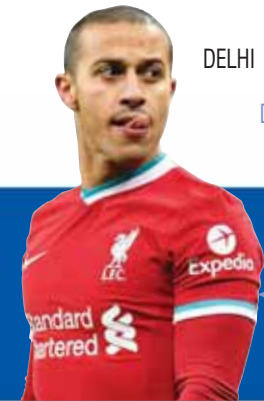


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PAK SC ORDERS RECONSTRUCTION OF VANDALISED HINDU TEMPLE**AVENUES 10**
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Under 'strain', Boris cancels R-Day visit

Johnson stays put in UK to tackle new coronavirus variant, orders severe lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Given the current alarming situation in the United Kingdom after the new strain of coronavirus, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his visit to India later this month. He was named as the chief guest at the Republic Day parade.

Johnson had accepted the invitation last month and it was to be his first bilateral visit after the UK parted ways with the European Union in December. Incidentally, his scheduled visit to New Delhi would have been the first such event involving a world leader since the pandemic broke out.

The UK PM announced the decision to cancel his visit hours after his Government ordered a fresh lockdown in England following the new strain of coronavirus affecting a large number of people there.

Johnson called off the visit after speaking to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The



Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," read a statement from his Downing Street office.

"In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading, the Prime Minister said it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," it read.

"The leaders underlined their shared commitment to the bilateral relationship, and to continuing to build on the close collaboration between our countries, including in response to the pandemic," it added.

Johnson would have

become the second British Prime Minister to attend the Republic Day parade as the Chief Guest after his predecessor John Major in 1993. "The Prime Minister said he hopes to be able to visit India in the first half of 2021, and ahead of the UK's G7 Summit that Prime Minister Modi is due to attend as a guest," his office said.

While accepting Modi's invitation, Johnson had extended an invite to the Indian Prime Minister to attend the UK's G7 Summit as one of three guest nations alongside South Korea and Australia — with a focus on his declared ambition to work with a group of "like-minded democracies" to advance shared interests and tackle common challenges.

Continued on Page 2

First Covid shot by Jan 13 likely

Based on dry-run feedback, Ministry ready to introduce it within 10 days from date of emergency use approval

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 vaccines cleared by the top drug controller (DCGI) on January 3 is likely to be rolled out within 10 days from the date of emergency use authorisation, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday even as it added that the final decision lies with the Government.

"Based on the feedback of dry-run, the Ministry is ready to introduce Covid-19 vaccine within 10 days from date of emergency use authorisation," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said at a Press conference here.

The country's drugs regulator on January 3 granted restricted emergency use approval to Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield and also to indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech. Prior to it, the Government had successfully held dry-run pan India with an aim to test the laid-out mechanism for the mega vaccination drive and to assess operational feasibility of using Co-WIN application in field environment for planning, implementation and reporting at the block, district and State levels.

Bhushan said healthcare workers and frontline workers need not register themselves as their database has been populated in the Co-WIN vaccine delivery management system in



A health-worker takes part in a dry run as part of preparedness for the administration of Covid-19 vaccine, at Moli Lal Nehru Hospital in Prayagraj on Tuesday

PTI

a bulk manner. The Ministry also put forward the CoWIN Delivery Management plan.

"There are 4 primary vaccine stores called GMSD located in Karnal, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, and there are 37 vaccine stores in the country. They store vaccines in bulk and distributes further," Bhushan said, adding that the vaccine will further be taken from these stores and taken to sub-centres "via passive equipment like rice boxes."

Bhushan said the Co-WIN app can be used by any country who wants to do so, as the system is made for India and the world.

While healthcare and frontline workers will not be

required to register themselves, Bhushan said when they would come to the population priority group, the need for registration would come.

Continued on Page 2

Global leaders hail India's scientific innovation, decisive action against Covid

New York: Global leaders have lauded India's leadership in scientific innovation and decisive action to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, as the country gets set to begin the world's largest vaccination drive against the coronavirus. *PTI*

SII, Bharat Biotech vow synergy for Covid jabs' smooth rollout in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after engaging in a war of words over the efficacy of coronavirus jabs, the vaccine manufacturing firms, Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech on Tuesday apparently buried the differences by issuing a joint statement in which the duo pledged to work jointly on the vaccine rollout project.

"Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech Jointly communicate their pledge towards a smooth rollout of Covid-19 vaccines in India and the world," read the statement signed by SII CEO Adar Poonawala and Bharat Biotech Chairman Krishna Ella on behalf of the two companies communicating their combined intent to develop, manufacture and supply the Covid-19 vaccines in India and abroad.

"Vaccines are a global public health good and have the power to save lives and accelerate the return to economic normalcy at the earliest," said the statement.

They said now that two vaccines have been issued EUA (emergency use authori-



sation) in India, the focus is on manufacturing, supply and distribution so that populations that need them the most receive high quality, safe and efficacious ones.

"Both our companies are fully engaged in this activity and consider it our duty to the nation and the world at large to ensure a smooth rollout of vaccines. Each of our companies continue their Covid-19 vaccines development activities as planned," the statement said.

They said they are fully aware of the importance of the vaccines for people and countries alike. "We hereby communicate our joint pledge to provide global access for our Covid-19 vaccines."

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

INDIAN ECONOMY MAY CONTRACT BY 9.6%: WB
Washington: India's economy is estimated to contract by 9.6 per cent in the fiscal year 2020-21, reflecting a sharp drop in household spending and private investment, and the growth is expected to recover to 5.4 per cent in 2021, the World Bank said on Tuesday.

GZB ROOF COLLAPSE: NSA AGAINST ACCUSED
Lucknow: Taking note of the crematorium roof collapse incident in Ghaziabad's Murad Nagar that claimed 24 lives, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday directed officials to invoke the stringent National Security Act against the accused.

4L POULTRY BIRDS DIE IN PANCHKULA IN 10 DAYS
Chandigarh: Over four lakh poultry birds have died at 20 farms in Haryana's Panchkula district in the past 10 days, officials said on Tuesday. A team of experts from Jalandhar-based Regional Disease Diagnosis Laboratory has collected samples of birds at poultry farms, they said. Haryana's Animal Husbandry Department has issued an advisory regarding poultry products.

SC clears Central Vista project in 2:1 verdict

Junks petitions on violation of land use and green norms

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI



A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court by a 2:1 majority on Tuesday allowed the Government to go ahead with the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, which included construction of a new Parliament Building and a common Central Secretariat, with certain riders. The court rejected a batch of petitions challenging the scheme for alleged violation of land use and environmental norms.

The 611-page majority verdict was given by Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari. The third judge on the bench, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, dissented with regard to change of land use and prior approval of Heritage

Conservation Committee (HCC). Justice Khanna also found the environment clearance inadequate.

Justice Khanwilkar and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari held that there were no infirmities in the clearances given for the project and the grant of environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use for the project was valid.

"We hold that there is no infirmity in the grant of: (a) 'No Objection' by the Central Vista Committee (CVC).... 'Approval' by the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) as per

the DUAC Act, 1973; and (c) 'Prior approval' by the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) under clause 1.12 of the Building Byelaws for Delhi, 2016," said Justice Khanwilkar and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari.

The majority verdict held that the exercise of power by the Central Government under the DDA Act was "just and proper" in affecting the modifications regarding the change in land use of seven plots of the Central Vista project. It confirmed the Government's notification of March 20, 2020 on land use.

"The recommendation of Environmental Clearance (EC) by Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) and grant thereof by MoEF is just, proper, and in accordance with law including the 2006 Notification. We uphold the same along with appropriate directions therein to ensure that the highlighted mitigating measures are followed by the project proponent in their letter and spirit," it held.

Continued on Page 2

Farmers defer tractor march to Jan 7

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the bad weather in Delhi-NCR, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha on Tuesday deferred their proposed tractor march by a day to January 7 to intensify their protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

Addressing a Press conference at Singhu Border, the epicentre of the protest, Sanyukt Kisan Morcha leaders said thousands of farmers will take out the tractor march from all protest sites to the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) on January 7.

"The decision to defer the march was taken over forecast of bad weather condition on Wednesday. The agitation against the three agriculture laws will be intensified in the coming days," said Yogendra Yadav, Swaraj Abhiyan leader.

Talking about their other proposed tractor march to Delhi on January 26, farmer leader Joginder Nain said, "The farmers have decided to send 10 tractor trollies from every village in Haryana. We request people to come — at least one from a house. And a total of 11 women from a village."

Earlier, on January 2, the



Farmers on a tractor raise slogans during their protest against Centre's farm reform laws, at the Delhi-UP border near Ghaziipur in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

Sanyukt Kisan Morcha had announced their plan of action to intensify and deepen their movement.

"A fortnight of nationwide campaign will be started to counter the Government's propaganda called 'Desh Jagriti Abhiyan' from January 6 to 20 which will include rallies, con-

ferences and dharnas all over the country," the morcha said.

"Lohri and Sankranti festivals will be marked as Kisan Sankalp Diwas by burning the copies of these three laws. On January 18 farmers will be celebrating Mahila Kisan Diwas to underline the role of women farmers while Azad Hind Kisan

Diwas will be marked on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary on January 23 by protesting outside Governors' official residence in all State Capitals," they had said.

The 8th round of talks between the Government and the unions is scheduled for January 8.

China tried to change status quo in Ladakh: Def Ministry

India responded to in a firm and non-escalatory way, says report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As tension continues for the ninth month at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and several rounds of talks unable to break the logjam, the Defence Ministry has said China tried to forcefully and unilaterally change the status quo in Ladakh.

China also ramped up its troop strength in the border region on its side of the LAC leading to stand-off and tension all along the LAC, the Ministry said in its annual year-end review released recently.

Unilateral and provocative



actions by the Chinese to change the status quo by force, in more than one area on the LAC, were responded to in a firm and non-escalatory way, ensuring the sanctity of our claims in Eastern Ladakh, the report said.

"The Indian Army has maintained all protocols and agreements between the two countries while the Chinese escalated the situation by ul-

lisation of unorthodox weapons and amassing a large number of troops," the report said.

The use of orthodox weapons was in obvious reference to the Chinese troops using clubs and nail-studded rods to attack the Indian soldiers in the Galwan valley on June 15. The bloody brawl left 20 Indians, including the commanding officer, dead. Scores of Chinese casualties were also reported.

The Indian Army with assistance from IAF, mobilised troops, including accretionary forces, in a very short duration including heavy equipment like guns, tanks as also ammunition, rations and clothing.

On August 28-29, the Indian troops in a precautionary step, pre-empted Chinese expansionist designs and occupied heights along the southern bank of Pangong Tso.

Continued on Page 2

Budget on Feb 1; 2nd part of Session from Mar 8 to Apr 8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament will be convened for Budget Session on January 29, starting with President's address and Budget to be presented on February 1. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) on Tuesday recommended convening Budget Session in two parts. The first part of the Session will be from January 29 to February 15 and the second part will be from March 8 to April 8.

The forthcoming Budget Session is expected to have very heavy legislative business as the Winter Session was cancelled while the Monsoon Session was curtailed. The Covid-19 protocols will be maintained strictly like the previous Session ended in September, said, officials.



They said that both Houses will be working four hours daily on separate schedules. Earlier the Rajya Sabha worked in the morning time and the Lok Sabha in the afternoon.

This is the first budget of the Modi Government after the year when the economy suffered a major shock due to Covid-19 pandemic. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has already concluded pre-Budget consultations with the captains of industry.

Now, Sports Minister quits Mamata Govt

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress continues to crumble with exodus as on Tuesday State Sports Minister and former India player Laxmi Ratan Shukla quit the Mamata Banerjee Cabinet in order to, what he said, concentrate more on his game — cricket.

The 39-year-old Shukla, former Bengal captain, found an instant supporter in fellow MLA Baishali Dalmiya, the daughter of late BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya who said the former all-rounder had quit because he was not given to work the way he wanted.

"He was in chains. He was not allowed to work by vested interests... clearly he was prey of interest group politics. This is unfortunate," Dalmiya said. Shukla also resigned as the president of North Howrah district unit of the party.

Continued on Page 2

Trump vows to slug it out for presidency

AP ■ DALTON (US)

With mounting desperation, Donald Trump has declared he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency and appealed to Republican lawmakers to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when they convene this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Electoral voters won by President-elect Biden are "not gonna take this White House!" he shouted as supporters cheered at an outdoor rally in Georgia on Monday night.

Trump's announced purpose for the trip was to boost Republican Senate candidates in Tuesday's runoff election, but he spent much of his speech complaining bitterly about his election loss — which he insists he won "by a lot."



Earlier, in Washington, he pressed Republican lawmakers to formally object on

Wednesday at a joint session of Congress that is to confirm Biden's victory in the Electoral College, a confirmation of Biden's November 3 victory.

Though he got nothing but cheers on Monday night, Trump's attempt to overturn the presidential election is splitting the Republican Party.

Some GOP lawmakers backing him are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans faith in democracy.

Detailed report on P8

Covid can be transiently air-borne: Study

But preventive measures like wearing masks can keep one safe

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

A study on the air-borne nature of coronavirus has shown that the virus can be transiently air-borne, but preventive measures like wearing masks can keep one safe.

The study was conducted by the city-based CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech), Chandigarh.

The scientists worked with hospitals — three in Hyderabad and three in Chandigarh — to find if the virus particles can be found in air samples in the hospital wards, the CCMB said in a release on Tuesday.

They used an air sampler that can collect the virus particles, and then looked for their presence using RT-PCR.



"In this study, the virus was found in air samples from Covid-19 wards from hospitals but not from non-Covid-19 wards. This suggests that the

demarcation of hospital zones has been an effective strategy," the release said.

The study also showed the chances of picking up SARS-

CoV-2 (the virus that causes Covid-19) in air is directly related to the number of Covid-19 positive cases in the room, their symptomatic status and the duration of exposure.

When Covid-19 individuals have spent longer hours in a room, the virus is found in air for more than two hours even farther than two metres from their seating places.

"But for asymptomatic cases, they showed the virus does not spread farther from them when they are seated in a room without perceived air flow due to a fan or AC," it said.

All these findings do show that the coronavirus can stay in air for some time, but they also strengthen the importance of Covid-19 preventive guidelines that are already in place to curb the pandemic, CCMB

Director Rakesh Mishra said. "If we ensure that we follow hygiene protocols such as regular handwashing, using masks effectively and preventing symptomatic people from public mixing, we can start getting back to normalcy more comfortably," he said.

Detecting and isolating positive cases early on can help prevent the spread among other family members in a home setting too, said Mishra, who is also the corresponding author on the study.

"Till the vaccines are available, social vaccine i.e. Wearing mask is the best prevention," Sanjeev Khosla, Director, IMTech, said.

The study is now available on preprint server MedRxiv and was yet to be peer-reviewed, according to the release.

Bird flu: J&K, K'taka, Tamil Nadu on alert

Culling of chickens and ducks starts in Kerala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Culling of chickens and ducks began on Tuesday in parts of Kerala to contain the H5N8 strain of bird flu, while Jammu and Kashmir sounded an alert and started collecting samples from migratory species after Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh reported cases of the avian influenza.

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have stepped up surveillance and formed guidelines following the outbreak of the viral infection in neighbouring Kerala, where around 1,700 ducks have died due to the flu.

In Madhya Pradesh, officials said that 155 dead crows in Indore have been found with the H5N8 strain since the pathogen was first detected in the city a week back, while in Rajasthan, after Jhalwar, birds in Kota and Baran were found with the infection.

However, no cases have been reported yet in Maharashtra, which shares borders with Madhya Pradesh.

Officials in Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday surveyed the area around the Pong Dam Lake sanctuary in Kangra district to check the spread of the flu to domestic poultry birds, a day after samples of dead migratory birds there tested positive for H5N8.

Till now, 2,700 migratory birds, mostly bar-headed geese, have been found dead in the lake area and samples have been sent for testing, state animal husbandry officials said.

The operation to cull birds in and around a one-km radius of the affected areas in Alappuzha and Kottayam in Kerala was launched a day after results of samples tested at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in



Forest department official picks up a sick crow from a roadside near Jal Mahal in Jaipur on Tuesday

Bhopal confirmed the outbreak of the bird flu in the two districts. Rapid response teams, set up by the administration, began culling ducks, hens and other domestic birds as per guidelines, officials said.

Culling of birds in four

panchayats of Nedumudi, Thakazhy, Pallippad and Karuvatta in Kuttanad region, where the outbreak has been reported, is expected to be completed by Wednesday evening, Alappuzha district authorities said.

I-T dept records Robert Vadra's statement for 2nd day in benami assets case

New Delhi: The Income Tax department questioned Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, for about four hours on the second consecutive day on Tuesday in connection with its probe against him under the benami assets law, official sources said.

Vadra on Tuesday reiterated the allegations he had made the previous day — that the

aim of the action was to "digress" from the "real issues" being faced by the country and the farmers.

A team from the Chandigarh investigation unit of the department, that is handling the probe, was seen going inside Vadra's office in the Sukhdev Vihar area of the national Capital around 3 pm. They left after 6 pm. PTI

Now, Sports Minister quits...

From Page 1

Sources said he however would not quit as an MLA because "I was elected by the people and I cannot betray them ... so I will continue to work for them till my entire term." Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who immediately accepted Shukla's resignation ruled out any "misunderstanding" in the party saying "he quit because he wants to work for sports particularly his cricket ... There is nothing wrong in it if he wants to do so. We wish him success."

His resignation comes within a fortnight of his senior colleague Suvendu Adhikari quitting the Ministry and party to join the saffron outfit. While Suvendu's father Sisir Adhikari a veteran MP and former Union Minister and second brother Dibyendu also an MP were still in the TMC, his youngest brother Soumendu a municipal chairman joined the BJP. Shukla's resignation came on a day when another senior Minister Rajiv Banerjee skipped the Cabinet meeting for the second consecutive time on Tuesday.

Banerjee who has openly spoken against nepotism in the party where "undeserving people even of questionable conduct get priced positions just because they excel in the art of sycophancy," did not attend Tuesday's Cabinet meeting despite being asked to do so by senior leaders like Sougato Roy.

The triumvirate of Banerjee, Shukla and Dalmiya come from the same Howrah district though inside sources in the party said they were not acting in mutual connivance. Welcoming Shukla's resignation State BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said, "Shukla is a good human being and also a known cricket personality. We will welcome him if he wants to join the BJP. But for that he will have to adopt our ideology and shun the ideological fallacy that the TMC represents."

Congress Lok Sabha leader and PCC president Adhir Chowdhury said "no self-dignified person can live in the Trinamool Congress for long ... it is not a party. It is a company belonging to one person who treats others as her employees."

"The TMC is now facing existential crisis with people leaving it every day. Gradually the party will be left with no one save a few persons. At this juncture I must welcome those good persons in the Trinamool who do not want to stay in that party and who cannot go to the BJP for ideological reasons ..."

The Congress' gates are always open for such good persons. They may join us in our fight."

SC clears...

From Page 1

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri. "We are equally compelled to wonder if we can jump to put a full stop on the execution of policy matters in the first instance without a demonstration of irreparable loss or urgent necessity, or if we can guide the Government on moral or ethical matters without any legal basis. In light of the settled law, we should be loath to venture into these areas," the majority verdict said. "We need to say this because in the recent past, the route of public/social interest litigation is being increasingly invoked to call upon the court to examine pure concerns of policy and sorts of generalised grievances against the system. No doubt, the courts are repositories of immense public trust and the fact that some public interest actions have generated commendable results is noteworthy, but it is equally important to realise that courts operate within the boundaries

defined by the Constitution. We cannot be called upon to govern," Justice Khanwilkar and Justice Maheshwari said. While Justice Sanjiv Khanna — who delivered a dissenting verdict — said the change in land use and environmental clearances given to the project were "bad in law". Justice Khanna, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project. "Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother AM Khanwilkar on the aspects of public participation on the interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment," Justice Khanna said. He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of "notice inviting bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent

order". Justice Khanna, however, agreed with the majority on the aspect of notice inviting bid for the project, award of the contract and order of urban commission. The Central Vista revamp, announced in September 2019 envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs, that is to be constructed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project. A number of petitions challenged the construction of Central Vista project in the Lutyen's zone, alleging certain violations, including change in land use and environmental compliances. The petitioners, including activist Rajeev Suri, have challenged various permissions given to the project by the authorities, including the nod for change of land use. They have questioned the project over environmental clearance granted to the project and the historical value of the existing building. Another petitioner, Lt Col (ret'd) Anuj Srivastava, challenged the public hearings held to raise objections to the exercise.

China tried to...

From Page 1

"Braving inclement weather, the Indian troops continue to be deployed on these heights. Advance Winter Stocking (AWS) and winter preparations for the enhanced strength has been completed and troops are well entrenched to counter any misadventure by Chinese forces," the review said.

While the Indian Army is prepared for any eventuality, talks are also progressing to resolve the issue in an amicable manner, it said.

It was in an apparent reference to the groundwork now for the ninth round of Corps Commander level talks in the coming days. The last round was held on November 6.

Incidentally, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh last week said talks between the two sides for disengagement and de-escalation have not given positive results.

The review also said the IAF's heavy-lift planes altered the dynamics of "force posturing" in the Ladakh sector "by mobilising huge quantum of war-waging machinery along with battle-ready troops in quick time-frames".

The Indian Army swiftly moved and occupied a series of key heights to prevent the PLA from grabbing Indian territory on the southern bank in a stealthy midnight move on August 29.

The Indian Army now controls ridgeline positions on the southern bank of Pangong Tso that allow it to completely dominate the sector and keep an eye on Chinese military activity. The Indian Army has also taken control of key heights overlooking the PLA's deployments on the Finger 4 ridgeline on the northern bank of Pangong Tso where rival soldiers are deployed barely a few hundred metres from each other. At present, more than one lakh troops from both the sides are facing each other at the nearly 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh sector. Given the situation, the Indian security establishment has enhanced its capabilities all along the 4,000 km long LAC stretching from Ladakh in the east to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat earlier this week reviewed the operational preparedness during his two-day visit to forward air bases and army on the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh.

North India witnesses snowfall, rain

New Delhi: Snowfall was recorded in higher reaches of North India on Tuesday and rain was witnessed in the plains, with Kashmir remaining cut-off from the rest of the country for the second consecutive day as the arterial Jammu-Srinagar national highway and Mughal road remained closed due to accumulation of snow. Sporadic rains continued in the national Capital for the third consecutive day, the India Meteorological Department said.

Under 'strain'...

From Page 1

Last month, Johnson had written to Modi to formally accept his invitation to visit India as Chief Guest at the Republic Day Parade, which was to mark his first major bilateral visit since taking office in 2019 and the first since Britain's formal exit from the European Union (EU) at the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31, 2020.

"I am absolutely delighted to be visiting India next year at the start of an exciting year for Global Britain, and look forward to delivering the quantum leap in our bilateral relationship that Prime Minister Modi and I have pledged to achieve," Johnson said at the time. "As a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, India is an increasingly indispensable partner for the United Kingdom as we work to boost jobs and growth, confront shared threats to our security and protect our planet," he said.

It followed Modi's invitation to Johnson in a phone call in November 2020, ahead of UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's precursor tour of India to lay the groundwork for the prime ministerial level talks. Healthcare was among the key sectors of focus during Raab's visit and cooperation in the field of coronavirus vaccines was to also be among the priorities for Johnson's visit.

"As the 'pharmacy of the world' India supplies more than 50 per cent of the world's vaccines, with over a billion doses of the UK's Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine being manufactured at India's Serum Institute in Pune," Downing Street had said when confirming the Johnson's planned India visit.

