gupta.

“Dr Hitesh Gupta served the patients during the period of Corona pandemic. He got infected while serving the Corona patients and unfortunately lost his life after being hospitalized. The Delhi government had announced this unique scheme to support the families of Corona warriors who lose their lives in the line of Covid duty,” he said.



**SIGH OF RELIEF**

# Covid-19 vaccine arrives in U’khand

Consignment of 113000 doses of Covishield lands at Dehradun airport

Vaccine to reach all district headquarters today

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

In a major step in the direction of Covid-19 vaccination in Uttarakhand, 1,13,000 doses of Covishield, the vaccine developed by Oxford University – AstraZeneca and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in the country, arrived in the State capital Dehradun on Wednesday. The flight number GG 779 of Spice Jet from Mumbai brought the vaccine at Dehradun airport, Jollygrant at 2.45 pm. From here the authorities took the vaccine to the central drug store where it was kept safe at walk in cooler.

Giving information about the arrival of the vaccine, the secretary health, Amit Singh Negi at the State secretariat, here on Wednesday, said that the vaccine would reach all the district headquarters including those located in remote areas till Thursday afternoon. From January 16, the vaccination drive in the State is commencing. Negi said that out of



1,13,000 doses received initially, 1,640 would be administered to the health care workers of the central Government, 3450 for the armed forces medical services and 107530 for the health workers of both private and Government sectors in the State.

The health secretary said that every vehicle transporting vaccines to the district would be provided with an escort vehicle of the police. He said that auto disposal syringes are being made available with the vaccine doses and every beneficiary would be provided with a vaccination card. This card is being supplied with the vaccine dose. Negi expressed hope that the state would soon receive the second consignment of the vaccine.

The health secretary made it clear that the vaccine is optional and denied having any information about any reluctance among the health workers for receiving the vaccine jab. He said that the vaccine has a shelf life of six months and the state has a robust system of cold chains for transportation and storage of the vaccine.

Negi said that the central government has made the district wise allocation of vaccine. For Dehradun 28920 vaccine doses are earmarked while 18050 doses are for Haridwar, 12010 for Nainital, 8680 for Udham Singh Nagar, 7670 for Pauri, 7160 for Tehri, 6970 for Almora, 5820 for Pithoragarh, 4880 for Chamoli, 3950 for Uttarkashi, 3320 for Bageshwar, 2610 for Champawat and 2580 for Rudraprayag district.

**COVID-19**

## Four deaths, 209 new cases reported on Wednesday

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

The tally of novel Coronavirus cases in Uttarakhand climbed to 94,170 on Wednesday with the State health department reporting 209 new cases of the disease. The department also reported the death of four patients of the disease on the day after which the death toll mounted to 1,593 in the State.

The health department discharged 289 patients from different hospitals on Saturday. A total of 88,761 patients have recovered from the disease so far in the State. The recovery percentage from the disease is now at 94.26 and the sample positivity rate is 4.86 percent.

Two patients of Covid-19 were reported dead at Kailash hospital Dehradun on Wednesday. One patient each was reported dead at Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital Dehradun and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh on the day.

The health department reported 97 new patients of the disease from Dehradun, 45 from Nainital, 19 from Haridwar, 12 from Pithoragarh, 10 from Udham Singh Nagar, seven from Pauri, six from Almora, five from Tehri, three from Chamoli, two each from



**Uttarakhand now has 2,552 active cases of the disease. Dehradun continues to remain at top of the table of active cases with 636 cases while with 502 active cases Nainital is at second spot. Haridwar is at third position with 315 cases;**

Bageshwar and Uttarkashi and one from Rudraprayag. No new patient was reported from Champawat district on Wednesday.

Uttarakhand now has 2,552 active cases of the disease. Dehradun continues to remain at top of the table of active cases with 636 cases while with 502 active cases Nainital is at second spot. Haridwar is at third

## Several people still buying poultry products but at reduced prices

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

The recently confirmed bird flu cases in Uttarakhand have affected more than 50 percent business of the poultry farms across the State.

According to various poultry farm owners, some locals are not consuming chicken and eggs due to the recently found cases in the State but however some residents are still buying chicken in reduced prices. "The consumption of poultry products like chicken has not reduced to a great extent but the prices have come down because of which we lost over 50 percent of business on a daily basis in the last few days. Several people are still buying chicken and eggs but at reduced prices," informed the president of Uttarakhand Poultry Association Yashwant Rawat. According to Rawat, who also owns a poultry farm

in Haridwar, the prices of chicken have reduced to ₹100 to ₹150 per kilogramme which was ₹200 per kilogramme before the bird flu outbreak but people still ask to lower the prices. Another poultry farm owner Mahesh Kainthura stated that traders who do not directly deal in the poultry products but are associated with the business are also taking advantage of the panic created in the market due to which the prices have come down. When people suddenly stop consuming poultry products or stop paying the usual rates, many farm owners have to sell poultry products to such traders at minimal rates, said Kainthura. Moreover, some poultry farm owners stated that the poultry business will possibly return to normal within the next few weeks if more bird flu cases will not be discovered in the State.



## CM orders high level probe into alleged scam in USWDB

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has ordered a high level probe into allegations of financial irregularities in feed purchase by the Uttarakhand Sheep and Wool Development Board (USWDB). In pursuance of the CM's directions, chief secretary Om Prakash has formed a committee under the agriculture produce commissioner Manisha Panwar with finance additional secretary Bhupesh Tiwari as member. The chief secretary has directed the inquiry committee to probe the complaint and submit its inquiry report within 15 days.

It will be recalled that recently MP and former Union minister Maneka Gandhi had written to the CM complaining about alleged financial irregularities by the board's CEO. She had also averred that the irregularities could not have taken place without the complicity of the animal husbandry secretary. She had pointed out various irregularities in the board, adding that this could be a major

scam.

Before that, People For Animals trustee Gauri Maulekhi had also written to the CM and the chief secretary stating that various irregularities had been revealed in the board through replies received from the Animal Husbandry Department under the Right To Information Act. She had said that there are several cases of financial irregularities in the purchase of fodder/feed for goats and sheep in the financial year 2019-20 in the districts of Uttarkashi and Pithoragarh.

Maulekhi informed that the government approved rates of feed for goats and sheep is Rs 2,050 per quintal. The feed has to be sourced from the animal feed factory at Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar district. However, contrary to this, the USWDB CEO Dr Avinash Anand had sanctioned the purchase of fodder for different goat and sheep farms in Uttarkashi and Pithoragarh at much higher rates than that approved by the government of Uttarakhand.

## Harish Rawat bares heart, says being deliberately ignored

**States it's time to bring young leadership forward**

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

Continuing his candid comments on social media, along with his hectic tour of the State, the former Chief Minister and general secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC) Harish Rawat has now made his hurt feelings public. In response to the collective leadership line toed by the Congress organisation, Rawat on Wednesday stated that he is being deliberately ignored. "It had become clear that I am not suitable for collective leadership on the day when the mascot general secretary organisation of the party didn't even consider announcing my name from the dais in the first meeting of the newly constituted office bearers of the party," said Rawat in his post.

Reiterating his stand that the party should declare its Chief Ministerial face for the assembly election of 2022, Rawat said that public protests are taking place in different parts of the State and it would be prudent for the president of Uttarakhand Congress and Leader of Opposition to visit



**"It is not possible for Harish Rawat to visit all these places. In such a scenario we should handover the rein to the youth in the party. To promote generation change is a service to the party and is for its better future. I am presenting myself as an example so that this trend is carried forward in other states as well," Harish Rawat said**

such places so that the party is associated with the public sentiments. "It is not possible for Harish Rawat to visit all these places. In such a scenario we should handover the rein to the youth in the party. To promote generation change is a service to the party and is for its better future. I am presenting



myself as an example so that this trend is carried forward in other states as well," he said.

Meanwhile reacting to the statements made by Harish Rawat, the LoP Indira Hridayesh said that it is for the national president of the Congress party to make any announcement on the chief ministerial candidate of the party. She said that the party has never in the past declared any CM candidate and added sarcastically that in the last election Harish Rawat was the face of the party and in that election Congress got only 11 seats in the assembly. "He (Harish Rawat) himself led the party in the last assembly elections. He contested from two seats without consulting us, which he should not have done," said Indira Hridayesh. "We have thirteen districts in the state. At least we could have won one seat from each district and got thirteen seats, which we did not and ended by getting eleven assembly seats", Hridayesh added

## Social welfare department to send proposal for revival of prohibition cell

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

The fund collected by the excise department by charging a cess of two percent on liquor is meant to be used for rehabilitation programmes and it should be mandatorily used for the same. This was stated by the SCPCR chief Usha Negi in response to the additional commissioner of excise department statement that the department collects the fund but does not have the information on how the funds are spent by the State administration.

A meeting headed by the chairperson of State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Usha Negi, in coordination with various departments of State, was conducted on Wednesday to discuss the increasing substance abuse among adolescents and how to provide them treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

The police department revealed in the meeting that the

## HC directs State to set up tents for 50 lakh in Kumbh Mela

**PNS ■ NAINITAL**

The Health secretary, Kumbh Mela officer and Haridwar district magistrate appeared via video conferencing in the hearing of public interest litigations in the Uttarakhand high court regarding the condition of quarantine centres. The officials informed the court about the preparations for the Kumbh Mela but this did not satisfy the court. The division bench of chief justice RS Chauhan and justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari directed the government to set up enough tents to accommodate 50 lakh persons while also arranging for their Covid checks.

The officials have been directed to ensure completing of the remaining construction works and appear in the court

on February 22.

It will be recalled that advocate Dushyant Mainali and Dehradun resident Sacchidanand Dabral had filed separate PILs in the high court regarding the state of quarantine centres and Covid hospitals in the state, seeking better health facilities for those who had returned to the state during the pandemic.

Following court directions in the past, the district legal services authority secretary had submitted a detailed report on the state of quarantine centres acknowledging that the condition of quarantine centres in the state was not good. Following this, the court had directed formation of district committees under the district magistrates for regular monitoring of the hospitals



police have confiscated drugs to the tune of ₹30 crore in the last three years and have arrested over 1000 culprits in such matters but despite such measures, cases that include school children and poor children continue to increase in the State. Moreover, the additional superintendent of police, Mamta Bohra, recommended appointing nodal officers in every department to facilitate the treatment and rehabilitation of minors affected by substance abuse. Further, Hemendra Singh from the anti-drug cell stated that anti-drug cells were also being established in several schools but Covid-19 pandemic hindered the process but the anti-drug cells will be set up again after all the schools reopen in the State.

It was also discussed in the meeting that since substance abuse is increasing among the students of several educational institutes in the State, students should go under a blood test every six months and those

found to be addicted must be given counselling while maintaining the secrecy. Negi also instructed to form child protection committees from district Panchayat level to Gram Panchayat level to enable the representatives of such areas to tackle substance abuse efficiently. Besides, the secretary of Uttarakhand Child Protection Committee, Yogendra Yadav stated that a list of vacant government schools will be prepared in order to convert them into rehabilitation centres. He further added that a similar meeting in coordination with all the departments must be held every three months to discuss the issues and progress in the matter. Meanwhile, the social welfare department also disclosed that they will soon send a proposal to the State Government to set up a prohibition cell for the proper allocation of two percent cess collected by the excise department.

## Talks with UTC failed, roadways unions to continue protest

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

On the first day of the State-wide strike of the Roadways workers across Uttarakhand on Wednesday, several commuters had to face trouble in various parts of the State.

The protesting roadways unions said that they have approached the management of Uttarakhand Transport

Corporation (UTC) several times in the past regarding their demands and complaints but the management took no action due to which they are forced to protest against them.

Ashok Chaudhary, the secretary of Uttaranchal Roadways Karamchari Union stated that about 70 percent Roadways buses did not operate on Wednesday across the State. He said that the union had a meet-

ing with the managing director (MD) of Uttarakhand Transport Corporation (UTC) but it failed to bear any fruit. Now, the union will have another meeting with the corporation again on Thursday, informed Chaudhary. The union members said that they will continue their protest across the State unless the administration accepts all the demands.



Members of the Punjabi community in Nainital gather around a bonfire to celebrate Lohri on Wednesday

Pioneer photo







# Adhikari sees threat to his life, moves HC

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

Days after quitting the ruling Trinamool Congress and joining the BJP kicking up a political storm, Suvendu Adhikari has moved the Calcutta High Court apprehending threat to his life and seeking directions for the Mamata Banerjee Government to ensure full security along his route wherever he travels.

In his petition, Adhikari has referred to recurrent attacks on his convoy by alleged Trinamool Congress goons saying though he enjoys Z category security provided by the central Government the vehicles of his followers are regularly being attacked by the TMC-backed hooligans.

“On January 3 my convoy was

attacked at Kanthi, thereafter my followers were attacked at Purulia and other places. As I am under Z category security they are targeting my followers’ vehicles so as to hinder my movement,” Adhikari said adding “it is the duty of the State Government --- and there by the State police administration --- which controls State’s law and order to ensure my security when I am on the move.”

Referring to a similar order passed by Justice Dipankar Dutta in 2007 directing the State Government to ensure his security the former Bengal Minister said “I have petitioned the High Court to direct the State Government to implement the 2007 order itself.”

Adhikari said that the Centre

has provided him Z-category security following two IB reports apprehending threat to his life demanding “full protection along the routes I travel and the areas where my rallies are held.” He said the superintendents and commissioners of police should be directed to “ensure full protection to me and my followers during such political programmes.”

Meanwhile, continuing to take penal actions on the Adhikari family the Trinamool Congress on Wednesday removed Suvendu’s father Sisir Adhikari from the district presidency of the party’s East Midnapore unit. He was replaced by State Minister Soumen Mahapatra.

The senior Adhikari, also a powerful leader with mass con-

nect is a sitting MP and a former Union Minister. He was on Tuesday removed as the chairman of Digha Sankrpur Development Authority Board (DSDA).

Though the elder Adhikari continues to remain the chairman of district TMC inside sources said that the TMC top leadership decision to remove him from the said posts was a ploy to instigate him into following in his son’s footsteps. Suvendu’s younger brother was earlier removed as the Chairman of Haldia development Authority. His another brother Dibeyendu Adhikari too is a party MP from Tamluk constituency.

Meanwhile, in a related development Deputy Election Commissioner Sudip Jain on Wednesday told the

Magistrates and Superintendents of Police to pull up their socks or face action.

Acting tough on erring officers Jain said that election will be conducted only after “hundred percent peace” has been ensured. He said so during a meeting with the DMs, SPs and Commissioners of Police.

Sources said that the EC has told the officials that any dereliction of duty would not be tolerated and that any complaint against any official from the rank of presiding officer till the commissioner of police will first see the his or her removal.

“Only after removal or suspension, other disciplinary actions like show-cause etc will follow,” an insider quoting Jain said.

## Seven MLAs sworn in as Cabinet Ministers in K’taka

**Bengaluru:** With the induction of seven new faces, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Wednesday expanded his Cabinet for the third time in the last 17 months. This comes after days of hectic parleys and discussions, including with the central leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Those who took oath on Wednesday in the Raj Bhavan are Umesh Katti, Aravind Limbavali, MTB Nagaraj, Murugesh Nirani, R Shankar, CP Yogeeshwara and S. Angara.

Rajarajeshwari Nagara MLA Muniratna Naidu, who was part of a group 17 defectors, has been left out, but Yediyurappa for the time being assuaged him stating that he would be accommodated during the next Cabinet reshuffle.

While being inducted, six of the new

ministers took the oath of office and secrecy while Katti took it in the “name of farmers and God”. Eight-time legislator from Hukkeri, Katti was the first one to be sworn in while six-time legislator from Sullia, S. Angara was the last to be sworn in.

With the swearing in of seven new members, Yediyurappa has filled 33 Cabinet slots, while keeping one vacant for the time being. Yediyurappa had directed Excise Minister H. Nagesh to resign from his ministry and the CM is likely to keep one vacant berth.

This was the third expansion of the Cabinet since Yediyurappa assumed charge in July 2019 after the collapse of the Congress-JD(S) government as 17 MLAs of the coalition partners defected and joined the BJP by resigning their Assembly membership.

**IAN5**

## ADMK-led alliance, not NDA, to shine in polls: EPS

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI**

Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy has categorically stated that there would be no National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu for the upcoming assembly election. “The Front in Tamil Nadu will only be known as the AIADMK-led alliance,” said Palaniswamy in his interaction with reporters on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister also made it clear that there would be no change in the AIADMK-led alliance. This means that all parties that contested in alliance with the AIADMK in the 2019 Lok Sabha election would fight the 2021 assembly election together.

He pointed out the announcement by C T Ravi, the BJP’s National Secretary in

charge of Tamil Nadu that the Hindutwa party endorsed his name as the chief ministerial candidate, G K Vasan, leader of Tamil Manila Congress, too declared his party’s support for Palaniswamy as chief minister.

A source close to Dr Ramadoss, founder of the Vanniyar dominated PMK, told The Pioneer that the party would remain with the AIADMK. “Doctor Ayya (as Ramadoss is addressed by others) is in talks with the AIADMK leadership for reservation for Vanniyar community in government institutions and jobs. If our demands are accepted, we will remain in the AIADMK-led alliance,” said the source.

But he also disclosed that there was no question of the PMK aligning with the DMK.

“The DMK is the party which has done maximum damage to the Vanniyar community,” said the PMK leader.

This means that the DMDK is the only political outfit that is yet to make its stance known about the assembly polls. With party founder Vijayakanth ailing and remaining out of action, his wife and party treasurer Premalatha is unlikely to move towards the DMK camp, said a political commentator.

