

**OPINION 6**  
PAKISTAN'S SOPHISTRY

**WORLD 8**  
INDIA CALLS ON LANKA TO MEET EXPECTATIONS OF TAMILS

**SPORT 12**  
KIWIS CLIMB TO NO 1 TEST RANKING

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## R-Day tractor rally rehearsal today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers protesting against the three farm laws at Delhi borders for around 40 days are fully prepared to take out a tractor rally on Thursday. However, the inclement weather, because of which they had deferred their tractor rally by a day, has continued unabated.

Even as their talks with the Government have failed to resolve the issues, the farmer unions on Wednesday said scores of farmers are gathering at borders for the tractor rallies on January 7. The farmers said the Thursday tractor rally is a rehearsal for the Republic day show.

Meanwhile, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSSC) has urged farmers to take out tractors parade in all districts of the country on January 26.

Several rural women in Haryana's Jind district are receiving training to drive tractors for taking part in a "tractor parade" in the national Capital on January 26 against the three new farm laws.

Women hailing from three villages — Safa Kheri, Khatkar, Pallwan — in Jind are learning to steer the tractor wheel.

Sikim Nain Sheokant, president of Jind-based Kisan Ekta Mahila Manch, said though some of the women can drive tractors in the fields for farm operations, they do not have experience of road driving.

"We want women to drive tractors on highway on January 26 without any help," she said. Sheokant said several villagers were also helping them out by offering their tractors and providing them required training.

Women are undergoing training at a toll plaza on Jind-Patala National Highway for handling tractor-trolleys on road. The protesting farmers have declared toll plazas "free".

"We are getting the training for driving a tractor for par-

## Rural women in Haryana receive training to drive tractors in Jan 26 'tractor parade' in national Capital

icipating in the tractor parade," said a woman who has been receiving the lesson.

She feels the new farm laws are not in the interest of the farming community.

"Several other protests also have begun in support of the farmers' demand. A sit-in has begun with more than 500 tractors marching into Baraut area of Baghpat district. In Chennai, a massive dharna was held and tribal protests are planned in Odisha," AIKSSC stated.

The body blamed the Central Government for not being serious about talks and solving farmers' problems. "In the 7th round talks held till now, we have stated we want repeal and nothing else. The Government too has understood that the demand is for repeal" and said it will have to undertake "further consultation". Yet, several Ministers and BJP leaders are putting a spanner in the wheels," they said.

"Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar had announced he will be talking to other farmer unions who support the laws. Already this exercise to manufacture support has been undertaken and has achieved very poor response. Taking cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP leaders from MP and Punjab have said demands are unjustified," she said.

"While Nitin Gadkari targeted the need to improve food production and feed India's largely hungry population, he attacked MSP, saying it is higher than market rate, even when the Government says MSP will continue. Ministers should know that India is host to 33 per cent of the world's hungry population," said the AIKSSC.

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Farmers on a tractor raise slogans during their ongoing protest against farm reform laws at Singhu Border in New Delhi on Wednesday

## No improvement on ground, SC says, posts matter for Jan 11

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After suggesting the Centre on December 17 to put on hold the three controversial farm laws and form a panel to go into the issues raised by protesting farmers, the Supreme Court on Monday noted that there has been no "improvement on ground" and posted the matter for hearing on January 11.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde said the intention of the court is to encourage and facil-

itate talks between farmers and the Government. To this, Attorney General KK Venugopal informed the Bench that "there are chances of the parties coming to some sort of an understanding".

"We understand the situation and encourage consultation. We can adjourn the matters on Monday if you submit the same due to the ongoing consultation process," the Bench said. The Bench was hearing a petition filed by advocate Manohar Lal Sharma challenging the validity of the

three farm laws. The court also issued notice to the Government on a separate petition filed by advocate Sharma, challenging the Third Constitutional Amendment of 1954 which included Entry 33, concerning food and essential commodities, in the Concurrent List. "This is one of Sharma's startling petitions... He says you [Government] have been committing illegalities since 1954," Bobde told Venugopal in a lighter vein.

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## 12 bird flu epicentres in 5 States identified

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

### Centre issues advisories to other States; over 69,000 birds culled in Kerala

After lakhs of birds died in several States and thousands were culled, the Centre on Wednesday identified 12 epicentres of avian influenza, or the bird flu, outbreak in Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and issued advisories to other States to contain spread of the infection in chickens, ducks, crows and migratory birds.

Over 69,000 birds, including ducks and chicken, were culled in Kerala while the Madhya Pradesh Government banned chicken supply from Kerala and other southern States for next 10 days. The bird flu outbreak has been reported barely a few months after India in September 30, 2020, declared the country free from the disease.