"Our countries have cooperated closely throughout the coronavirus outbreak to maintain the flow of medical goods for our citizens. The UK has received 11 million face masks and 3 million packets of paracetamol from India during the pandemic, and we continue to work together to keep vital supply chains open," it said. Trade and investment, defence and security and climate change were among the other priority areas identified on both sides. The coronavirus infection has been raging in the UK for some time owing to a large extent to a new mutant of the virus, which has been found to be more infectious. England has entered a new lockdown similar to the one in March, with orders to work from home and schools, pubs and restaurants closed. According to the latest data, in England alone, the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000.

That number is 40 per cent higher than the first peak of the pandemic in April. On December 29, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK — a new record — and the number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week.

SII, Bharat Biotech vow synergy for Covid jabs' smooth rollout in India

From Page 1

The joint statement follows a tweet by Poonawala on Tuesday afternoon: "I would like to clarify two matters; as there is confusion in the public domain, exports of vaccines are permitted to all countries and a joint public statement clearing up any recent miscommunication with regards to Bharat Biotech will be made."

Taking strong exception to

Poonawala's Monday's jibe that except three all other vaccines were like water, Dr Ella had lashed out at him as well as his detractors criticising the fast-track granting of EUA to his vaccine Covaxin.

However, the Progressive Medicos and Scientists Forum, a national association of doctors and scientists, was not impressed. The Forum said it suspects that clearance granted to the vaccines by the DCGI shows that profit and political gains have taken precedence over science.

In a statement, the group said, "India was quick to criticise China and Russia for emergency approvals without efficacy data but failed to exercise diligence when its turn arrived."

First Covid shot by Jan 13 likely

From Page 1

"Then the system electronically allows session allocation...the beneficiary has been vaccinated this will also be digitally captured and he will be given this information digitally when he has to come for the next dose. They will also get an acknowledgement, a unique health ID would also be generated," he said.

Bhushan said Co-WIN will have a provision that one can create a unique health ID and "you can keep the acknowledgement in a digital locker which is free or on your phone."

"In case of an adverse event, to ensure its real time reporting there is a provision in Co-WIN vaccine delivery management system," he said.

Bhushan further said that Co-WIN has the facility of automated session allocation, Aadhaar authentication to prevent malpractice, creation of Unique Health ID for willing beneficiaries, reporting and tracking of adverse events following immunisation, if any, SMSes

in 12 languages to guide beneficiaries and vaccinators, QR code-based vaccination certificate issued after all doses, DigiLocker integrated for data retrieval and storing QRcode-based certificate, 24x7 Helpline including IT professionals.

The Health Secretary also refuted reports that the Union government has banned the export of any one of the Covid-19 vaccines.

"When I say Union Government, it means there are three Ministries --- Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with the Ministry of Commerce and Directorate General of Foreign Trade -- which can initiate, in a hypothetical scenario, such an action."

"But none of them has taken any such action. Therefore, our request to our media friends would be that we should be on guard when such misinformation is sought to be spread," Bhushan said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to the general public that my client, Smt. Mumtaz Devi W/o Late Sh. Ram Pal aged about 65 years, R/o H.No.173, Gali No-12, Near MCD School, village-Kardandwala, Delhi-110092, has disowned her son Sandeep Kumar and his wife Reeta from her moveable and immovable properties and severed her relationship with them as a result of suffering and harassment due to uncooperative, aggressive and inhuman act & behavior of her above-mentioned son and his wife. If anybody keeps any relation or deals with them, in any manner whatsoever, he would be doing solely at his own risk and consequences and my client shall not be responsible for the act of Sandeep Kumar and his wife Reeta.

Ashok Thagel (Advocate)

Chamber No. 47 (1st Floor)

Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Santosh Bhalla W/o Late Banarsi Das Bhalla & D/o Late Havell Ram Soni, R/o CC-88B, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, owner of Flat No. CC-88B, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, has applied for conversion of the aforesaid property from leasehold to free hold in DDA. The original documents (i.e. allotment letter, possession letter, property tax, NOC from DDA, electricity and water bills etc.) of the above property have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged vide LR No. 690228/2020 DT. 27/10/2020, in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address (phone no. 9810474537) within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property can personally appear or write to Deputy Director, DDA, New Delhi.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I RADHIKA DEVI, spouse of PREM SINGH R/O A30B Street No. 8, West Vinod Nagar Delhi, have changed my name from RADHA DEVI to RADHIKA DEVI vide Affidavit dated 2 JAN 2021 Sworn before Notary DRAUPADI BIR DELHI.

PD(8866)A

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

In order to upgrade the infrastructure, Railway will undertake the Electronic Interlocking work in connection with Raj Nandgaon-Kalamna 3rd line of Nagpur Division from 06.01.2021 to 11.01.2021. During this period the following trains will be affected as under:-

Train No. & Train Name	Date from originating station
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn. Festival Express Special	06.01.2021 & 08.01.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn. - Bilaspur Festival Express Special	08.01.2021 & 10.01.2021
02887 Visakhapatnam - Hazrat Nizamuddin Samta Exp.	05, 06, 07 & 09.01.2021
02888 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Visakhapatnam Samta Exp.	07, 08, 09 & 11.01.2021

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

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Security Helpline
No. 182

Integrated Helpline
No. 139

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Capital's air quality moderate: SAFAR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Air quality in Delhi was recorded as "moderate" on Tuesday with overall Air Quality Index (AQI) being recorded at 118µgm-3 on the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI).

According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), a unit of Ministry of

Earth Sciences (MoES), the values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs) was recorded at 97 and 66 µgm-3 slightly above the prescribed standards which is 60 for Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 and 100 for PM 10.

According to SAFAR's short range forecast, the overall air quality continues to be in the "moderate category" as forecasted. Rain observed over

many places in the Delhi region, under the influence of active Western Disturbance, the wet spell is likely to continue for next 24 hours.

"The AQI is likely to stay in the Moderate to Satisfactory category on Tuesday and Moderate to Poor category on Wednesday. AQI is likely to marginally deteriorate and in the 'too Poor to lower end of the Very Poor category' on the January 7 and January 8," SAFAR said.

Meanwhile, temperature in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) is likely to witness a sharp fall in the upcoming days after Wednesday, predicted India Meteorological Department (IMD).

"In upcoming days we expect that the minimum temperature, which at present is 10 to 11 degrees Celsius will likely to fall by at least four degrees and could reach at seven degrees resulting in increased cold in the Delhi-NCR," the weatherman said. As per the forecast, there has been no cold wave predicted for Wednesday, it added.



HANUMAN TEMPLE

VHP, Bajrang protest over razing of temple by NMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Hindu outfits, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal members were detained by the Delhi Police during a protest on Tuesday over the demolition of a Hanuman temple at Chandni Chowk in Delhi.

The temple was demolished on Sunday by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) in accordance with court orders as part of the ongoing Chandni Chowk beautification plan.

The protesters, carrying saffron flags and raising slogans, took out a march from the Gauri Shankar Mandir to the site where the temple existed. They were stopped by police at a barricade.

According to VHP spokesperson Mahendra Rawat, around 15-20 workers and leaders, including Delhi unit president Kapil Khanna, vice president Surendra Gupta, secretary Raviji and Bajrang Dal state convener Bharat Batra were detained during the protest. A senior police official said 27 protesters who gathered near the Gauri Shankar temple on



Vishwa Hindu Parishad activists stage a protest over the demolition of a 100-year-old temple of Lord Hanuman, in Chandni Chowk, Delhi on Tuesday
Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

Tuesday were detained owing to COVID-19 guidelines.

"They were taken to a nearby police station and

released later. These protesters belonged to Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal outfits," said the senior police offi-

cial. "As a precautionary measure, security personnel have been deployed in the area," said police.

BJP showing reluctance in accepting farmers' demands: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Tuesday accused Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of showing a shameful reluctance to accept the demands of the farmers.

"The BJP Government is working as General Dyer and torturing poor farmers every day. Till our last breathe the AAP and Arvind Kejriwal will stand beside the farmers and from the parliament to the streets we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the farmers," said Singh.

He alleged that the BJP Government is not representing the citizens of India but the capitalists like Adani and Ambani.

"On January 4, the farmers of met the Centre Government with high hopes, thinking that the meeting would be their last one. But, the government is behaving in an unjust and unruly manner with them," said Singh.

"The farmers are being attacked with tear gas, lathi-charge and water cannons. Along with this, they are being insulted and allegedly called terrorists, khalisanti, Pakistani. The behaviour shown towards

the farmers, who are the backbone of our nation, has been extremely disgraceful," said Singh.

"The farm laws have been resisted by everyone. Be it at the parliament or the streets of the nation. They were passed without due deliberations via ordinance. These laws have been made to fan the bogey of capitalists like Adani but the farmers too, have made up their mind and will continue to fight till the government is forced to re-appeal them," said Singh.

"Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party, have decided to

stand shoulder to shoulder with the farmers in this fight. From parliament to the streets, we will continue to resist for the sake of our farmers," said Singh.

"We hoped that these laws will be re-appealed by the central government in January 4 meeting but the result was the same as before. I request Prime Minister Narendra Modi to not test farmers' patience any longer. They have suffered enough at the hands of the central government. Kindly re-appeal these laws back because if their wrath takes the streets, the consequences will be serious," said Singh.

Bhardwaj seeks investigation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the demolition of Hanuman temple at Chandni Chowk, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled Municipal Corporation's Delhi (MCD) Deputy Commissioner Satnam Singh had filed an affidavit in the court saying that the temple could not be demolished due to festivals, but now the preparations have been done.

Bhardwaj also questioned this organisation and asked for its detailed investigation in the Hanuman Mandir demoli-

tion. "He also gave the court the date of demolishing the temple. The BJP Delhi State President Adesh Gupta should clarify whether the affidavit filed in the court is his or not," said Saurabh Bhardwaj, the spokesperson of AAP.

"At the same time, an organisation called Manushi Sangathan also demanded the High Court to demolish the ancient Hanuman temple. Sanjay Bhargava, who is the head of this organisation is close to MP Vijay Goel and other volunteers of the BJP," said Bhardwaj.

He said the BJP's enmity is

with AAP, the party which is doing politics in the name of Lord Ram, should not take it out on Lord Hanuman or it will offend Lord Rama.

"The BJP does not have the required police force for small demolitions, but they deploy thousands of police personnel at night to demolish a temple," he said.

He further said, "There is an organisation called Manushi which has been repeatedly filing a writ in court to demolish this temple. When their first attempt to demolish the temple was failed, they again went to the court to carry out the demolition."

Two more wanted criminals arrested

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Crime Branch unit of the Gurugram police arrested two more wanted criminals from the Rohtak-Hisar bypass on Tuesday.

The Crime unit Sector-39 had swung into action after receiving information from two members of the same gang who were allegedly nabbed by the crime branch after a gun battle near Rithoj village during the early hours of Monday.

The arrested accused have been identified as Amit Godara alias Shiyama of Sri Ganganagar district in Rajasthan and Shri Bhagwan of Rohtak.

The two criminals had managed to escape using the cover of darkness during an encounter on Monday.

Four automatic pistols, 20 live cartridges, 5 magazines, 4 mobile phones and 1 master key have been recovered from their possession, the police said on Tuesday.

The accused had disclosed to the police that they had brought the four automatic pistols for Rs 35,000 each and 5 magazines for Rs 7,000 each from Madhya Pradesh.

According to the police, all the arrested culprits were involved in a dozen cases of attempt to murder, loot, snatching incidents on gun points, dacoity, house theft and vehicle thefts

which they had committed in Ratasthan, Punjab and Haryana.

"During interrogation the culprits revealed that they had come to Gurugram along with their accomplice Rahul Barar, (who is yet to be arrested) to rob an SUV vehicle. Thereafter they used that vehicle to carry out more killings in Punjab and Maharashtra but before that they were nabbed by the Gurugram police," ACP (crime), Preet Pal Sangwan said.

The accused have also disclosed before the police that they belong to Punjab based Dilpreet alias Baba gang.

"The gang leader Dilpreet alias Baba is currently lodged in Ropar (Punjab) jail. Amit who has been arrested while Rahul who is still absconding was a kingpin of the gang. They used to include such companions in their gang who did not know them, so that if they were arrested they could not tell anything about the gang leaders. Shri Bhagwan the arrested accused was the new member of the gang," Sangwan said.

On Monday the Gurugram police had nabbed Sunil Kumar alias Sonu and Sandeep after a brief exchange of fires near Rithoj village.

The duo had received bullet injuries and is still undergoing treatment at the Civil Hospital Sector-10A in Gurugram.

Sensitise parents on consequences of underage driving: Govt to schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to sensitise parents against driving of vehicles by underage students, the Delhi Government on Tuesday directed schools in the national Capital to explain to the parents about its legal consequences. Schools have also been directed to ensure that no student who is underage be allowed to commute to and from school driving any vehicle.

In a letter to schools principals, the Director of Education (DoE) stated that incidents of offences by juveniles while driving vehicles are on the rise.

"In this context, attention of all parents and heads of schools of Delhi is brought to the Section 199 A (1 and 2) and 199 B of 'The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019,' stated the letter.

"The law states that if an offence has been committed by a juvenile, 'the guardian of or the owner of the motor vehicle shall be deemed to be guilty of the contravention and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly', as per letter 'Students and their parents should be made aware of the above provisions of the law and penalties and consequences of their violations through classroom instructions, school assembly (whenever schools re-open), online instructional mediums used by the teachers, parent teacher meetings, school notice board,' according to DoE letter.

"Help of school management committee members can also be taken to spread awareness in this regard. Schools have been directed to sensitise parents to ensure that no student who is underage and does not hold a valid driving license be permitted to drive any vehicle or commute to and from school driving any vehicle," the letter further stated.

Contractor held for Gzb crematorium roof collapse

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

The contractor, Ajay Tyagi, who was on run after the roof of crematorium collapsed in Muradnagar which claimed 24 lives on Sunday, was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh (UP) police on Tuesday. Police said that a reward of Rs 25,000 was also declared on information leading to his arrest.

Twenty-four people, most of them attending a funeral, were killed and 17 others injured when the roof of a shelter at the cremation ground in Muradnagar collapsed on

Sunday.

Ghaziabad Police had on Monday arrested Muradnagar Nagar Palika Executive Officer Niharika Singh, Junior Engineer Chandra Pal and Supervisor Ashish as they were involved in the tendering process for building the structure. They were sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

According to a senior police official, the contractor Tyagi, who went into hiding after news of the collapse spread, was nabbed near the Ganga canal bridge of Sathedi village by a joint team of Muradnagar and Niwari police.

Police said that Tyagi has been booked under various sections of the law, and he will be produced before a court on Tuesday.

A tender of Rs 55 lakh and not Rs 55 crore as reported earlier, was awarded to Tyagi for renovation and construction of shelter three months ago, and the shelter was opened to the public 15 days back.

The senior police official said a probe was underway to examine how much substandard material was used in the construction. After the investigation, corruption charges would be added in the case, he

added.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued on Tuesday, the UP Government said that the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed that the National Security Act (NSA) be slapped against the accused persons. He also directed that loss of public money during the construction work be recovered from the contractor and engineers.

He also announced that a financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh be provided to each of the kin of the deceased, and homeless affected families be provided a home.

HIGH AMMONIA LEVEL IN YAMUNA

NGT panel asks CPCB to identify sources of pollution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal-appointed Yamuna Monitoring Committee has asked the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to identify point sources of pollution leading to high levels of ammonia in the river in Delhi and submit a report by January 10.

The directions from the two-member green panel came after the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) alleged that Haryana has not yet stopped discharging industrial pollutants in the river despite repeated reminders, and urged the CPCB to take immediate remedial measures.

The committee cited a media report that said ammonia levels in the Yamuna at Wazirabad rose to 7 parts per million (ppm) against the per-

missible limits of 0.8 ppm.

"It has also been reported that the reason primarily is the industrial effluent/untreated domestic sewage entering river Yamuna through Drains no. 6 and 8 and through the Rohtak regulator," the panel, comprising former Delhi Chief Secretary Shailaja Chandra and retired NGT expert member B S Saijan, said.

The incidence of high ammoniacal nitrogen concentration is sporadic in nature and is generally reported during the winter months of December-February almost every year, the committee said.

"Considering the recurring nature of the problem, it is incumbent upon the CPCB and Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) to put in place a robust surveillance system, particularly dur-

ing the critical winter months, for monitoring the activities of the industries and the functioning of STPs and also take coercive action against the defaulting units," it said.



The panel asked the CPCB to associate with HSPCB and depute a team to identify point sources of pollution leading to high levels of ammoniacal nitrogen in the Yamuna

and submit a report by January 10.

The YMC has also taken up the matter with the Chief Secretary of Haryana, requesting him to direct authorities to take immediate action to prevent flow of untreated sewage and industrial effluent from Haryana into river Yamuna. The Delhi Jal Board had recently said it will consider moving court against the "apathetic" Haryana government as it is yet to stop the discharge of pollutants in the Yamuna which affects drinking water supply in the national capital.

The utility said it will soon start work to install ozonation units at the Chandrawal and Wazirabad plants to treat high levels of ammonia.

High levels of ammonia in the Yamuna have prompted the DJB to reduce or stop water

production at its plants at least five times this year.

According to officials, the DJB's water treatment plants can treat up to 0.9 parts per million ammonia concentration in the river water. If the ammonia content is higher than this, the raw water is diluted

with fresh water from the Upper Ganga Canal or the Munak Canal. If enough fresh water for dilution is not available, the production capacity of plants is reduced or they are temporarily shut.

The Delhi Jal Board said two canals in Haryana -- DD-1 and DD-2 -- carry contaminated water to the Yamuna. DD-2 is also known as "dye drain" because this canal contains a large amount of dye from industrial units.

The two canals meet near

Shimla Gujran village in Haryana's Panipat district and merge into the Yamuna near Khojkipur village where ammonia levels often reach up to 40 ppm.

Apart from Carrier Lined Channel (CLC), Delhi Sub-Branch (DSB) and Yamuna, water is also supplied to the city from DD-8 canal.

A few kilometres along the DD-8 canal also flows another canal, DD-6 (at Pyau Manhari, Haryana) in which Haryana releases huge amounts of industrial and domestic waste.

These two canals are separated via sand sacks which are mostly in bad shape at many places. As a result, the contaminated water of DD-6 mixes with DD-8 and thus, the ammonia reaches Delhi, the Delhi Jal Board said.

Scooterist dies, pillion rider hurt in road accident

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old man died and his colleague was critically injured after their scooty met with an accident near the Punjabi Bagh flyover in west Delhi on Monday night. Police said that there are no witnesses, and it is being ascertained if the accident involved another vehicle.

The deceased, Kunal Sadana, a resident of Rani Bagh, and his colleague, Sukash Mandal, worked as salesmen at a garment shop in central Delhi's Karol Bagh.

"After information regarding the accident was received a police team was dispatched for the spot. Kunal was declared brought dead while Mandal is undergoing treatment at the Maharaja Agrasen Hospital and is said to be in a critical condition," said Deepak Purohit, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), West district.

"Police have registered a case under IPC sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way), 337 (causing hurt by act of endangering life or personal safety of others) and 304 A (causing death by negligence), and an investigation is underway to ascertain the exact cause of the accident whether the scooty was hit by some vehicle or got slipped accidentally," said the DCP.

Central Vista Centre's misplaced priority: Cong



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday described the Central Vista redevelopment project as a case of "misplaced priority by a whimsical autocrat".

The grand old party has been arguing against the ₹13,450 crore central redevelopment project during a pandemic and economic recession.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted: "The ₹13,450 CR Central Vista Project is not a legalistic issue but a case of 'misplaced priorities' of a 'whimsical autocrat' seeking to etch his name in the annals of history with cement & mortar. Ironical that in times of Corona pandemic & economic recession, Delhi has ₹14,000 cr for Central Vista & ₹8,000 CR for buying aircrafts for PM".

"But the same BJP Govt imposes cuts of ₹37,530 CR in allowances of 113 Lakh Armed Forces & Central Govt Employees & Pensioners. PM

Deputy Leader of Congress in Rajya Sabha, Anand Sharma also tweeted that he was "saddened" by the Supreme Court's go-ahead to the project

must not forget that he has imposed cuts of ₹11,000 CR on 15 lakh Soldiers & 26 lakh Military Pensioners. And the same BJP Govt at Centre has no time to provide 'heated tents and equipment' to our soldiers braving braving Chinese incursions in Ladakh," Surjewala added.

Deputy Leader of Congress in Rajya Sabha, Anand Sharma also tweeted that he was "saddened" by the Supreme Court's go-ahead to the project.

In a series of tweets, Sharma said it is time to "reflect" on the State of the republic. "Saddened by Supreme court endorsement

of Government's misplaced priorities during Pandemic and clearing the Central vista project- a unnecessary and colossal waste of public money," Sharma said.

"We are living in strange times. No relief for the migrant labour, no Justice for India's farmers fighting for their rights in bitter cold. Pouring rain, tear gas and braving lathis. As we approach 'Ganatantra Diwas' need to reflect on state of Republic," he added.

Congress floor leader in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury didn't directly comment on the Supreme Court ruling but focussed on "values to bolster democracy".

"An Atma Nirbhar Parliament isn't made just by brick and mortar. It is made by the spirit of questioning, discussing and debating inside the House. It is built by promoting Constitutional values that bolsters democracy," he said.

The Congress' parliamentary leaders along with other key Opposition leaders had boycotted the Bhoomi puja ceremony by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Puri hails SC nod, says Govt always sensitive about green concerns

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday welcomed the Supreme Court judgement giving a go-ahead to the Central Vista redevelopment project, and asserted that the Government has always been sensitive to environmental concerns.

"Delhi is on course to becoming a World Class capital city and in the first step by the time nation completes 75 years of its Independence in 2022 a new Parliament building will be ready reflecting the aspirations of new India," Puri tweeted.

"We welcome the Judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court giving the go ahead for the ambitious Central Vista Project. Central Govt has always been sensitive to environmental concerns & will continue to adhere to the highest standards during the period of construction," Puri said.

The Minister also stated that the Speaker's office had communicated to Secretary-Urban Development on July 13, 2012 highlighting the inadequacies of the existing Parliament building and an urgent need for construction of a new one. Congress was in power then.

"Sadly, few Congressmen feign collective amnesia today," he said.

"In 2012, when his party was in power, Jairam Ramesh had said "We badly need a new Parliament building. This one simply isn't functional & is outdated", Puri tweeted.

Meanwhile, after the supreme court verdict, the Central Public Works Department, which is executing the government's ambi-

tious Central Vista redevelopment project, will soon start the construction work once it gets permission from the Heritage Conservation Committee.

"The CPWD will approach the committee and seek permission before the start of construction work of new Parliament building. Other formalities will also be followed by concerned agencies," an official in the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said. Another official said that the outlook of the new building will be similar to the existing one that is why there should be no problem in getting permission from the Heritage Conservation Committee.

The redevelopment project of the Central Vista — the nation's power corridor — envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a common central secretariat and revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath, from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

According to the Government's latest proposal for the redevelopment of the Central Vista, the Prime Minister's new residential complex will have 10 four-storey buildings with a maximum height of 12 metres.

The CPWD has revised the estimated cost from ₹11,794 crore to ₹13,450 crore.

The new Parliament building will have the capacity to seat 888 Lok Sabha MPs while the Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for the members. The government has identified around four locations — in Gole Market, K G Marg, near Africa Avenue and near Talkatora Stadium — in central Delhi for the temporary shifting of offices of various ministries.