Political Tamil Nadu is expected to come alive after the visit of former Congress President Rahul Gandhi to Madurai on Thursday. The scion of the Congress party is flying down to Madurai to watch the traditional jallikattu (bull taming) at Avaniyapuram.

Congress chief K S Alagiri said that Rahul Gandhi has no

other engagements except watching the bull taming. He is likely to interact with farmers to get a first hand information about the issues faced by them. Interestingly, the Congress had assured the people in its 2009 and 2014 election manifestos that the party, if voted back to power, would ban Jallikattu.

J P Nadda, BJP President, too would pay a two day visit to Tamil Nadu starting Thursday. Besides celebrating Pongal (the annual harvest festival of Tamil Nadu) at a suburb in Chennai, the BJP boss would be the chief guest at the anniversary celebrations of Thuglak , the weekly launched by late “Cho” Ramaswamy. The Thuglak anniversary is rated as Tamil Nadu’s major socio-political-cultural event held on January 14 every year.

## Kerala Film Academy chairman’s letter to regularise Left staff triggers controversy

**KOCHI:** An effort by the chairman of Kerala State Chalachitra Academy (Kerala State Film Academy) to jumpack the government-funded institution with Marxists and Islamic fundamentalists have come a cropper thanks to an initiative by Ramesh Chennithala, Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly.

Chennithala shocked the ruling CPI(M) and the cultural fraternity in the State when he released on the floor of the House, copy of a letter written by Mohammed Majeed Kamaluddin (popularly known as Kamal), chairman of Kerala State Film Academy, in which he has demanded A K Balan, minister of culture, to declare the Marxists and Islamists working in the Academy on contract basis as permanent

staff.

Kamaluddin was appointed chairman of the Academy by the CPI(M)-led Pinarayi Vijayan Government as part of its policy of appeasing minorities. The movie maker is an accused in a sexual abuse case that happened in 2018. An upcoming film artist had alleged that Kamaluddein had sexually exploited her after promising the role of heroin in his new venture. But the director said that he had settled the issue then and there giving credence to the charges by the young artist.

The Film Academy chairman has said in his letter that persons who have been working as Deputy Director (Festival), Festival Programme Manager, Deputy Director (Programmes), Programme

Manager on contract basis be declared as permanent staff members of the Government of Kerala. Film Academy is tasked with holding the annual International Film Festival of Kerala.

Kamaluddin has said that cultural institutions in the State should be packed with Marxists and those who uphold/follow Progressive/Marxist ideology. “This is to sustain the Left nature of the Film Academy,” Kamaluddin has written in his letter to the Minister.

“All cultural organisations funded by the Government of Kerala, viz Kerala Sahitya Academy, Music and Dance Academy, Folklore Academy, Academy of Fine Arts are jam-packed with CPI(M) activists and fellow travellers of the party.

**PNS**

## UP’s primary teachers to get corporate appraisal system

**Lucknow:** The basic education department Uttar Pradesh has decided to introduce a system of ‘corporate appraisal’ for teachers and principals in primary schools.

Teachers will now have to ‘earn’ points for promotion in job or increment in salary.

According to the government spokesman, the basic education department has asked teachers and head teachers to fill in a self-evaluation form based on nine parameters on the Manav Sampada portal latest by April 15.

While seven performance indicators are common for teachers and school heads, two are different.

**IAN5**

# Coal & cattle scam: CBI to summon 17 IPS officers

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA**

In what BJP leaders Suvendu Adhikari and State party president Dilip Ghosh sees just the penultimate step before the Central Bureau of Investigation reaches the doors of the “topmost Trinamool Congress leadership,” the central investigation agency is all set to send summonses to at least 17 IPS officers in connection to the coal smuggling case.

“There is just one step remaining ... let the CBI first catch hold of these corrupt businessmen and implicate the IPS officers then their hands will reach the TMC leadership that reside in South Kolkata,” Adhikari said.

The CBI is investigating the coal and cattle smuggling cases in which it has already quizzed six Bengal police officers and two former IPS officers. Two top businessmen Enamul Haq and Binay Mishra are also being probed in the cattle and coal

smuggling case. While Haq is in CBI custody Mishra, considered close to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee is currently at large.

According to reports the CBI is speculating the role of government officials in the organised racket behind the cattle-smuggling case and coal-mining scam. The CBI had earlier discovered that cattle smuggling was unrestrained along the India-Bangladesh border which is allegedly aided by some corrupt officers of the BSF and Customs receiving illegal gratification from smugglers.

The 17 IPS officers under CBI radar may soon get the notice from the central agency to appear before it, sources said while the ruling TMC leadership saw in it a ploy by the BJP to force these officials to depose against their top leadership. “Nothing will deter our leader Mamata Banerjee from fighting against the communal forces like the BJP,” Trinamool MP Saugato Roy said.

## BJP demands rape-accused NCP Minister’s resignation

### Munde dismisses charges as fake

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Two days after a woman lodged a complaint with the Mumbai police against Maharashtra’s Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde for alleged rape, the Opposition BJP on Wednesday upped the ante, by demanding the minister’s resignation on “moral grounds” and also seeking action against him from the Election Commission for allegedly suppressing information that he had two wives.

On a day when the NCP minister came out with a detailed Facebook post dismissing the allegations against him as “fake” aimed at “defaming and blackmailing me”, BJP’s women’s wing leader Chitra Wagh asked the Mumbai police to conduct an impartial investigations into the

allegations against Munde by “not succumbing to political pressure”.

Talking to media persons, Mrs Wagh said: “The allegations made against the minister are serious and shocking. I would like to tell the police not to succumb to any political pressure but to conduct an impartial probe into the allegations against the minister and act against those found guilty”.

“A couple months back, a few private photographs involving Dhananjay Munde had gone viral. I have been given to understand that the minister wrote a letter in November last year that he was being blackmailed and he had apprehended that there might be allegations against him. Now a woman named Renu Sharma has come forward and made allegations against Munde,” Mrs Wagh said.

“There is a need for an impartial probe into the allegations against Mr Munde. Mr

Munde should accept moral responsibility and resign from his post as a minister. Even my party president Chandrakant Patil has made a demand for Mr Munde’s resignation as the minister,” she said.

“In high profile cases like this, political pressure is brought to bear on the victim woman and her family and there is also likelihood of evidence being tampered with. Hence, it is essential for Mr Munde to resign from his post to paver way for an impartial probe into the allegations against him,” Mrs Wagh said.

In a complaint lodged with the Election Commission of India (ECI), BJP leader Kirit Somaiya said that Munde had not disclosed in his election affidavit filed during the 2019 State Assembly polls that he had two wives, children and properties in their names. He urged the ECI to order an inquiry and take appropriate action against

Munde, a senior NCP leader.

Dhananjay Munde is the estranged nephew of late BJP leader Gopinath Munde. He formally joined the NCP after resigning as the BJP MLC on July 2, 2013. He was re-elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council on September 2, 2013. It may be recalled that Ajit Pawar had encouraged Dhananjay, a BJP MLC then, to rebel against his uncle Gopinath Munde in the run up to the December 2011 presidential poll in the Parli Municipal Council.

Meanwhile, in a detailed Facebook post, Munde referred to the allegation of rape made against him by one Renu Sharma, sister of the alleged victim woman, in social media. “The documents (released by Renu Sharma) mention some complaints filed against me. All these allegations are fake, aimed at defaming me and blackmailing me,” he said.

“I have been in a relationship with a woman named Karuna Sharma since 2003. This matter was known to my family, wife and friends. In this relationship of mutual consent, we were blessed with a son and a daughter. I have given my name to both of these kids,” Munde said.

“From school admission to all the papers these kids have my name as parents, these kids stay with me. My family, wife and my children have also taken these kids as family and approved. I have taken the responsibility of taking care of the woman named Karuna Sharma as the mother of my children,” Munde said.

“But from 2019, Karuna Sharma and his sister Renu Sharma blackmailed me and started demanding money. A complaint has also been lodged with the police in connection with the happenings since November 12, 2020,” he said.

# Sankranti cockfights popular in Andhra Pradesh despite Covid

**Seesali (Andhra Pradesh):** Hundreds of people gathered at Seesali village in Andhra Pradesh’s West Godavari district on Wednesday afternoon to engage in cockfights and place bets worth crores of rupees as part of Sankranti celebrations.

Sankranti just started with Bhogi festivities on Wednesday, wherein people pile up old wood and burn it to symbolically ring out the old and invite the new in the wee .

Seesali is a small Godavari village, 10 km away from Bhimavaram by the JP Road, where some acres of flattened paddy fields host the bloody sport every year without fail, behind a defunct prawn packing and exporting company.

Manthana Ramaraju, local MLA and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader representing the Undi constituency was seen to be busy at the event. He entered the ring many times.

As the specially bred cocks fight it out with sharp knives tied to their feet, Ramaraju was also seen enjoying the show from a vantage point, wearing dark sunglasses on the first day of cockfights in this village.

Other local big shots who attended the cockfights include G. V. Narasimha Raju, brother of former Narasapuram MP Ganga Raju, newly appointed YSRCP Undi constituency in charge Ramaraju and others.

In about five acres of levelled paddy fields, the organisers pitched makeshift tents. The central tent serves as the

ring where the cockfights occur, which is surrounded by some more tents where the punters sit to watch and gamble.

Hundreds of plastic chairs are laid in the tents for people to sit and enjoy the show. On the other side of the tents, space is allocated for temporary food and beverage outlets where spicy fried chicken in Andhra style is making brisk sales.

Despite the arrangements, many spectators had to stand on their feet and struggle to catch a glimpse of the cockfight because the people sitting before would always block.

As the cockfights are planned to last for three days and also run till midnight, the organisers have fixed floodlights and a public address system. Volunteers wield a whip like stick used to control bullock cart bulls to bring order when people do not follow discipline and block others view.

“Everybody should vacate the ring right now. Please leave the ring. If you do not cooperate, we cannot conduct cockfights,” requests a volunteer. He also warns that he will hit them and requests them not to feel bad later.

Meanwhile, a cockfight just got over, which triggers a chain reaction in the spectators. All of them faithfully exchange wads of cash pledged in the bet on their chosen rooster. In addition to the two individual cock owners who place the main bet in the central tent, hundreds of enthusiasts sitting by also bet with each other.

**IAN5**

## 4 girls, including 3 sisters go missing in UP

**IAN5 ■ ETAWAH (UTTAR PRADESH)**

Four girls, including three sisters, have been missing under mysterious circumstances from the Civil Lines area of Etawah district.

The four girls had left their homes on Monday morning to attend their classes at a nearby government school.

The girls did not return home and their parents finally reported the matter to the police on Monday night.

One of the girls is 18 years

old while the remaining three are minors.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Etawah Omveer Singh said that a case has been registered under sections 363 and 366 of IPC.

“We have questioned the school authorities who claimed that the girls did not reach school on Monday. The police also questioned their parents, who have denied having enmity with anybody. Four investigating teams have been formed to locate the girls,” he said.

# HC asks Govt to facilitate ‘E-snan’ at Ganga Sagar Mela

**Kolkata:** Amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic situation, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday advised all the pilgrims to go for ‘E-snan’ (E-bathe) during the holy Ganga Sagar Mela in West Bengal this year. Concerned by the risk of spreading Covid-19 infection, a bench of Chief Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan and Justice Arijit Banerjee ordered the Mamata Banerjee-led state administration to make necessary arrangements to dissuade the pilgrims going for a holy dip in the water. Instead the administration can facilitate them to opt for ‘E-snan’ during the religious congregation.

The bench was presiding over a Public Interest Litigation

**The bench was presiding over a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Ajay Kumar De over the issue of public health and safety on the occasion of Makar Sankranti**

(PIL) filed by Ajay Kumar De over the issue of public health and safety on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

The pilgrimage attracts lakhs of Hindu devotees every year who throng the Sagar Island in West Bengal’s South 24 Parganas district. Devotees take the holy dip in the water at the confluence of river Ganga offering prayers at the Kapil Muni temple on the island.

**IAN5**

## J&K Police arrests 2 LeT associates

**Srinagar:** Jammu & Kashmir Police have arrested two associates of proscribed terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba from Bulbul Bagh in Barzulla area of Srinagar district, officials said on Wednesday.

The arrested terrorist associates have been identified as Muzaffar Jan, a resident of old Barzulla, Srinagar and Abass Shafi Najar, a resident of Natipora, Srinagar.

“Arms and ammunition including two Chinese pistols, two magazines and 13 live pistol cartridges were recovered from their possession,” the police said.

Police have registered FIR and investigation in the case is underway.

**IAN5**

## Kerala cinema halls open after 10 months of Covid shutdown

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The movie theaters in Kerala, which were shut for around ten months owing to Covid restrictions opened on Wednesday.

Over 500 of the total 670 theaters opened to the public.

South Indian Super star Vijay’s movie, “Master”, is the inaugural movie in all the theaters in the state. However in certain theaters, owing to projector equipment complaints, the show was put on hold. Apsara theater in Kozhikode cancelled the 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. shows owing to a projector complaints, thereby disappointing a huge number of fans who had gathered in the theater.

Mohammed Koya, 34, an



A woman paints a Rangoli design in front of her house on the eve of Makar Sankranti, at Lankamura village on the outskirts of Agartala on Wednesday

**PTI**

seats.

Murugan, owner of a theater group in Thiruvananthapuram told IANS, “It’s a great relief. Even though we may get only 25 per cent of the collection owing to distribution charges of the movies, we are happy that the government has allowed the theaters to open. It’s a grand gala opening with Vijay movie ‘Master’. This makes us doubly happy and all the shows are booked for the next one week.”

In Palakkad district which borders Tamil Nadu, the movie opened with fans showering huge cutouts of Vijay with flowers and even pouring milk on them.

Subramanian Mani, a member of the Vijay fans club while speaking to IANS over telephone said, “Vijay is indeed a mega star. The movie will be super, we are about to enter the theater and there are no tickets even for fan club members for the next one week.”

Super stars of Malayalam movie industry, Mammooty, Mohanlal, Prithviraj have thanked the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for having allowed the theater’s to function.

With the theater’s opening, there is a long list of movies to be screened in the days to come with Jayasurya starrer, “Vellam” to be screened in select theaters on January 22.

**IAN5**



## The jab of health

Feverish preparations are going on across India for the ‘world’s biggest vaccination drive’ beginning January 16



With just hours to go before the first anti-COVID injections are given to the very first lot of beneficiaries — including three crore healthcare and frontline workers, high-risk groups with co-morbidities and around 27 crore people over 50 years of age — across India on January 16, the mammoth scale of preparations resembles a General Elections-type or a wartime-like setting, with pace, precision, efficiency, teamwork and synergy being the buzzwords. While the States firmed up their plans and fine-tuned logistical details, there were airplanes carrying the two vaccines flying into airports across the country from where the precious cargo was dispatched to small cities and towns in readiness for the inoculation exercise, and the police across States were in all readiness to receive and swiftly transport the life-saving immunogen and ensure its safety while it was under their charge. A day after the first consignment of 56 lakh doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca’s Covishield vaccine rolled out from the stable of the Serum Institute of India (SII) manufacturing facility in Pune to 13 cities, the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech — which has donated 16.5 lakh doses to the Centre — said it had successfully transported Covaxin, developed in collaboration with the ICMR and the National Institute of Virology, to 11 cities. On a day when there were reports of “promising new antibodies” being found against the Coronavirus and China recorded a spike in cases ahead of a World Health Organisation team’s visit to investigate the origins of the virus, the exercise signalled India entering a decisive phase in its fight against the pandemic that has left the world crippled and economies in the doldrums.

Currently, active COVID-19 cases in India stand at 2,14,507 while 1,01,29,111 people have recovered from the disease after the country reported a single-day rise of 15,968 new cases and 202 fatalities, pushing its virus caseload to 1,04,95,147 and the death toll to 1,51,529, according to the Union Health Ministry. The world has been waiting with bated breath to get inoculated against the virus. The world’s most inexpensive vaccines are now being made available in India. Even the Union Health Ministry categorically stated that the two vaccines in India would be probably the “cheapest” vials because these are not being sold at market rates. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan has clarified that the option of choosing either vaccine wasn’t available to the person going for vaccination, adding that only countries with a variety of vaccines available to them could enjoy this luxury. The Government Medical Store Department (GMSD) in Karnal, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai are being treated as the four main storage centres for the vaccine rollout, which shall see a “sequential rollout”. The Union Government, realising the import of the historic drive, also advised the States to “exercise continuous oversight and personal involvement at the highest level in the entire process” of the vaccination exercise. We wish the Union Health Ministry, the various pharmaceutical companies producing the vaccines and the State Governments deploying the vaccines, the very best of luck going into the inoculation drive. We also hope and pray that there are no untoward incidents and all unforeseen hiccups can be dealt with promptly. All of us need and want the “world’s biggest vaccination drive” to be a success so that the Herculean job of vaccinating millions of Indians can be completed as soon as possible.

## Welcome, Tesla!

The blue-chip electric car maker’s entry into the country promises to take the driving experience one gear higher



It is official! The Electric Vehicle (EV) major, Tesla, has entered the Indian market which is certainly good news for the green brigade and all EV enthusiasts. This is a development that everyone hankering after a thoroughbred EV was awaiting. It is expected to give a big push to India’s plans to move to green car technology in a major way in order to meet its global commitments to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. The increased use of EVs could reduce CO2 emissions by 37 per cent. In October 2020, Tesla CEO Elon Musk had said that the process of bringing Tesla cars to India would begin in January 2021 and, towards the end of December 2020, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari had reiterated that commitment. Now that promise is being fulfilled and Tesla has registered Tesla India Motors and Energy Private Limited in Bengaluru as a subsidiary of the foreign company. However, as in all things related to maverick tech-billionaire Musk, there is a lot of mystery and speculation surrounding this entry at the moment and the firm’s India operations. But the positive thing is that the company is in talks with other State Governments too in its search for local partners. It’s not yet known what the car maker’s Bengaluru subsidiary will do, and there are reports that it could be just a research and development unit. It is speculated that Tesla may launch its fully electric Model 3 sedan in India at ₹60 lakh. However, this is way above the price tag common Indians can afford. Plus, there are already enough pure EVs in India that come at a much more reasonable price and Gadkari has already promised that India will continue to encourage other carmakers to build cheaper EVs which will be as technologically advanced as those made by Tesla.