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying on Wednesday alerted States to keep a vigil on any unusual mortality among birds and to report immediately to take necessary measures as there is

As per the action plan on avian influenza, the Ministry has suggested the affected States to strengthen the biosecurity of poultry farms; disinfection of affected areas and proper disposal of dead birds/carcasses; timely collection and submission of samples for confirmation and further surveillance; prevention of disease spread from affected birds to poultry and human

Centre has set up a control room (011-23382354) in Krishi Bhawan to keep watch on the situation

The Health Ministry has sent multi-disciplinary teams to Alappuzha and Kottayam in Kerala, and Panchkula in Haryana

Bhawan to keep watch on the situation and to take stock on daily basis of preventive and control measures undertaken by State authorities.

The avian influenza cases have been reported in many States like Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat, while Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are on high alert.

"After confirmation of positive samples from ICAR-NIH-SAD, avian influenza (AI) has been reported from the following States (at 12 epicentres): Rajasthan (crow) — Baran, Kota, Jhalawar; Madhya Pradesh (crow) — Mandasaur, Indore, Malwa; Himachal Pradesh (migratory birds) — Kangra; Kerala (poultry duck) — Kottayam, Alappuzha (4 epicentres)," said the Ministry.

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Animal Husbandry Department workers gather ducks for culling following the detection of Avian Influenza (H5N8) at four places in Alappuzha district of Kerala on Wednesday

## Nirbhaya revisited in Budaun: 50-yr-old gangraped, killed

Prime accused priest on run, 2 accomplices arrested, Yogi orders sternest action

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a stark reminder of the Delhi's 2012 Nirbhaya case, a 50-year-old anganwadi worker was gangraped and murdered allegedly by a priest and his two accomplices in Budaun district of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday.

While the priest is on the run, his two accomplices were arrested on Tuesday night after the post-mortem report confirmed rape, police said on Wednesday, adding the woman's leg and a rib bone too were found fractured and there were injuries in her private parts.

The incident, which triggered an uproar in political circles, took place on Sunday and the matter came to light that night when the priest and his accomplices took the body to the victim's home, saying it was found in a dry well in the temple premises.



District Magistrate Kumar Prashant (blue coat) and SSP Sankalp Sharma visit the victim's village in Budaun district on Wednesday

ful". The CM has directed the ADG Bareilly zone to report back to the Government on the incident and action taken against the accused. The CM has also said that STF would be assisting the district police in the investigation.

The National Commission for Women too took note of the incident and decided to send a team of its members to probe the incident.

About the incident, Budaun's Senior Superintendent of Police Sankalp Sharma said, "The post-mortem report confirms rape and there are injuries in her private parts and a fracture in the leg." She suffered a rib fracture too, he added, citing the autopsy report.

The SSP said the station house officer (SHO) of Ughaiti police station has been suspended for "delay in informing higher authorities, laxity in taking action, dereliction of duty and failure in taking speedy action". Four teams have been formed to nab the priest, the SSP said.

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Petrol price reaches all-time high after oil firms hike rates after month-long hiatus

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price on Wednesday neared all-time high after state-owned fuel retailers hiked rates after a nearly month-long hiatus.

Petrol price was raised by 26 paise per litre and diesel by 25 paise a litre, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies.

After this increase, petrol in Delhi climbed to ₹83.97 per litre from ₹83.71 previously. Diesel rates rose to ₹74.12 per litre from ₹73.87. In Mumbai, diesel touched an all-time high of ₹80.78.

Continued on Page 2

## 4 workers killed, 6 injured in Rourkela Steel Plant gas leak

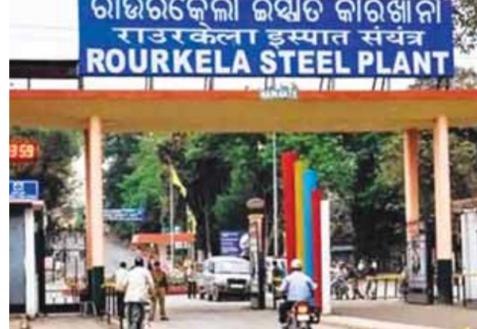
Kin of deceased to get jobs; two senior officials suspended; probe ordered

PNS ■ ROURKELA

At least four workers were killed and six others seriously injured following leakage of carbon monoxide gas at the Coal Chemicals Department of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) on Wednesday morning.

While six of the victims were taken to the RSP dispensary, four workers, identified as Ganesh Chandra Paila (55), Rabindra Sahu (59), Abhimanyu Sah (33) and Brahmananda Panda (51), were admitted to the ICU of the Ispat General Hospital (IGH) where they died while undergoing treatment.