Over 70 new UK Covid variant cases in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of cases of highly infectious new Covid variant found in the UK has crossed the 70 mark in India till Tuesday, DBT Secretary Renu Swarup said even as the Union Health Ministry has put the number at 58.

Talking to reporters here at a press conference, Swarup said that till date 71 cases of the new UK variant have been reported in the country. However she did not give much detail about the cases.

On the other hand, a statement from the Ministry said that a total of 58 people have tested positive for the new UK variant of SARS-CoV-2 in India so far. The new coronavirus variant found in the UK is said to be 70 per cent more infectious than the first one.

Till Monday, a total of 38 people were found infected with the new strain of the virus in the country. Among them, 11 people have tested positive with the new strain at CSIR's Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), and eight samples tested at NCDC, both in Delhi.

Dr VK Paul, member of the Niti Aayog said that in terms of the new UK variant of SARS-CoV-2, "we have not seen emergence of any untoward clusters in the country as of now which is reassuring."

Later, Swarup also gave details on the various vaccines that are being developed in the country. "The mutations in the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 don't substantially affect the antibody accessibility as assessed by computer modelling."

She said that all Indian vaccines being developed against the coronavirus will have to be stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius as the logistics have been worked out while considering temperature as a factor.

Swarup said Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin and Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield have

Global leaders laud India's leadership in scientific innovation, combating Covid pandemic

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Minister's Office.

Global leaders have lauded India's leadership in scientific innovation and decisive action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, as the country gets set to begin the world's largest vaccination drive against the novel coronavirus.

The Drug Controller General of India on Sunday approved the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech, for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

"It's great to see India's leadership in scientific innovation and vaccine manufacturing capability as the world works to end the COVID-19 pandemic," Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said in a tweet on Monday, tagging the Prime

Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tweeted that India "continues to take decisive action & demonstrate its resolve to end #COVID19 pandemic".

"As the world's largest vaccine producer, it's well placed to do so. If we #ACTogether, we can ensure effective & safe vaccines are used to protect the most vulnerable everywhere," Ghebreyesus said and tagged Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his tweet.

A day after India's drug regulator approved two vaccines for restricted emergency use, Prime Minister Modi said the world's biggest inoculation drive against coronavirus was set to begin in the country.

Praising the scientists and technicians for the "Made in India" vaccines, he said the country was proud of them.

robustly undergone immunoassay lab tests.

"(For) all our vaccines, we are looking at right now... (we) are targeting 2-8 degree because our logistics are worked out on that basis and we are working on that," Swarup said.

She said the DNA vaccine candidate being developed by Zydus Cadila, and the Biological E's mRNA vaccine work at storage temperatures of 2-8 degrees Celsius.

"Unlike the Pfizer and Moderna which requires a minus 70 degree Celsius (cold) chain, this (the Biological E's vaccine candidate) is basically at the 2-8 degree Celsius," Swarup said.

The Zydus Cadila candidate has been granted approval to conduct the

phase-3 trial while the Biological E candidate is in its phase-1 clinical trial stage.

Swarup said Dr Reddy's Laboratories has partnered with Russia's Gamaleya Institute and a vaccine is being developed for India targeting storage at 2-8 degrees Celsius.

"They (Dr Reddy's Laboratories) have started phase 2/3 trials in the country. They have completed the first part of the phase 2 trial on 1,000 subjects and they are now looking at interim data which is to be analysed."

"They also have large global trials, like the AstraZeneca and that data is also being looked at. What they are targeting is for India to try and see how it could be at 2-8 degrees," Swarup said.

COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF
Sh. SANATAN PRASAD, ADJ-01,
East, KKD, Courts, Delhi.
PC No.-26/2020

1. SMT. Satish Sharma
W/o Late Sh. Mukesh Kumar Sharma
R/o H.No. 15-A, Old Geeta Colony,
Delhi-110031
Verses
1. State of NCT OF DELHI,
through Chief Secretary, GNDCT,
Player Building, Delhi Secretariat,
New Delhi-110001.
2. SMT. Sumita Sharma
D/o Late Sh. Shakti Raj Sharma
R/o H.No.-864, Vikas Kari,
Vikasapuri, Delhi-110018.
3. Sh. Naresh Sharma
S/o Late Sh. Shakti Raj Sharma
R/o H.No.-15-A,
Old Geeta Colony, Delhi-110031.
4. State Bank Of India
Through its Branch Manager
Chander Lok Building, Gandhi Nagar,
Delhi-110031

Respondents.
Letter of Administration in respect of movable assets of the deceased Sh. Mukesh Kumar Sharma to the Legal Heirs of deceased under section 372 of the Indian Succession Act 1925. Whereas an petition under Section 372 of Indian Succession Act, 1925 for grant of Letter of Administration has been filed by the petitioner. Whereas in the above noted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for Letter of administration in respect of the Bank Locker No. 13 vide A/c No. 1018531927, C/P No. 8014548065 with respondent no. 2 i.e. State Bank of India in the joint names of her husband Late Mukesh Kumar Sharma and father-in-law Late Sh. Shakti Raj Sharma. Whereas the 19.01.2021 at 10:00 clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing of the case, notice is hereby given that person having any interest in the admission Letter, WOC for any if the said desire appear in this Court of the said 19.01.2021 and see the proceedings.
Given under my hand the seal of this court on this 17.12.2020.
Judge Additional District Judge-01,
East Karkardooma Court, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Indoor Medical Records of the patients admitted prior to 31.03.2015 in Deepak Memorial Hospital, 5-6 Institutional Area, Vikas Marg, Extn. Delhi-92 is scheduled to be disposed of under hospital policy.
Any patient requiring his/her Medical Records may approach the undersigned within 7 days failing which the records will be disposed of without further notice.
Medical Record Officer
Deepak Memorial Hospital,
5-6 Institutional Area, Vikas Marg,
Extn. Delhi-92

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that, I Rajan Kapila S/o Dev Parkash Kapila R/o Flat No 7/1, Block -O Multi Storey Flats, Sector-13, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110022, is the Allottee/Virtuante of DDA MIG Flat No.85-C On Second floor Pocket-U&V Situated Shalimar Bagh, Delhi vide file no M-1541311983/GF/NS applied for conversion of the aforesaid property from leasehold to freehold in DDA Original Demand-Cum Allotment Letter. Possession Letter, WOC for water and Electricity Connection and Possession Slip of the above said flat have been lost/misplaced. An R.R. to this effect has been lodged. Police Station, Vile NO-11385/2021 Dt. 05.01.2021. Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection may write/contact with above named person at above address/Ph 9810556220 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this Flat can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB)/MIG or Asst. Director (LAB) D-Block, Third Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi

Metro Railway, Kolkata

Corrigendum No. 1

Tender Notice No. : S&T/Work_18-2020 a corrigendum has been issued on IREPS Portal on 05.01.2021. The Tender opening date will remain same as 22.01.2021. Sl. No. 1. Name of Work : Provision of Automatic Fire Detection and alarm system at all stations and Carshed of Metro Railway Kolkata. Changes Incorporated : Special Condition of Contract has been modified. The Corrigendum can be viewed at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> The tenderer/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate on e-Tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participation in e-Tender. Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/IT
FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

50% newborns in TN miss out on mom's milk in the very first hour: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite having a well-structured primary healthcare infrastructure and an impressive institutional delivery rate, at least half of the total infants ie one in two babies born in Tamil Nadu do not get the much-needed mother's milk within an hour of their birth, according to a report released here recently online.

"It is puzzling that in a State where 99 per cent of deliveries are institutional, both public and private, initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of birth is only at 54.7 per cent. There is other disturbing data, such as that 34 per cent of births are by caesarean section.

"This is well above the WHO threshold of 15 per cent as well as the rate recorded in other states," said former Union Health Secretary Keshava Desiraju while commenting on the observation made in report titled "Spotlight on infant feeding in Tamil Nadu 2020 -tracking policies and programmes in support of women and children to adopt optimal feeding practices: from conception to 2 years or beyond".

The first ever report of assessment of policy and programmes in the State prepared by the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) and its State Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (SBTI) team was released by J Radhakrishnan, Principal Secretary to the TN Government recently.



As per the report, TN scored 64 out of 100 in the first assessment of the 10 parameters of policy/programmes on breastfeeding and infant and young children feeding practices.

Tamil Nadu is not doing well particularly in breastfeeding, implementation of the Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003, and on Infant Feeding during disasters, said the report.

Commenting on the report's observation, Dr. Radhakrishnan said, "...Tamil Nadu is doing fairly well in most of the indicators and that with focused attention on those areas where we have some gaps, we can certainly bridge them to improve the status of IYCF practices in the State".

The report attributed dismal breastfeeding rate to barriers such as women's perceptions of 'not enough milk', breast conditions like sore

nipples, engorgement and mastitis leading to use of infant formula, which is unnecessary.

All these common reasons for women to give up breastfeeding can be overcome with proper counselling and skilled support to the women and family in the State which has a large number of women work force, it suggested.

Dr Arun Gupta from BPNI pointed out that optimal feeding includes early breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with adequate and appropriate complementary feeding after six months.

According to health experts, breastfeeding prevents diarrhoea, pneumonia in children and provides long-term benefits against non-communicable diseases. It also reduces risk of breast and ovarian cancer in the mothers and protects them from diabetes.

SC spells out green conditions for Govt to refurbish Central Vista project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to consider issuing directions to ensure adequate use of anti-smog guns and make setting up of smog towers a "mandatory requirement" during construction of development projects involving Government buildings, townships or other major private projects.

The apex court said that time has come to advance the intent behind improving air quality a mandatory feature for modern buildings and more particularly during the phase of construction of major projects in the cities most affected by air pollution.

The top court said this in its 2:1 majority verdict by which it paved way for the ambitious Central Vista Project, covering a three-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi.

"We deem it fit to call upon the respondent MoHUA (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) to consider issuing appropriate general directions so as to ensure that adequate use of smog guns during the construction of development projects and setting up smog towers is made a mandatory requirement, particularly involving government buildings, townships or other major private projects," said Justice A M Khanwilkar, writing the 432-page majority judgement for himself and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari.

NIA files supplementary chargesheet in Hizbul narcotic terror case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency on Tuesday filed a supplementary chargesheet in the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) narco terror case before the NIA Special Court, Mohali, Punjab against alleged narcotics terrorists Jaswant Singh of Gurdaspur and Gursant Singh of Tarn Taran, Punjab.

Both the accused persons were charged for criminal conspiracy, impersonation, using forged documents as genuine and destruction of evidence under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

The accused persons were involved in collection, distribution and selling of heroin smuggled from Pakistan as also in collection and channelization of proceeds generated for furthering the activities of the banned terror group Hizbul Mujahideen.

"Accused Gursant Singh was one of the important members of the terrorist gang and as a close associate of prime accused Iqbal Singh alias Shera was responsible for safe movement of heroin and proceeds to

various places/unknown persons," the NIA said in a statement.

Investigation has also brought out that he has purchased many immovable properties and luxury cars to be used as hide outs and for transportation of drugs and proceeds, it said.

Earlier, a chargesheet was filed on October 20 last year against ten accused persons including arrested Hilal Ahmed Shergoiji of Pulwama, Birkam Singh of Amritsar (arrested), Maninder Singh (arrested), Ranjit Singh (arrested), Gagandeep Singh (arrested), Iqbal Singh, all from Amritsar (absconding), Ranjit Singh (arrested) and Jaswant Singh (arrested), both from Gurdaspur, Zafar Hussain Bhat of Anantnag, presently in Pakistan (absconding) and Riyaz Ahmed Naikoo of Pulwama (killed).

They charged various IPC sections and provisions of UA (P) A and NDPS Act besides the Indian Passports Act.

This case arose out of Police Station Sadar, Amritsar Case No. 135 dated April 25, 2020 pertaining to arrest of one Hilal Ahmed Shergoiji and recovery of Rs 29 lakh from his possession, by Punjab Police.

1991 disappearance-cum-murder of Jr engineer Multani

Place on record chargesheet filed in fresh FIR against ex-Punjab DGP: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Punjab Government to place on record the charge sheet filed in the fresh FIR lodged against former DGP Sumedh Singh Saini in the 1991 disappearance and murder of a junior engineer Balwant Singh Multani.

The top court had already granted anticipatory bail to Saini.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah also asked the trial court to postpone its scheduled hearing of January 22 as the top court is hearing this matter.

The bench is hearing Saini's plea seeking to quash the fresh FIR lodged in the case in May 2020.

"Gopal Subramaniam, senior counsel, for the State seeks time to place the charge sheet and additional documents on the record. Let him do within two weeks. Counsel for the petitioner submits that matter be listed in the month of February, 2021. List in the second week of February, 2021", the bench said.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R, KARNAL	CONSTRUCTION OF ICU/HDU BUILDING IN CAMPUS OF DANVEER KARAN RAJIKYA HOSPITAL KARNAL (PROVIDING MGP AND ALLIED ITEMS ONLY).	04.01.2021 19.01.2021	184.21 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01842265696 pwd-need-karnal@hry.nic.in
2	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA,REWARI	REPAIRING OF DAMAGED PATCHES OF PRANPURA DISTY. FROM KM. 0.000 TO 3.976 + 15 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 14.01.2021	36 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9354260552 xenwv2m@gmail.com
3	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA,REWARI	SPECIAL REPAIR OF 1 NO. 150 CS PUMP (P-5) AT PUMP HOUSE JC-1 + 7 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 22.01.2021	EMD 1.77 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274256466 xenmech@yahoo.com
4	FOREST DEPARTMENT HISAR	CONSTRUCTION OF EARTH MOUND AT VILLAGE KAJALHERI DISTT. FATEHABAD	04.01.2021 18.01.2021	3 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662259233 dwlohisar@gmail.com
5	DISTRICT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY BHIWNAI	E-TENDERS FOR SUPPLY OF COMPUTERS SYSTEMS AND PRINTERS	04.01.2021 25.01.2021	20 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01664-241341 ditsbhw@gmail.com
6	CIVIL SURGEON HISAR	HIRING OF E-RICKSHAW WITH MIXING SYSTEM FOR URBAN HISAR & URBAN HANSI UNDER NATIONAL URBAN HEALTH MISSION HARYANA	05.01.2021 15.01.2021	EMD 10000	www.nrhmharyana.gov.in	9034259320 dhs.cshsr@hry.nic.in
7	BLOCK LEVEL E-TENDERING COMMITTEE BLOCK ISMAILABAD	SUPPLY OF BUILDING MATERIAL IN VARIOUS VILLAGE OF BLOCKS ISMAILABAD IN DISTT KURUKSHETRA	05.01.2021 21.01.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9813320006 bdpso.ismailabad@nic.in
8	PANCHAYATI RAJ,KAITHAL	LAYING OF DRY STONE PITCHING OF KOTIKUT TIRTH AT VILLAGE KEORAK BLOCK - KAITHAL	06.01.2021 12.01.2021	129.06 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	94161-91639 Prexeeng.kd@hry.nic.in

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

RO NO. 1256

SEARCH FOR MISSING WOMAN



Poonam Gautam

General public is here by informed that this woman namely Poonam Gautam D/o Tarun Kumar R/o D-398, Jahangir Puri, Delhi Age : 23 years, Height : 5', Face : Round, Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Thin, wearing blue & orange colour printed suit, firozi colour shawl and black colour chappal in feet, has been missing since 24.12.2020. In this regard DD No. 92-A dated 24.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Jahangir Puri, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing woman may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Jahangir Puri,
New Delhi
Tel. No. : 011-27636000,
27631600

DP570NNW20

KERALA GOLD-SMUGGLING CASE

NIA files chargesheet against 30 accused

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kochi unit of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday submitted the first part of the charge sheet in the gold smuggling scam that rocked the Kerala Government.

The chargesheet which runs into hundreds of pages lists 30 persons including Swapna Suresh, Sarith as accused. Sandeep Nair, who was arrested along with Swapna and Sarith has turned approver in the sensational case.

The NIA was expected to file the chargesheet with the special court hearing the case within 180 days of the first arrest. Radhakrishna Pillai, the investigation officer, handed over the first part of the chargesheet before the deadline. Though the contents in the chargesheet are yet to be released, sources in the NIA said that the accused had been slapped with section 16, 17 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act which would make it difficult for the accused to come put on bail in the near future.

Though there are 30 per-



sions listed as accused in the gold smuggling scam, the NIA could arrest only 21 persons till now. Out of this, seven persons are in judicial custody while 12 managed to get bail. Some of the persons who have been identified as accused by the NIA are absconding. Though Fazal Fareed, a Dubai based smuggler who is the master brain behind the entire scam have been caught by the UAE Police, Indian law enforcing agencies are yet to get him extradited to India.

The NIA officials remained tight-lipped when asked whether M Sivasankar, the former principal secretary of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has been included as an accused in the case.

The gold smuggling scam burst out when a diplomatic consignment meant to the UAE Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram evoked suspicion in the minds of the custom officials who held back the baggage for further inspection in the last week of June 2020. This resulted in a plethora of telephone calls from the Chief Minister's Office to the Customs Department at Thiruvananthapuram airport arousing suspicion about the involvement of persons in higher places in the case.

Following the cracking of the gold smuggling scam, names of the Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly P Sreedharakrishnan, Kerala's Minister for Higher Education KT Jaleel, Tourism Minister Kadakampalli Surendran and C M Raveendran, additional private secretary to the Chief Minister too started figuring in the scam.

The NIA which took up the case in July 2020 following the demand made by Pinarayi Vijayan to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for investigation by a central agency, was joined by Enforcement Directorate and CBI.

ED attaches ITPCL's ₹452 cr shares held by Singapore shell company

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday attached shares worth ₹452 crore of IL&FS Tamil Nadu Power Company Limited (ITPCL) held by a Singapore-based shell company.

"The ED has provisionally attached assets totaling to ₹452 crores belonging to AS Coal Pte Singapore, a Singapore-based shell company owned by a British National Jaimin Vyas under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) in a case relating to fraud," the agency said in a statement.

The attached assets are in the form of 8.86 per cent shares of ITPCL presently worth around ₹452 crore, it said.

The ED had initiated investigation under PMLA on the basis of FIR registered by EOW, Delhi against IRL, ITNL (Group companies of IL&FS), its officials and others.

Investigation was also conducted by the Serious Fraud Investigation office (SFIO) and criminal complaint has been filed by SFIO against IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN) and its officials invoking sections of Companies Act, 2013.

"Investigation under PMLA revealed that there was a well planned conspiracy to defraud IL&FS and Indian Banks by Jaimin Vyas in connivance with officials of IL&FS and one

Chinese EPC Contractor namely SEPCO III. The company's right to select the EPC contractor was illegally delegated to Jaimin Vyas, violating the terms and conditions of Share Purchase Agreement," it said.

Jaimin Vyas thereafter nominated SEPCO as EPC contractor and got kick back in guise of fees for consultancy services. The same money was routed as equity investment in ITPCL. Subsequently, ITPCL paid SEPCO III the amount (paid earlier by SEPCO to Jaimin Vyas) by inflating the value of the contract and payments were also made in the guise of early completion of the project, the agency said.

Further, investigations also revealed that Jaimin Vyas received illegal gratification from Noble Coal in lieu of awarding a coal supply contract (to ITPCL) at an inflated rate, it said.

Earlier, ED had attached movable and immovable properties of committee of directors of IFIN worth ₹126 crore, and movable and immovable properties of two defaulter loanes of IFIN namely SIVA Group and ABG Group worth ₹1,400 crores. Arun Kumar Saha, one of the former members of committee of directors of IFIN and Karunakaran Ramchand, former MD of ITNL were arrested and prosecution complaint has been filed under PMLA against the duo, it said.

CREMATORIUM ROOF COLLAPSE

Adityanath directs officials to invoke NSA against accused

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a serious view of the crematorium roof collapse incident in Muradnagar that claimed 24 lives, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday directed officials to invoke the stringent National Security Act against the accused.

Twenty-four people, most of them attending a funeral, were killed and 17 others injured when the roof of a shelter at the cremation ground in Muradnagar collapsed on Sunday.

In a statement issued here, the UP Government said, "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed that the National Security Act be slapped against the accused persons. He also directed that loss of public money during the construction work be recovered from the contractor and engineers."

He also announced that a financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh be provided to each of the kin of the deceased, and homeless affected families be provided a home.

The contractor wanted in connection with incident was arrested from a village near the border of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar districts of Uttar Pradesh, police said on Tuesday.



Twenty-four people, most of them attending a funeral, were killed and 17 others injured when the roof of a shelter at the cremation ground in Muradnagar collapsed on Sunday

Contractor Ajay Tyagi, who went into hiding after news of the collapse spread, was nabbed near the Ganga canal

bridge of Sathedi village by a joint team of Muradnagar and Nivari police.

The Ghaziabad Police had on Monday arrested Muradnagar Nagar Palika Executive Officer Niharika Singh, Junior Engineer Chandra Pal and Supervisor Ashish as they were involved in the tendering process for building the structure. They were sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

MP officials apprise EC of action taken against 3 IPS officers, others

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Madhya Pradesh Government on Tuesday appraised the Election Commission (EC) of the action initiated against three IPS officers and others whose alleged role in the use of black money during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls came to the fore after the I-T Department raided former chief minister Kamal Nath's close aides.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains informed that the State Economic Offence Wing has registered a PE (preliminary enquiry) in the matter. He also sought two weeks' time to apprise the Election Commission (EC) of further action in the matter. Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajesh Kumar Rajwara was also present at the meeting. In December, the EC had decided to call top officials of the Madhya Pradesh government to apprise it of its orders to lodge "criminal

action" against the three IPS officers and others.

The poll body also asked the Union home secretary to initiate "appropriate departmental action" against the IPS officers and asked the Madhya Pradesh chief secretary to undertake a "similar action" against a state police service officer. Election Commission sources identified the three IPS officers as Sushovan Banerjee, Sanjay Mane, V Madhu Kumar and state police service officer as Arun Mishra.

The EC had said it was recommending action after it "deliberated" upon a report sent to it by the CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) intimating it about the Income Tax Department's "search operations in Madhya Pradesh and its findings of extensive use of unaccounted cash during the 2019 general elections".

An EC statement had said the CBDT report informed the commission about certain

entities and individuals who were engaged in "unauthorised and unaccounted cash contributions to individuals on behalf of a certain political party, which was reported to be corroborated during searches against persons by the tax department". While the EC did not name the party, it has been widely reported that the CBDT report referred to the Congress.

It said the EC has directed to forward the copy of the October 28 CBDT report "to the Chief Electoral Officer, Madhya Pradesh, to lodge criminal action before designated authority, which is the Madhya Pradesh economic offences wing, against the concerned for the violation as per extant electoral and other relevant laws".

The tax department had conducted raids at 52 locations in Madhya Pradesh and Delhi in April last year and those searched included Nath's for-

The poll body also asked the Union home secretary to initiate "appropriate departmental action" against the IPS officers and asked the Madhya Pradesh chief secretary to undertake a "similar action" against a state police service officer

mer officer on special duty (OSD) Pravin Kakkar, adviser Rajendra Miglani, Ashwani Sharma, executives linked to his brother-in-law's firm Moser Baer, a company of his nephew Ratul Puri and others.

The CBDT, on April 8 last year, had said in a statement that tax sleuths recovered Rs 14.6 crore "unaccounted" cash and seized diaries and computer files of suspect payments after the raids. It said the department detected a trail of Rs 20 crore suspect cash allegedly being moved to the "headquarter of a major political party in Delhi".