Also, a few customers have already burnt their fingers as in 2016, Tesla collected \$1,000 as deposit from interested buyers in India but, despite Musk hinting in 2017 that his cars could come to the country in the summer of that year, those buyers who had paid the deposits are still waiting for their cars. At that time, Musk had cited FDI norms as the reason for the delay. “Maybe I’m misinformed, but I was told that 30 per cent of the parts must be locally sourced and the supply doesn’t yet exist in India to support that,” he had tweeted. But still, the news of Tesla’s entry has been received with a lot of enthusiasm in the country as all those who want a thoroughbred EV and for whom money is not a consideration will certainly opt for it. If the firm sets up a manufacturing unit, the cost of the EVs, too, will come down. It is hoped that Tesla will bring the charging infrastructure, which is much needed in the country right now, even though it might be on a proprietary basis at the beginning. Plus, with the Government also planning to set up 69,000 charging stations across the country at existing petrol pumps, EVs are the way forward, especially considering the soaring prices of petrol and diesel. Adoption of EVs in the country would help curtail its dependence on oil imports and lower its massive import bills which stand at nearly 85 per cent and a whopping \$102 billion respectively. In the end, the blue blood of EVs coming to India is good news because it will force the other car makers to ramp up their R&D and manufacturing in the country. It will make the use of EVs more acceptable because of its hip brand image and this uptake of EVs will also yield manifold benefits for the country, such as lowering pollution levels, improved balance-of-trade levels and meeting global climate change commitments. So now that Tesla has made a foray into India, it remains to be seen how its presence gives a fillip to the EV market in the country.

# opinion06

## Opportunistic Oli?

China’s mission is to prevent a formal split in the NCP after Parliament dissolution but the Nepal PM says he wants to be ‘a real friend of India’



ASHOK K MEHTA

Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali is in New Delhi for the 6th Meeting of India-Nepal Joint Commission. The invitation was given before Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli, facing a revolt in his party, dissolved Parliament last month and ordered elections, making him the head of a caretaker Government. Oli shot to fame by winning an overwhelming mandate for the pro-China Nepal Communist Party (NCP) on an anti-India wave of ultra-nationalism and later bashing New Delhi with sundry charges, including territorial aggression and attempts at unseating his Government. In diplomacy there are neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests. Oli decided to make up to India with friendly overtures to which India responded favourably, prompting Nepalis to speculate that the dissolution of the House might be at India’s behest and that China’s loss is India’s gain. Except that the validity of the prematurely terminated Parliament in which Oli enjoyed a majority is to be determined by that country’s Supreme Court and an “election Government” could be in place if and when the elections are held. So far, India has issued one official statement noting that the political developments are an “internal matter for Nepal to decide as per its democratic process”. Indian Ambassador Vinay Kwatra has met Government Ministers in Kathmandu to continue minimal engagement. Meanwhile, the majority faction of the NCP — led by co-chairs Madhav Nepal and Prachanda, who is also the new leader of the parliamentary party and other Opposition parties — is out on the streets challenging Oli’s “undemocratic” and “unconstitutional” dissolution of Parliament. Heavily invested in Nepal, China failed to secure a patch-up and unity in the NCP despite dispatching a Chinese Communist Party delegation to the Himalayan State.

The China-US rivalry in Nepal has been hotting up over the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) and the related Millennium Challenge Corporation, both seen by the Prachanda-Nepal group as countering China and obstructing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India’s border standoff and longstanding contestation with China makes it a natural partner of the US — rather the other way round in Nepal — turning the bilateral competition tri-lateral. The US has normally let India take the lead in Nepal and it



has followed. Since its drubbing over mishandling Nepal’s Constitution in 2015 and the Kalapani row in 2019, India has remained hands off Nepal, especially after the NCP’s unassailable election victory in 2017. It was resigned for a full five-year term of the NCP, during which China was expected to consolidate its strategic gains. The long-simmering power-sharing dispute within the NCP, egged on by ego and ambition of its leaders, presented an opportunity for New Delhi to try and subtly reshape the political landscape. There is nothing immoral or sinful in preventing China from turning the tables on India as long as the game is played skilfully, and not clumsily as in the past. It is the first time during Nepal’s internal crisis that China is seen as the “great interferer”, not the usual culprit India, and what’s better is that there is no palpable anti-India sentiment.

The Oli Government is expected to be in office for some time before the Supreme Court delivers its verdict. New Delhi has secured a timely reconciliation with Oli who is pro-US, pro-IPS, pro-MCC and once India’s blue-eyed boy. His statement on Sunday in the National Assembly that “I want to be a real friend of India” has to be tested. Routine work and interaction between the Governments has to continue. Following King Gyanendra’s royal coup in 2004, India condemned the squashing of democracy by stopping all lethal military aid to the Nepal Army, which was fighting the Maoists, but soon it accepted the *fait accompli* and resumed bilateral

“ NEPAL-WATCHERS IN INDIA ARE WARNING THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST ENTERTAINING THE OPPORTUNISTIC OLI AND LET THE NEPALESE DEAL WITH THE POLITICAL MESS THEY HAVE CREATED ”

business. India reported increased speed and efficiency in the interactions among Government departments and an Indian official had remarked: “Never achieved so much so fast!”

Nepal’s Supreme Court will decide today whether an extended full Bench or a constitutional Bench should hear the case. There is also a legal and moral

issue in Chief Justice Cholendra Rana heading the Bench. Whether the House is restored or fresh elections held, the awe and might of the NCP will never be the same again. We may see two NCPs or the NCP could unravel into its previous avatars — the CPN UML and the CPN Maoist Centre. The division, it is noteworthy, has taken place more among the CPN UML (which has had three former Prime Ministers) than among the Maoists. The NCP has not split as neither Oli nor Prachanda want to be blamed for its bad optics. The Election Commission says that the Prachanda-Nepal faction, claiming to be the larger and original faction, has applied for ownership of the party’s symbol and name but it has not recognised the split as they are not registered as two parties. Despite the matter being *sub judice*, Oli has been publicly claiming that Parliament will not be restored even as four former Chief Justices have called the dissolution unconstitutional.

The primary mission now of the Chinese Communist Party and its versatile Ambassador Hou Yanqi is to prevent the formal split at all costs. Although both factions have spurned Chinese attempts to effect a compromise for the sake of party unity, Beijing’s wealth is a strong incentive for compliance. Still, while both the factions are China-leaning, the two separate entities of the NCP were also India-friendly. It was post-2015, and especially after 2017, that the Communist factions visibly tilted towards Beijing. During the civil war, the Chinese lampooned

the Maoists as “hijackers of Mao’s fair name” and called them “mischievous anti-State rebels” till they rocketed into power, with China conveniently recognising ideological congruence between them.


After Prachanda was forced to step down as the Prime Minister in 2008, he admitted that initially he thought China was required to balance India but later realised that India was more important for Nepal. Former Prime Minister Madhav Nepal used to be jokingly called Madhav India. In the power games that were ritually played out in Kathmandu, New Delhi’s blessings were invariably sought. Beijing, though a late entrant, assumed primacy after India’s marginalisation.

A fresh election is the best case scenario for democratic forces, especially the Nepali Congress which could emerge as the single largest party as it did in 2013 after Maoists were routed. New Delhi should have sound relations with all the parties but, most of all, with the people of Nepal. Seasoned Nepal-watchers in India are warning the Government against entertaining the opportunistic Oli and his caretaker Government and let the Nepalese deal with the political mess they have created. In other words, India should be an idle bystander. This is precisely what China wants India to do.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)


SOUNDBITE

The Modi Government is not embarrassed when 60 farmers are martyred but is ashamed about the tractor rally by the farmers.




Congress leader  
Rahul Gandhi

The US political opportunism is recognised by those who are honestly concerned about the scourge of terrorism and its victims.



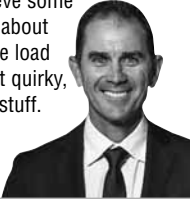
Cuban Foreign Minister  
Bruno Rodriguez

Objectification of women still exists, and often women are valued primarily for their looks. I think there is a conversation to be had over that.



Actor  
Keira Knightley

I literally cannot believe some of the rubbish I read about Steve Smith. Absolute load of rubbish. He is a bit quirky, he does some weird stuff.



Australian coach  
Justin Langer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Incentivise girl students

Sir — Every State in India should follow in the footsteps of the Assam Government which has decided to give financial incentives to school-going girls. It will help encourage the girls to attend school, eventually increasing their attendance and enrolment ratio.

In many far-off places and rural areas, parents are still reluctant to send their daughters to school due to several reasons. Consequently, girls often fail to complete their schooling and are married off at an early age.

Illiterate women and girls are more vulnerable as they are unaware of their rights and privileges. If the girls are educated and financially independent, several unethical and illegal practices like dowry will come to an end. We need more social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who can staunchly fight for the rights of women. Although Indian women have made a mark in every field, be it academics, bureaucracy, politics and so on, we still need to end gender discrimination at all cost.

Aman Jaiswal  
Delhi

### Govt should draft a national liquor policy

Deaths due to consumption of spurious liquor have become very common in India. In the recent tragedy, more than a dozen lives were lost in Madhya Pradesh’s Morena after drinking country-made liquor. In most cases, the police rounds up bootleggers and petty criminals who sell the liquor while real perpetrators of the crime walk away scot-free. It is because of the complicity of district-level officials in the business of illegal sale and purchase of hooch.

Ironically, mostly those who are from the lower rungs of society fall prey to the menace of illicit liquor. A lack of quality control while preparing country-made liquor results in many impurities and adulterants being present in it. This leads to serious organ damage or even the death of the person who consumes it.

The Government must come up with a national liquor policy and make stringent laws banning the manufacturing, sale and purchase of hooch. If illicit liquor is manufactured somewhere, the local district administration should also be held accountable. As of now, the legal drinking age in the country and the laws which regulate the sale and consumption of alcohol vary significantly from State to State. Political patronage to the criminals involved in the business of illegal liquor is also one of the major causes that makes hooch business flourish. In turn, these criminals help politicians at the time of elections. There is also a need to break the nexus involving police, politicians and criminals involved in the illegal liquor trade.

Ganapathi Bhat  
Akola

### Expand expert panel

Sir — It’s not appropriate on the part of farmers’ unions to judge the expert panel set up by the Supreme Court (SC) on the basis of the previous stand of its members. The fact remains that they are experts on the subject.

It is quite possible for the farmers to feel that the composition of the panel is heavily weighing against their interests. Perhaps the apex court should have taken onboard members having both for and against stands in equal numbers. In such a situation, there would be better amalgamation of thoughts to arrive at an amicable solution.

The top court can still review this angle and expand the

### Ensure user privacy

Sir — As the furor over changes in WhatsApp’s privacy policy grows, a wide range of companies have started switching to the messaging platform Signal. This happened after the Facebook-owned company decided to continue with its new privacy policy.

In the coming days, common people will also move out of WhatsApp to other platforms and the company will receive a major setback. The companies in the field of social media must remember that the privacy of end users is of utmost importance and people are not willing for it to be compromised.

It is also high time for the Government to encourage young entrepreneurs to come up with alternatives to the WhatsApp platform. We should also avoid using such platforms where our privacy is not secure. Social media is an effective tool in our hands only if we are aware and cautious of our privacy breaches.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



FIRST COLUMN

# The future must be green

Our clean energy sector has been at the forefront of the country's fight against climate change, but is currently faced with liquidity constraints



DHRUBA PURKAYASTHA

India's energy sector is one of the fastest-growing in the world and has been attracting substantial investments. However, meeting the country's climate goals requires an increase in proportionate and transformative investments at the sectoral level. Given the current rate of penetration and the overall health of the economy which is bogged down by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to find new and alternative ways of financing the transition and incentivising private industries' participation to scale-up investments in clean energy. This is because a huge corpus of funds is required for creating a sustainable impact in the field of green energy. Our clean energy sector has been at the forefront of the country's fight against climate change but is currently faced with liquidity constraints and supply chain disruptions due to the ongoing contagion. Addressing the growing needs of the nation while simultaneously taking steps to protect the environment, requires both international and domestic capital flow towards high-impact sectors. The latest report by the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), gives us unique information about green finance trends in India by mapping finance from source to end users, thus helping us to know whether we are on the right track to meet the nation's economic and environmental goals. Such an exercise can also help us in identifying new avenues to ramp up our climate expenditure, mobilise new resources, build trust with investors besides bringing transparency and accountability in the governance of domestic public finance. The study reflects that green sectors are outpacing our overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. For instance, green investments in India grew by 24 per cent between 2016 and 2018, whereas the GDP grew by only 7.4 per cent over the same period.

One of the major recipients of green finance in the country is the power generation industry (70 per cent), followed by energy efficiency (20 per cent) and sustainable transportation (10 per cent). Grants-in-aid and budgetary allocations are the most commonly used instruments by the Government to finance the area while loans by commercial banks are a major source of finance to private industries involved in green energy. Out of the total, 85 per cent of the clean energy finance is raised domestically, with Government finance sources being the backbone for strong private sector investment. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India, in the renewable energy sector, crossed the \$1 billion mark in 2018. While foreign underwriting plays a role, it is dwarfed by the contributions of the Indian Government, its agencies and domestic private markets. In the face of methodological constraints regarding defining and tracking green funding across its value chain in the country, it is a big challenge to procure granular data and apportion public, private, domestic and international investments. Further, lack of consensus on what constitutes "green" is especially acute in sectors like energy efficiency and power transmission.

Moreover, we are far short of the capital required to reach the nation's ambitious renewable energy and climate targets. India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) estimates that the country would need \$2.5 trillion between 2015 to 2030, an annual requirement of roughly \$170 billion per year to finance its climate action programmes. The nation's clean energy finance flows currently stand at around \$19 billion per annum. No doubt, there is a long way to go in order to create a sustainable and transformative impact.

So, what can be done? First, aspirations of a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 as well as an "atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)" must be underpinned by green solutions. The renewable energy sector entails several benefits like providing safe and non-hazardous jobs, accelerated economic growth and so on. Hence we must turn towards the renewable energy sector for sustainable growth.

Second, Indian policymakers can look at various studies to assess whether they are using the best instruments to unlock private capital in priority social areas. Creating an integrated domestic measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system to track green finance can be the first step towards identifying the entry points for dedicated action. A combination of climate budget tagging and MRV will form a strong foundation for the nation's climate investment strategy in the coming decades. Last, expenditure on climate mitigation activities undertaken by dedicated Public Sector Units (PSUs) more than doubled from 2017 to 2018. PSUs are important channels for the disbursement of funds for Central and State Governments, bond markets and international development agencies. They also operate as a critical source of green finance themselves through various public schemes and initiatives. Agencies such as the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency and the Solar Energy Corporation of India have helped to launch India as a renewable energy leader. Even in these dark times, we must believe that the country has a bright future. To make it true, that future must be green.

(The writer is Interim India Director and Director, USICEF. The views expressed are personal.)

SITA TOLD LORD RAM SHE WAS LUCKY TO BE ABDUCTED BY RAVAN AND NOT BY HIS CHELAS OR ELSE HER FATE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS THE HATHRAS GIRL'S.

—TMC MP  
KALYAN BANERJEE



IT SEEMS KALYAN HAS AUGMENTED THE SLOGAN OF 'TMC HATAO BANGLA BACHAO' BY DRAGGING THE NAME OF MOTHER SITA AS PART OF TMC's POLITICS.

—VHP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON  
VINOD BANSAL

# Don't expect a dignified exit

The infamy of a second impeachment is a fitting denouement of Donald Trump's presidency. If he were a man of honour or good sense, he would have quit



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

In a historic decision, the US House of Representatives which had initiated the process to impeach US President Donald Trump over the recent Capitol Hill attack — that was unprecedented in the country's history — passed a resolution urging Vice-President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove the President from office. The resolution, which called upon Pence to mobilise the Cabinet to activate the 25th Amendment was voted by 223 to 205 votes. The voting was mostly on party lines, with one Republican voting in favour of the resolution and another five abstaining.

The 25th Amendment, adopted more than 50 years ago in the wake of President John F Kennedy's assassination, provides a mechanism for the succession of the President for his replacement in the event he proves unfit to serve. Under the amendment, the Vice-President and a majority of either the Cabinet or some other body designated by Congress may remove the President from office.

Wednesday's resolution came after Mike Pence wrote to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that he would not invoke the 25th Amendment. Earlier, the House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler released a majority staff report for the impeachment of Trump. The 50-page report made a strong case to impeach the Republican President.

At a time like this, one cannot help but be reminded of the warnings issued by Mitt Romney, a Republican Senator. He had forewarned prophetically during the presidential campaign in March 2016 that Trump was a "fraud who had neither the temperament nor the judgement to be President."

Other elder Republican Senators like John McCain and Lindsey Graham, too, had warned against Trump becoming the President. During the campaign, Trump had threatened: "If I become President, the media is going to have a problem." He had gone on to describe the media as "among the most dishonest groups of people I have ever met."