Govt to hold exam on 'gau vigyan' on Feb 25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday announced a national-level voluntary online exam on 'gau vigyan' (cow science) to be held on February 25, in a bid to generate interest among students and the general public about the indigenous cow and its benefits.

Announcing the first-ever exam of this kind, Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) Chairman Vallabhbhai Kathiria said this exam will be held annually.

Students of primary, secondary and college levels and general public can take part in the 'Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Examination' without any fee.

"For raising mass awareness about the indigenous cows among young students and other citizens, the RKA decided to conduct a national exam on cow science," he told reporters.

The Aayog has prepared a study material on cow science.



The exam will infuse the curiosity into all Indians about cows and make them aware of the unexplored potential and business opportunities a cow can offer, even after it stops giving milk, he added. Further, Kathiria said there will be objective-type questions, and the syllabus will be recommended on the website of the RKA. The exam results will be declared immediately and certificates will be given to all. Meritorious candidates will be

given prizes and certificates, he added.

The RKA chief also mentioned that it has received good response from varities for setting up a chair and research centres on cow and related issues. The RKA, which comes under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, was set up by the Centre in February 2019, and is aimed at "conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny".

Kamdhenu Aayog claims ayurveda treatment cured 800 Covid-19 patients

New Delhi: Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) Chairman Vallabhbhai Kathiria on Tuesday claimed that 800 Covid-19 patients have been cured through 'panchavya and ayurveda' treatment in a clinical trial conducted in four cities across the country. Kathiria said the clinical trials were conducted on 200 patients each in Rajkot and Baroda (Gujarat), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and Kalyan (Maharashtra) between June and October 2020 in partnership with state governments and some NGOs. The treatment entailed doses of 'panchavya' granules (mixture of cow urine, cow dung, milk, ghee and curd), herb 'Sanjeevani booti' and herbal concoction 'khada', he said.

PNS

Farmers stand to lose rights to cultivate in their farms: Stalin

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The DMK which launched its campaign for the 2021 Assembly election has made the contentious farm laws 2020 and allegations of corruption against Tamil Nadu Government as its main weapons. MK Stalin, the DMK chief, cautioned the people against the continuation of the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre and the Edappadi Palaniswamy Government in the State even for one day.

"The Narendra Modi Government has taken away the rights of the farmers to cultivate in their own fields. The three farm legislations enacted by the Modi regime are against the farmers in the country. Hereafter the farmers will not be allowed to cultivate in their own lands. The Mandis and village markets operating all over India are being shut down. Even if the farmers cultivate in their fields, the crops would be taken away by corporates with the support of the Centre and State governments," warned Stalin while addressing Gram Sabhas in Tiruvavur and Cuddalore districts on Monday and Tuesday.

The Grama Sabhas which saw unprecedented crowds, mainly poor and marginal farmers, sat in rapt attention as the DMK chief told them about the traps laid by the Centre and State governments to 'dispossess them of their lands'. He said the BJP and the AIADMK were working exclusively to safeguard the interests of big-

time businessmen and corporate houses.

But farm experts in Tamil Nadu feigned ignorance about the possibilities listed out by the DMK president in his speech. "Though I read the new legislations threadbare and discussed about its pros and cons with our lawyers, I did not find anything in the new laws which substantiate the allegations of Stalin," said R V Giri, president, CIFA (Confederation of Indian Farmers' Associations), an umbrella organization of farmers' unions in the country. Giri, himself a farmer, cultivating sugarcane in his ten-acre farm in Virudachalam, said that with the President signing the new Bill, he felt he was freed of the shackles of controls and regulations. "Till now I could sell the sugarcane only to sugar factories which were handpicked by the Government. Now, I am at liberty to sell the crop to the buyer of my choice. Moreover, Tamil Nadu has no Mandis to speak about and I do not know what Stalin meant by these charges," Giri told *The Pioneer*.

Farmer-turned-farm leader Pon Vijayaraghavan described Stalin's words as a bunch of lies. "He is spreading canard and falsehood. These were the same legislations which were under the consideration of the Congress for decades but the leaders were reluctant to get them converted into laws. Stalin has political intentions and that is why he is engaged in distorting the laws," said Vijayaraghavan, former Tamil Nadu chief of Kisan Morchcha.

NIA files chargesheet against 3 for trafficking fake Indian currency from Bangladesh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency has filed a charge-sheet against three persons for their alleged involvement in trafficking Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) procured from Bangladesh, an official said on Tuesday.

The supplementary charge sheet was filed on Monday against Jasim of Thane's Mumbai, Radhakrishna and a third person, both from Karnataka's Chikkaballapura, in a special NIA court in Mumbai in under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code. The case pertains to the seizure of FICN having a face value of ₹82,000 from the house of Jasim, an NIA spokesperson said.

In major rejig, Rajasthan Govt transfers 288 officers

PTI ■ JAIPUR

In a major bureaucratic reshuffle, the Rajasthan Government has transferred 288 officers, including 77 from the IAS and IPS cadre.

The reshuffled bureaucrats also included 28 officers from the Indian Forest Service and 183 belonging to the the Rajasthan Administrative Services.

The government changed three collectors, SPs in 14 districts and five range Inspector General of Police late on Monday night while the RAS officers were reshuffled on

NC delegation meets Lt Guv, highlights attempts of 'horse-trading' of DDC members

PTI ■ JAMMU

An eight-member National Conference delegation on Tuesday met Lt Governor Manoj Sinha here and drew his attention to alleged attempts being made to mutilate the mandate of the people by encouraging horse-trading of the recently elected DDC members, the party said.

The NC stressed the crucial need of ensuring neutrality and impartiality of the administration in establishment of District Development Councils and said this is imperative for respecting the mandate and upholding people's faith in the grass-roots level democratic institutions which hold promise for transforming rural landscape in Jammu & Kashmir.

The delegation was by led by party's Jammu provincial president Devender Singh Rana and included former ministers Ajay Kumar Sadhotra, Surjeet Singh Slatia, Syed Mushtaq Ahmed Shah Bukhari and former legislators Javed Rana, S Tarlochan Singh Wazir, Rattan Lal Gupta and Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, the party said in a statement here.

"During their meeting with the Lt governor at Raj Bhavan, the delegation drew his attention to the attempts being made to mutilate the mandate of the people by encouraging horse-trading of the recently elected Councillors which is not good for democracy," it said.

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) comprising of seven main-

stream parties, including the NC and the PDP, swept the DDC polls by winning 110 seats and accused the BJP and Apni Party of forcing elected DDC members to shift their loyalties to control the post of DDC chairman.

"The people's mandate has to be respected. This is actually the message sent out by the electors, loud and clear. They lauded the efforts of the Lt Governor in ensuring peaceful conduct of the polls," the delegation said, adding that the promise of upholding democratic values has to be kept by foiling the "machinations of reversing the will of the people".

"This is imperative for the larger interests of democracy," the senior leaders said.

Jumbo electrocuted to death in TN village forest

Coimbatore: A 20-year-old male elephant died of electrocution after coming into contact with an illegal electric fence erected around a paddy field at a village on the city outskirts early Tuesday. Residents of Semmedu village alerted forest department officials about the elephant in the area falling under Boluvampatti Forest range, they said.

Electricity board officials who also arrived at the scene found high voltage electricity was illegally connected to the fence erected around the field of Durai alias Aruchamy, who is absconding, the officials said.

PTI

Cong launches campaign for Guj local body polls

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Ahead of the upcoming elections to local bodies in Gujarat, the Congress on Tuesday launched a campaign to reach out to urban voters of six municipal corporations, which are currently ruled by the BJP.

Under the campaign titled "Hello", residents of Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara can raise civic issues by calling up a dedicated number or sending messages on Whatsapp, party leaders told reporters.

Highway patrol vehicles CCTV network monitoring lab inaugurated in Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir Police has further strengthened its highway patrol grid with the induction of CCTV fitted Highway patrol vehicles.

Director General of J&K Police Dilbag Singh on Tuesday inaugurated Highway Patrol Vehicles CCTV network monitoring lab and reviewed functioning of modern nakas and other naka points in the Jammu Zone.

On the occasion, DGP also directed that the Highway Patrol and Naka Grid be further augmented with the bulletproof bunker vehicles and Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) on the highways so that no time is lost in reacting to situations befittingly.

Jawans of the Jammu and Kashmir police have played a crucial role in preventing terrorist strikes by timely detecting their infiltration from across the international border and tracking them while they were proceeding towards the Kashmir valley in mobile bunkers.

DGP said that these Highway Patrol Vehicles will be very helpful in surveillance and speedy response to incidents. He said that these vehicles will be complementing the Naka Network already established on the Highway grid.

A total number of 33 such vehicles have been deployed across Jammu division to keep a track on the movement of vehicles along the highway. In Jammu Samba Kathua range 14

vehicles have been deployed, 9 in Doda Kishtwar Ramban range, 4 in Udhampur Reasi range and 6 in Rajouri Poonch range.

These Highway patrol vehicles are equipped with two cameras, one each at front and rear of the vehicle, the vehicle is equipped with Network Video Recorder (NVR), two-way audio transmission device, a touch screen and an alert button.

These patrol vehicles will provide live streaming from the incident site. It will make live tracking of the vehicles along the route possible. The vehicles can be monitored from PCR Jammu and district PCRs.

The DGP was briefed by IGP Jammu Zone Mukesh Singh and SSP PCR Kulbir Singh about the working and various modern functions of the Highway patrol vehicles deployed at 33 places across Jammu Zone.

A live demonstration of the working of these Highway Patrol vehicles was given and senior officers interacted with the personnel on duty with these vehicles at different locations.

Speaking on the occasion, the DGP congratulated and appreciated the efforts of Jammu Zone senior officers for working towards further modernization.

He said that communicating/directing the personnel on these vehicles on a real-time basis from Police Control Rooms is going to be very useful in prevention and checking of crimes on the highways.

SC nod to makeover

Top court greenlights Govt's Central Vista project with caveats but will it be another symbolic ritual?



Finally, India@75, the hashtag and slogan that's being touted as the Narendra Modi Government's crowning glory in perpetuating a new idea of nationhood, is a reality. For, its symbolic representation — a new Parliament building and a redone Central Vista — has received the Supreme Court's nod. Of course, the top court, while clearing the redevelopment initiative and settling questions regarding changed land use and environmental compliance raised in a clutch of pleas, has put in several riders to avoid any runaway ambitions or creativity. It has clarified that the Government will

need the clearance of the Heritage Committee before beginning the project. But the fact that a dissenting judge in the three-member Bench expressed concerns about the Government's lack of public consultation doesn't quite assuage anxieties over the tampering with what is considered Delhi's cultural landmark and iconic identity. The Bench has even made smog towers mandatory as part of the construction process to keep pollution in check. And the Central Vista revamp is massive as it envisages a new triangular Parliament building with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs and synergised administrative blocks, to be completed by August 2022. On its part, the Government has been arguing for a makeover of this part of Lutyens' Delhi for its functionality and efficiency, claiming that it would create spaces for a more streamlined operation of Ministry offices and free up more citizen-friendly spaces. But the purpose is entirely political, an attempt at rewriting history and concretising a political legacy. It is the Modi regime's attempt to overwrite our Colonial past and redesign an institution as wholly Indian, as representative of its people and epoch-making simply because no Government had thought of this before. Proponents of this line of thought cite examples of democracies overturning Colonial legacies, be it the Capitol building in the US or Australia's current Parliament building in Canberra, which opened in 1988 and became a source of Australian pride. They argue that as the world's most populous democracy, there needs to be a new sense of ownership about our institutions. Does that mean that we are doing away with all Colonial-era markers and rituals, or simply making a point to show the transformative intent of a *naya Bharat*? In short, it is a power statement that overlays the Modi regime as a change-making moment in history which is, in fact, an expensive indulgence of political egoism than the Spartan commitment to our Constitution.

Yet, tradition has been sitting easily with modernity in Delhi, where each successive ruler lives through relics and monuments that have never overshadowed each other. Delhiites themselves have never denied heritage its place — Rajput, Islamic, European or Colonial — and made it a part of their living history, one where Lutyens' Delhi is a key chapter. There is no question of outdoing the elegance and classicism of design — the green pavilions, perches, cupolas and the islands are the only democratic spaces where citizens can move and roam around freely, catching the afternoon sun in the middle of winter and the gentle breeze of a summer evening. The cluster of offices would undoubtedly change the skyline as we know it and their ramped-up security would rob us of an indulgent spread in the heart of the city. Shouldn't the Government be wiser to leave a legacy of policy and governance instead of seeking a place-based identity? And shouldn't the Government be more concerned about upholding the dignity and respect for as well as independence of institutions in its pursuit of legacy? Prime Minister Narendra Modi doesn't quite like the "Lutyens' world" and the power structures and codes embedded in it. "I am a representative of the non-elite world. For me, everything is about the people of India," he had said earlier. But in the name of breaking elitism, one cannot justify point-scoring as a historical imperative. Or even the political economy it will generate — the project is expected to run into multi-crore tenders. There are fruits of preservation; they serve as reminders of what was and, as a reference point, help us learn lessons. There are no gains of demolition, forcibly reconstructing the past to suit our narrow ends. Given the secrecy around the makeover project, one hopes that the least the Government can do is to keep it transparent, consultative, reasonable and synchronise its character with the aspiration of Delhiites to be the citizens of a world heritage city. The city's application, which was submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in 2013, lists Lutyens' Bungalow Zone along with Shahjahanabad (old Delhi) as the rationale for seeking the tag. That sure will have a longer legacy than proving a point for the BJP's election manifesto in 2024.

Finding democracy

The United States will find it hard to sell democracy if its leaders can't fix their own



There are exactly two weeks to go before Joseph Biden is sworn in as the 46th President of the United States (US) on the steps of the US Capitol in Washington DC. His predecessor Donald Trump is, however, not giving up and recent revelations about a phone call that he made to the Secretary of State in the US State of Georgia is as bizarre as it is frightening. In a recording made available to the US media outlets, Trump is heard asking the Georgia officials to "find" 11,780 votes so that he can overturn Biden's narrow win in that State. American constitutional and legal experts believe that Trump's phone call was inherently illegal and could land him in trouble once his presidency ends. The

45th President of the US, ironically the man who is trying to thwart democracy itself, sounds increasingly desperate when he proclaims that he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency; the fact that all the 10 living former Defence Secretaries recently wrote in an Op-Ed that "the time for questioning the results has passed", notwithstanding. But as if matters were not bad enough, a whole host of US lawmakers and the Congress and Senate — many of whom owe their political careers to Trump — have said that they will try to delay the certification of the results. This despite the fact that Biden not only won enough US States to win the convoluted Electoral College, he also won a plurality of votes.

The 2020 US Election had the highest turnout in history and while Trump is right in claiming that he polled more votes than any incumbent US President in history, it was more a function of the higher turnout and an increased population. Biden won the popular vote by over seven million, having a margin of 4.4 per cent over Trump. Trump's attempts to overturn this election are a little different from the protesters' who cried "Not My President" when Trump won in 2016. Sowing the seeds of doubt on the electoral process, just like sore losers do in India when they blame the electronic voting machines, is the worst possible thing to do to build confidence in democracy. The US elections prove that it is a deeply divided country and Biden and his Vice-President Kamala Harris have a tough task uniting a country that talks in terms of 'Blue' States and 'Red' States. If the world is to look up to the US and not China, the 46th President has to be less divisive and become the Uniter-In-Chief.



PRAFULL GORADIA

Apprehensions have been expressed that the BJP's ideology will get mixed up, if not downright vitiated, by the entry of politicians brought up in alien thought processes. The probability of such confusion is very low for the simple reason that most of the new members joining the BJP happen to be Hindus. There would, therefore, be no contradiction between their own private lives and what should be projected in their public life and political expression. In contrast, if a person like me were to join, say, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) at the age of 50, for a year or two, I would not know whether I am coming or going; it would be somewhat traumatic.

I have been brought up in the belief of karma and, in the RSP, I would need to switch over and start having faith in a Permanent Revolution as preached by Leon Trotsky. Vladimir Lenin's favourite number two until he lived. This favourite leader wanted to go on with the revolution until he had converted the whole world to communism. If I read the *Das Kapital*, the Bible of Marxism, I would come across the foundational tenet: From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. These words are simple but the message behind them could take an average politician some exercise in mental digestion.

A similar challenge had faced BR Ambedkar who had resolved that he would not like to die a Hindu. In that case, the question arose, which religion should he and his many followers convert to? Babasaheb adopted the thinking method of *reductio ad absurdum*. First, he took up Christianity and rejected it because it was of a foreign origin; it would, therefore, have a denationalising effect on his followers. Moreover, by having more Christians, Ambedkar felt that they would add to supporters of the British rulers. Islam also had a foreign origin; more Muslims could mean greater support to the creation of Pakistan. Thus reasoning, his eventual choice fell on Buddhism.

For politicians, joining the BJP is like coming home; what they should have politically believed in, and are now believing in. If they are committed to secularism, they can continue down that path. The question of Church and State being separate or otherwise does not arise in the case of the Temple. Virtually every temple can follow its own ritual of worship; how can it then influence the Government? In any



case, Hinduism has never had a habit or tradition of dabbling in politics. State governance was the exclusive function of the ruler. But the fact is that since the early sun rose in the mists of time, the Indic ethos has been Hindu (or call it *Sanatan* or *Vedic*). That came through in the reasoning of Ambedkar as discussed above.

Traditionally, in the West, especially in America, the common folk identified all Indians as Hindus and then enquired whether one was a Hindu Muslim or Hindu Christian or Hindu Hindu! To them, the sound of the word "India" first rang the bell of the American Red Indian. Some Nehruvians might have been embarrassed but, most of the time, the identity of India has been Hindu. The birth of Pakistan intensified this trend.

The Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1915, incidentally after the Muslim League was created by Lord Curzon in Dacca (now Dhaka) in 1906 after inducing Nawab Salimullah of Dacca with a loan of £1,00,000. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh came into being under the leadership of Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1951. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) helped him with some full-time workers. In 1977, to fight the general elections immediately after the end of the Emergency, the Jana Sangh — like several other parties — merged with a new combine called the Janata Party. In 1980, the Jana Sanghs left this party to form the Bharatiya Jana Sangh; to start with, its manifesto was based around Gandhian Socialism.

The centre point of the party's ideology is "nation above all else". It is the anti-thesis of the

supranationalist communism. The Islamic supremacy of the *ummah* above the nation is similarly disapproved. Care as much as possible but even socialism is not favoured as it contradicts the faith in karma as the decisive influence in life. The Hindu view of life sees a contradiction between liberty and equality; the latter causes levelling down of liberty to achieve it. How can

one control anyone's better karma? Welfare for all, yes, but forced equality, no.

Imperialism and the exploitation of other countries are wrong. It is equivalent to robbery. Collective unity of one's own people in order to dominate others is wrong. Instead, the Hindu blessings are with those who strive to actualise themselves and, thus, bring out the best in themselves. Killing of animals and birds is not desirable and the Jains, in particular, are sensitive to the destruction of even vegetation that is grown below the ground. The worship of the peepal tree is symbolic of the Hindu respect for ecology. Most of the ills that one sees are the result of centuries of rule by others over Hindustan.

There is not a great deal of political or ideological literature. Nevertheless, Veer Savarkar first defined Hindutva or Hinduness in a single volume. It is valuable for those who wish to study the theoretical aspects of the ideology. After that, there is a volume called *The Saffron Book* and, it is reported, a book called *The Grammar of Hinduness* is under publication. It is noteworthy that it is the only ideology which is Asia's own, unlike all other political theories which are foreign or rather European.

Ideology is essentially a Western phenomenon, just as political science is a European preoccupation. In sharp contrast, we in India have so far to our credit only two theses on this subject: One, the famous *Arthashastra* written more than 2,500 years ago; and the second, published only two years ago, titled *Krishna Rajya*. Hindu India had only one history book,

Rajatarangini, by Kashmiri scholar Kalhana, which again was many centuries ago.

On the other hand, the European political parties are guided by their ideologies, which are many; beginning with communism on the extreme Left, to what is understood as fascism on the extreme Right. Take Britain, for example; only recently, Jeremy Corbyn was an extreme socialist. Earlier, there was Aneurin Bevan, who incidentally designed and implemented Britain's famous National Health Service. Harold Wilson, who was the Prime Minister, had the reputation of being a Leftist. Comparatively, Clement Attlee was a middle-of-the-road politician while his contemporary Hugh Gaitskill was looked upon as a liberal. Yet, all these men belonged to the Labour Party.

On the Conservative Party side, Sir Anthony Eden was a Rightist and went to war against Egypt in 1956 over the Suez Canal. Yet earlier, there was Enoch Powell who declared that "rivers of blood will flow in England as a result of immigration". Later, Margaret Thatcher was a Right-winger and anti-socialist. Even fascism, considered Right extremism, did not spare British politics. Sir Oswald Mosley, a son-in-law of Lord Curzon, openly admitted to being a fascist. Despite all these differences in ideology, leaders — even eminent ones — occasionally did change their parties. Winston Churchill, who was looked upon as a dire conservative, had for a few years crossed over to the Liberal Party.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

We will have to adopt the BJP model but with slight change. We need to accommodate Hindutva philosophy also. We will form 10-member committees at all booths.



JD(S) leader
HD Kumaraswamy

It is the triumph of justice. I commend England's action because WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is a journalist and he deserves a chance. We will give him protection.



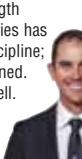
Mexican President
Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

Reality shows can be a great starting point. It was a great experience for me as well. Having said that, I did have to establish my solo career on my own. I think it's a great stepping stone.



Singer
Neha Bhasin

India...their greatest strength over the last couple of series has been their (bowling's) discipline; they have been so disciplined. Ashwin is bowling very well.



Australia coach
Justin Langer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jab safety concerns

Sir — The approval for emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines has been given only on the basis of safety data which have not yet been made public. Any doubts regarding the safety and efficacy of the vaccines will adversely affect the proposed large-scale vaccination programme.

Such doubts regarding the lack of transparency and reasoning in the approval process have raised many eyebrows. The minutes of the meeting of the Subject Expert Committee are also not in the public domain. In such a situation, people are apprehensive because of the hurry and opacity in rolling out the vaccine when data from the phase III trials are perhaps no more than a few weeks away.

In other countries, top political leaders, including the US President-elect and the Vice President-elect, have taken the jab in public to inspire confidence among people. Similarly, our Prime Minister should also instill confidence among the people by taking the dose of the Covaxin in its approved trial mode.

Shovanlal Chakraborty
Kolkata

It's time to abolish Legislative Councils

The State Legislative Councils or Vidhan Parishads should be abolished as they are just white elephants and nothing more than a rehabilitation centre for politicians and their favourites. The Vidhan Parishads (Upper Houses) have turned out to be a huge burden on the exchequer and become a refuge for the politicians who lose in the elections.

The practice of horse-trading is common in the States having bicameral legislature. The Vidhan Parishads were gradually abolished by many States after Independence. The existence of a State Legislative Council has proved to be politically controversial and a number of States, that have had their Upper House dissolved, have subsequently requested for its re-establishment. As of now, only six out of 28 States have a State Legislative Council. There is rampant misuse of the Vidhan Parishads for political and personal favours in States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka. Moreover, the State Legislative Council plays no role in the passage of the money Bills.