In a February 2017 tweet, Trump, then the President, called the media the "enemy of the American people", a term, the critics noted then, was used by Stalin and Mao Zedong. It's intriguing that despite the complex electoral procedure established by the makers of the US Constitution to ensure that the office of the President does not "fall to men with low intrigue and the little arts of popularity", Trump was elected the 45th President of the country.

The shameful assault on the Capitol Hill, the seat of the US Congress, by the rioting supporters of Trump on January 6, when the Congress was in joint session to take count of the votes of the Electoral College, proved the proverbial last nail on his presidency. The premeditated violence was so egregious that even the Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell appealed to the lawmakers to finish the count in the wake of "the failed insurrection."

The votes were counted and the results were declared by Mike Pence, the ex-officio President of the Senate. Biden was declared elected,

“NO AMERICAN PRESIDENT HAS EVER BEEN REMOVED FROM OFFICE BY THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS, AND NO PRESIDENT HAS BEEN IMPEACHED BY THE HOUSE MORE THAN ONCE. IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS WERE LAUNCHED AGAINST FOUR PRESIDENTS, NAMELY, ANDREW JOHNSON (1868), RICHARD NIXON (1974), BILL CLINTON (1998) AND DONALD TRUMP (2019) BUT THE MOTIONS FAILED”



despite Trump hectoring: "Do it Mike, this is time for extreme courage."

Lawmakers, mostly Democrats and some Republicans, have accused Trump of "fomenting the violence with his relentless falsehoods" and want him impeached or removed. Albeit, a few days are left for the inaugural of the new presidency, yet Democrats and a considerable number of Republican leaders and officials want Trump to be removed from office before January 20. They accuse Trump of abuse of power to the effect that he "wilfully made statements that encouraged and foreseeably resulted in imminent lawless action at the Capitol."

The draft impeachment mentioned Trump's prior and consistent efforts to "subvert and obstruct" the results of the election and referenced his call to the Georgia Secretary of State asking him to find more votes after losing the State to Biden.

The draft went on to say: "Trump has falsely claimed there was widespread fraud in the election, and the baseless claims have been repeatedly echoed by congressional Republicans... President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of Government... He threatened the integrity of the democratic system, interfered with the peaceful transition of power and imperiled a coordinate branch of the Government. He thereby betrayed his trust as President, to the manifest injury of the people of the United States."

Impeachment is not something which is new to Trump. He was

impeached by the House on December 18, 2019, on two counts: Abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. Of course, he was acquitted by the Republican, the Grand Old Party, (GOP)-controlled Senate on February 5, 2020. Yet, Trump faces the ignominy of a second unprecedented impeachment bid at the fag end of his presidency. Normally, there is an impeachment investigation by the House and the evidence is sent to the House Judiciary Committee, which holds hearings, drafts articles and sends them to the full House. The impeachment of Trump by the House in 2019 took three months.

However, this time, with so few days left, there was a feeling among Democrats that there was little need to investigate what happened, since most members of the Congress were in the Capitol Hill when the mob broke in.

Speaker Pelosi held a floor vote with no hearings or reference to the House Judiciary Committee. Now that the House has moved a resolution urging Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove the President from office, the article and evidence would be sent to the Senate, where a trial would be held and there would be final votes to convict or acquit. It would outlast the tenure of Trump.

However, even now, many Republicans, even those who have criticised Trump, say impeachment would be unhelpful, as it would do "more harm than good." But Democrats and some Republicans, too, feel that: "It must be made clear that no President, now or in the future, can lead an insurrection against the US Government."

No American President has ever been removed from office by the impeachment process, and no President has been impeached by the House more than once. Impeachment proceedings were launched against four Presidents, namely, Andrew Johnson (1868), Richard Nixon (1974), Bill Clinton (1998) and Donald Trump (2019) but the motions failed.

Nixon resigned before the proceedings were launched. Legal experts are divided into three camps over the desirability or otherwise of the impeachments proceedings against Trump. According to one view, "A President can be impeached only while in office." Another opinion is that, if the House votes to impeach while the President is in office, the Senate can proceed to a trial even after the President has left office. And, a third view is that the entire process can begin even after the President is out of office. No President has ever been impeached after leaving office. But as the House Speaker, Pelosi, said: "Democrats will preserve every option" to force Trump from office, either through the 25th Amendment or impeachment. In the end, whether Trump is impeached or not, only time will tell. However, the infamy of a second impeachment is a fitting denouement of Trump's presidency. If he were a man of honour or good sense, he would have quit. But a dignified exit is not Trump's style of functioning. He will make a mess of it and go down fighting.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

# Good intentions are not enough, implementation is key

The Govt should regularly do a status check of the implementation status of schemes, and taxmen should be accommodative in their approach



SHSHANK SAURAV

Former President late Pranab Mukherjee had quoted Kautilya in his 2010 Budget speech highlighting the fact that financial prosperity depended on public affluence. Policy certainty is essential to bring financial prosperity to a nation and the ruling BJP promised this in its 2014 election manifesto. Bringing on board all State Governments for adopting the Goods and Services Tax (GST), addressing all their concerns, overhauling the dispute resolution mechanism and providing a non-adversarial and conducive tax environment were also part of the poll promise which the saffron party made in that election year.

To its credit, the Government made some notable structural reforms in the areas of indirect tax-

ation and insolvency cases. GST was the biggest-ever indirect tax reform in the country which helped in simplification and unification of the tax regime. As with all big changes, there were some teething problems in the implementation of GST but these were driven by shortcomings related to the information technology platform. Apart from this, the lackadaisical attitude of States regarding cracking down on tax evasion was coming from the fact that GST compensation was guaranteed by the Centre but the Coronavirus crisis changed the situation drastically. However, GST collection is increasing now after State Governments began taking action to check the revenue loss arising out of fake input tax credits.

Similarly, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was a major shift in policy towards dealing with the bad loan crisis plaguing the country. Various cases have been successfully resolved under the IBC framework but this will be put to a tougher test now because various entities are facing financial stress due to the ongoing pandemic.

However, the Government's

track record in dealing with litigation is not impressive. The NDA Government unveiled the Transparent Taxation Rights Charter for Taxpayers in its second term which shows good intent on its part. Prior to this, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had proposed a Dispute Resolution Scheme (DRS) in 2016 to reduce tax litigation.

Though the infamous Vodafone retrospective tax amendment ghost which continues to haunt the Centre is a legacy issue, the Government's own record doesn't align with the promises made to taxpayers. Budgetary data show that direct tax collection has increased at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent, while the amount under dispute has increased at a CAGR of 15 per cent.

The disputed amount has increased from ₹3,40,985 crore in 2014 to ₹8,02,621 crore in 2020 while direct tax collection has increased from ₹7,35,271 crore in 2014 to ₹13,19,000 crore in 2020. Since 2020 was an exceptional year due to the outbreak, tax collections are likely to be significantly less than the budgeted numbers. Therefore, tax collection CAGR will go down

even further. The real estate sector is one of the largest employment-generating ones in the country and new arrangements keep evolving in it. The Joint Development Agreement (JDA) is one such arrangement in which a landowner enters into an agreement with the developer and the owner of the plot gets his share in the constructed property after completion. There are many cases where an agreement was made but the building is yet to be constructed due to reasons ranging from delay in getting necessary approvals to lack of funds and so on.

In a nutshell, the landowner gets nothing except for an agreement on a piece of paper till the time the building is completed. However, the tax department has raised demand, interest and levied penalty on such transactions. Thankfully, the Government bought an amendment in 2017 to ensure that the taxman could tax such transactions only after the completion certificate was received. This was the right decision. But if taxmen have raised demands on the JDA where the building is not yet completed then isn't it unjustified?

The Government's role is not

just limited to bringing about changes in laws. It must ensure that these changes are implemented correctly on the ground. It is right to chase and penalise tax evaders but, if raising tax demands on transactions which are not yet crystallised is not "tax terrorism" then perhaps Government officials should redefine this term as per their convenience.

The Government launched the ambitious 'Vivad se Vishwas' (VSV) scheme in the last Budget with the intent to unclog the judiciary and realise the money locked in litigation. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued circulars for implementation of the scheme and the intent was to settle the disputes. But if field officers are not complying with the legislative intent to a large extent and many issues are not getting resolved, the Government is to be blamed squarely for this. Because it is not the bureaucracy who has to seek the mandate of the people every five years. And people see the faces of their elected representatives, not bureaucrats.

The VSV scheme had specified January 31, 2020, as the cut-off date for settlement of disputes. Successive

clarifications issued by the CBDT entitle a taxpayer to avail the scheme if the appeal period had not expired on January 31.

This means that the time to raise the dispute is still available in cases like tax orders not being served on the assessee or even if a delayed appeal is filed which is admitted by the tax department. However, many assesseees are allegedly awaiting communication from the department on the status of admission of their appeals. This is again a case of poor implementation of the well-intended scheme of faceless assessment/appeal.

A similar initiative called 'Sabka Vishwas' was launched in the previous year to settle indirect tax cases which received a lukewarm response. Though the Centre claimed that it had realised ₹39,000 crore from it, the Government received only around ₹15,000 crore because the rest of the amount was already pre-deposited by assesseees. In a nutshell, this scheme was not a success despite desperate calls made by the Government to people to avail it. VSV is a good scheme but the Government had to reach out to Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)

to file declarations under this scheme to avoid an embarrassing situation. If the mandarins sitting in the North Block didn't learn from the failure of Sabka Vishwas and now VSV, too, is going in the same direction, then the babus must be criticised for their myopic vision. There is no mechanism to take stock of how taxpayers' grievances are dealt with. If genuine issues are not resolved then people will approach courts with writ petitions. This will defeat the very purpose of such schemes.

Socio-political issues like farmers' agitation require use of political capital but resolving tax litigation and charting a clear path requires a vision and honest implementation on the ground. The road to a \$5 trillion-economy requires more than a noble intent and wishful thinking. The Government should regularly do a status check of the implementation status of schemes and laws and taxmen should be accommodative in their approach while implementing settlement schemes.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant and a public policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



## REMOVAL OF TRUMP FROM OFFICE

# Pence asked to invoke 25th Amendment

**Washington:** The Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives, which is rushing ahead towards impeaching Donald Trump over the unprecedented Capitol Hill attack, has passed a resolution urging Vice President Mike Pence to invoke 25th Amendment to remove the president from office.

The resolution was voted by 223 to 205 votes on Tuesday night. The voting was mostly on party lines, with one Republican voting in favour of the resolution and another five abstaining. The resolution calls upon Pence to mobilise the Cabinet to activate the 25th Amendment to remove the president from office.

The 25th Amendment, adopted more than 50 years ago in the wake of President John F Kennedy's assassination, provides a mechanism for the succession of the president for his or her replacement in the event he or she proves unfit to serve. Under the amendment, the vice president and a majority of either the Cabinet or some other body designated by Congress may remove the pres-



ident from office.

The vote came after Pence, a Republican, wrote to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that he would not invoke the 25th Amendment.

“Under our Constitution, the 25th Amendment is not a means of punishment or usurpation. Invoking the 25th Amendment in such a manner would set a terrible precedent,” Pence said in a letter to Pelosi, a Democrat.

Speaking on the House floor, Pelosi said on January 6, President Trump incited a deadly insurrection against America that targeted the very heart of its democracy, the US Capitol.

“Defiling the genius of the Constitution, separate but

equal, attacking the first branch of government, trying to prevent the US from ascertaining – the constitutional duty to ascertain that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be President and Vice President of the

United States.

“The gleeful desecration they have – gleeful desecration of the Capitol and violence against the Congress, our staff and our workers are horrors that will forever stain our

nation’s history. Five Americans have died following the violent attack. More than 50 police officers were seriously injured, including fifteen officers who were hospitalised,” Pelosi said. **PTI**

# Free speech is under assault like never before: Trump

**Washington:** Free speech is under assault in the United States like never before, outgoing President Donald Trump said as almost all major social media outlets moved to block him following the breach of the Capitol Hill by his supporters.

In his first public speech on Tuesday after the January 6 storming of the US Capitol, Trump, in a Texas border town, addressed for the first time several issues, including impeachment proceedings against him, last week's incident itself and the call to invoke the 25th Amendment

to the US Constitution where-in he can be removed by his cabinet members.

“Free speech is under assault like never before. The 25th Amendment is of zero risk to me but will come back to haunt Joe Biden and the Biden administration. As the expression goes, be careful what you wish for,” Trump said in his remarks at a border wall in Texas.

“The impeachment hoax is a continuation of the greatest and most vicious witch hunt in the history of our country and is causing tremendous anger and divi-

sion, and pain far greater than most people will ever understand, which is very dangerous for the USA, especially at this very tender time,” he said.

Referring to last week's events, Trump said millions of Americans watched on as a mob stormed the Capitol and trashed the halls of the government.

“I have consistently said throughout my administration, we believe in respecting America's history and traditions, not tearing them down. We believe in the rule of law, not in violence or rioting,” he said. **PTI**

## YouTube suspends Trump’s channel for at least a week

**Hong Kong:** YouTube has suspended Donald Trump's channel for at least a week amid concerns over "ongoing potential for violence," making it the latest platform to limit the president's online activities.

YouTube said in a tweet that it suspended Trump's channel after new content was uploaded that violated its policies. It did not specify which videos were in question or how they were in violation.

The move to curtail Trump's social media activity comes after a mob of his supporters, urged on by his rhetoric, stormed the Capitol last week to try to stop Congress from certifying President-elect Joe Biden's win.

“After review, and in light of concerns about the ongoing potential for violence, we removed new content uploaded to Donald J Trump's channel for violating our policies,” YouTube said in a statement on Twitter.

YouTube said that the channel had its “1st strike” and comments would be indefinitely disabled on the channel. Under its policies, a second strike will result in a two-week suspension, while a third strike bans the account permanently. **AP**

# FBI opens over 160 investigations against Capitol Hill rioters

**Washington:** The FBI has opened more than 160 investigations against the January 6 Capitol Hill rioters, officials said here, and asserted this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The agency has worked hand-in-hand with the United States Attorney's Office and law enforcement partners in DC and across the country to arrest and charge multiple individuals who took part in last week's breach of the US Capitol, FBI Washington Field Office Assistant Director In-Charge Steven M D'Antuono told reporters at a news conference.

“In six days, we have opened over 160 case files, and that's just the tip of the iceberg,” he said, adding the FBI has received more than 1,00,000 pieces of digital media.

D'Antuono said the FBI will be knocking on the doors of the people who participated in the attack on the Capitol. “But before we do this, this is your opportunity to come forward as several individuals involved in Wednesday's riots

have done,” he added.

In the weeks leading up to the January 6 rally, the FBI, D'Antuono said, developed some intelligence that a number of individuals were planning to travel to the DC area with intentions to cause violence.

This was immediately shared and action was taken as demonstrated by the arrest of Enrique Tarrio by the Metropolitan Police Department the night before the rally, he said.

Other individuals were identified in other parts of the country and their travel subsequently disrupted, D'Antuono noted.

Acting US Attorney for the District of Columbia, Michael Sherwin, said the scope and scale of the investigation in these cases are really unprecedented not only in FBI history but also probably in the history of the Department of Justice in which the Capitol grounds outside and inside are essentially crime scenes. **PTI**

## Around the Globe

**Terre Haute (US):** A Kansas woman was executed on Wednesday for strangling an expectant mother in Missouri and cutting the baby from her womb, the first time in nearly seven decades that the US Government has put to death a female inmate.

**United Nations:** The UN and humanitarian partners in Afghanistan are seeking \$1.3 billion to assist almost 16 million people in need of life-saving assistance as a result of decades of conflict, recurrent natural disasters and the added impact of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.

**Wellington:** Police said a man armed with an axe smashed the glass doors that form the main entrance to New Zealand's Parliament early on Wednesday but did not attempt to enter the building.

**Karachi:** Pakistan's restive Balochistan province saw 2,886 terrorist attacks and 3,184 related deaths in the last decade, according to a media report.

# US cancels ambassador's controversial trip to Taiwan

AP ■ TAIPEI

The US State Department canceled the planned Taiwan visit by its UN ambassador that has drawn strong opposition and a warning from China.

The department announced it was canceling all senior-level overseas travels, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's planned trip to Belgium, in a decision to assist with the transition to the next administration.

US Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft was due to begin a three-day visit Wednesday, which would have involved meetings with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu as well as delivering a speech.

Craft's trip was one of two moves in the twilight days of the Trump administration that

increases official exchanges with the self-ruled island while also provoking China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory.

The US and China have clashed on everything from the origins of the pandemic to Hong Kong. China had already warned the US would pay a “heavy price” in response to the planned visit.

It follows an announcement from Pompeo on Saturday that the US would remove longstanding restrictions on how its diplomats and others have contact with their Taiwanese counterparts.

Under the Trump administration and bipartisan support from Congress, relations with Taiwan has warmed up considerably, with the government increasing the frequency and quality of weapons sales to the island's government.

# China says it’ll defend self over UK Xinjiang labour measures

**Beijing:** China said on Wednesday that it would defend itself against a British government demand that companies ensure their supply chains are free from forced labour linked to the northwestern Chinese region of Xinjiang or face punishing fines.

The comment came after British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said officials have issued guidance to British firms with ties to Xinjiang on how to carry out due diligence checks.

The government intends

to exclude suppliers and review export controls to prevent the shipping of any goods that could contribute to such violations in Xinjiang, where China is accused of widespread rights violations against Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups.

China denies allegations of rights abuses and forced labour, saying it aims only to raise incomes among minorities and stamp out radicalism.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said China would “take all necessary measures to defend national

interests and dignity and firmly safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests.”

“Individual countries including the UK have funded, concocted and deliberately spread lies and rumours to smear and discredit China on the pretext of so-called human rights issues,” Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing. “It fully exposes their hypocrisy and sinister intentions to curb the development and progress of Xinjiang and interfere in China's internal affairs.” **AP**

# Iran to hold missile drill in Gulf of Oman amid tensions

**Tehran:** Iran's navy was poised to begin a short-range missile drill in the Gulf of Oman on Wednesday, state TV reported, amid heightened regional tensions over Tehran's nuclear program and a US Pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic.

The two-day missile drill was to be held in the gulf's southeastern waters and two new Iranian-made warships were expected to join the exercise: The missile-launching Zereh, or “armor,” and the Makran, a logistics vessel with a helicopter pad named after a coastal region in southern Iran.

President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdrew the US from Iran's nuclear deal, in which Tehran had agreed to limit its uranium enrichment in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Trump cited Iran's ballistic missile program among other issues in withdrawing from the accord.

When the US Then ramped up sanctions, Iran gradually and publicly abandoned the deal's limits on its nuclear development as a series of escalating incidents pushed the two countries to the brink of war at the beginning of the year. **AP**

# Intense Israeli airstrikes in east Syria said to kill dozens

**Beirut:** Israeli warplanes carried out intense airstrikes on eastern Syria early on Wednesday, apparently targeting positions and arms depots of Iran-backed forces. Dozens of fighters were killed or wounded, according to an opposition war monitor.

A senior US intelligence official with knowledge of the attack told The Associated Press that the airstrikes were carried out with intelligence provided by the United States — a rare incidence of publicised cooperation between the two countries over choosing targets in Syria. **AP**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform you that Late Shree Khushi Ram (Voter ID No. UP777387/0315215) S/o Late Shree Khairati R/o Village Parthala Khanpur Sector 122 Noida Dist: G.B. Nagar has a plot in Noida whose no. is Plot No PK-B 28 Sector-122 Noida is registered at sub registrar office 1st in Bahi No. 3, Jld No.673, at page no. from 257-274 on 27.12.2016 at serial no 2253. So above plot is being transferred to the name of Deepak Kumar Yadav (Adhar No. 794265691315) and Deepanshu Yadav (Adhar No. 880859165635) S/o Shree Satyaveer Singh Yadav R/o Village Parthala Khanpur Sector-122 Noida on the basis of registered will. So all related people is informed that if someone has any objection about transfer of above plot, then he submit his objection in Noida Authority Residential department with all document proof within 30 days from the publishing date of this information. Deepak Kumar Yadav

**UJVN LIMITED**  
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135 - 2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135- 2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866  
पत्र सं. 34, Time Extension Notice-I दिनांक: 12.01.2021  
**Name of Work:** Hiring of one no. 24 seater non AC Bus for 12 months.  
**In reference to e-Tender No. 13/EE/Klg/2020-21** invited by this office it is to inform that Time extension notice has been published on e-procurement portal. Please quote your bids accordingly. For further details kindly log on to <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>. All other terms & conditions of tender shall remain unchanged.  
**Dates of the aforesaid tender are extended as below-**  
Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal - 22.01.2021 up to 16:00 Hrs.  
Last date of submission of original documents- 23.01.2021 up to 16:00 Hrs  
Date of opening of bid on the website - 25.01.2021 at 11.00 Hrs  
**\*AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY\*** Executive Engineer (Maint.)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is inform to all concern that Sh. Gopiram S/o Late Mansa Ram R/o Village-Hulmbi Kalan, Narela, Delhi, was the joint owner of Residential Plot No. C-02/32, Sector-31, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (UP).  
Sh. Gopiram has expired on 25-08-2019. He had executed a registered WILL pertaining to the hs share in the above noted plot in favour of Sh. Shivam Gaur S/o Sh. Ranvir Singh R/o B-166, Sector-14, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (UP) vide WILL, dated 03-11-2018, duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Gautam Budh Nagar (UP) in Book No. 3, Volume No. 1104, on Pages 397 to 410, at Document No. 2378 dated 03/11/2018.  
Now the above plot is going to be transferred through the above WILL in favour of Sh. Shivam Gaur S/o Sh. Ranvir Singh R/o B-166, Sector-14, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (UP). If anyone has have any objection, he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of Noida authority, Sector-6, Noida within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.  
Shivam Gaur

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**MULTI SECTION DIGITAL AXLE COUNTER AT FLOOD PUNE AREA**  
**E-Tender No. SG 217\_2\_284\_**  
**WA dated: 12.01.2021. Name of Work :** Part supply of material, execution installation, testing and commissioning of Multi Section Digital Axle Counter at Flood pune area of Vasai Road station of Mumbai Division of Western Railway.  
**Approx. Cost of Work :** Rs.5,47,81,118/-  
**Cost of Tender Form :** Rs. 10,000/-  
**Particular office where E-tender open :** Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer(S), 2nd Floor, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Mumbai Central, Mumbai-400 008.  
**EMD:** Rs. 4,23,900/-  
**Time & Date for closure for submission of E-Tender Documents :** At 15.00 hrs. on 10.02.2021.  
**Time & Date for opening of E-Tender :** After 15.30 hrs. on 10.02.2021. The tender can be viewed at website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).  
0570  
Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**  
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.  

1	<b>Name of work</b>	Development of borewell and improvement of water supply system at SZM, ANDI, DBSI and PTNR in the section of SSEW/DDL/Line under ADEN/DLI.
2	<b>Approx. cost of work</b>	Rs. 44,89,503.25 (Rupees Forty Four Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Three and Paise Twenty five only)
3	<b>Earnest Money to be deposited</b>	Rs. 89,800/- (Rupees Eighty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Only)
4	<b>Cost of tender document</b>	Rs. 0/-
5	<b>Date &amp; Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender</b>	09.02.2021 @ 15:00 Hrs.
6	<b>Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen</b>	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

- The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system.
- For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.
- No manual offers are acceptable.
- Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

**No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/34/2020-21/W-3 Dated : 13.01.2021**  
93/2021  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
  
General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sakshi D/o Subir Sarki R/o H. No. 178, Near DTC BUS Terminal Azadpur, Delhi** has been missing since 29.12.2020. In this regard a **FIR No. 820/20 dated 30.12.2020** has been registered at PS, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under:-  
**Name: Sakshi, Father's Name :** Subir Sarki, **Age :** 16 year, **Height :** 5'1", **Face :** Oval, **Complexion :** Wheatish, **Built :** Thin, **Wearing :** Pink Color Jacket, Pink Color Top and Blue Color Jeans & Pink Shoes in feet.  
If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.  
Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>  
e-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641  
Extn.-210  
Fax: 011-24368639  
DP/595/NW/2021  
**SHO P.S., Adarsh Nagar, Delhi Ph. : 011-27674452, 27672452, 8750870233**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY**  
  
General public is hereby informed that one boy **Namely: Mukesh, S/o Bhaiya Lal, R/o Jhuggi No. N-125/177/C-35, Satsang Colony, WPIA, Delhi. Age: 20 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Blue Colour Jacket, Light Blue Colour Jeans and Blue Spots**  
**Shoes in Feet** has been missing since 21.12.2020.  
In this regard a DD No. 23A/20 dated 29.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Ashok Vihar, Delhi.  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far.  
Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.  
**E-Mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) SHO**  
**Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> P.S. Ashok Vihar, Delhi**  
**Fax: 011-24368639 Ph. 011-27243066, 8750870221**  
**Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/573/NW/2021**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
**(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)**  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused persons **Vijay Vats @ Nishu S/o Rajender Vats R/o H. No. 39, Kirari, Suleman Nagar, Delhi** and **Ravinder Vats @ Sonu S/o Ved Prakash R/o VPO Bohar (Melwan), Rohtak (Haryana)** have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 651/19 u/s 354/354A/354D/34 IPC & 8/12 POCSO Act** dated 18.12.2019 registered at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon that the said **Vijay Vats @ Nishu** and **Ravinder Vats @ Sonu** could not be found and where it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused **Vijay Vats @ Nishu** and **Ravinder Vats @ Sonu** have absconded (or is concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Vijay Vats @ Nishu** and **Ravinder Vats @ Sonu** are required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before **18.02.2021**.  
**By Order Ms. Raj Rani, Addl. Sessions Judge (North-West), Room No. 203, Rohini Courts, New Delhi**  
DP/604/RD/2021  
(Court Notice)

**Public Notice**  
Sarv Priya Mahajan Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. 202, Vardhman Avon Shopping Plaza, LSC, C-Block Market, Saraswati Vihar, Pitampura, Delhi-110034.  
In pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules, 2007, it is to inform publicly that following members of Sarv Priya Mahajan CGHS Ltd (Regd No.1384) have resigned from the membership of the society i.e., 1). Sh. Anil Kumar (M.No.536) 2). Sh. Rajeev (M.No.616) and Sh. Neeraj Gupta & Sanjay Gupta (M.No.566). Further they have been issued account payee cheque for their deposited amount. If anyone have any objection he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RCS, Parliament Street, New Delhi or at society office i.e., 202, Vardhman Avon Shopping Plaza, LSC, C-Block Market, Saraswati Vihar, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 within 7 Days from the date of publication of the public notice.  
Sd/- President/Secretary Sarv Priya CGHS Ltd

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE is hereby given that Mr. Rahul R/o. Flat no. 354, L Block, Sector-9, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh is going to Purchase the property from Mrs. Rajabala as Flat No L-351, Ground Floor, Sec-9, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP.  
While Registered GPA dated 15/03/2003 (Doc. No.390) executed by Mr. Sunil Kumar Madan to Mr. Ashok Tyagi and Sale Deed dated 17/04/2003 (Doc. No. 3461) executed By GDA through Mr. Sunil Kumar Madan to GPA holder Mr.Ashok Tyagi are lost.  
All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/ registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan for purchase of the said Property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.  
Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) 011-43052822, 9981006351

SALE NOTICE	
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-	
Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Vs Ram Sewak, CS No. 68/2020 (1934/ 19)	Vehicle No- UP14FT7944, Make and Model- CHEVROLET SAIL PS, Year- 2016
ICICI Bank Vs Punit CS 900/2019	Vehicle No- HR55AA9780, Make and Model- KUV 120 K4 PLUS D, Year- 2016
ICICI Bank Vs Sanjeev Kumar, CS (COMM) 2338/ 19	Vehicle No- DL1ZB2383, Make and Model- SAIL LS, Year- 2017
ICICI Bank Vs Arun Gupta, CS 20237/ 16	Vehicle No- UP14CY4735, Make and Model- HYUNDAI I 20 MAGNA 1.4, Year- 2016
CICI Bank Vs Bharat Miglani, CS SCJ 1152/ 18	Vehicle No- HR51BP8125, Make and Model- DATSUN GO T, Year- 2017
ICICI Bank Vs Vipul Goel, CS No. 44/ 18	Vehicle No- UP14CK1886, Make and Model- SANTRO GL PLUS, Year- 2014
ICICI Bank Vs Subodh Kumar, 3180 of 17	Vehicle No- UP14FT7914, Make and Model- TATA INDIGO ECS VX, Year- 2006
ICICI Bank Vs Ass. Mohd. CS (COMM) NO 1325/ 19	Vehicle No- UP14GT8009, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT VTVT PRIME T+ CNG, Year- 2018
ICICI Bank Vs Dheeraj Singh, 16 of 18	Vehicle No- UP16BH1700, Make and Model- MARUTI CIAZ SHVS VDI, Year-2016
ICICI Bank Vs Saksham Kathuria, CS NO 1791/ 2018	Vehicle No- UP16DT8933, Make and Model- XCENT, Year- 2016
ICICI Bank Vs Chand Saifi, Case No- 6/ 18.	Vehicle No- UP16ET2968, Make and Model- NISSAN GO T, Year- 2016
ICICI Bank Vs Rakesh Batra, Suit No 470/ 17	Vehicle No- DL3CCM1900, Make and Model- BENZ E350 CDI, Year- 2009
ICICI Bank Vs Naseem Ahmed, CS (Comm) No. 1989/ 2019	Vehicle No- DL3CCM0916, Make and Model- MARUTI SWIFT VDI (O), Year- 2017
ICICI Bank Vs Mukesh Kumar, CS (COMM) No. 1016 of 20	Vehicle No- HR55AG4069, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT VTVT PRIME T+ CNG, Year- 2019

**Auction Date :** January 29, 2021, Timing: 11:00AM to 1:00 PM  
**Venue:** Godara Yard, Khewat No: 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi School, Sec-17, Sukhrail, Gurugram- 122022.  
**Contact Person-** Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/Jitendra Kumar (7304914763) And auction of below mentioned one vehicle will be conducted at Shriram Automall- Narela.  

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Vs Raheesuddin, CS (Commercial) No. 2875/ 2019	Vehicle No- UP14HT0654, Make and Model- AL DOST, Year- 2018

**Auction Date :** January 29, 2021, Timing: 11:00AM to 1:00 PM  
**Venue:** Shriram Automall, Vill- Mamurpur, Pio Maniyari Road Narela, New Delhi, Narela, Delhi, 110040.  
**Contact Person-** Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)  
**Terms of Sale**  
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves /itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids.  
Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the approval date by the way of pay order/demand draft/ RTGS/NEFT.  
The intending bidders may visit at **ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Centre, Plot No-7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi- 110085**, for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle.



# Economic activity continues on normalisation: Report

**FY21 GDP to contract 6.7%**

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Economic activity continued with its pace of normalisation and the festivities helped narrow the deficits as compared to the year-ago period in December, a Japanese brokerage said on Wednesday. Based on data shown by its proprietary models, Nomura also revised up wits FY21 GDP forecast to a contraction of 6.7 %, as against the official estimate of a 7.7% contraction in the pandemic-impacted fiscal year.

The Nomura India Monthly Activity Indicator rose to -2.3% in December provisionally when compared to the year-ago period's performance, and was much better than the -7.7% year-on-year witnessed in November and -13.3% in September, it said. The brokerage said this suggests a "strong recovery" in Q4. "The pandemic situation did not substantially deteriorate in the festive season in December quarter, clearing the decks for a faster pace of economic normalisation," it said. "We expect GDP growth of -6.7 per cent y-o-y in FY21, before rising to 13.5 per cent in FY22, above consensus (10 per cent).

Along with the moderation in inflation in the short term due to lower food prices, we believe the economy is entering a Goldilocks period," it said. It can be noted that earlier in the day, analysts at its American peer Bofa Securities also pegged the GDP to close FY21 with a contraction of 6.7%. The Japanese brokerage said an index which it uses as a proxy for the extent of normalisation across the economy suggests economic activity continued to improve during December. At the end of the festive season, the overall normalisation index for consumption improved to 88.3% in December as against 87% in November and 85% in October, it said. For passenger cars, two-wheelers and tractors, the normalisation index readings are higher than their respective pre-pandemic levels while on the investment front, the index is trending at 93%, which is 3 percentage points below pre-pandemic levels, it said.

# Sensex snaps 3-day winning streak; M&M soars 6 pc

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Snapping its three-day record-setting run, the BSE Sensex closed marginally lower after a choppy session on Wednesday as investors pocketed gains in banking and finance stocks amid mixed global cues. Participants also kept their powder dry ahead of some key corporate results, traders said. After gyrating over 721 points during the day, the 30-share BSE index ended 24.79 points or 0.05 per cent lower at 49,492.32. It scaled a record intra-day peak of 49,795.19. The broader NSE Nifty inched up 1.40 points or 0.01 per cent to its fresh closing record of 14,564.85. The index touched a lifetime high of 14,653.35 during the day. M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 6.24 per cent, followed by SBI, ITC, NTPC, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank. On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, HDFC, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Sun

Pharma and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards, tumbling up to 2.85 per cent. According to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, domestic equities were volatile and gave-up early gains as profit booking was visible in a large number of stocks. "While contraction in November 2020 IIP data indicates more measures by FM in the budget to stimulate economic activities, better than anticipated softening in CPI data for December 2020 negates the looming concerns over low interest rate scenarios. "We continue to believe that that a sharp rebound in high frequency key economic data for December 2020 indicates demand revival, which bodes well for the markets. Further, 3Q FY21 corporate earnings are progressing well and are expected to sustain growth, which along with weak dollar and soft monetary policy of global bankers should continue to attract FPIs into domestic equities," he said.

**Rupee firms up 10 paise to finish at 73.15 against US dollar**

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The Indian rupee strengthened gains for the second straight day and closed 10 paise higher at 73.15 against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking upbeat Asian currencies and sustained foreign fund inflows. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 73.16, and hit an intra-day high of 73.10 and a low of 73.23. It finally finished at 73.15, higher by 10 paise over its last close. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.07 per cent to 90.15.

# ‘GDP may clip at just 6 pc in FY22 if vaccine distribution is delayed’

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

A delay in Covid-19 vaccine distribution could impact GDP growth prospects in the next fiscal year and the Reserve Bank may cut policy rates by 50 basis points by June as inflation cools down, a foreign brokerage said on Wednesday.BofA Securities said it expects GDP growth at 9 per cent in 2021-22 if the vaccine distribution is done in the first half of the new fiscal year but may be just at 6 per cent if the distribution is deferred to the second half (October-March). For the current financial year, it expects GDP to con-

tract by 6.7% as against the government's estimate of 7.7 % contraction. It can be noted that a slew of policy measures have been taken in the recent past including deep rate cuts, which had to be halted because of a surge in inflation to beyond the upper end of the range set for RBI. Speaking to reporters a day after official data suggested a sharp cool-down in the consumer price inflation to 4.6 per cent in December after being consistently above 6 per cent, its India economist Indranil Sen Gupta said BofA expects the RBI to cut rates by 50 basis points by June before it starts hiking them again.