Similar demands have also been raised in Britain for abolishing the House of Lords; yet the Upper House



of Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha, must be retained as it still serves some fruitful purpose. However, stringent rules regarding the attendance of members, their medical fitness and against the misuse of money and power should be enforced. Our democracy cannot let the Rajya Sabha become a club of billionaires and celebrities. Those who have lost elections to the Lok Sabha or Assemblies must not be allowed to become members of the Rajya Sabha for the next six years.

Madhu Agarwal
Delhi

Need to be cautious

Sir — It is heartening to know that all the players involved in the restaurant episode have tested negative for COVID-19. The Indian cricket team has been under scrutiny of the Australian media ever since a video surfaced of five Indian players dining inside a Melbourne restaurant on Friday.

Team India is already facing many problems with injuries to its bowlers like Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav, who have been declared unfit to play the rest of the Test series.

Virat Kohli, who was on paternity leave after the Melbourne Test, is also not available for the remainder of the series. There is already a lot of

hue and cry regarding the fourth Test and quarantine rules have been imposed in Brisbane. Already, much of the sporting activity has been lost to the pandemic. Hence, it is the responsibility of all the players to act more responsibly and not breach the bio-secure bubble.

V Nagendra Kumar
Hyderabad

Let the birds live

Sir — It is really heart-wrenching to see the pictures and videos of hundreds of birds lying dead on the roads and pavements of Rome, Italy. The deaths occurred due to firework displays on New Year's eve.

Animal rights groups have called it a massacre. Many are of the opinion that the birds died after getting knocked against one another or they hit the electric lines and windows out of fear.

Not only in Rome but even in India and elsewhere, we see animals and birds panicking and running haphazardly during such displays of firework.

The birds are an integral part of the food chain and food web and their mass destruction will disrupt the balance of nature. Once disturbed, this balance is hard to restore.

Animal rights organisations and Governments across the globe must take urgent measures to prevent such incidents in future and should create more awareness among citizens.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Stock markets in for a rough ride

The new year is full of hope. Investors expect this sentiment to be mirrored on the bourses but they might end up being disappointed



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The year 2020 was one of lost lives, livelihoods, businesses and shattered economies. However, the new year has brought the hope that the march of the virus would be contained through mass inoculation and result in the global economy recovering from the onslaught of the contagion. Usually, fiscal recovery is led by a revival in the stock markets and the bourses show improvement much before the actual economic upturn. This is because stock prices are forward-looking and investors buy scrip based on their expectations of the future and not on past data or present information. So what do the bourses have in store for us this year?

Both the benchmark indices, Nifty 50 and the BSE Sensex, started the year with a bang, ending on record highs with Nifty 50 ending above the 14,000 mark and the BSE Sensex above the 48,800 levels. The sentiment was boosted by the expectation of economic revival. So, will the markets continue to rise further? Since the pandemic broke out in India at the end of March 2020, the Nifty 50 rose to double its level from 7,500 to above 14,000 as on January 1. In the US, the NASDAQ Composite index, too, rose from the 7,000 range in March 2020 to almost touch the 13,000 mark on the last day of the year. Nikkei 225, the benchmark index of Japan too, showed the same trend and gained 66 per cent to reach the 27,444 mark at the end of the year. This worldwide phenomenon of continuous stock market rise during the most difficult times in living memory shows that the bourses have already incorporated and priced in the news of positive results of the COVID-19 vaccination and earnings revival.

A trendline typically confirms the direction of the market by connecting the troughs and the peaks. An upward trend connects all the troughs and creates a support line. The strength of this upward trend and the support line is tested by the numerous times it is able to stop a price breach. Historically, looking at the last 10 years, there has been an overall primary uptrend in the Nifty 50 from the level of 2,700 in 2009 to 12,000 in January 2020, with minor secondary downturns in 2010-2011 and 2015-2016. After a steep drop in March 2020, Nifty 50 started another uptrend which lasted the entire year. At the current levels of above 14,000, the sentiment still remains bullish and there is a strong possibility of the markets moving past 14,500 in the near future. However, the upward trend during the last year shows that all the positive news about economic revival have already been reflected in the prices. On the downturn, Nifty may find support levels in the range of 11,000-13,000.

Options are considered information channels for the markets, which eventually result in stock price changes. As options markets are the preferred trading markets for informed investors, volume and open interest play an important role as predictive tools to forecast the movement of the underlying stocks as they can develop an early earning mechanism for any market crisis. They also represent the strength and potential of price change of the underlying asset. Therefore, an important indicator to consider is the put-call options volume ratio.

This contrarian-sentiment investment measure is one of the most important tools to predict the market's direction by tracking the daily and weekly volume of puts and calls in the stock market and gauging the sentiments of the investors. Puts are generally bought as an insurance against a market decline, whereas calls are bought as a directional bet for bullish markets. So when put volume increases, expectation of the market decline increases and when call volume increases, expectation of market uptrend increases. The put-call ratio for the options in Nifty with various expiry dates from January to February this year is increasing steadily, from 1.17 for Nifty options expiring on January 7 to two for Nifty options expiring on February 4. This shows that the put options volume is steadily increasing, showing a possibility of a short-term downtrend.

The new year is full of expectation of positivity and hope. Investors expect this sentiment to be reflected in the stock markets but they have to understand that bourses are leading indicators and last year's rally has already incorporated the economic revival. The uptrend may continue till the 14,000-15,000 levels. However, these levels have a psychological barrier and we may see a market correction soon. Support levels can come in the range of 11,000-13,000. The new year may not see just an uptrend but would also witness some profit booking. Any downtrend due to profit booking could be an opportunity for people to invest for the long-term. This year could also see increased earnings as most of the companies were able to reduce their operating costs last year during the pandemic. This may help them to increase their earnings this year. A revival of earnings would go a long way in improving stock market returns. Overall, there is hope for economic revival this year. However, since the information has already been reflected in the stocks last year, this year the markets may see a bumpy ride.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)

THESE JUMBO COMMITTEES SERVE NO PURPOSE. 32 VPS, 57 GS, 104 SECRETARIES. NONE WILL HAVE ANY AUTHORITY WHICH MEANS NO ACCOUNTABILITY.

—CONGRESS MP
KARTI CHIDAMBARAM

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



MANY HARD-WORKING PEOPLE HAVE MADE IT TO THE COMMITTEE. THOSE (WHO) BECAME MPs BECAUSE OF THEIR FATHER DON'T UNDERSTAND.

—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY IN TN
K MAHENDRAN

Much ado about NPAs

There might be a delay, some re-scheduling or loan restructuring may be required but eventually the bank will get its money back with interest. There is no need to panic



SUBHASH PANDEY

As we step into the new decade, the woes of the last decade seem to have spilled over into the new one, especially where the beleaguered banking sector is concerned. According to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) estimates, the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPAs) of banks may increase from 8.5 per cent in March 2020 to 12.5 per cent by March this year. For public sector banks (PSBs), the deterioration is estimated to be more problematic and the GNPAs could be anywhere between 11.3 to 15.2 per cent under the "baseline scenario." Some Cassandras warn that the situation could be worse. Their relentless scaremongering could potentially hurt economic revival that requires a major increase in bank lending.

In December 2020, scheduled commercial banks had total outstanding deposits of ₹145,91,773 crore while their outstanding loans and advances added up to only ₹105,04,536 crore. A bank's primary function is to lend against deposits and earn enough to make profits after servicing deposits. Data show that banks have enough money to lend more and they must be helped to give more loans. However, a lot of good borrowers are out of the banking net. Banks no doubt face certain risks especially in the prevailing situation due to the pandemic but there is no need to panic. But first, we need to answer the question, what is an NPA? For a bank, an NPA is the amount of loan or an advance for which repayment of any due instalment of principal or due amount of interest is not cleared within 90 days of the "due date." Interestingly, for agricultural loans it is "within two crop seasons for short duration crops" or within "one crop season for long duration crops."

If default of payment continues beyond one year of the due date, the NPA is called "Substandard Assets." If a NPA default continues beyond two years of the due date the NPA is called "Doubtful Assets." If auditors find that the NPA is due to an incurable default, they classify it as "Loss Assets." Does anyone expect a business to always make a profit? The answer is an emphatic "no." Because this is an unrealistic expectation and every business will face a loss or just about break even, many times in its years of existence. This is because how a company makes its money depends a lot on external factors. Likewise, lending is also a business and a bank always runs the risk of a loan or a part of it or the interest not coming in. A bank hoping to lend money only to safe borrowers will not run for long because 100 per cent safe borrowers generally don't need to take loans or are disinclined to do so.

Past efforts for resolution of Stressed Assets seemed to be showing results because, after reaching a peak of 11.5 per cent at the end of March 2018, the GNPAs of scheduled commercial banks came down to 8.5 per cent by the end of March 2020. So the first thing to note before resorting to scaremongering is that more than 90 per cent of bank loans and advances are being serviced with a delay of 90 days at the most. It does not mean that the remaining bank loans where debt servicing is delayed beyond 90 days are a dead loss for banks because they have enough securities to cover most of these balance loans suffering from problems in debt servicing.

As a pandemic relief measure, all borrowers whose loan accounts were classified as standard as on February 29, 2020, were allowed a moratorium till August 31. This was done to ensure that this period was not counted in the 90 days' default period and was not classified as an NPA account.

INDIAN BANKS ARE NOT LENDING ENOUGH AND THEY ARE BEING FAR TOO RISK-AVERSE. BANKS NEED TO USE MODERN DIGITAL TOOLS TO IMPROVE LOAN SURVEILLANCE AND LEND MORE BY USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE CREDIT PRODUCT DESIGN, PRE-SANCTION APPRAISAL AND POST-SANCTION OVERSIGHT ON END USE



The Supreme Court had in September 2020 directed that no bank account should be declared an NPA until the disposal of pleas seeking an extension of the moratorium period. The final verdict on this is expected soon.

What perhaps escapes attention is that the concerns regarding NPAs or bad loans in popular parlance are exaggerated due to the conservative approach of the RBI. Banks are told to classify loans as performing or non-performing only on the basis of timely repayments of loans and interest, even when there is no erosion in the availability and value of the security or net worth of the borrower/guarantor.

The 90 days' default rule to tag a loan account as an NPA is a rough and ready, easy to implement, blunt regulatory tool. It indicates an income impairment of the borrower or liquidity risk but certainly not solvency risk. The "income impaired" borrower may or may not be "asset impaired." Therefore, if we create a new subclass of NPAs based on the 90-day rule, with an assessment of solvency risk, then it should be possible to refine capital adequacy norms and evolve a differential capital adequacy requirement for NPAs where underlying securities are not materially impaired. Betting on the banking sector's NPA level once the loan moratorium is lifted amounts to betting on the extent of the pandemic's impact on economic growth and on the incomes of borrowers. Such betting is not economics or mathematics but politics.

If the banks have enough security behind the loan they have given out (house, vehicle, gold, shares, bonds and

so on) and the borrowers are not all crooks, the loans will be serviced. There might be some delay, some re-scheduling or loan restructuring required, but eventually the bank will get its money back, with interest. There is no need to press the panic button. Heavens will not fall merely because some loans, interest or equated monthly instalments (EMIs) are not paid within 90 days of the due date.

The Government and the RBI have to take some steps to see that the loans and advances of good borrowers are properly restructured and the debt recovery process becomes efficient in terms of time and value recovered. Banks need to raise additional capital to meet regulatory requirements, depending upon what kind of NPAs emerge. Banks also need liquidity support to service the deposits during the period the borrowers face liquidity problems but have sufficient assets to cover their loan liability.

Every code and every rule book has enabling clauses to deal with exceptional situations. Rules of normal times don't apply in abnormal times. The pandemic is the time to invoke these exceptional powers to fine-tune the regulatory policy on recognition of a bad loan and the level of additional capital needed by banks to cover definite loss from irrecoverable loans due to the lack and erosion of underlying securities.

The impact of the contagion on the economy is temporary and low inflation has softened what would have otherwise been a harder blow. Assessments and perceptions about population segment-wise distribution of pain may vary according to commentators but it is abundantly clear that at an aggregate level, the nation will recover from the crisis fast enough. A high recovery and low fatality rate, fast resumption of eco-

nomics activity in several sectors, both formal and informal, as evidenced by several high frequency indicators, are very good signs. Hence, loan servicing will happen albeit with some delay.

By and large, Indian banks are pretty conservative and most of the loans are heavily secured, backed by good valuable securities. The problem comes in enforcing the security because the legal system does not allow it so easily. What we need is a system of vigilance and diligence on the assets mortgaged for the loans and advances. The genuineness and continued existence of assets must be watched and digital tools can be deployed for this.

There is no harm in giving borrowers providing adequate security an extended moratorium. But what we need is a system that will protect the banks' securities during the moratorium period so that these are not diluted or alienated or encumbered further. We require a robust system of oversight on these securities. This is particularly so for small borrowers below ₹2 crore who have been helped by the Government based on the Rajiv Mehrishi Committee report.

In India, the credit-to-GDP ratio is just 50 per cent. Many good borrowers like households and businesses depend on informal channels of finance. Indian banks are not lending enough and they are being far too risk-averse. Banks need to use modern digital tools to improve loan surveillance and lend more by using digital technologies to improve credit product design, pre-sanction appraisal and post-sanction oversight on end use. This will help boost the economy of the country in the long run.

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The views expressed are personal.)

Time to give a modern touch to an ancient skill

As a first step, professional institutes like the ITIs, polytechnics, NIFT and NID can start imparting training in *khadi* and handloom clusters



MONIKA S GARG

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government's decision to include a *khadi* fashion show in UP Day celebrations is recognition of the sector's role in inclusive development and its employment potential. *Khadi* and handloom fabrics are as integral to our cultural heritage as *zari* is to a trousseau. The *Rigveda*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* expound upon the art of spinning and weaving. Woven cloth, bone needles and spindles were found in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Block-printed fabrics, mainly of Gujarati origin, discovered in Egyptian tombs, exhibit demand of Indian cotton textiles abroad and their export since the 19th

century B.C. This tradition of excellence has been preserved by generations of skilled artisans and weavers. Today, the *khadi*-handloom sector employs over four million weavers and allied production workers. The textile sector is the second-largest employer after agriculture in India. However, the 2010 Handloom Census revealed that the number of weavers was declining at a rate of seven per cent per annum, the count of handlooms was dwindling and a weaver earned a meagre ₹3,400 per month as against the all India average of ₹4,500 per month for any other worker. With the next generation being sceptical and disinterested in the craft, the Indian handloom industry is on the verge of becoming extinct.

The need of the hour is to segregate the sector into subsectors and work on the strengths of each. India occupies an enviable place in the world as 85 per cent of the global handloom production occurs in the country. Other handloom producing nations like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia manufacture a very limited range of products,

which is mainly for domestic use. India has the capability to meet the demand for handmade products across the globe due to its demographic advantage and cultural heritage. We need to align our rich legacy with the demands of the modern era by incorporating latest designs. A *Benarasi* or *Chanderi* weaver can earn more if s/he contemplates the sari and diversifies into exportable accessories like stoles, scarves, ties, belts, bags and so on. This product development calls for a strong collaboration between weavers and designers. Another crucial dimension in the value chain is marketing, that needs to be understood, appreciated and exploited. Premium handloom products like the *Patan Patola*, *Baluchari*, *Jamdani*, *Ikot* and *Kani* need to be projected as niche products. With their unique designs and distinct weaving techniques, they should be targeted only at the affluent so that weavers get high returns.

However, this strategy is intended only for highly skilled weavers with whom designers associate. They constitute only 20 per cent of the hand-

loom weavers who produce 80 per cent of the high-value items. The remaining 80 per cent of the weavers would need to be dealt with differently.

Handloom textiles face a serious threat in the marketplace when powerloom cloth is clandestinely sold as handloom. As a layman cannot distinguish a powerloom product from handloom, the Handloom Mark is a guarantee to the buyer that the product is genuinely handwoven. However, there is a need to generate awareness among the people about the Handloom Mark. Something as simple as a one-line commercial during the daily soaps on television could be instrumental in enlightening the target group. Plus, only products carrying the Handloom Mark should be exhibited at Government-sponsored exhibitions in India and abroad. Apart from raising awareness, this would also ensure that only genuine handloom weavers derive benefit from the sales at such expos and Government schemes.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the sector provides

direct and indirect employment to over four million people, all of whom cannot be trained immediately to make intricate, high-end products. They are the durrie makers, the *gamchha* and towel manufacturers. They need Government support of a different kind. Apart from reservation of articles for production only on handlooms, they need subsidised yarn and credit. Credit is available to the sector at six per cent interest rate. If implemented in earnest, this can provide the much-needed working capital to spinners and weavers, apart from helping them in putting up facilities for dyeing, processing and finishing of hand-spun and handwoven fabric. The Hank Yarn Obligation makes it mandatory for spinning mills to produce certain percentage of their yarn in the hank form required for handlooms. The need is to strengthen the implementation machinery and ensure effective enforcement in the field so that every producer who manufactures yarn for powerloom or mill consumption, packs at least 30 per cent of that in hank form.

If small units in the sector have to take up spinning and weaving on a commercial scale, this would require modification of the workstations. They should be ergonomically designed to produce more and better quality threads and fabrics at a faster pace. They should be modular, easy to assemble and transport. A solar powered spinning wheel is the need of the hour. A semi-automatic loom could be a good solution wherein the motive power is provided by the weaver manually and various other motions are synchronised to obtain better speed and productivity. These could also be coupled with an automatic take-up and let-off mechanism. Technological innovations can create new possibilities for design development and the production process. There is a strong need for focused incentive schemes towards *khadi* and handloom research.

For both couture and mass producers, there is a need to generate a sense of pride with the occupation. Hand spinning as well as weaving needs to be treated as a modern pro-

fession. As a first step, professional institutes like Industrial Training Institutes, polytechnics, the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) and the National Institute of Design (NID) can start imparting training in *khadi* and handloom clusters. A NIFT or NID certificate will instill a sense of pride apart from upgrading skills of weavers and spinners. Acquiring these standardised, employable and marketable skills will earn them due recognition in the job market and society. In a world increasingly inclined towards standardisation and mass production, *khadi* and handloom provide a refreshing change because of their uniqueness, flexibility and versatility. The sector represents the country's traditional craft that has been patronised and promoted since times immemorial. We must never forget that the sector has been sustained by transferring skills from one generation to another and it is crucial to keep Gen Next in the profession.

(The writer is Additional Chief Secretary, UP Government. The views expressed are personal.)

Trump: Will fight like hell to hold on to presidency

Dalton (US): With mounting desperation, Donald Trump has declared he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency and appealed to Republican lawmakers to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when they convene this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Electoral voters won by President-elect Biden are "not gonna take this White House!" he shouted as supporters cheered at an outdoor rally in Georgia on Monday night.

Trump's announced purpose for the trip was to boost Republican Senate candidates in Tuesday's runoff election, but he spent much of his speech complaining bitterly about his election loss — which he insists he won "by a lot."

Earlier, in Washington, he pressed Republican lawmakers to formally object Wednesday at a joint session of Congress that is to confirm Biden's victory in the Electoral College, itself a confirmation of Biden's nationwide victory November 3.

Though he got nothing but cheers Monday night, Trump's attempt to overturn the presi-



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dential election is splitting the Republican Party. Some GOP lawmakers backing him are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans' faith in democracy.

All 10 living former defense secretaries wrote in an op-ed that "the time for questioning the results has passed."

Its unclear the extent to which GOP leaders in Congress will be able to control Wednesday's joint session, which could drag into the night, though the challenges to the election are all but certain to

fail. Trump himself is whipping up crowds for a Wednesday rally near the White House.

Vice President Mike Pence, who is under pressure to tip the results for Trump, will be closely watched as he presides in a ceremonial role over Wednesday's joint session.

"I promise you this: On Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress," Pence said while himself campaigning in Georgia ahead of Tuesday's runoff elections that will determine control of the Senate.

Trump said in Georgia: "I hope that our great vice president comes through for us. He's a great guy. Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much." He added, "No, Mike is a great guy."

One of the Georgia Republicans in Tuesday's runoff — Sen. Kelly Loeffler, who faces Democrat Raphael Warnock — told the crowd she will join senators formally objecting to Biden's win. The other Republican seeking reelection, David Perdue, who is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff, will not be eligible to vote. **AP**

Pence torn between Trump, Constitution

Washington: He has been President Donald Trump's most loyal soldier, dutifully backing the unpredictable leader through one chaotic situation after another.

Now Vice President Mike Pence finds himself in the most precarious position of his tenure as he prepares to preside over Wednesday's congressional tally of Electoral College votes, the last front in Trump's futile attempts to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the November election.

Seated on the House of Representatives' rostrum, Pence will bear witness to the formalisation of Trump's — and his own — election defeat, as tellers from the House and Senate record states' electoral votes.

At the end of the count, it will be his job to announce who has won the majority of votes for both president and vice president.

But Pence, whose proscribed role is largely pro forma, is under intense pressure from the president and legions of supporters who want the vice president to use the moment to overturn the will of

the voters in a handful of critical battleground states.

"I hope Mike Pence comes through for us, I have to tell you," Trump said at a rally Monday night in Georgia for candidates in two Senate runoff elections.

"Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much," Trump added, drawing laughs. He said Pence was "going to have a lot to say about it. And you know one thing with him, you're going to get straight shots. He's going to call it straight."

Pence has spent hours huddling with the president, staff and the Senate parliamentarian. His office declined to discuss his plans heading into Wednesday's count. But people close to the vice president stressed his respect for institutions and said they expect him to act in accordance with the law and hew to the Constitution.

"I think he will approach this as a constitutionalist, basically, and say, 'What's my role in the Constitution as president of the Senate?'" said David McIntosh, president of the conservative Club for Growth and a Pence friend. **AP**

Xi asks military to step-up training, combat readiness

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping has asked the military to strengthen training to hone its combat skills and remain on high alert as the new revised defence law expanding the powers of the armed forces came into force from this year.

The 67-year-old leader, who also heads the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) besides the Central Military Commission (CMC) — the overall high command of the two million strong military — signed the commission's first order for 2021, which listed priorities in the training of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed

Police Force (PLAF), official media here reported on Tuesday.

The order instructed the armed forces to stick to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guiding principle and uphold Xi Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military as well as military strategies in the new era.

It said the CCP will enhance its guidance over the military's training, urging the armed forces to focus on improving their combat readiness and continuing to reform their training system, state-run China Daily reported.

The first such order was issued in January 2018, when Xi addressed a massive training and commencement ceremony at a shooting range in northern China.

According to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post, Xi said the PLA must be ready to "act at any second" as the armed forces kicked off the year's military training and exercises on Monday.

"(The PLA must) increase the integration of new equipment, new forces and new combat realms into training and combat systems," the report said, quoting the Chinese president. **PTI**

Former head of China state asset firm gets death sentence

Beijing: The former head of state-owned China Huarong Asset Management Co Ltd was sentenced to death on Tuesday for bribe taking in one of the harshest punishments for economic crimes in recent years.

Lai Xiaomin, 58, was also found guilty by the Second Intermediate People's Court of Tianjin of lesser charges including corruption and bigamy.

Life sentences and suspended death sentences commuted to life after two years are frequently handed down in corruption cases, but death sentences without the chance of reprieve have become rare in recent years. Such sentences are automatically appealed to China's highest court.

Lai was placed under investigation by the ruling Communist Party's corruption watchdog in 2018 and expelled from the party later the same year. In its ruling, the Tianjin court cited the "especially enormous" size of the bribes Lai accepted, saying they exceeded 600 million yuan (\$93 million) in one instance.