# RBI sets up panel to suggest measures for promoting digital lending

**Mumbai:**Amid rising incidents of harassments relating to online lending, the Reserve Bank on Wednesday constituted a working group to suggest regulatory measures to promote orderly growth of digital lending. The RBI said that the recent spurt and popularity of online lending platforms/mobile lending apps has raised certain serious concerns which have wider systemic implications. "Against this backdrop, a Working Group (WG) is being set up to study all aspects of digital lending activ-

ities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players so that an appropriate regulatory approach can be put in place," the central bank said. The working group, chaired by RBI Executive Director Jayant Kumar Dash, will consist of both internal and external members, and submit its report within three months. The internal other members are, Ajay Kumar Choudhary (CGM-in-Charge, Department of Supervision, RBI), P Vasudevan (CGM, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems) and Manoranjan Mishra.

# Sandeep Aggarwal appointed TEPC chairman

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Sandeep Aggarwal will be the Snew Chairman of the Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) which has been set up by the Government of India to promote and develop export of Telecom Equipment and Services. Aggarwal, who is the Managing Director and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications Ltd., a leading cable manufacturer, was elected TEPC's new Chairman on Tuesday. He will take over from Shyamal Ghosh, ex-Telecom Secretary.

# Mallya denied permission to appeal in UK bankruptcy case

**London:**Liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya was on Wednesday denied permission to appeal against a UK High Court order refusing to dismiss bankruptcy proceedings brought by a consortium of Indian banks led by the State Bank of India (SBI), in their pursuit of debt related to his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. The 65-year-old businessman, who remains on bail in the UK, had filed a renewed application to appeal against UK court orders in the case from last year, which had allowed for an adjournment of bankruptcy proceedings until the debt issue before the Supreme Court in India was decided upon. *PTI*

**The Executive Engineer, W.R Division No-II, 3rd Floor, P. N. Complex, Gurkhabasti, Agartala Tripura,** invites e-EOI against project NIEOI No **02/EE/WRD-II/2020-21** \*Dated **06-01-2020**

The Executive Engineer, Water Resource Division No-II, invites e-Expression of Interest on behalf of the “GOVERNOR OF TRIPURA” from original equipment manufacturer or their authorized Indian Agents/Multi-national companies and their joint ventures/Firms etc. having three years experienced of similar nature of work and interested bidders for “**Operation, Maintenance of Dredger and De-siltation of Rudrasagar lake, under PWD(WR), by using Department’s amphibian multi functional dredger, Water Master Classic-IV dredger machine**”.

This is an invitation for e-expression of interest open to original equipment manufacturer or their authorized Indian Agents/Multi-national companies and their joint ventures/Firms etc having three years experienced of similar nature of work.

Last date of e-bidding document downloading & Uploading is **10-02-2021 upto 3.00 P.M. in website <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>.**

For more details kindly visit: **<https://tripuratenders.gov.in> vide tender I.D:-.....or contact with the O/o the bid inviting authority Ph No: 9436460131/700547625.**

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
W.R. Division No-II  
3rd Floor of Khadya Bhavan, P.N. Complex,  
Gurkhabasti, Agartala,  
ICA/C-2785/2020-21  
West Tripura


**Eastern Coalfields Limited**


“All the tenders issued by CIL and its subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works & Services are available on i) Website of Coal India Limited: **www.coalindia.in**, ii) Website of ECL: **www.easterncoal.nic.in**, iii) CIL e-Procurement Portal: **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in**, iv) Central Public Procurement Portal: **https://eprocure.gov.in**. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal: **https://gem.gov.in**”.

**(By Order), ECL**


**UJVNL Limited**

H.O.: “Ujjwal”, Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dohradun-248006  
Telephone : 0135-2763808; Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website : [www.ujvnl.com](http://www.ujvnl.com)

**Ro. No. 41 e-Tender Notice Dated: 13/01/2021**

Office of the EE (E&M),Asan Barrage, Dhakrani invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:  
e-NIT No. 09/EE(E&M)/Asan Barrage/2020-21  
Name of Supply : Procurement of safety and security equipment .  
Estimated Cost : Rs. 6,50,000.00 (GST extra)  
Date of availability of bid document on website: 12/01/2021  
Last date for submission of bids on website: 03/02/2021 upto17:00 Hrs  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal" <http://uktenders.gov.in>  
**Executive Engineer(E&M)**

**“Avoid wasteful use of Electricity”**




General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Richa Jain D/o Shobaag Jain R/o 1540B Gali No. 11, Jain Nagar, Karala, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS: Begumpur, Delhi since 25.12.2020. In this regard, a case **DD No. 38A Dated 25.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. Begumpur, Delhi**. The description of the missing girl are as under.

**Age:** 20 Years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5' 6" , **Face:** Round, **Hair:** Black & Long, **Wearing:** Black colour suit-salwar and cream colour jacket. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/ kidnapped girl then please inform PS: Begumpur, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, providing clue about the missing girl.  
**Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639**

Sd/- SHO  
**PS: Begumpur, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 8750870326**

**DP/602/RD/2020**



**(See Section 82 Cr. PC)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Narender S/o Nanta Ram R/o Gali No. 5, Chote Ram Park, Bahadurgarh, Dist-Jhajjar HR** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 29/18 u/s 33/38/58D. Ex.ACT PS: Kanjhawala, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrants of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Narender** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Narender** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person **Narender of FIR No. 29/18 u/s 33/38/58D. EX.ACT PS: Kanjhawla, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 15.02.2021**. By order  
**Anuj Kumar Singh**  
**Metropolitan Magistrate-02,**  
**North West District**  
**Rohini Courts Delhi**

**DP/600/RD/2021**




General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Soni, D/o: Sh. Sheshnath, R/o: E-160, JJ Colony, Shakurpur, Delhi Aged: 18 years 7 monthsh,** has been missing since 30.12.2020 from the area of PS Subhash Place, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 32A, Dated 30.12.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi**. Her physical description is as under:

**Height:** 5'2" Feet, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Build:** Strong, **Clothing:** Grey Colour Suit and Salwar.. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Subhash Place, Delhi. at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in) or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O  
**P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-27356336, 27353014, 8750870224**

**DP/596/NW/2021.**


**MODI RUBBER LIMITED**  
CIN: L25199UP1971PLC003392,  
**Registered Office:** Modinagar - 201204; Dist. Ghaziabad, (U.P.)  
**Corporate Office:** 4-7C, DDA Shopping Centre, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110025; Website: [www.modirubberlimited.com](http://www.modirubberlimited.com)  
Email: [investors@modigroup.net](mailto:investors@modigroup.net); Phone: + 91-11-47107398

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that the Company is processing for issuance of duplicate Share Certificates in pursuance of intimation about the loss of shares certificates having the following particulars:-

S. No.	Name of the Shareholders	Folio No.	No. of Shares	Certificate No.	Distinctive No.
1.	SANKARARAMAN STHANUNATHAN AND S.S.STHANUNATHAN	S00606	366	11539-40 59432-33 166415-16 2304015-16	5234351-4450 7663421-3486 14491365-1464 21837465-7654

Public is cautioned against purchasing or otherwise dealing with the above mentioned share certificates. A Duplicate thereof will be issued to the shareholders, unless any objection is received by the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

For Modi Rubber Limited  
Sd/-  
(S K Bajpai)

Place : New Delhi  
Date : 13.1.2021

Head-Legal & Company Secretary

# Delhi-NCR residential sales grow 43% in Oct-Dec, says JLL

**IAANS ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Capital Region (NCR) witnessed a quarter-on-quarter growth of 43 per cent in the sale of housing units during the October-December period on the back of festive discounts, low interest rates and some premium launches by established developers, said a JLL report.However, sales are yet to reach the pre-Covid levels witnessed in 2019, it said. Noida continued to dominate sales with 45 per cent share of overall sales in Delhi-NCR, followed by Ghaziabad, which contributed 31 per cent of the total sales.

The residential market also rebounded with some prominent new launches. In Q4 2020, new launches more than tripled when compared to the last quarter. Majority of the launches were recorded in Gurugram, which accounted for 61 per cent of the new launches followed by Noida which contributed 24 per cent of the launches.

“Homebuyers are increasingly becoming more confident about returning to the market. Site visits and enquiries from prospective buyers have been increasing consistently, driven primarily by end-users who are keen in ready-to-move-in projects and newly launched projects by established developers,” said Manish Aggarwal, Managing Director, Delhi NCR, JLL India.

The report also noted that the quarter also witnessed the launch of plotted developments and individual floors by prominent developers. While prices remained range-bound across all the submarkets, developers are offering freebies and attractive payment terms to serious homebuyers.

Overall, residential property sales across the top seven markets in the country rose by 51 per cent as compared to Q3 2020.It is important to note that this improvement has been holistic with seven key residential markets showing an uptick in sales.

## INBRIEF

**WIPRO REPORTS 21% GROWTH IN Q3 NET PROFIT**  
**Mumbai:** IT major Wipro on Wednesday reported 20.85% growth in its consolidated net profit for the October-December quarter at ₹ 2,968 cr.The company had reported a net profit of ₹2,455.9 crore during the corresponding period of the last fiscal (FY2019-20).Its revenue increased 1.3% during the period under review to ₹15,670 crore.Thierry Delaporte, CEO and Managing Director said: "Wipro has delivered a second consecutive quarter of strong performance on order booking, revenue and margins. Five of our sectors grew over 4% sequentially." "We closed our largest ever deal win in Continental Europe. The demand environment is steadily improving, especially for digital transformation, digital operations, and cloud services. I am also pleased to share with you that we have moved into our new organization structure and are stabilizing quickly," the CEO said.

**SCOPE EMINENCE AWARDS 2019-20 LAUNCHED**  
**New Delhi:** Honouring the unrelenting efforts of public sector as nation builders and catalysts for social transformation in the country, Standing Conference of Public Sector Enterprises (SCOPE) launched 'SCOPE Eminence Awards 2019-20.' These awards are part of SCOPE's commitment to honour the outstanding contribution of the Public Sector Enterprises to the economy at large. Among the most coveted awards recognizing outstanding contribution in PSEs, SCOPE awards have been presented by Hon'ble President of India in the past.

SALE NOTICE			
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on “ <b>AS IS WHERE IS BASIS</b> ” and “ <b>AS IS WHAT IS BASIS</b> ” for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-			
Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD Amount (10% of reserve price)
ICICI Bank Vs Sunil Kumar, CM (M) 228/ 2020	Vehilcle No- DL3CCA2916, Make and Model- SWIFT VDI, Year- 2014	1,80, 000/-	18,000/-
ICICI Bank Vs Vikash., 225/ 2020	Vehilcle No- HR38V/6041, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT BASE CRDI, Year- 2015	64,000/-	6,400/-
ICICI Bank Vs Ankit Bhadana, CM (M)- 231/ 2020	Vehilcle No- HR38V/7561, Make and Model- XCENT, Year- 2015	80,000/-	8,000/-
ICICI Bank Vs Kulvinder Singh, Fao 213/ 2015	Vehilcle No- Unregister, Make and Model- ERTIGA, Year- 2012	1,40, 000/-	14,000/-
ICICI Bank Vs Jitendra Chaturvedi, CM (M) 22/ 2020	Vehilcle No-UP14FT/7814, Make and Model- SAIL UVA LT, Year- 2016	64,000/-	6,400/-
ICICI Bank Vs Amit Kuril, 06 of 18	Vehilcle No- HR51AL/7799, Make and Model- FABIA ACTIVE 1.2 MPI, Year-2010	35,000/-	3,500/-

**Auction Date :** January 29, 2021 from 11AM-2PM  
**Venue:** Godara Yard, Khewat No: 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi School, Sec-17, Sukhrail, Gurugram – 122022.  
**Contact Person-** Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)  
**EMD:** DD/PO of EMD amount to be made in favour of ICICI Bank Limited, payable at Delhi.  
**Contact Person-** Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)  
**Terms of Sale**  
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at site with original DD/PO of EMD amount along with original KYC proofs to participate in the auction.  
Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited. The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Centre, Plot no-7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi-110085. For details and inspection of the said by photocopied vehicle.



The general public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Priyanka D/o Ramesh Kumar R/o 305, Income Tax Colony, Pitampura, Delhi** has been missing since 03.01.2021 from her house at around 2:30 p.m. In this regard, **DD No. 06A, dated 04.01.2021 has been registered at PS Maurya Enclave, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing girl is as under:

**Name:** Priyanka, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 19 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Oval, **Complexion:** Fair, **Build:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue & white colour top, white colour jacket, white colour jeans and black colour shoes on her feet. If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/Maurya Enclave, Delhi.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax : 011-24368639

SHO  
**P.S. Maurya Enclave, Delhi,**  
**Ph. No. 011-27322353, 27314426**

**DP/586/NW/2021**



Priyanka



## Trend Blazer

### Cyrus challenged his fears in Manali

Actor-anchor **CYRUS SAHUKAR** challenged his fears in Manali, and he says the outcome was a meditative and relaxed feeling.

"It was an incredible experience being in Manali after months of lockdown. To be in such a beautiful setting, hanging with (actor) Amol (Parashar) and doing all these adventure activities was a magnificent experience for me," Cyrus said.

"The best moment was canyoning down the waterfall as I had never done that before. It was super scary, yet there was something very calm about it. It was almost like after you get over your fears, there's a meditative and relaxed feeling that you get," he added.

Cyrus went to Manali to host the reality series *Feelin Alive Season 2*.

Actor **KAJOL** shared a hilarious way to avoid all things that make her fat, and fans sure are amused.

On Instagram stories, she shared a post that read: "I've decided I'm ignoring all the things that make me fat...Mirrors, Scales, Opinions..."

She is currently gearing up for the release of her next film, the Renuka Shahane-directed women-centric digital release, *Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy*.

The film, written and directed by Shahane, also features Tanvi Azmi and Mithila Palkar. It is a family drama about three distinct women, and their unconventional life choices.



## Live outside the box

As long as there is a demand for affordable accommodation in cities, co-living will continue to be a lucrative business for brands, creating opportunities and a better way of living, even amid a pandemic

There are many myriad disruptive start-up ideas that have exploded in the Indian living ecosystem, especially if we look into the real estate sector. In the recent years, only a few of them have made the kind of impact that co-living has. The idea of co-living has been embraced by the present generation wholeheartedly with arms wide open. It has become an obvious answer to the age-old concern of affordable housing. The utility of shared living spaces is set in motion to find its way into the urban millennial headspace.

During the initial two lockdowns, many people spent months in isolation and some of them within their limited support bubble. This further resulted in starved human connection, urging people to look for more ways to socially engage than ever before. The young workforce was seen and even looking forward to build social connections even in their own buildings. The pandemic came as realisation that there is a necessity of organised purpose-built co-living accommodation and the objective being to disrupt the PG (accommodation) market, which is highly unorganised and is poorly managed, with least or no COVID-19 protocols in place. Hassle-free living sounded like a distant dream a few years ago. The shared economy concept has now percolated all aspects of society, giving rise to unprecedented disruptions along with the creation of new opportunities. It is important to note that the driving force for co-living in the market is not just the lack of available spaces or cramped living, but also flexibility and affordability, aspira-

tions of the present generation, the breakthrough technological innovation and the digital economy.

Predominantly focussed at millennials and working professionals, without an age limit, co-living aims to build an instant community for those looking for open-minded friendships. It also intends to facilitate an opportunity to live in the main business and commercial areas of the city that would usually be highly expensive in the otherwise traditional private rented set up. Because of millennials contributing to the larger share of the population, the requirement of the hour is to have affordable, organised and thoughtfully planned communities that will lead to disruption in the market and resolve the purpose-built co-living solutions for this constantly growing segment of target consumers.

### The way of living will become affordable and better organised

Co-living enables residents to dwell in a sociable environment and to take the benefits of a much wider variety of facilities than the ones that would be available to them in an individual apartment or flat share. If we look beyond the numbers, it becomes quite obvious that across a spectrum of sectors, the shared economy concept has unleaded disruptive forces that have forced a simple choice upon the occupants i.e. to level up and to elevate their communal needs.

It is important to note that the business of shared living spaces is moving to an asset-light model, where operators are changing and evolving their business model as per consumer needs,



rather than involving high business risks such as taking up building on rent. The aim is to take up buildings on a revenue share basis, which means that the operators operate the building as a co-living space on behalf of the owner for a fee in return. These are spaces that go beyond offering a space to live in, but a congregation of thoughts, ideas, opinions and backgrounds to coexist and be a part of a vibrant community for people to come together and connect.

### The growing need and importance of building a sustainable community

Community living is the principal driving force of co-living — to bring together people regardless of their age, to shape communities around similar and niche interests according to the ever-changing individual needs, to have the same mindset as millennials, and to pursue the will for a richer communal living environment. Further, co-living aims to be an option to combat loneliness, especially among the migrant millennial workforce in metro

cities, inviting people from different walks and different stages of life to co-create, evolve and flourish in collaboration by building meaningful connections and shaping a vibrant ecosystem with the help of recreational activities. Community management is thereby regarded as the key to the success of co-living.

Remote work is going to sustain for long or for the least, hybrid remote work is likely to become an integral part of workplace strategies as we go forward. Since human connection during the lockdown has been starved, co-living is an option that gives access to communal spaces and social events in a way that is unmatched by any other housing model. The properties are designed to revolutionise creative spaces in order to create an environment which is fun, playful and yet inspiring and fulfilling.

A specifically curated holistic community fosters a culture of inclusivity among the occupants which enables meeting a variety of other individuals and in turn expanding their network. Besides, provid-

ing contemporary lifestyle solutions that are fully equipped for people who enjoy hassle-free living. It provides smart living solutions, creating a balance for both leisure and work. However, co-living spaces need to elevate and step up their facilities to sustain and to endure the new reality.

### The outlook on co-living in 2021

Sustainability, community, and well-being are intertwined aspects. Health and well-being will continue to remain as the two primary factors for anyone to consider living in a safe space, especially in these unprecedented times. Considering the expansive offerings that shared accommodations and co-living spaces offer, along with ensuring enhanced safety protocols, this alternative will gradually become a necessity for modern migrants as they adjust and familiarise themselves with the new normal.

Today's workforce is on a constant move and does not wish to compromise on their living standards. The lockdown has led to starved human connection and there is a strong yearning for more social engagement opportunities than ever before. Promotion of positivity and empathy is the key to re-build the bond. To exemplify, build relationships between the residents and the local commerce or engage co-residents by curating events and fun activities. The pandemic has forced people to prefer places that offer safety and hygiene along with fully furnished facilities, rather than public places, which makes their transition to their new homes easier.

As long as there is a demand for affordable accommodation in cities, co-living will continue being a lucrative business for brands, providing opportunities to create conversational bonds and diverse communities with a better way of living, even in a pandemic. Residents are looking for proximity to the workplace and a holistically curated community living. The future of co-living sees a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

(The writer, Kahraman Yigit, is the co-founder and CEO of Olive by Embassy.)

### SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) namely **Manisha D/o Shatrudhan Mukhiya R/o H. No. WZ-333, Shakurpur Village, Delhi Aged- 16 Years** has been registered missing since 27.10.2020 at 11:00 AM from the area of P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi vide FIR No. 472/20 U/s 363 IPC Dated 28.10.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Subhash Place, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-



Manisha

**Complexion:** Fair, **Height:** 4'9", **Built:** Medium, **Face:** Oval, **ID:** burn mark on forehead, **Wearing:** Black coloured suit, yellow coloured dupatta and Purple coloured slipper in feet. Any person having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Subhash Place, Delhi at E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 SHO, Subhash Place, Delhi  
Fax: 011-24368639 Tel.: 011-27356336  
DP/575/NW/2021 Mob.: 8750870224

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

The general public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 27 years of age whose name, residence, and family is unknown had been found dead under the flyover, Wazirabad, Delhi on 11.01.2021. In this regard, a vide has been registered with FIR No: 30/21 dated 11.01.2021 u/s 279/304A at PS Wazirabad, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the UIDB is as under:



**Sex:** Male, **Age:** about 27 years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Yellow-white colour shirt and grey colour pant. If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/ Wazirabad, Delhi.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 SHO  
Fax : 011-24368639 P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi.  
DP/880/N/2021 Ph. No. 011-23810076, 23810073

### SUNIL HEALTHCARE LIMITED

Regd. Office: 38E/252-A, Vijay Tower, Shahpurjat, New Delhi-110049  
CIN-L24302DL1973PLC189662  
Email:- [info@sunilhealthcare.com](mailto:info@sunilhealthcare.com) / Website: [www.sunilhealthcare.com](http://www.sunilhealthcare.com).  
Tel:- +91-11-49435555/00, Fax: +91-11-43850087

### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in pursuance to the Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 and other applicable regulation of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on **Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.**, through video conferencing/other Audio visual means, inter alia, to consider, approve and take on record the Un-Audited Financial Results for the 3rd quarter/nine months ended on December 31, 2020 of the financial year 2020-21. The Registered office of the Company at New Delhi shall be deemed as venue of the Board meeting.

Further, the Trading Window, under the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 as already intimated via our letter dated 31.12.2020, shall remain close from **January 01, 2021 till January 23, 2021 (both days inclusive)**.

The information contained in this notice is also available on the Company's website [www.sunilhealthcare.com](http://www.sunilhealthcare.com) and also available on the website of BSE Ltd. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).

For Sunil Healthcare Limited  
Santosh Kumar Sharma  
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer  
F-6817

Place: New Delhi  
Date: January 13, 2021

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



Shikha Gupta

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Shikha Gupta, D/o: Bhupendra Kumar Gupta, R/o: B-1/160, Aman Vihar, Delhi** has been reported missing since 17.10.2020 at around 02:00 PM from her house. In this regard FIR No. 548/20 dated 11.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under:

**Name:** Shikha Gupta, **Age:** 18 Year, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Fair, **Wearing:** Black colour Suit & Grey colour Jeans

If anyone has any information about this missing girl please inform P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 SHO  
Police Station Aman Vihar, Delhi  
DP/599/RD/2020 Ph.: 011-27581812, 8750870321

### SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



Nemat

General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely: Nemat, D/o: Md. Ilyas, R/o: G-228, J.J. Collony, Sawada, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 25.12.2020 at 3:00 pm. from the area of P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 15A dated 26.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: **Age:** 18 years 9 months, **Sex:** Female, **Height:** 5', **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Hair:** Black, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Black colour suit, white colour salwar and white colour jutti in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail Id - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) SHO  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi  
Fax No. 011-24368639 Ph.: 011-25951486, 8750870324  
DP/603/RD/2021

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

### OFFICE OF THE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT (PURCHASE-I)

#### SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES SOURA, SRINAGAR-190011

FAX: 0194-2403929, E-mail: [ammopurchase1@skims.ac.in](mailto:ammopurchase1@skims.ac.in)

Sub :- Extension of E-NIT.

Ref :- (i) E-NIT No: SIMS 325 (P 1<sup>st</sup>) Drugs Tender 07 OF 2020, DATED: 12.12.2020.

(ii) Approval of Director, Dated: 12.01.2021.

In view of present weather conditions and the representations made by the various firms requesting therein that due to bad weather they are unable to receive the hard copies from there principle companies therefore the last date for submission of online bid and opening of technical bid of above referred e-NIT as approved by the authorities is hereby extended as under :-

1.	Last date of submission of online bid	23-01-2021 (up to 2 pm)
2.	Date of Opening of technical bid	27-01-2021 (at 11:30 am)

• However in view of the present weather condition the hard copies of technical bids along with EMD and tender fee will be accepted till 27.01.2021 up to 11:30 am.

• Other terms and condition shall remain unchanged.

No: SIMS 325 (P1<sup>st</sup>) Drugs Tender 07 of 2020- 132-38-5940-43.

Dated: 13.01.2021

Sd/- Materials Management Officer  
Purchase I, SKIMS



# Chennai airport gears up for a makeover



AI's Chennai airport has been witnessing tremendous traffic growth over the years, which has necessitated the revamp of the airport aimed at providing a world-class terminal to passengers. The second phase of Chennai Airport Modernisation commenced in the year 2019 when the Prime Minister of India laid the foundation stone for the project.

The modernisation of the Chennai airport is planned in two stages. The first

stage has seen dismantling of the existing Domestic Terminal T-2 with an area of 19,250 sqm for construction of new facility, which is scheduled to be commissioned by June 2021. The second stage will be the demolition of International Terminal T-3, with an area of 42,300 sqm and construction of new terminal. The total project will be commissioned by December 2022.

The estimated cost of the project is ₹2,467 crore, which also includes integra-

tion of airside corridor for seamless flow, augmentation of contact bays, integration of multi-level mechanised car park and metro rail.

The new combined terminal (Stage-1 + Stage-2), which will function as one large integrated terminal for international and domestic operations having a total area of 2,18,000 sqm, will enhance the present capacity from 21 million passengers per annum to 35 million passengers per annum.

The design of the roof is most important as it gives the structure an iconic look. It is derived from the traditional form of local art and culture, the movement of traditional costume from Tamil Nadu's Bharatanatyam dance. The pleats in these costumes open beautifully when the dancer forms particular postures and the roof will reflect the movement and lightness of the garment. The fabric-like roof lightly sits above the terminal with the ripples creating from layers of curvature roof

structure. The roof then cantilevers over the forecourt road to create a welcoming space and weather protection for the passenger and visitors alike. Evidently, the new terminal and its interiors will reflect an array of aesthetic elements taken from the rich cultural repository of Tamil Nadu.

The new terminal will also be GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) compliant, with various eco-friendly materials planned to be used during the construction phase. A host of new facilities will ensure passengers flow is smooth and safety/security aspects are given equal importance. Apart from multiple lounges and master concessionaires; Automated Tray Retrieval System (ATRS), Self-Baggage Drop (SBD), Passenger Flow Monitoring System (PFMS) and Boarding Process Control e-Gates will enhance passenger convenience.

With the commissioning of Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP), the present

1,200 car parking capacity will increase to 3,000. The buildings will accommodate car parking area along with spaces created for commercial use.

AAI has also taken up works to enhance the efficiency of operational area (airside) of the airport by constructing Rapid Exit Taxiways (RETs), taxiways to the main runway (07/25), taxiway straightening works etc. The RETs will reduce runway occupancy time of aircraft. The introduction of MARS (Multi Apron Ramp System) ensures optimal usage of tarmac/Apron.

The commissioning of New Terminal will not only create new opportunities for the communities around airport but will also provide the required impetus to health and educational tourism.

The Chennai airport is the fourth biggest airport in India in terms of passenger handled every year. With the new terminal coming up, it will be termed as one of the unique engineering marvels.

## LIC gives new opportunities

To encourage continuation of the risk cover in the current circumstances of Corona pandemic, LIC brings an excellent opportunity for its policyholders to revive their lapsed policies. It has decided to launch a Special Revival Campaign for its customers to revive their individual lapsed LIC policies. It has also authorised its 1,526 satellite offices to revive policies where special medical tests are not required.

Under this Special Revival Campaign, policies of specific eligible plans can be revived within five years from date of the first unpaid premium subject to terms and conditions. Certain concession in health requirements is also being offered subject to eligibility. Most policies

can be revived only on the basis of a declaration of good health and a COVID questionnaire to be submitted by the proposer/life assured.

The campaign is launched to benefit those policy holders who were not able to pay premiums due to unavoidable circumstances and their policy lapsed. It always makes better sense to revive an old policy to restore insurance cover. LIC values its policyholders and their desire to continue their life insurance cover. This campaign is a good opportunity for LIC's policyholders to revive their policies and restore life cover to ensure financial security for their family. LIC currently services almost 30 crore policies across the nation.

### PRESS RELEASE

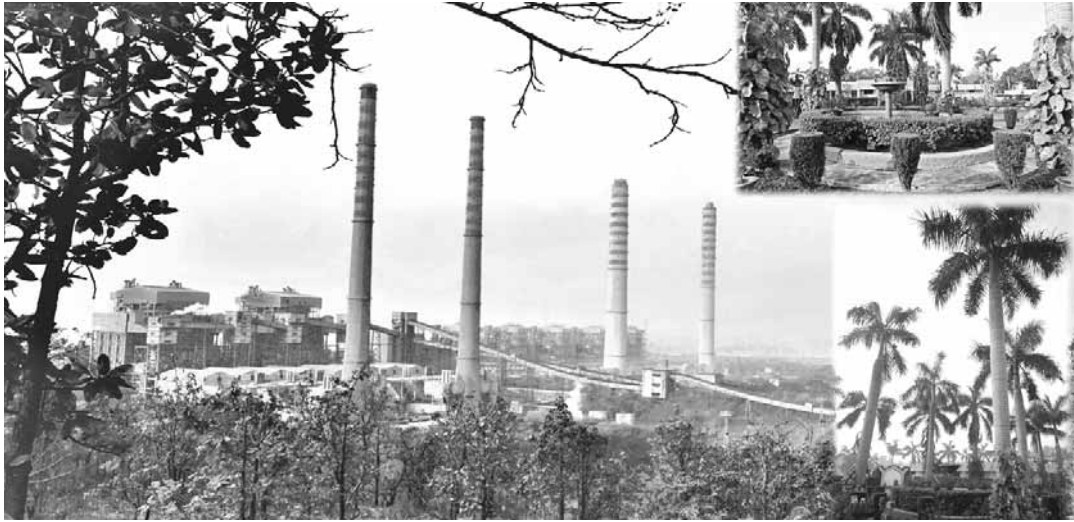
#### DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM, JAMMU Celebration "Lohri Festival-2021 at Katra"

The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu celebrated Lohri Festival-2021 on a grand scale at Katra today on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021. The event was celebrated in collaboration with the District Administration Reasi, Hotel & Restaurant Association, Travel Agent Association, Dry Fruit Association, Katra and officers/officials of Tourism Department. The above said event was organized for the 1st time at Katra by the Tourism department, started from Asia Chowk, to Fountain Chowk, Katra with cultural procession and local folk dance also performed by the artists. Special Kud performance and Lohri Haran dance was performed by the artists of J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Jammu at Foundation Chowk Katra. The aim of celebration of this festival is sustainable effort being made by the Tourism department with other stakeholders to revive the Tourism sector, in the area.

On this occasion the Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Mrs. Indu Kanwal Chib KAS, was Chief Guest, DDC Panthal, Sh. Rajinder Mengi, CO CRPF 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Katra, Sh. Jatinder Gupta, Joint Director Tourism, Jammu, Mrs. Neelam Khajuria, SDM Katra, Sh. Ashok Kumar Chowdhary Addl. SP, Katra Sh. Amit Bhasin, Assistant Director Tourism, Katra, Ms. Ambika Bali and staff of Tourism Department were present

The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, celebrates Lohri festival.

## NTPC'S OLDEST UNIT RECORDS HIGHEST PLF



NTPC Ltd's very first unit, which was commissioned 38 years ago at Singrauli in Uttar Pradesh, has achieved the highest Plant Load Factor (PLF) of 100.24 per cent among all thermal units in the country between April to December 2020, data published by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) showed. The 200 MW unit was commissioned in 1982 and

the robust PLF signifies the exceptional operational and maintenance efficiency. Besides the exceptional feat achieved by unit #1, three more NTPC units — Singrauli unit #4 and Korba unit #1 and #2 in Chhattisgarh, have figured among top five performing units.

Further, NTPC Group achieved highest gross gen-

eration of 222.4 Billion Unit (BU) from April to December 2020, an increase of 3.8 per cent compared to the same period last year. Concurrently, NTPC coal power stations have maintained high availability of 92.21 per cent from April to December 2020 as against 87.64 per cent during the same period last year.

Six flagship power

plants of NTPC i.e. NTPC Korba (2,600 MW), NTPC Sipat (2,980 MW) in Chhattisgarh, NTPC Rihand (3,000 MW) in Uttar Pradesh, NTPC Vindhyachal (4,760 MW) in Madhya Pradesh, NTPC Talcher Thermal (460 MW) and NTPC Talcher Kaniha (3,000 MW) in Odisha have also featured among the top 10 performing thermal plants in the country.

Bangladesh is organising the birth centenary celebrations of "Father of the Nation" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, named as "Mujib Borsho", w.e.f 17th March 2020 to 16 December 2021.

In India too, many programs are being organized to commemorate the birth centenary of the Bangabandhu. In the series of these programs, Border Security Force is organising "Maitri Cycle Rally". This 'Maitri Cycle Rally' will begin on 10th January, 2021 from Border Out Post Panitar (Main Pillar-1), 153 Battalion, Border Security Force, 24 North Parganas District

## BSF rolls out Maitri Cycle Rally

and after covering of total distance of 4,097 Kms along the border, the rally will end on 17th March, 2021, at Border Out Post Silkor, 60 Battalion, Mizoram Frontier. 13 Bicycle riders would be participating in this Cycle Rally. This rally will be completed in 66 days and it will be passing through the states viz. West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram along the Indo-Bangladesh border covering distance of 4,097 Kms.

This Cycle Rally will be flagged

off from Border Out Post Panitar, at 1100 hours, by General Shankar Rai Chaudhary PVSM, AVSM, (Retd) on 10th January, 2021, in the presence of other dignitaries including senior officers of Border Security Forces & Border Guard Bangladesh and local people. This rally will cover distance of 90- 100 Km each day and will have nighthalts at the Border Posts along the International Boundary. Various programs will be organized by the Border Security Force at var-

ious Border Posts enroute, which will involve local government officials and people from the border areas who will encourage the riders.

On 11th January 2021, a programme will be held at Petrapole to welcome this bicycle rally, in which Sh. S. Ramakrishnan, IPS, ADG (Police) Retd, will be the Chief Guest. The event will be attended by Shri Pankaj Kumar Singh, IPS, Additional Director General, Eastern Command, Officers of

Border Security Force & Border Guard Bangladesh and local people. This cycle rally will culminate on 17th March 2021, at Border Out Post Silkor, Mizoram.

The objective of this bicycle rally is to create sense of security among the people living on the border, to enhance the friendship between Border Security Force and Border Guard Bangladesh, to create awareness amongst the border population, to stop trans-border crimes, no use of drugs and to stop cattle smuggling on the border. The Border Security Force is determined to make this cycle rally a success.

Over a month-long 9th International Adolescent Summit 2020: Life Skills, Health, Safety and School Well-being closed in a valedictory function. Organised by Expressions India with National Book Trust, India as the knowledge partner, the event was inaugurated by Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal.

The summit aimed to understand and review the concept, needs and trends of mental health, life skills and values in the national as well as global perspectives. The summit also enabled an interactive dialogue on good practices on integration of school safety, sanitisation, nutrition, hygiene and mental health. With active participation of nearly 14,000 students and 1,200 teachers from all over India, the summit gave a chance to them to appreciate and suggest their views

with other schools from all over the country, thus, facilitating and promoting cultural exchange.

Over the course of four weeks and over 15 sessions, the summit saw the presence of various eminent educationists, artists, counsellors, psychologists, academicians from across India as the National Resource Faculty. Various events such as poster-paintings, Indian classical dance, Nukkad Natak and making short films along with Yuva Sansad provided an eclectic platform where students from schools across the country and abroad interacted with each other to promote creativity and awareness in health, wellbeing, friendship and



peace, amongst the various cultural backdrops of the nation. The International Adolescent Summit also endeavoured to facilitate an understanding of other adolescent concerns such as gender

sensitization, family bonding and communication, media literacy thus enabling a conducive environment for application of Life Skills and partnering for Behavioural and Emotional Safety of school

going students.