In total, it said Lai collected or sought to collect 1.79 billion yuan (\$260 million) over a decade in exchange for abusing his position to make investments, offer construction contracts, help with promotions and provide other favours. **AP**

Pak SC orders reconstruction of vandalised Hindu temple

Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Evacuee Property Trust Board (EPTB) to start reconstruction of a century-old Hindu temple that was vandalised and set on fire by a mob in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province last week, saying the attack has caused "international embarrassment" to the country.

The apex court, which took notice of the attack and ordered the local authorities to appear before the court on January 5, also directed the board to submit in court details of all functional and non-functional temples and gurdwaras across Pakistan, Dawn newspaper

reported. The attack on the temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Karak district on Wednesday by members of radical Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party (Fazal ur Rehman group) drew strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders.

During the hearing on Tuesday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the EPTB to clear encroachments from temples across the country and take action against officials involved in the encroachments. **PTI**

Putin, Angela Merkel discuss possible joint vaccine production

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed the possibility of jointly producing coronavirus vaccines in a phone call, the Kremlin said on Tuesday.

"Issues of cooperation in combating the coronavirus pandemic were discussed with an emphasis on the possible prospects for joint production of vaccines," the Kremlin said in a statement.

The Kremlin added that an agreement was reached to "continue contacts on the issue" between the two countries' health ministries and specialised agencies.

The two leaders also discussed the settlement of the conflict between Kiev and pro-Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, that has largely remained at a standstill since peace accords were signed in 2015.

Both Russia and Germany

have recently started mass vaccination drives at home to curb the spread of the coronavirus and avoid reimposing nationwide lockdowns. **AFP**

Lanka to finalise pact to secure virus vaccine through COVAX

Colombo: Sri Lanka is all set to finalise an agreement to secure Covid-19 vaccine via the United Nations-backed COVAX facility, which subsidises the shots for 92 low and middle income countries.

The COVAX or COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access programme is run by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in partnership with developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers. **PTI**

Will redouble efforts to save Iran nuclear deal: EU

Brussels: The European Union says it will redouble its efforts to save the Iran nuclear agreement despite what it calls Tehran's "important breach" of commitments made in the 2015 deal by starting to enrich uranium to new levels.

EU spokesman Peter Stano said that Iran's actions "will have serious implications when it comes to nuclear nonproliferation."

Stano said it was in everyone's interest to rescue the deal and said the 27-nation bloc "will strengthen" its attempts to make sure all adhere to the commitments made in the landmark deal.

Iran began enriching uranium Monday to levels unseen since its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The decision appeared aimed at increasing Tehran's leverage

in the waning days in office for US President Donald Trump, whose unilateral withdrawal from the atomic accord in 2018 began a series of escalating incidents.

Increasing enrichment at its underground Fordo facility puts Tehran a technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the action was "fully reversible" if other partners in the deal fully complied too, without elaborating. Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency of its plans to increase enrichment to 20% last week. **AP**

Qatar ruler lands in Saudi for summit to end blockade

Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia): Qatar's ruling emir arrived in Saudi Arabia and was greeted with an embrace by the kingdom's crown prince on Tuesday, following an announcement that the kingdom would end its yearslong embargo on the tiny Gulf Arab state.

The decision to open borders was the first major step toward ending the diplomatic crisis that has deeply divided US defense partners, frayed societal ties and torn apart a traditionally clunky alliance of Arab states.

The arrival of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to the kingdom's ancient desert city of Al-Ula was broadcast live on Saudi TV. He was seen descending from his plane and being greeted with a hug by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The emir is in Al-Ula for an annual summit of Gulf Arab leaders that is expected to pro-



Journalists watch a large display screen as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, center left, chairs the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meeting in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday

duce a détente between Qatar and four Arab states that have boycotted the country and cut transport and diplomatic links with it since mid-2017 over Doha's support for Islamist groups and warm ties with Iran.

The diplomatic breakthrough comes after a final

push by the outgoing Trump administration and fellow Gulf state Kuwait to mediate an end to the crisis. It wasn't until Monday that the major step to ending the spat was announced. **AP**

SEARCH FOR MISSING

SAPNA

General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Namely: Sapna, D/o: Satender Sharma, R/o: A 1837 Phase II Metro Vihar, Holambi Kalan, Delhi, Age: 22 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Red Colour Black Pati Wali Kameez, Black Colour Pajami and Ladies Chappal in Feet** has been missing since 18.12.2020 from her house. In this regard **DD No. 60A, Dated 18.12.2020**, has been lodged at **P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi**.

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

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/689/ON/2020

SHO
P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27787592, 27787593 & 7065036324

The Executive Engineer, Bishramganj Division, PWD (R&B), Bishramganj, Sepahijala District, Tripura invites e-tender against press NIT No. 09/EE-BRG/PWD/2020-2021, dated, 28/12/2020

For Strengthening Of road from Gabordi to Kanchanmala (L = 5.90 km) under Jampurajala Block during the year 2020-21/SH: Granular sub base, metalling, carpeting and sand seal coating and construction of 3 Nos. box culvert (2.50 x 2.50 mtr.). Replacement of existing old and damaged culvert by providing (i) single cell box culvert without footpath clear span 6.00 m clear carriage way 7.50 m and clear height 5.60 m (ii) Double cell box culvert without footpath clear span (2 x 8.00 m) = 16.00 m clear height 5.60 m & some portions retain wall etc. under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure in 2020-21. With

Estimated cost: ₹ 16,90,72,701.00
Earnest Money: ₹ 16,90,727.00
Time of Completion: 18 (eighteen) months.
Last Date of bidding for bids: 27/01/2021 up to 15.00 Hrs.

For more details kindly visit: <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>

Note:
"NO NEGOTIATION WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH THE LOWEST BIDDER"

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Bishramganj Division, PWD(R&B)
Bishramganj, Sepahijala District, Tripura

ICA/C-2669/2020-21

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Rajender Singh So, Shri Budh Ram, R/o. Flat No. 3-E, DDA, UG Flat, Second Floor, Pocket-JC, G-8 Area, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110064 Contact: 981171679 Email: singhr7479@gmail.com, Allottee/purchase of Flat No. 3-E, DDA, UG Flat, Second Floor, Pocket-JC, G-8 Area, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110064, has applied for the conversion of aforesaid property Demand Letter, Possession Letter, Site Possession Slip, NOC for Water and Electricity etc. of the aforesaid property have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in police station date 30.12.2020. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address with in 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and can personally contact Deputy Director (LAB) Rohini, C block 3rd floor, New Delhi.

Metro Railway, Kolkata

Kolkata's Pride

EXECUTION OF ALL WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH PROOF CHECKING OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS, ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING ETC.

Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by **Chief Engineer/Con, Metro Railway** for the following work : **Name of work :** Execution of all works in connection with proof checking of conceptual designs, architectural drawing, detailed structural designs, construction drawings for underground construction of Double Line/Multiple Line, Station building and Subway beyond Bimanbandar Yard to New Barrackpore by cut and cover method in connection with extension of Metro Railway from Noapara to Barasat via Bimanbandar (Airport). **Tender Value: ₹ 1,64,79,407.26 (approx). Cost of Tender Document: Nil. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,32,400. Completion period: 24 (Twentyfour) months. Date of closing: 08.02.2021 at 12.00 hrs.** The tender document and other details can be obtained from the website www.ireps.gov.in. The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.

Abridged Tender Notice No.: CIVIL-2354-2020 (Open)

FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

KOMAL

General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo) namely **Komal D/o Late Sh. Babulal R/o W-101/R-17, Khazan Basti, Subzi Mandi, Nangal Raya, New Delhi Aged : 20 years, has been reported missing since 25.12.2020 from her house, vide DD No. 49-A Dated 26.12.2020 lodged at Police Station - Mayapuri, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-**

Complexion : Wheatish, Height : 4'8", Face : Round, Build : Thin, Clothing: green colour suit, purple colour salwar, white & chocolate colour sweater and black colour chappal in feet.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may inform SHO, Mayapuri, Delhi at **E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Tele No.: 24368638/24368641, Fax: 24368639.**

SHO : P.S. Mayapuri, Delhi
Ph. : 011-28116097, 28117644

DP/308/WD/21

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/Esst/Pre-Primary/Furniture/406/2020/3809 Date:05.01.2021

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed manufacturer of plastic moulded furniture for supply of Plastic Moulded Storage Cupboard.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/ Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Executive Director,
SSA, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /CF/3712/20

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway, Delhi division, New Delhi invites e-tender for the following work:	
1 Name of work	Mechanized cleaning and Housekeeping work of Group G stations (Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Faridabad & Palwal) of Delhi Division for a period of two years.
2 E-Tender Notice Number on IREPS	Sanitation02-2021
3 Date of Tender Opening	09/02/2021 upto 1100 hrs
4 Approximate cost of work	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
5 Cost of Tender document including 18% GST	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
6 Earnest Money Deposit	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender document can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
No:C-12/Sanitation/Vetting/Group G/2019 Dated : 05 January 2021 30/2021	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:	
1 Name of Work with its location	Replacement of failure prone/old Catenary wire (35Km.) 2nd phase over Delhi Division.
2 Approx. Cost of Work	Rs. 72,63,874.80/-
3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,45,300/-
4 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	18.01.2021 (00.00 Hrs.) to 01.02.2021 (15.00 Hrs.)
5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	01.02.2021 (15.00 hrs.)
6 Fund Allocation	29366203
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No.: 23-TRD-NDLS-2020-21 Dated: 05.01.2021 28/2021	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely **Sukh Bahadur Dari S/o Sh. Im Bahadur R/o H. No. J 11, WZ 50, Beri Wala Bagh, Hari Nagar, New Delhi Aged- 45 Years** has been reported missing since 07.10.2020 from his house vide **DD No. 94A Dated 10.12.2020** has been lodged at Police Station Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:- **Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5'0", Face: Round, Built: Normal, Wearing: Half pant, green-chocolate coloured shirt and slipper in feet.**

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing male, please inform SHO, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Tele No. : 011-23014046(Direct), Sd/-
011-3015229 & 23015218 extn. 210 SHO, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi
FAX No. : 011-230111334 Tel.: 011-25448885
DP/313/WD/2021 Mob.: 8750871127

Appeal for Identification

General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body **Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o: Unknown Age: 65 years, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Shallow, Gender: Male, Built: Thin, Face: Long, Hair: Black & White, ID Mark: Plaster on Right Hand, Wearing: White Linedar Shirt and Grey Pant Found DB-Block Road Opposite Mother Dairy Hari Nagar, Delhi - 110064 on 29.12.2020. In this regard,**

DD No. 06-A Dated 30.12.2020 has been lodged at PS Hari Nagar, Delhi. The dead body of the deceased has been preserved in DDU Hospital Mortuary for 72 Hours. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this male but no clue has come to light so far. Any, person having any information or clue about this male may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S., Hari Nagar, Delhi
Ph. : 011-28125719,
8750871128, 9818606025

DP/315/WD/2021

Sensex, Nifty scale fresh peaks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex defied gravity for the 10th straight session to close at a fresh lifetime high on Tuesday as robust buying in financial and IT stocks offset lacklustre global cues.

Persistent foreign fund inflows supported the benchmarks, though a weakening rupee capped the gains, traders said. Despite opening on a negative note, the 30-share BSE index pared all losses and staged a smart recovery to end 260.98 points or 0.54 per cent higher at 48,437.78. It touched an all-time high of 48,486.24 during the day.

The Sensex has closed at record highs for seven sessions on the trot. The broader NSE Nifty rose 66.60 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at a new peak of 14,199.50. It scaled a record intra-day high of 14,215.60.

Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 6.31 per cent, followed by

HDFC, IndusInd Bank, TCS, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Titan and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, ONGC, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, M&M and Reliance Industries were among the laggards, tumbling up to 2.06 per cent.

"Domestic equities saw a brisk recovery from today's low mainly led by sharp rebound in banking and IT stocks."

Continued improvement in COVID-19 recovery rates along with likely commencement of vaccination drive shortly and sustained improvement in key economic data defied weak global markets.

"IT stocks witnessed strong buying ahead of TCS' 3Q FY21 numbers...Key economic data for Dec20 have been quite encouraging, which along with likely commencement in vaccination drive in India have bolstered investors' confidence. Hence, domestic equities are likely to remain in buy on dips mode," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Rupee skids 15 paise to 73.17 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 15 paise to settle at 73.17 against the US dollar on Tuesday, in tandem with most Asian currencies as fresh lockdowns in Europe and rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East sapped risk appetite.

However, unabated foreign fund inflows and weakness of the American currency in the overseas market restricted the rupee's fall, forex dealers said.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened flat at 73.02 against the greenback. It swung between a low of 73.27 and a high of 73.02 during the session.

HDFC Ltd shares gain nearly 3 pc

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of mortgage firm HDFC Ltd on Tuesday gained nearly 3 per cent after the company said its disbursement in the individual loan category grew 26 per cent during the third quarter ended December 2020.

The stock jumped 2.78 per cent to close at Rs 2,651.15 on the BSE. During the day, it gained 3 per cent to Rs 2,658.55 -- its record high.

At the NSE, it climbed 2.84 per cent to close at Rs 2,651.85. In volume terms, 2.40 lakh shares were traded at the BSE and over 58.70 lakh units at the NSE during the day.

Approval of Covid vaccine lends strength to optimism on health, eco fronts: FinMin report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Approval of the long-awaited Covid-19 vaccine provides strength to the optimism on health and economic fronts, the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic report.

"The effective management of COVID-19 spread despite the festive season and onset of the winter season, combined with sustained improvement in high-frequency indicators and V-shaped recovery along with easing of lockdown restrictions distinguish Indian economy as one riding against the COVID-wave," the report said.

The new year, it said, has dawned with the approval of the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine and initiation of vaccination drives in various countries.

"This gives strength to the optimism on both health and economic fronts despite continuing surge in global cases and the potential challenge of a mutant strain," the Monthly

Economic Review for December said.

India, the report said, "has been successful in bending the COVID-curve till now, with reducing weekly/daily infections, rising recovery rate (now at around 95 per cent) and one of the world's lowest case fatality rates".

The downside risk, however, remains due to the spread of the UK variant and fatigue from social distancing guidelines, it said, adding the emphasis on continued observation of 'COVID appropriate' behaviour with the due exercise of caution and surveillance needs to be sustained.

Sharing improvement in some of the high-frequency data, the report said the sustained spurt in commercial and industrial activity was further corroborated by continued growth in PMI manufacturing, power demand, persistent improvement in E-way bills generated and highway toll collection rising above pre-COVID levels.

Monthly GST collections attained their record levels in December.

The gross GST revenue collected in December 2020 was Rs 1,15,174 crore, the highest since the introduction of Goods and Services Tax from July 1, 2017.

The liquidity situation remains comfortable as the accumulation of dollars along with the growth of currency in circulation are enhancing liquidity in the banking system despite the average daily net absorptions by the RBI rose in December compared to the preceding month, the report said.

The credit growth improved sharply as reflected in strong non-food credit rise and overall credit growth, thanks to the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), which continues to support robust credit disbursements to MSMEs, with Rs 2.05 lakh crore sanctioned to 80.93 lakh borrowers under ECLGS 1.0.

Amendment in Raj Senior Sanctioned Journalist Samman Yojana 2020

Jaipur: The State Government has issued a separate notification amending the Rajasthan Senior Sanctioned Journalist Samman Yojana 2020, Rajasthan Journalist and Literary Welfare Fund Rules 2001 and Rajasthan State Sanctioned Journalist Medical Facilitation Scheme 2005.

Commissioner, Information and Public Relations Shri Mahendra Soni informed that after these amendments, Rajasthan Senior Sanctioned Journalist Samman Yojana (Amendment) 2020, Rajasthan Journalist and Sahitya Kalyan Kosh (Amendment) Rules 2020 and Rajasthan State Sanctioned and Paid Non-Approved Journalist Medical Facilitation Scheme (Modification) will be 2020. He said that the above amendment rules will come into force with immediate effect.

Toll collection through FASTag in Dec increases by over ₹200 cr to ₹2,304 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toll collection in December 2020 through FASTags reached ₹2,303.79 crore in December 2020, recording an increase of ₹201 crore over the preceding month, the NHAI said on Tuesday. Similarly, toll transactions through FASTags recorded significant growth of 1.35 crore in December 2020. The increased revenue comes after the Government announced mandatory rollout of FASTag from January 1, 2021, though it has allowed hybrid lanes on National Highways till February 15 to avoid inconvenience to people. "Toll collection through FASTag in December increased significantly by over ₹201 crore to ₹2,303.79 crore, as against ₹

2,102 crores in November 2020," the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said in a statement.

The monthly transactions through FASTag increased significantly by 1.35 crore in December. "FASTag recorded 13.84 crore transactions in December, which is 10.83 per cent more as compared to 12.48 crore transactions in November 2020. Similarly, With more than 2.30 crore FASTag users, it contributes over 75 per cent of the total toll collection," the statement said.

It said the dedicated efforts of NHAI, receptive approach of highways users and other stakeholders has led to stupendous increase in adoption of digital mode of transaction at toll plazas.

Realty firms may witness margin shrink by 4-6% due to steel price rise

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Surge in prices of steel products that are used in the construction sector has an adverse impact on the real estate companies as these entities are now not in a position to pass the additional cost on their buyers and may witness shirking of margin by 4-6 per cent, realtors said on Tuesday.

The steel prices have increased at a time when demand for property is slowly getting back on the track with the government measures and low interest-rate regime, they said.

Price of construction steel or TMT bars had recently touched Rs 45,000 a tonne in some markets, which was at least 30-40 per cent higher than the rate in the pre-COVID period.



"The steel price rise is hurting the real estate companies as the property prices are under pressure. The additional cost will result in a shrink of gross margin by 5-6 per cent," Bengal Peerless Housing Development Company CEO Ketan Sengupta told PTI.

Real estate industry body Credai Bengal president Nandu Belani said the spurt in steel prices will reduce the margin by 4-5 per cent, which is quite high for the sector.

Govt to hold national voluntary online exam on cow science on Feb 25: Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday announced a national-level voluntary online exam on 'gau vighyan' (cow science) to be held on February 25, in a bid to generate interest among students and general public about the indigenous cow and its benefits.

Announcing the first-ever exam of this kind, Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) Chairman Vallabhbhai Kathiria said this exam will be held annually.

Students of primary, secondary and college levels and general public can take part in the 'Kamdhenu Gau-Vignyan Prachar-Prasar Examination' without any fee.

"For raising mass awareness about the indigenous cows among young students and every other citizens, the RKA

decided to conduct a national exam on cow science," he told reporters.

The Aayog has prepared a study material on cow science. The exam will infuse the curiosity into all Indians about cows and make them aware of the unexplored potential and business opportunities a cow can offer, even after it stops giving milk, he added.

Further, Kathiria said there will be objective-type ques-

tions, and the syllabus will be recommended on the website of the RKA. The exam results will be declared immediately and certificates will be given to all.

Meritorious candidates will be given prizes and certificates, he added. The RKA chief also mentioned that it has received good response from varities for setting up a chair and research centres on cow and related issues.

Michael Hwang joins arbitration tribunal looking into Amazon-Future dispute: Sources

New Delhi: Singaporean barrister Michael Hwang has joined the three-member arbitration tribunal at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre that is looking into the Amazon and Future Group dispute over the latter's Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Industries, according to sources. The other two members of the tribunal -- Albert van den Berg and Jan Paulsson -- were named by Amazon and Future. The sources close to the development said that with the appointment of Hwang as the presiding arbitrator, the tribunal is expected to meet soon and

begin the arbitration proceedings between Amazon and Future. The process could take 6-9 months before a decision is made, they added. E-mails sent to Future Group did not elicit a response. An Amazon spokesperson said the SIAC Registry has informed the parties that the arbitral tribunal has been constituted. Amazon had dragged Future to arbitration at the SIAC after the indebted Kishore Biyani group firm signed a pact to sell retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing units to billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance in August last year. PTI

PM to dedicate New Rewari-New Madar section of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor to nation tomorrow

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation the 306 Km New Rewari - New Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) on 7th January 2021, in Mahendragarh and Rewari districts) and Rajasthan (approx. 227 Km, in Jaipur, Ajmer, Sikar, Nagaur and Alwar districts). It consists of nine newly built DFC stations in which six are crossing stations viz. New Dabla, New Bhagega, New Sri Madhopur.

Section of WDFC

The New Rewari - New Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor is situated in Haryana (approx. 79 Km, in Mahendragarh and Rewari districts) and Rajasthan (approx. 227 Km, in Jaipur, Ajmer, Sikar, Nagaur and Alwar districts). It consists of nine newly built DFC stations in which six are crossing stations viz. New Dabla, New Bhagega, New Sri Madhopur.

Lt Gen Tarun Kumar Aich, DG NCC, inaugurates Republic Day Camp 2021

Lt Gen Tarun Kumar Aich, DG NCC, formally inaugurated the National Cadet Corps Republic Day Camp - 2021 at Delhi Cantt on 04 January 2021. The inauguration ceremony started with "Sarv Dharam Pooja".

1000 cadets, including 380 girl cadets with 500 support staff drawn from 17 State Directorates covering all the States and Union territories of the country are participating in

this camp which will culminate with the Prime Minister's Rally on 28 January 2021.

Speaking on this occasion, Lt Gen Tarun Kumar Aich, DG NCC, welcomed the cadets and congratulated them on getting selected for the most prestigious camp of the NCC. He advised the cadets to display the highest qualities of character, maturity and selfless service as well as the highest standards of discipline and conduct.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Indoor Medical Records of the patients admitted during period of 01.04.2013 to 31.03.2015 (financial year 2013-14 and 2014-15) are scheduled to be disposed of as per hospital policy. Any patient requiring his/her Medical Records may approach the undersigned within 7 days failing which the records will be disposed of without further notice.

Medical Record Officer
Kailash Hospital & Heart Institute
H-33, Sector-27, Noida

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Fakruddin@Fakru S/o Babu Deen R/o Near Halwai Ki Shop, Near Umar Masjid, Vill. Behta Hazipur, Loni Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P.** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence FIR No. 74/20 Dated 20.09.2020 u/s 356/379/34 IPC PS. Maurice Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Fakruddin@Fakru** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Fakruddin@Fakru** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. have been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Fakruddin@Fakru** accused of FIR No. 74/20 Dated 20.09.2020 u/s 356/379/34 IPC PS. Maurice Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 15.02.2021.

By Order: Ms. Gita,
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate,
Room No. 180, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/826/N/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING WOMAN



Poonam Gautam

General public is here by informed that this woman namely Poonam Gautam D/o Tarun Kumar R/o D-398, Jahangir Puri, Delhi Age : 23 years, Height : 5', Face : Round, Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Thin, wearing blue & orange colour printed suit, firozi colour shawl and black colour chappal in feet, has been missing since 24.12.2020. In this regard DD No. 92-A dated 24.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Jahangir Puri, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing woman may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in
Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Jahangir Puri,
New Delhi
Tel. No. : 011-27636000,
27631600

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI

4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

OA No. 814/19 Dates : 17.10.2020
CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA APPLICANT
VENKTAKRISHNAN D VERSUS RESPONDENT

To, DEFENDANT
3. M/S SHUBHAM KAMMA BUILDTECH PVT. LTD. 197- E, PKT, IV, MAYUR VIHAR, PHASE - I, DELHI - 91

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 50,49,285/- (RUPEE FIFTY LAKH FORTY NINE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIVE ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 18.02.2021 at 10.30 A.M. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar, DRT-II, Delhi.

MIDAS INFRA TRADE LIMITED

CIN: L65900L1994PLC02379
Regd. Office: 301, 2633-2634, Bank Street, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005
Tel: 011-42633934, Email Id: midasinftrade@gmail.com, Website: www.mtl.org.in

NOTICE

(A) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NOTICE is hereby given that the 26th Annual General Meeting of the members of the Company will be held on Saturday, 30th January, 2021 at 04:00 p.m. at 2633-2634, Bank Street Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005 ("Meeting").
The Annual Report for the financial year 2019-20 including the Notice convening the Meeting has been sent to the members to their registered address by post / courier, and electronically to those members who have registered their e-mail address with the Depositories/ Company. The said Annual Report is available on the Company's website (www.mtl.org.in) and also available for inspection at the Registered Office of the Company on all working days during business hours up to the date of the Meeting.
The Company is providing to its members facility to exercise their right to vote on resolutions proposed to be passed at the Meeting by electronic means ("e-voting"). The members may cast their votes using an electronic voting system from a place other than the venue of the Meeting ("remote e-voting"). The Company has engaged the services of National Securities Depositories Limited (NSDL) as the Agency to provide e-voting facility.
The communication relating to remote e-voting inter alia containing User ID and password along with a copy of the Notice convening the Meeting has been dispatched to the members. The Notice of the meeting and format of communication for e-voting are available on the website of the Company: www.mtl.org.in and on the website of NSDL <https://www.evotingnsdl.com/>. The remote e-voting facility shall commence on Wednesday, 27th January 2021 from 9:00 a.m. and end on Friday, 29th January, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. The remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the aforesaid date and time.
A person, whose name appears in the Register of Members / Beneficial Owners as on the cut-off date, i.e. Friday, 18th October, 2020, only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting / voting at the Meeting.
Any person who becomes member of the Company after dispatch of the Notice of the Meeting and holding shares as of the cut-off date may obtain the User ID and password inter alia by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.com. The detailed procedure for obtaining User ID and password is also provided in the Notice of the meeting which is available on Company's website and NSDL's website. If the member is already registered with NSDL for e-voting, he can use his existing User ID and password for casting the vote through remote e-voting. The members who have cast their vote(s) by remote e-voting may also attend the Meeting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote(s) again.
(B) BOOK CLOSURE
The Register of Members and the Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from Friday, 22nd January, 2021 up to Friday 29th January 2021 (both days inclusive).
By order of the Board of Directors of Midas Infra Trade Limited
Sd/-
Rajnish Chopra
Managing Director
Place : Delhi
Date : 04.01.2021

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

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET
(See proviso to rule 8(6))
Notice for sale of immovable assets

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s) / (Co-Borrowers) / Guarantors/	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Chander(Borrower), Tejpal (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002384207	Flat No.54, 3rd Floor Sec 34 Pocket 2, Block E3 LIG Rohini, Delhi 110085. Area- 345 Sq.ft.	Rs. 15,91,148/- (As on Dec 8, 2020)	Rs. 13,46,000/- (Rs. 1,34,600/-)	January 30, 2021 From 12:00 PM To 02:00 PM	February 05, 2021, From 12:00 Noon Onwards
2.	Bamdeo Mishra (Borrower), Shradha (Co-Borrower) LBNOD00002385629	Flat No.17, Block 85 4th Floor DDA, Sec 34, Pocket 2 Rohini LIG, Delhi, Delhi 110085. Area- 345Sq.ft.	Rs. 15,04,312/- (As on Dec 8, 2020)	Rs. 13,46,000/- (Rs. 1,34,600/-)	January 30, 2021 From 12:00 PM To 02:00 PM	February 05, 2021, From 12:00 Noon Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ notifiers are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **February 04, 2021** before **05:00 P.M** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005** and there after they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **February 04, 2021** before **05:00 P.M** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005** on or before **February 04, 2021** before **05:00 P.M**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "**ICICI Bank Limited**" payable at **Delhi**. For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 854874809/ 8657476284** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/ 9810029926/ 01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. **NexXen Solution Private Limited** 2. **Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: January 06, 2021
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work :
Sl. No. : [1]. Tender No. : M/6/NABL/Part-2. Name of the work : Consultancy Services by NABL as per ISO/IEC : 17025 2017 for C & M Lab of CLW, Chittaranjan. Tender value (₹) : 5,01,500.00 (Rupees five lakh one thousand five hundred only). Cost of tender document (₹) : 2,000.00 (Rupees two thousand only). Earnest money (₹) : 10,000.00 (Rupees ten thousand only). Period of completion : 90 (ninety) days. Note : (1) Complete details of Tender can be seen in the Railways Websites www.ireps.gov.in. (2) Date of closing of tender submission is 11.01.2021 at 13:00 hrs. (3) Contact No. : 9163340430. Dy. CMT/AD76 - 210 CLW/Chittaranjan

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EXPECTATIONS 2021

Consumer behaviour is evolving with increasing preference for personalised, round-the-clock and customised content that ed-tech platforms offer for the child's sustainable growth. YOGESH MAKKAR lists the predictions and expectations from the sector in the New Year



The year 2020 has been a significant year for the education sector. Though every industry across the globe has undergone a substantial transformation due to COVID-19, the way it has disrupted education and benefited ed-tech makes it worth to call 2020 a watershed year for the education sector.

To start with, the year saw an increased focus of education fraternity and governments on e-learning and the recognition that technology integration is vital to make education easily accessible, affordable, and personalised. Additionally, 2020 has been remarkable for ed-tech as it continues to disrupt the way education is delivered and consumed. There has been a significant increase in online courses, e-learning platforms, upskilling programs, and video conferencing tools.

Consumer behaviour is evolving with increasing preference for personalised, round-the-clock, and customised content that ed-tech platforms offer for the child's sustainable growth. As we enter a new year, let us dig deep into significant education system changes so far and expectations from 2021.

COVID-19 impact on education industry
E-learning is easily accessible, flexible, time-saving, convenient, and the best way to

educate the masses. The benefits of e-learning, its potential, and its approach are known to everyone now as both seekers and providers switched to the safe confines of e-learning during the sudden outbreak of a pandemic. Instead of buckling under the uncertainty of the pandemic's impact, the educational fraternity created a new space on the back of this unprecedented situation. According to NASSCOM, e-learning companies have benefitted immensely, and the industry is expected to reach \$3.5 bn by 2022. This is a significant rise from the earlier expected range of \$2.8-\$3.2 bn.

Emerging ed-tech a boon for learners and educators

In 2021, the ed-tech entrepreneurs' primary expectations revolve around improving the accessibility to education - covering a large number of masses from remote areas and promoting digital versions of textbooks that are cheaper to purchase. As e-learning can deliver education even to the outlying areas, it can help overcome challenges related to accessibility to education. Additionally, the ability to tailor technology as per individual needs is revolutionary for those with disabilities.

Further, the lack of teacher supervision during home tests is an issue of concern for par-

ents and educators. However, ed-tech can efficiently handle this challenge by helping teachers analyse data on how digital textbooks are consumed and enhance the teaching and learning methodology accordingly. Some apps let teachers conduct quizzes and generate immediate results, allowing them to monitor every student effectively and evaluate their progress.

Tech trends in education industry

With the incorporation of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality in the education system, the traditional classroom learning experience has undergone a tremendous change. It makes learning an immersive experience and incredibly useful to explain complex subjects; for example, it helps students view enhanced versions of the objects on their tablets, unlike hands on experiments in the lab. AR and VR are making unexpected changes in the education system by helping students experience something while reading about it. It will be interesting to see the advancements it infuses in 2021.

Further, gamification technology's adoption will gain popularity because of its unique and innovative concepts like incentive-based learning, likes, level advancement badge, etc. It will enhance the learner experience and drive user engagement by designing a more customised

offering.

Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Cloud-Based Learning are other significant trends ruling the education industry. Every learner has a different learning capacity, rate, interest, and tactics for grabbing information. The ed-tech industry is continuously and rapidly adapting to the learner's evolving behavior by analysing, understanding, and developing custom content and tests using big data and artificial intelligence. They will play a more prominent role in the future and help ed-tech form strategic associations with educational institutions. Additionally, cloud technology allows access to resources stored in a virtual environment, anytime and anywhere, from various forms of web-enabled devices. To offer enhanced access to learning resources, more and more ed-tech companies will incorporate cloud technology.

Summing up

The trends mentioned above will together help the education industry deliver the most relevant content and resources. Further, as more people stay glued to e-learning, 2021 is expected to be a year of exponential growth for the ed-tech industry.

The writer is Founder and Director, Kapdec

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.

— John Dewey

SRMJEEE registration begins

The SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, (earlier known as SRM University) begins the online registration process for its BTech entrance exam, SRMJEEE (SRM Joint Engineering Entrance Examination). Qualifying in SRMJEEE provides entry to all the campuses of SRMIST located at Kattankulathur (Main Campus), Vadapalani, Ramapuram, and Delhi-NCR; SRM University, Andhra Pradesh; SRM University, Sonapat — Haryana and SRM University, Sikkim. For further details visit www.srmist.edu.in.

Admissions to BTech programme is only through the common entrance exam, SRMJEEE 2021, which is scheduled to be held in the second week of April, 2021 in 127 Indian cities and five countries (Dubai, Doha, Muscat, Bahrain, and Kuwait). Last year, there was an overwhelming 1.52 lakhs of candidates who participated to gain entry to India's No.1 multi-stream university.

Entrance examination date and joint counselling dates will be announced in due course as per AICTE, UGC and Government notifications.

Candidates applying should have secured a minimum aggregate of 50 percent in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry/Biology for all campuses except for SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, which requires the minimum aggregate of 60 per cent in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics in Class 12 or other equivalent qualifying examinations. The admission would be based on SRMJEEE rank, subject to the eligibility criteria.

Indians and non-resident Indians can apply for SRMJEEE 2021. NRI candidates who qualify in SRMJEEE 2021 and those who also go through reg-



ular counselling will be treated as domestic applicants for all the four years. NRI candidates appearing for SRMJEEE 2021 can switch to direct admission under International Category in case of being unable to secure the desired course in the joint counselling by paying International fee. NRI candidates also have the option of directly applying under the International Admission Category to get admission to any program without taking SRMJEEE 2021 by paying the international tuition and other fees.

SRMIST has an enviable track record of 8500+ job offers with a top salary of ₹41.6 LPA, the highest pay by any university for the graduating batch 2019-20. Around 625+ Top-notch companies, including Microsoft, Amazon, IBM, CISCO, Siemens, PayPal, Accenture, Capgemini, Hewlett Packard, TCS, Infosys, Cognizant, Wipro, ABB, L&T, Ford, TVS, Schneider, Renault Nissan, Cerner, GT Strategies, Ford, Bioclinica, and Zifo among many others, visit SRMIST every year to recruit our students.

The university offers a wide range of scholarships to the tune of ₹35 crores making studying in the university affordable to all. To apply and for more details, kindly visit www.srmist.edu.in.

It's no rocket science to figure out that behind every successful venture, there is an extraordinary group of leaders. But you don't become a leader within a day. Great leaders come from varied walks of life. They seldom follow any specific predetermined path to attain leadership. While some are 'born leaders', the rest of them overcome obstacles and failures all along the way to become one. Leadership skills are intrinsic qualities that are hugely tough to cultivate and requires a struggle to develop.

Gone are the days where the boss gives instructions and expects his subordinates to follow them blindly. Modern leaders not only instruct but also listen, collaborate, encourage growth, and help the team members. These leaders work tirelessly each passing day to scale, empower, and uphold the prestige of their organisations. During a crisis, leaders remain at the forefront while directing their organisations to overcome the crisis. They take the responsibility and ownership of the organisation and do what is best for their organisations. They commence everything by changing their attitudes and building strength.

The significance of leadership in organisational development is simply unparalleled. Below listed are some of the fundamental ways through which leaders can support and uphold their organisations-

Leaders create leaders: Many people believe that leaders need followers. But the truth is that real leaders create more leaders and not followers. Modern leaders no more measure their influence by the number of followers they have. In stable

Be a true leader

Modern leaders not only instruct but also listen, collaborate, encourage growth and help the team members, says NISHA PARIKH



times, aligning the organisation around the vision of a single leader seems focused and convenient. Everything can be controlled by a single hand in the right direction, right speed, and at the right time. But in difficult times, the ability to adapt becomes predominant. The ability to change is limited to an organisation of followers. Led by a single leader, the team might find difficulty in adapting to new customer needs, new technologies, economic environments, competitions etc. On the contrary, leaders who create more leaders can quickly adapt to the change. In this way, the workload gets reduced on the leader. Increased pro-

ductivity, growth, and confidence is built assuring the well-being and growth of the organisation.

Visionary leadership: Leaders inspire and encourage team members in visionary leadership to achieve crucial yet rewarding goals and objectives. These leaders empower their teams so profoundly that employees figure out themselves the way to accomplish their unified goals. If a team is committed, they can accomplish incredible work. But if the team isn't heading in the right direction towards organisational success, they will be viable. Without setting the objectives or involving them in the process, no team can succeed.

Furthermore, leaders must assist individuals to associate their vision of the organisation and work according to the objectives of the team.

Leaders listen, defend and help:

The most important skill a leader has to master is listening. It signals the foundation of good relationships with employees as it clearly articulates that leaders truly care for them. The quality of listening determines leaders' quality of influence. Although it sounds easy, listening is a tough skill to master. Another significant skill is standing up for team members whenever they need help. By defending people, a long-term commitment, trust, credibility, and loyalty can be established that further boost the confidence levels of the team members.

Teamwork: Exceptional teamwork is the sole aspect that hugely contributes to an organisation's success. Leaders begin by forming a team of skilled people who perform the task like a pro. The second step that leaders ought to do is to make their expectations known. Assuming that each team member knows what exactly needs to be done is wrong. The most important step the leader should do is to encourage teamwork.

The writer is VP — HR & Marketing, Telebu

Future is bright

AI will be the catalyst that will drive growth cycle for the semiconductor sector. PVG MENON tells you how one can make a career in the field

Given today's rapid technological innovation, the semiconductor industry can look forward to growth. The semiconductor industry has been a pioneer in digitisation since its inception, offering digital services and pursuing new digital business models. Today, other industries, notably automotive, have clearly outpaced the semiconductor industry in terms of digitisation. That's ironic, given that automakers' own success in digitisation has been largely supported by the products made by the semiconductor industry. Now, artificial intelligence will likely be the catalyst that will drive another decade-long growth cycle for the semiconductor sector.

Many employers prefer that semiconductor processors have an associate's degree in a field such as microelectronics. These programmes are usually offered at community colleges. Students should take science and engineering courses, such as chemistry, physics, and classes in electronic circuits. ESSCI have developed many Qualification Packs in the field of Embedded System, IoT, VLSI Design & Verification Engg which can help the candidate in gaining the appropriate knowledge required as per industry demand.

There is an emerging trend of employers preferring semiconductor



processors to have a bachelor's degree in engineering or a physical science because of the increasing complexity of the manufacturing plants.

New semiconductor processors need on-the-job training from one month to one year. During this training, a processor learns how to operate equipment and test new chips. Manufacturing microchips is a complex process, and it takes months of supervised work to become fully proficient. Because the technology used in manufacturing microchips is always evolving, processors must continue to be trained on new techniques and methods throughout their careers.

While there are a number of career opportunities throughout the semiconductor industry, here are a few types of positions that we typically recruit for within the industry.

Field Service Engineer: As a Field Service Engineer, you will be responsible for quality machine installation and maintenance service of complex electro-mechanical systems; analytical troubleshooting of technical problems to component level; and performing complete installation, maintenance services, and technical reporting.

Equipment Technician: In this role, you will perform electrical and mechanical troubleshooting and preventative maintenance on semiconductor manufacturing equipment.

Test Technician: Test Technicians are responsible for mechanical and/or electrical testing of materials, devices, and products as well as test fixturing and general test equipment maintenance.

The writer is CEO, ESSCI

Accolades for Widhya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahindra University's e-Hub incubated Le-Learning start-up Widhya, is now a part of the fastest growing startup and innovation ecosystem in India, T-Hub. Widhya is an e-learning platform for students to get industrial experience without having to work at a company.

Widhya partners with various organisations, takes projects from them and puts it out for its learners to solve. What is interesting is that, this isn't traditional video-based approach that has been adopted by a large number of the e-learning players. Widhya is India's first real gamified platform for e-learning.

"We are happy that a start-up incubated by us at Mahindra University is winning accolades and is now being mentored and fast-tracked by T-Hub. We at Mahindra E-hub help students bring out proof of concept, mentor the students and showcase their strengths and opportunities to industry experts, mentors and investors. We work closely with startups to bring them to a critical mass at the beta phase with testing and trials, so that they can take off with ease once they get to the stage of formal launch. We are glad that in a short time, we've been able to help many startups and each success story motivates us to go far", says Dr. Yajulu Medury, Vice Chancellor, Mahindra University.

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham signs Mou with Esri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, ranked the fourth Best Overall University in India in NIRF 2020, has inked an MoU with Esri India, the market leader in Geospatial Information Systems, to establish a Centre of Spatial Analysis and Modeling with dedicated facilities for research, development and testing.

The Centre would pro-

mote development of specific skills and technical knowhow among academicians, students and the industry around geospatial technologies and latest toolkits like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and geospatial Big Data Analytics. It would conduct certificate and diploma courses, training programs and workshops, particularly around geospatial technology application areas to strengthen multi-hazard

risk reduction and community resilience.

Talking about the MoU, Dr Maneesha Sudheer, Dean of International Programs and UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development and Innovation, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, said: "This partnership aims to enhance research and capacity development in Geoinformatics, Spatial Analytics, and Modelling. The collaborative initiatives will work towards sus-

tainable development to address quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable communities (SDG 11), and climate action (SDG 13) by engaging faculty, bachelors, masters, and PhD students. They will help enhance the existing curriculum and educational material, as well as develop new educational approaches for effective teaching and learning of sustainability initiatives using spatial geoinformatics."

PGDM programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

JK Business School (JKBS) has opened its application for PGDM programme 2021-23. Candidates are requested to fill the application form in online format latest by January 30, 2021.

It is India's first B-School to have introduced business simulation gaming as an important criterion with a weightage of 20 per cent in the upcoming PGDM admission. It gives an opportunity to students to get

into the shoes of business professionals and analyse their analytical skills, thinking and problem solving approach across various functional areas of business processes. While up until now the section criterion of PGDM course was based on general aptitude tests, with the advancement in technology it is also about assessing the business acumen of candidates.

Candidates can visit apply.jkbschool.org/pg for more information.

The future of education is global, dynamic and in-sync with space and time triggered by unpredictable rapid changes that happen without interruption and notice, says
DR YP KOSTA



Anticipate and adapt

Given our present situation, the future of education isn't as dramatic nor so dark to predict. However, before we dive into the future, it is imperative to revisit how education has evolved over time.

Even before the transition into the industrial revolution, education has always been delivered within closed quarters. Initially, due to the lack of access to formalised schooling and higher education institutions, patriarchs transferred all knowledge and skills to their kin, while values and culture were delivered by religious figure heads.

To this effect, the family-surname evolved, attributed to the kind of work a family or a community did for a living. Thus, a social routine — a belief, culture, and value; was established.

Next came the Industrial Revolution — the age of mechanisation; involving machines, processes and men, advocating to work in a controlled environment, in a controlled way determined by the factory-settings. Industry reset the status quo as it demanded a fresh new outlook and skill-perspectives.

Industrial needs was the brain-child and revolutionised the concept of schools. With each key advancements toggling the reset

button - from mass manufacturing to automation to the present data-revolution. Each of them have changed the way education is consumed and assimilated.

Integration of digital tech is just one amongst the many weaves that constitute the future-education-package. The future-education is global, dynamic and in-sync with space and time, involving complex predictability, triggered by unpredictable rapid changes that happen without interruption and notice.

Future-education-continuum will need to account for anticipation and adaptability implemented at scale with speed. Incorporating these two attributes is really going to be the corporate-view on education. For example, educational institutions which could anticipate and predict volatility due to COVID19 and implement a digital first transformation strategy are leading in terms of threat mitigation due to the following social distancing and lockdown measures.

We predict the present model of classroom style engagement and knowledge delivery will reset to the performing-theatre-stage-model configuration, powerfully networked and synced digitally with data and holographic projec-

Universities will integrate and link with industries, research institutes and digital platforms to offer courses and programmes in a phased flexible graduation timeline that happens through credit accumulation

tions wherein video led community interactions to enable seamless training, skilling, exposure and learning experiences.

Futuristically speaking, student and teachers' age-bar may vanish as there has been a huge impetus on lifelong learning. Teaching will continue to extend beyond classrooms and institutions globally. A complex combination of students and teachers belonging to multiple specialities at multiple levels jointly affect education delivery standards.

As the delivery of education is portioned, in terms of knowledge, skills, and behavioural-experiences, and the fact that not all can be best taught by an individual teacher nor within the premises of a fixed located classroom; the students will need to be exposed to a wide ranging mentor network to fulfil the total education-competency requirements. Thus teaching methodology is distributed and so are institutions, universities and teachers.

Heavy investments are now being considered to accelerate virtual classrooms aided by AR and VR tech which fulfils these needs. There is also a huge scope of developing AI assisted teaching assistants which will aid faculty to deliver educational content more effec-

tively, thereby augmenting teaching methodology.

Social scientists and tech entrepreneurs also need to be roped-in so as to bring-in bilateral thinking, self and team management, and techno and economic-managerial concepts amongst learners and to sensitise them to the unique needs of the education sector and simulating genuine faculty-student relationships which are at the core of advancing an individuals learning outcomes.

Most universities will implement technological solutions to be deeply linked, networked and in sync to offer a more robust future and industry ready student, which considering current circumstances and uncertainty is required more than ever.

Universities will integrate and link with industries, research institutions and digital platforms to offer courses and programmes — offering in a phased wise flexible graduation timelines that happen through credit accumulation. Universities, industries and research institutions will jointly design and offer courses and programs and share human and other resources (labs, equipment and infra) to enable delivery.

The writer is Vice-chancellor, Marwadi University

'Schools will look and act differently'

Learning is set to become personalised on the dimension of speed of understanding, interest in different subjects and language of instruction, says **SUMEET MEHTA**

■ What is the future of edtech sector in India?

There are certain truths that won't likely change for the next 10-20 years. Core education will continue to be offered in schools but schools will look and act very different. There will be far greater permeation of systems and technology to make schools run effectively. Till about 12 years of age, mediated learning (learning assisted by a trusted adult) will continue thus teachers will continue to play an important role till high school but they will need to be enabled by technology. Going forward, learning will become more and more personalised. This personalisation will happen on the dimension of speed of understanding, interest in different subjects and language of instruction.

■ How do you see the new academic year for students?

The new academic year will signal return to normalcy in terms of time-lines. Schools in North and CBSE schools can go back to beginning their academic year in April 2021 whereas schools in West and South can start academic year in June. But when schools re-open, there might be still some parents who are hesitant to send their children to school. Schools should implement hybrid systems that enable both in-school and at-home learning, both in-class and online learning.

■ What is something that schools should do/ can be done when schools reopen post covid?

Before opening, there has to be a massive confidence building and awareness building drive among parents and the wider community. Schools should put in place measures for student safety, student well-being and hybrid learning. These should be communicated to parents via a dialogue. Parents should be given a choice and those who choose to keep their students at home, should have an option for at-home learning while understanding the limitations of this choice.

■ What can be done to curb the anxieties of the parents of class 10th students who will be writing their board exams?