Shri Rajat Sharma Chairman & Editor-in Chief, INDIA TV News, and the Guest of Honour at the event said that the adolescents are also our teachers in some regard as they constantly teach us new ways of life and lead the world to a new direction. He applauded the program director, Dr. Jitendra Nagpal for successfully organizing this interactive summit wherein the adolescents were not mere audience but an integral part of the entire program. He said that good health, both mental and physical, is the most important aspect of life and the biggest lesson that the pandemic has taught us. Adolescents

especially need to focus on their mental well-being. "If you are rich, travel. If you are poor, read. But if you are in between, then do both." Speaking at the valedictory ceremony of the International Adolescent Summit, Shri Yuvraj Malik Director National Book Trust, India implored adolescents to have self-faith and believe in their own capabilities. Recognizing the adolescents as future leaders and future of the nation, he encouraged them to embrace the talent that sleeps within and express it fearlessly. Adolescence is the stage of life where one has unlimited capabilities, strength and the youth should be fearless in

accepting and expressing their talent.

Adolescence is a tender age where an individual goes through self-realization and requires the right guidance and mentorship to build his life. The importance of introducing the adolescents to the rich Indian culture and history at this age so that they inculcate human values and ethos early on, was highlighted in all the events and interactive workshops of the Summit. During the course of the Summit, the students engaged with participants from schools across the country and abroad in various events that helped foster a newer understanding of 21st-

century life skills, innovative programs for promoting values, gender sensitivity, health and wellbeing.

A Students Charter on Life Skills, Health, Safety and School Wellbeing-2020 was also drafted and came into effect at the conclusion of the 9th International Adolescent Summit on Life Skills, Health and Wellbeing, after extensive deliberations during the International Summit that facilitated the voice of school students from across the country who came together for the first time in addressing their opinions, needs and concerns regarding the core themes such as health and wellbeing.



# 'Not ideal' IPL timing responsible for growing injury list: Langer

PTI ■ BRISBANE

He loves the IPL but Australia coach Justin Langer on Wednesday questioned the timing of the last year's edition, which he believes could have been a contributing factor in the injury setbacks that both his and the Indian team have endured in the ongoing series.

The IPL was held in the September-November window in 2020 in the United Arab Emirates due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lucrative tournament is usually held in India during the April-May window.

India have had a spate of injuries since the IPL and also in the current Australia series. Australia too had its share of injuries.

"It is really interesting how many injuries (it) has been throughout this summer. I can't help and think that the IPL this year (2020) was in reality, probably wasn't ideal timing for anyone, certainly for such a big series like this," Langer said at a virtual press conference.

The latest addition to the Indian injury list is Ravindra Jadeja, who was hit on his thumb, and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who has been ruled out of the last Test following an abdominal strain.

Earlier, KL Rahul, Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav were ruled out of the series due to the various injuries they suffered.

For Australia, David Warner was a big blow but he recovered in time for the last two Tests.

Langer was all praise for the IPL saying it helps in development of young players but was critical of the previous editions' timing.

"I love the IPL, I look at IPL now like I used to look at county cricket for our young players. They go and play county cricket and it helps them (in) their cricket development enormously. I think it is the same with the IPL, helps their white-ball development.

"But the timing of



Hanuma Vihari receives treatment to a leg injury during final day play of the third Test at Sydney Cricket Ground

AP

it...Because of what happened with Covid...Probably wasn't ideal, and I just wonder whether that is having an impact on the injuries that we are seeing for both teams throughout the summer, so I'm sure they'll review that," said the Australian head coach.

Asked how much the absence of the Bumrah-Jadeja duo will impact the contest, he said, "Hopefully, it (absence of

Bumrah and Jadeja) impacts it (the contest) a lot. But I have said this is going to be the survival of the fittest this summer."

"And I have said when I was asked at the start of the summer about Virat (Kohli) not being here...If you are taking your best players out of any team, whether it is our team or our opponent, it is going to have an impact or it is potentially going to have an impact," he said.

But Langer would rather focus on his team's resources than worry about how India would put together their playing XI in the fourth Test starting January 15 here.

"...Test cricket, like I keep saying survival of the fittest, and we can't concentrate on what India are doing, we just concentrate on (what) we are doing to make sure that we are up for the contest," he signed off.

## 'Paine is an outstanding leader'

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australia coach Justin Langer on Wednesday unequivocally supported his under-fire skipper Tim Paine, calling him an "outstanding leader", who will remain in the top job for some more time despite his poor keeping and unsportsmanlike conduct in the third Test against India.

Paine was heavily criticised for sledging and yelling at Ravichandran Ashwin who battled pain and aches to help India draw the match on the fifth and final in Sydney. He also dropped three catches at crucial junctures.

But Paine has "100 per cent" backing of his coach.

"You have no idea how much faith I have in Tim Paine, he did not have his best day, no doubt about that, but after three years he has been outstanding as the Australian captain, everything he does," Langer said.

The chief coach was speaking two days ahead of the series-deciding fourth and final Test here.

"He (Paine) had a frustrating day, that cut him some slack surely. But having said that when you set a standard as high

as he does and as we do, we understand when you are criticised when we fall below that.

"It is not what we are about, but Tim Paine is an outstanding leader and will continue to be for some time to come yet, he has my 100 per cent support," added Langer.

### 'LOAD OF RUBBISH'

Justin Langer cannot believe the "absolute load of rubbish" that Steve Smith was trying to scuff up Rishabh Pant's guard in the drawn Sydney Test, and has called the criticism of his "quirks" way out of line and ludicrous.

Smith was accused of scuffing up the batsman's guard during the drinks break in the first session on Monday in the drawn Test. But Langer backed Smith to the hilt, coming down heavily on the criticism, mostly driven by fans online and some former players like Michael Vaughan.

"...I literally cannot believe some of the rubbish I read about Steve Smith. Absolute load of rubbish. I mean, if anyone knows Steve Smith, he is a bit quirky and he does some weird (stuff) and we have laughed about it for the last couple of years," Langer said.

## Harris will open if Pucovski is unfit

PTI ■ BRISBANE



Justin Langer chats with Marcus Harris

Opener Will Pucovski has a partially dislocated shoulder and Marcus Harris would replace him if he fails to recover in time for the fourth and final Test against India here this week, Australia head coach Justin Langer said on Wednesday.

Pucovski suffered the injury during the Sydney Test, which was his debut in

the longest format. The 22-year-old was injured while diving on the field.

"Will had a sore shoulder before he fell, he was actually going to have a scan after that day's play anyway, just to see what was happening," Langer said at a virtual press conference.

"We will see how he pulls up today, we are really hopeful that he will get up and if he doesn't, then the obvious thing would be

Marcus Harris would come in as an opener," he added.

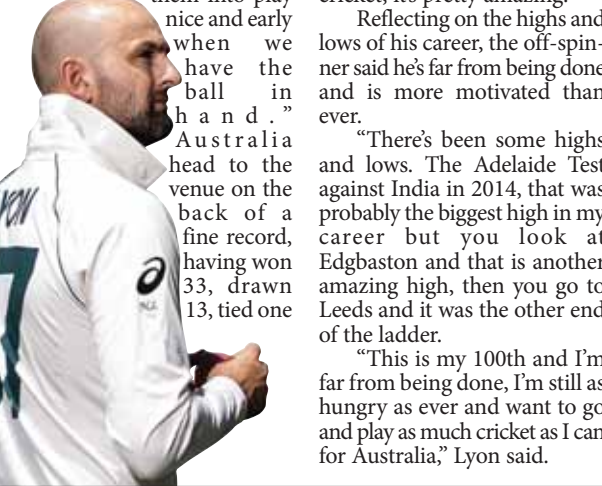
Langer said he is quite optimistic about the batsman pulling through.

"Will is a young guy, he has just played his first Test. So mentally he's going to be exhausted anyway. We will keep an eye on how he pulls up today. With shoulders, as long as he can bat OK and catch, it's not as big a deal in Test cricket, we're really hopeful

he will get up, we will probably know by tonight," Langer added.

Pucovski, who has suffered numerous concessions, made an impressive start to his Test career, scoring a half-century on debut.

Harris has so far played nine Test matches for Australia scoring 385 runs, including two fifties, with the highest score of 79.



## Injury-ravaged India trains in Brisbane

PTI ■ BRISBANE



The injury-ravaged Indian team on Wednesday underwent its first training session at the Gabba here, hoping to field 11 fit players in the series-deciding fourth Test against Australia.

Ruled out of the last Test with an abdominal strain, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah still accompanied the visiting team for its training session.

The likes of Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, skipper Ajinkya Rahane and others were seen in their training kits.

Bumrah, though, was not in his training outfit as he got involved in a discussion with bowling coach Bharat Arun.

"After an epic fightback in Sydney, it is time to regroup. We have begun our preparations for the final Test at the Gabba!" the BCCI posted on its twitter handle.

Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav was seen bowling at the nets and there is a chance that he could be picked for the match with influential all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja ruled out due to a fractured thumb.

Also part of the session were seamer Shardul Thakur and all-rounder Washington

Sundar. Either T Natarajan or Shardul is likely to replace Bumrah in the playing XI at Gabba, forming a new-look pace attack alongside Mohd Siraj and Navdeep Saini.

Bumrah picked up the abdominal strain during the third Test in Sydney.

Head coach Ravi Shastri, who was keeping a tab on the proceedings, addressed the team huddle.

Shastri was also seen having a discussion with the rest of the support staff, which includes batting coach Vikram Rahtour and fielding coach R Sridhar, apart from Arun.

## Pogba's winner take Man Utd on top

AFF ■ BURNLEY

Paul Pogba said he is "always happy" when he is winning after scoring the only goal in a 1-0 victory at Burnley that took Manchester United top of the Premier League for the first time in three years on Tuesday.

Despite continued speculation over his future, Pogba has played an increasingly important role in recent weeks to aid United's first serious title challenge since legendary former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men now lead defending champions Liverpool by three points ahead of a top-of-the-table clash between the two most successful sides in English football history at Anfield on Sunday.

"I'm always happy when I win," said Pogba, who has been consistently linked with a move away from Old Trafford at the end of the season.

"I'm happy we are playing well and happy we are at the top, but there is a long way to go and we have big games coming up."

United have now taken 29 points from the last possible 33 points to recover from just two wins in their opening six games of the season.

The signing of Bruno Fernandes shortly after Burnley

won 2-0 at Old Trafford nearly a year ago in the last meeting between the sides has transformed United's fortunes.

And if Pogba can finally produce consistent displays worthy of the then world record fee United paid for the Frenchman in 2016, there is reason for Solskjaer to believe he can end the club's eight-year wait for a league title.

"I've always said Paul is a big, big player for us," added Solskjaer. "He is a good character in the dressing room, he is always one of the lads look to (because) he's a world champion. We are seeing the best of Paul at the moment. He's getting better and better every game."

The manner of victory against a Burnley

side that had not lost at home since October also suggests United have the ability of champions to grind out a result when they need to.

The first-half was dominated by controversy over a series of VAR reviews as both sides escaped without having a man sent off for challenges by Luke Shaw and Robbie Brady, while United had a goal harshly ruled out for a slight push by Harry Maguire when he powered home a header at the back post.

The visitors upped the pressure in the second-half and got their reward 19 minutes from time when Pogba's volley from Marcus Rashford's cross deflected off Matt Lowton and through the legs of Nick Pope to head to Anfield leading Liverpool.

"We couldn't be going there at a better time to play them," added Solskjaer. "We are in good shape, good form, hungry, these boys want to get better and that's a test again."

### EVERTON WIN AT WOLVES

Everton moved back into the top four and within four points of United as they overcame an injury crisis to beat Wolves 2-1 at Molineux.

The Toffees took an early lead when Alex Iwobi converted Lucas Digne's cross but were pegged back when Ruben Neves levelled for Wolves.

Michael Keane's towering header won the game 13 minutes from time to bolster the Blues' European ambitions.

At the other end of the table, Sheffield United ended a 20-game winless league run as Billy Sharp's penalty earned a 1-0 victory over 10-man Newcastle.

The Blades still face an uphill task to haul themselves off the bottom of the table as they sit nine points adrift of safety.

But Chris Wilder's men ensured they will not set an unwanted record by going a full top-flight season without a win thanks to another night to forget for Newcastle.



## Atletico extend La Liga lead

AFF ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid extended their lead at the top of La Liga to four points on Tuesday after a 2-0 win over Sevilla that strengthened their title credentials.

Goals in each half from Angel Correa and substitute Saul Niguez on a freezing night following historic snowfall in the Spanish capital allowed Diego Simeone's side to increase the gap between themselves and city rivals Real Madrid.

The match at the Wanda Metropolitano was one of three games in hand that Atletico had on Madrid and

Barcelona, who sit a further three points back in third.

Their home fixture with Athletic Bilbao at the weekend had to be postponed after Madrid experienced its heaviest snowfall in half a century.

"I'm very happy to help the team with this goal... the work pays off," said Saul after the win.

Sevilla meanwhile stay sixth on 30 points, level with fifth-placed Real Sociedad.

Zinedine Zidane's Madrid will have a tough task defending their La Liga crown on the evidence of Tuesday's display which bore all the hallmarks of a Simeone side.

## Saina, Srikanth progress in Thailand

### Satwik-Chirag clear first round hurdle, Kashyap retires midway, Sameer out

PTI ■ BANGKOK



Star India shuttler Saina Nehwal and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth entered the second rounds of their respective events but Parupalli Kashyap made an early exit from the Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament here on Wednesday.

Saina got the better of Selvaduray Kisona of Malaysia 21-15, 21-15 in the women's singles opening round to set up a clash with Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan.

Saina, who was first forced to withdraw from the event for positive Covid-19 results on Tuesday but later returned a negative test, thanked the Badminton World Federation officials and doctors for allowing her to participate.

"Yesterday, I was given a positive Covid-19 result after my PCR test but I already told them that I had Covid last November, so I have antibodies.

I tried to explain this to the doctor and after my blood tests and chest X-rays the doctor said I was OK and I don't have Covid-19," Saina said after her win.

"I am thankful to the doctors, the BWF and everyone who made the decision for me to play. It was a tiring day but I am happy I could comeback and play my match."

Earlier in the day, Srikanth took just 31 minutes to prevail over compatriot Sourabh Verma 21-12, 21-11 in the men's singles, but Kashyap was forced to retire midway in his opening-round match against Jason Anthony Ho-Shue of Canada.

Kashyap, a Commonwealth Games champion, was trailing 8-14 in the third game when he chose to retire after pulling his calf muscle.

He had lost the first game 9-

21 before making a comeback to take the second 21-13. Srikanth will next play eight seed Zii Jia Lee of Malaysia, who defeated another Indian HS Prannoy 13-21, 21-14, 21-8.

Sameer Verma too made a first round exit after losing 15-21, 17-21 to Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia.

In the men's doubles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty came from behind to defeat the South Korean pair of Kim Gi Jung and Lee Yong Dae 19-21, 21-16, 21-14.

The two were delighted by the win over their idol.

"Lee Yong Dae was an idol for both of us when we were started, so it was excellent playing him today, and we are happy to get the win," Satwiksairaj said.

"Our strategy was to attack

as much as possible, but not to hurry. We gave up some points in the first game by hurrying too much. But we always knew what we had to do," Chirag added.

However, it was curtains for Arjun Madathil Ramachandran and Dhruv Kapila, who lost to the Malaysian duo of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi 21-13, 8-21, 22-24.

Another Indian men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumeeth Reddy also lost in the opening round to Thai duo of Weeraphat Phakjarung and Wongsathorn Thongkham 19-21, 14-21.

The mixed doubles pair of N Sikki Reddy and Sumeeth Reddy also failed to cross the opening hurdle, losing to Chung Man Tang and Yong Suet Tse 20-22, 17-21.

## Sabalenka wins 3rd straight title

AFF ■ ABU DHABI



Aryna Sabalenka heads to next month's Australian Open brimming with confidence after she captured a third consecutive title by outclassing Veronika Kudermetova 6-2, 6-2 in the Abu Dhabi final on Wednesday to extend her winning streak to 15 matches.

The 22-year-old from Belarus is the in-form player at the moment on the WTA tour and will be looking to translate her success from the smaller events into the majors, where she has yet to make it past the fourth round.

Sabalenka added a ninth singles trophy to her collection and will rise to a career-high number seven in the world when the new rankings are released next week.

"I came here to play some matches after one month of just preparation. I played six matches and it's really important and

I'm really happy I could play that long and to win this title," Sabalenka told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

"I'm going to Australia, I'm confident with only one thing, that I'll do everything I can to win matches and that's the only confidence I have right now."

Sabalenka, who ended her 2020 season by clinching back-to-back titles in Ostrava and Linz, is also riding an 11-match winning streak in the Middle East, having triumphed in Doha on her last previous visit to the region 11 months ago.

## Ankita falls short again

**Melbourne:** Ankita Raina's bid to qualify for a Grand Slam singles main draw failed yet again when she lost the final round of the Australian Open qualifying event to Serbian Olga Danilovic on Wednesday.

In the women's singles qualifiers being held in Dubai, Ankita lost the third and final round 2-6, 6-3, 1-6 to her Serbian opponent in almost two hours. It was the her's sixth attempt to qualify for a competition at the grand stage.

Her defeat means that Sumit Nagal will be the only Indian to compete in the singles event of the first Grand Slam of the season.

Nagal has been awarded a wild card entry into the men's singles.

PTI