The way our education system is currently structured, Class X still plays a disproportionate role on a child's future. Thus it is necessary that over the



Summeet Mehta
CEO & Co-founder, LEAD School

next three months schools and parents enable children to focus, practice and enable closer teacher assistance where there are gaps

■ What does the future look like with regard to NEP?

It is very important that we revive the development and growth agenda in education as soon as possible. India has to not only bring back all the students who have suffered massive learning losses in 2020, it also has to ensure it stays focused on improving the quality of learning outcomes in its schools. It will be easy to get busy with survival but true leadership would be to aim high, and bring back students to a new, better normal and not regress to 5 year old levels of poor access and poor outcomes.

■ What were some of the edtech trends observed in 2020?

Schools woke up to the reality that they are sitting ducks to any disruptive, unforeseen situation because they have been stuck with an age-old technology - paper. Parents woke up to realise that they had been paying for day-care when they thought they were paying for education. Online supplemental has rushed in to fill the value gap. Tuitions were always prevalent in India from the neighbourhood tutor. Online learning as replacements for tuitions, as replacements for physical or centre-based test prep has taken off like a rocket.

Smartphones and various educational apps have bought an unprecedented change in people's lives with what not! A smartphone has a world of its own. The flexibility and affordability of EdTech (Education Technology) affects not only the future of the child, but also the future of the country. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the education system due to the closure of schools and other educational institutions. Lockdown and these critical times have brought a lot of obstacles in the way of students' learning.

On the other hand, this pandemic has given the EdTech industry a fancy opportunity. As people get locked into their homes, online learning applications and

home-based technologies work as solutions to all these problems.

The advent of educational applications has made passive recipients of knowledge more active and involved students by providing access to audio, video lessons, images and even virtual fieldtrip. Applications enable students to solve mathematical equations, understand science in an interesting way, easily learn and retain historical information, and acquire knowledge that enriches their knowledge.

They have become omnipresent in classrooms, resulting in learning, test scores as well as attendance improvements. Allen Digital Classroom offers application-based learning and has found tremendous

MINDIT

appeal among students by providing study material in a clear, concise and easy-to-understand format.

It provides several high quality video lessons that can be paused and repeated as many times as desired. Also, students can take advantage of it by taking lectures anywhere and anytime of the day and also take the module if necessary. The need for technology has always found a place in education, educational applications have defined all the disadvantages and it has grown to the status it holds today.

Enhanced parent-teacher communication:

Learning technologies are instigated in several schools these days. This technology also allows the teachers to teach from their homes and further chat the improvement of the student with their parents. Teachers can appear to the queries of the parents anytime and anywhere through and make knowledgeable decisions concerning the child's growth.

Accessibility of online resources:

Online learning technology enables students to gain access to a large library of

resources, including books, PDFs, exam papers, and more. These resources help students in their learning process.

Promotes remote learning:

Online learning has prearranged the advantage of flexibility in the time and place to study. There is a convenience of using the study materials and resources at all times with the students. This further delivers independence to the students to study at their own pace.

Cost-effective: E-learning technology is more affordable. With access to all students, regardless of their financial and economic background, e-learning tools are available to them at low cost and provide them with quality education.

Live streaming of lectures: Online

learning applications enable students to participate in live streaming lectures by teachers and professionals. Students can enjoy real-time doubt resolution through the use of advanced technology. It provides a live experience of fine and quality learning in the comfort of their home.

Technology is everywhere. It involves our lives, making it easy and hassle-free. It has created a more comfortable environment than watching on a white board or a single screen where millions of children have been brought under traditional theological educational programs giving them unique opportunities.

The writer is Keshav Maheshwari, Whole-time executive, Allen Career Institute



received on email id mentioned above will be considered.
Application deadline: It is January 15, 2021.

The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) has consistently worked towards 2009, in partnering with Citi has been offering **scholarships to the young promising students who seek advanced training in the field of Hindustani music.** This year, scholarships are being offered for vocal — khayal/dhrupad and percussions — tabla/pakhawaj. The entries are limited to the age group of 18 to 35 years.

Eligibility: Candidate's bio-data will be considered as his/her application for this scholarship. There is NO separate form to be filled. **Age limit:** For khayal/percussions - 18 to 30 years of age (as off 1st March 2021). For dhrupad — 18 to 35 years of age (as on March 1, 2021)

Candidates who are beneficiaries of other scholarship/grant in the field of music during April 2021 to March 2022, are not eligible to apply. Candidates who are full-time/part-time working professionals at any company cannot apply. Professional musicians including those with A-grade from All India Radio are not eligible to apply

How to apply: In order to apply, candidates must send in their application (bio-data on music education) via an email to ncpascholarships@gmail.com. Applications received in hard copies through courier will not be accepted. Only the applications

The National University of Ireland Galway invites applications for the UG merit awards for the academic session 2021/2022.

An undergraduate degree programme in any subject field offered by the university.

Eligibility: You must be a Non-EU candidate, Must have received an offer to study at NUI Galway commencing September 2021 will be considered for these awards.

Supporting documents: Pre-qualification degree; Copies of academic transcripts and award; Certificates of English language proficiency; A statement; A copy of passport.

Admission requirements: Entry requirements may vary from course to course. Please go through this page to get more information in this regard.

Language requirement: The minimum level of English language ability acceptable for entry to a full UG or PG is IELTS and TOEFL.

How to apply: Candidates will be required to submit a personal statement (MS Word, 500 words max) covering: Your interest in studying in NUI Galway; How you foresee your relationship with NUI Galway developing in the future. How you will promote links with NUI Galway, both during your scholarship tenure and as alumni.

Application deadline: It is

TRANSLATION (ENGLISH TO HINDI) AT FLIP RETAIL

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671824
Deadline: January 14, 2021

VIDEO EDITING AT 7FRAMES

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671828
Deadline: January 14, 2021

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT VAYUZ TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671830
Deadline: January 14, 2021

ONLINE TEACHING (ADVANCED JAVASCRIPT) AT CODINGZEN

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671831
Deadline: January 14, 2021

CONTENT WRITING (MEDICINE AND NURSING) AT AUGMENT SYSTEMS

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹16,667 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671833
Deadline: January 14, 2021

BUSINESS DEV (SALES) AT VIBES

Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹5,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671838
Deadline: January 14, 2021

HR EXECUTIVE AT BUSIBUD

Location: Chandigarh, Jaipur
Stipend: ₹20,000-₹25,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6671836
Deadline: January 14, 2021

STUDY ABROAD

Take the start-up visa route

Students completing a degree programme can remain in the UK to look for work and or start a business

At Newcastle University, we offer many opportunities to international students during their studies and for three years after they graduate, whether they want to remain in the UK, return home or emigrate elsewhere.

We welcome the announcement that The Graduate Route is set to launch in 2021. This new scheme will offer an opportunity for students completing a degree programme to remain in the UK to look for work and/or start a business.

The Graduate Route will open in the summer of 2021 to students who have successfully completed a programme at degree level or above. Applicants must be in the UK with tier 4 or student route leave at the time of application.

Successful applicants at degree level will be granted

two years leave to remain in the UK. Applicants who have completed a PhD will be granted three years to remain in the UK.

A pre-requisite of the start-up visa route is that the individual's new business must be innovative, viable and scalable with clear plans for profitable growth.

Ravneet Kaur, graduated in 2013 with an International Marketing M.Sc. and co-founded tech start-up Equivatt with CEO Johnson Fernandes in 2016 after being endorsed by START UP for her Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa.

She and Johnson had previously been accepted onto the Start Up Founderships programme in 2015 to allow them to develop themselves and the business. "As an international student, founder-ships is one of the greatest things that happened to us. It was a crash course in how to be an entrepreneur and it helped us to connect with regional stakeholders as well as challenging us," Kaur said.

INBRIEF

NON-ROUTINE MATHEMATICS OLYMPIAD

U nicus Olympiads, first Online Summer Olympiad Exam, has recently unveiled Non-routine Mathematics Olympiad (UNRMO) for the students of classes 3 to 10. This new Olympiad has been designed to test the students' fundamentals and make them accustomed with non-routine questions in the mathematics examination. The Level 1 of the Olympiad is absolutely

free of cost for all and has gained quite a momentum in students since its launch.

Non-Routine mathematics examination enables students to expand their thinking ability, creativity, logical reasoning, analytical skills among others. Solving non-routine mathematics questions require students to figure out the concept to be used in a given problem and requires them to attempt

the question as per the understanding of the concept. There's no standard way to solve such questions. Students, when they consistently grapple with these challenging problems, they acquire essential problem-solving skills and the confidence to tackle the questions asked.

The Olympiad is a two-level Olympiad Exam and the exams happen in winters.

FREE FUNDAMENTAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

One of the most common barriers in pursuing upskill programmes is cost.

Even after having an option of education loan, people are afraid if they wouldn't be able to pay back the amount. Therefore, Careerera has announced the launch of free fundamental certification programmes which are open to Indian and foreign students.

This series of two-eight hours, depending on the program's duration, will cover key concepts introduced by industry experts. The organisation has a track

record of training thousands of professionals successfully via classroom and online training.

It's mission is to be the most preferred destination for quality education in the virtual campus and to demonstrate extraordinary commitment to every individual that it serves. It's programs are the most recognised programmes in the world with 100 per cent placement opportunities. You can begin with your enrollment procedure by submitting the application online.

IP VARSITY OPENS ONLINE REGISTRATION

As a final opportunity to non-admitted candidates of CETs & National Level Tests based programmes, the university has opened online registration for special offline counselling to fill up vacant seats in various programmes. Last

date of online registration for the purpose is January 6, 2021.

The offline counselling will be held programme-wise at the university campus from January 7, 2021 onwards on the basis of registered data of willing candidates.

Willing candidates are advised to go through the detailed notification in this regard uploaded on the counselling website www.ipu.admissions.nic.in and register online accordingly to avail another chance of admissions.

Rohit to replace Mayank in XI

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The Indian team management is weighing its options for the third pacer's slot with Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini in contention but Rohit Sharma is certain to replace Mayank Agarwal at the top of the order against Australia in the third Test starting at Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday.

While Agarwal's axing was only a matter of time after seven failures in last eight Test innings, the choice for the third pacer's slot has got a bit tricky with divergent opinions emerging on who could fit the role best in absence of an injured Umesh Yadav.

A few days back, Mumbai seamer and useful lower-order batsman Shardul Thakur was considered a favourite but it is learnt that there are some senior players, who feel that Saini, India's fastest bowler by a distance, could be used to unsettle the wobbly Australian batting line-up with his raw pace.

The Indian team had a net session at the overcast SCG on the day and all eyes were on Rohit Sharma, who looked pretty comfortable against both pace and spin.

The decision on the third pacer has been primarily delayed because on Tuesday, the SCG centre strip was covered due to overcast conditions.

On Wednesday, a look at the strip and the conditions will probably help them make a decisive choice.

If the conditions are overcast and there is bit more moisture on the strip, then Thakur is expected to be preferred.

If the track is on the flatter side, Saini, with his pace and ability to reverse the old ball, could prove to be a handful against a batting order that is struggling to put up even 200 runs on the board.

If Saini plays, it will be his debut in the longest format while for Thakur, it would be like a debut as he couldn't even finish his second over when it



was officially his debut two years back.

There is a third angle to the pacer's debate and that is Thangarasu Natarajan, who has had a meteoric rise in the past four months and is ready to be handed the red cherry in whites as his tweet after Monday's photo-shoot suggested.

Natarajan has 20 first-class games to his credit and his last longer format appearance was in January, 2020 against Railways on a rank-turner at the Chepauk where Railways were all-out for 76 and 90 largely due to the exploits of spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and R Sai Kishore.

Natarajan bowled a total of 11 overs in that game with three wickets. Whether Natarajan is ready for the arduous bump and grind of Test cricket is the biggest question.

India Expected Squad (from 12 in batting order): Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (cap-

tain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin,

Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur/Navdeep Saini.

WS EXPECTS CENTURY FROM RO
The Australian wickets suit Rohit Sharma's batting

Rahul out with sprained left wrist

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India batsman K L Rahul was on Tuesday ruled out of the remaining two Tests against Australia after sustaining a wrist injury during training in Melbourne, the BCCI said.

Rahul had not played any match of the ongoing series in which the third Test starts on Thursday.

"KL Rahul sprained his left wrist while batting in the nets at the MCG during Team India's practice session on Saturday," the BCCI said in a statement.

"The wicketkeeper-batsman will not be available for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as



he will need about three weeks time to recover completely and regain full strength," it

added.
It has been learnt that the stylish right-hander suffered a

style and if he can see off the pacers with the new ball, the Indian vice-captain can conjure a big century in the Sydney Test, reckons former India batsman VVS Laxman.

An injury during the IPL forced Rohit to miss a major part of the Australia tour, where India lost the ODI series, won the T20 assignment and the Test series is locked at 1-1.

"The Indian cricket team will be very pleased to have Rohit Sharma back, especially when Virat is not there. You want more experience in the Indian dressing room, because now is the perfect opportunity for us to go 2-1 in Sydney and then probably win 3-1," Laxman said on *Star Sports'* show *Cricket Connected*.

"Rohit Sharma himself would like to showcase his talent, because I always feel that his style of batting and talent is very suited for the Australian wicket."

"So, if he gets his eye in, if he sees through the new ball, I'm sure that a big hundred is on the cards as far as Rohit's batting is concerned," he added.

sprain while facing one of the three throwdown specialists at the nets and had to call off his training session.

For the time being, he will not be able to add to his 36 Test matches although Virat Kohli, before the start of the Test series, had stated that they were looking at Rahul as a middle-order batsman.

Rahul had accompanied the squad to Sydney and on Tuesday left for India.

He will head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for rehabilitation.

The injury also puts him in doubt for the four-match home Test series against England, which begins February 5.

Warner, Pucovski will play in Sydney: Langer

PTI ■ SYDNEY

A 'warrior' that he is, David Warner has done everything to be ready and is likely to compete in the third Test against India, Australia head coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday and assured that lack of four-day cricket for the opener in the last few months is not a concern.

Langer also announced that young batsman Will Pucovski will make his Test debut on Thursday.

Both Warner and Pucovski, who was primed for Test debut in Adelaide, missed the first two Tests of the series due to a groin injury and concussion-related issues respectively.

"Very hopeful that David will be ready to go (for the third Test), he is a bit of a warrior, isn't he? I have said this since day one that he is doing everything possible to be ready," Langer said at a virtual media conference.

"He is moving pretty well. He is very determined to play. He loves the competition and he loves playing Test cricket. We will get some final eyes on him at training this afternoon and we will make a discussion on that. But I would say, he (Warner) is looking very likely to play the Test match," he added.

Langer also announced that 22-year-old Pucovski, who was hit on the head during the warm up game against India A, has been cleared to play.

"He has been cleared by all the medicos. He has been cleared and that will be very heartening for him and for his family and everyone involved in it," Langer said.

Langer sought to allay concerns that Warner hasn't played four-day cricket for about 12 months, saying the immense experience that is behind the opener will help him jump into traditional format without any fuss.

"He has played a lot of white-ball cricket recently, a bit like Steve Smith. Davey hasn't played any four-day cricket for about 12 months but he is a master of the game. He has played a lot of cricket, his experience



will help him, no doubt about that," said Langer.

The coach said they will keep Warner in the slips to help him save energy though he may feel some discomfort while fielding.

"He is going to play with pain though and it is not so much in the muscle but in the tendon area. Like (a) lot of cricketers, who play through different levels of pain, he is willing to take that on and hopefully won't hamper him too much," he added.

Warner had himself last Saturday said he was "highly doubtful" about attaining full fitness ahead of the third Test, though he would possibly do respond to a desperate selection and team management's call.

However, Langer assured that if the Australians felt that there was any risk of re-injuring Warner, then they would have certainly not rushed his return.

"He has had a good rehab, as I said he might be little restricted in the field, he might get that area little-bit fatigued, because he hasn't played Test cricket for a while but we wouldn't take that risk if we thought he would re-injure himself," said Langer.

Williamson's 238 gives NZ big lead

AFP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

2nd Test, Day 4
Live from 3:30am IST
FANCODE APP

Kane Williamson underscored his ranking as the world's premier batsman with a masterful double century on a landmark on Tuesday as New Zealand took control of the second Test against Pakistan.

In between the showers at Hagley Oval in Christchurch, Williamson was in classic form, batting for nine hours 33 minutes for his 238 and leading New Zealand to an imposing 659/6 declared to lead Pakistan by 362.

At stumps, the tourists were already in trouble at one down for eight, with Kyle Jamieson adding to his five-wicket haul in the first innings by removing Shan Masood for a duck.

Should New Zealand win the Test it will confirm their ranking as the number one side in the world for the first time — to go with Williamson's promotion as the number one batsman — and keep alive their chance of making the World Test Championship final.

It was a relentless performance from Williamson who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries.

He should have been out for 177 on the first ball after the first of two rain stoppages, but as has happened several times in the Test the chance was put down — this time by Azhar Ali, who earlier in the day had dropped Henry Nicholls short of his century.

Williamson and Nicholls had rebuilt the innings after New Zealand were reduced to 71/3 on Monday's second day.

By the time Nicholls was dismissed early in the afternoon session for 157, the pair had put on 369, the third-best all-time partnership for New Zealand and a record for the fourth wicket.

Along the way his record innings Williamson followed Ross Taylor and Stephen Fleming to become only the third New Zealander to pass 7,000 runs.

The end came for Williamson three overs before tea when he skied a short ball from Faheem Ashraf and was caught in the deep by Masood. In four innings from three Tests in the past month Williamson has scored 251, 129, 21 and 238.

Nicholls, dropped on 92 and 133, was hampered by a calf strain which left him hobbling between the wickets.

But he was still able to attack, with boundaries producing 48 of his 68 runs on day three, before he top-edged a short ball from Mohammad Abbas and was caught at deep fine leg.

Daryl Mitchell clobbered 102 off 112 balls with Williamson delaying the declaration until the all-rounder posted his first century.



Saini's extra pace makes him better choice at SCG: Nehra

New Delhi: Former India pacer Ashish Nehra believes that Navdeep Saini should be the "first choice" for the third fast bowler's slot in the upcoming third Test against Australia because of his extra pace and ability to extract disconcerting bounce.

While Shardul Thakur and T Natarajan are also in contention, the former left-arm pacer feels the selection of Saini for the Sydney Test, starting Thursday, is a no-brainer if one goes by pure cricketing logic.

"If you look at squad composition, Saini was first choice and Shardul and Natarajan both came in as replacements for Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav," Nehra said on Tuesday.

"So if Saini was ahead of them during initial Test squad selection, I don't see any reason why he would slip down in the pecking order. You selected him first, so obviously you believed he was better than other two. Isn't it," Nehra, known for his plain speaking, said.

He gave his points as to why Saini would be better suited for Sydney. "Navdeep's biggest asset are



bounce and extra pace. This is a Test match. How does Natarajan normally gets his wickets? When people are trying to hit him. Also, you haven't tested Natarajan by playing him India A like you did with Siraj, who has risen through the ranks," said Nehra.

"Similarly, Navdeep has also come up the ranks having been on multi-ball red ball tours of India A. In Test

matches, batsmen normally don't get out. You have to get them out. That's the difference."

The white-ball games that were held in Sydney indicated that the deck was a flat one and express pace comes in handy on such surfaces.

"On Sydney pitch, you will require a bit more pace and Navdeep has that. There shouldn't be any debate as such. Sydney pitches what I saw during white ball games, it was very flat."

"So when kookaburra seam will flatten out after some time, you will, require that extra pace that Navdeep has and also he can get a bit of reverse swing," said one of his India's finest exponents of swing bowling.

The other factor is the current Australian team's inability to play short-pitched bowling.

"Also this Australian team is susceptible to short-pitched bowling. Navdeep can be used better as he bowls a mean bouncer compared to a Natarajan or Shardul." "His average speed is around 140 but out of the three, Navdeep is best suited to play the Sydney Test match." **PTI**

Saina unhappy with BWF curbs

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's Saina Nehwal on Tuesday lashed out at Badminton World Federation for denying the athletes, among other things, access to trainers and physios ahead of the upcoming tournaments in Thailand and urged BWF to address the issues at the earliest.

In a series of tweets, Olympic Bronze-medallist Saina expressed her displeasure at the restrictions imposed by BWF as part of its Covid-19 protocols for the bio-security bubble.

"The physios and trainers cannot meet us during the entire tour after all (all) of us have tested negative? @bwfmedia @bwf.ac. 4 weeks of this how is it possible to maintain ourselves. We want to play the tournament in good condition. Please sort this @bwfmedia," Saina tweeted.

With March being the cut-off date for Tokyo Olympics qualification, Saina is worried that the lack of proper training might have an impact on her performance.

The former world number one said she tried contacting the BWF, but to no avail.

"Practice only for an hour



everyday for the entire team? Gym timings the same ... Considering March being the important Olympic qualification period this is not good enough to be in good shape."

An Indian contingent is currently in the Thai capital to take part in the BWF World Tour Finals and two Super 1000 events.

In another tweet, Saina wrote, "No Time for warm ups / taping / cool downs / stretches. We are talking about the best players in the world competing isn't it?"

"We've spent a lot of money getting the physios and trainers along with us. If they can't help us then why was this not told before?"

Ings helps Saints beat Liverpool

AFP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Jurgen Klopp admitted Liverpool are suffering a "rusty moment" after a 1-0 defeat at Southampton extended the defending champions' winless run in the Premier League to three games.

Danny Ings's stunning second-minute goal earned three points which moved Southampton into sixth and led to Saints manager Ralph Hasenhuttl breaking into tears of joy on the final whistle.

Liverpool remain top of the table on goal difference over Manchester United, but have now played a game more than the Red Devils, who they face in their next league game at Anfield on January 17.

"That's a rusty moment we have to admit it," said Klopp, whose side last failed to win in three straight Premier League games back in May 2018.

A first league defeat in three months may hasten Liverpool's search for a centre-back in the January transfer window.

Without the injured Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joel



Matip, Klopp started two of his first-choice midfielders from their title-winning campaign, Fabinho and Jordan Henderson, together at the heart of his defence.

Southampton had not scored in their last three games to temper their hopes of a push for European football, but took just two minutes to break the deadlock in style through former Liverpool striker Ings.

Trent Alexander-Arnold did not deal with James Ward-Prowse's angled free-kick into the box and Ings perfectly hooked his shot over Alisson

Becker into the far corner. Southampton had key absentees themselves with goalkeeper Alex McCarthy missing due to a positive test for coronavirus, while Oriol Romeu, Jannik Vestergaard and Che Adams were out injured.

Fraser Forster was making his first Saints appearance since May 2019, but the former England international was rarely tested to earn his clean sheet.

The visitors could easily have found themselves 2-0 down before the break when Southampton substitute Nathan Tella was inches away from his

first senior goal.

If Klopp's men were too passive in the first-half, they started the second-half with the intensity they have made their trademark in recent seasons as Southampton were pinned inside their own half.

Sadio Mane was the visitors' biggest threat on his return to St Mary's as Jack Stephens made a last-ditch challenge to block his route to goal before Kyle Walker-Peters was lucky to escape without conceding a penalty for obstructing another burst from the Senegalese into the box.

Thiago Alcantara was making just his second Liverpool start since a much-anticipated move from Bayern Munich, but even the Spaniard's range of passing could not cut through Southampton's determined defence.

"I started believing we can do it in the 92nd minute, not earlier," said Hasenhuttl. "They are so strong in front you always believe something can happen. We had to have a perfect game-plan today and luck. Without luck against such a team you cannot win."