Hours after the incident, the RSP authorities suspended two senior officials, Deputy General Manager Gopabandhu Barik of EMD Department and DGM Nabendu Das of CCD



Mechanical Department for their alleged negligence. Also, the authorities decided to provide job to one family member of each deceased.

While opening flange bolts of the gas line of the gas mixing tank at the site A of the plant, some entrapped gas gushed out affecting four workers of the contract firm, Star Construction, critically.

Meanwhile, a high-level committee has been formed to enquire into the cause of the accident. The plant is functioning normally, informed

## SC to hear pleas against religious conversion for marriage law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to examine controversial new laws of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand regulating religious conversions due to inter-faith marriages.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde refused, however, to stay the provisions of the laws and issued notices to both State Governments on two different petitions.

The pleas, filed by advocate Vishal Thakre and others and an NGO 'Citizen for Justice and Peace', have challenged the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020 and the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018 which regulate religious conversions of inter-faith marriages.

At the outset, the top court asked the petitioners to approach the Allahabad High Court after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that it is already seized of the matter.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

**POLLS FOR 12 UP MLC SEATS ON JANUARY 28**  
Lucknow: The Election Commission of India on Wednesday declared the poll schedule for 12 legislative council seats in Uttar Pradesh getting vacant on January 28. The term of 12 MLCs is coming to an end on January 30.

**DELHI'S AIR QUALITY TURNS POOR**  
New Delhi: Delhi's air quality turned "poor" on Wednesday due to unfavourable meteorological conditions, weather department officials said.

## Democrats near majority in US Senate

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democrat Rev Raphael Warnock on Wednesday secured a crucial win in the senatorial race, becoming the first Black senator from Georgia and bringing his party within the reach of a majority in the US Senate ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration.

Multiple news outlets on Wednesday morning projected 51-year-old Warnock, a senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, winner against Republican Senator

Kelly Loeffler in the Georgia Senate runoff.

He is the first African-American to represent Georgia in the US Senate. He is also the first Democrat to win the Senate race from Georgia in 20 years. The control of the Senate now boils down to the other Senate runoff from Georgia wherein Republican incumbent Senator David Perdue is trailing against Democrat Jon Ossoff, when reports last came in. The special elections were held on Tuesday.

Both President Donald Trump and President-elect Joe

Biden had campaigned for their respective candidates.

The 100-member Senate now has 50 seats for the Republican Party and 49 to the Democrats. The result of the Perdue vs Ossoff is yet to be called in.

In the event of both Republicans and the Democrats having 50 seats in the Senate, Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris is in her capacity as the Vice Chairman, who presides over the Senate meetings, would cast the crucial vote in favour of the Democrats.

## Shapoorji Pallonji emerges as lowest bidder for Central Vista project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shapoorji Pallonji and SCompany Limited has emerged as the lowest bidder for the Central Vista Avenue/Rajpath redevelopment project quoting ₹477.08 crore, which is 4.99 per cent less than the estimated cost.

Tata Projects quoted the second-lowest bid amount of ₹488.78 crore.

Continued on Page 2

## Covid-19 IN INDIA

**TOTAL**  
CASES: 1,03,95,221  
DEATHS: 1,50,364  
RECOVERED: 1,00,15,123  
ACTIVE: 2,25,454



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	19,54,553	49,825	18,52,759
Karnataka	9,24,137	12,124	9,02,817
Andhra Pradesh	8,83,876	7,125	8,73,855
Tamil Nadu	8,23,181	12,188	8,03,328
Kerala	7,90,883	3,210	7,22,421
Delhi	6,28,352	10,625	6,13,246
Uttar Pradesh	5,89,611	8,433	5,68,892
West Bengal	5,57,252	9,863	5,38,521
Odisha	3,30,921	1,940	3,27,008
Rajasthan	3,11,111	2,723	3,00,690
Telangana	2,88,410	1,556	2,81,872
Chhattisgarh	2,85,586	3,447	2,73,030
Haryana	2,63,887	2,934	2,58,281
Bihar	2,55,097	1,420	2,49,520
Gujarat	2,49,246	4,329	2,36,423
Madhya Pradesh	2,46,048	3,670	2,33,862

# Diversion on EPE today for farmers' tractor rally

PTI ■ NOIDA

There will be diversions on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE) during the afternoon on Thursday in view of a "tractor rally" called by farmers protesting against the new central farm laws, police here said on Wednesday.

The Eastern Peripheral Expressway also known as the Kundli-Ghaziabad-Palwal Expressway is a 135-km-long six-lane road stretch connecting Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. It passes through Gautam Buddha Nagar.

The Gautam Buddha Nagar Police said the tractor rally has been called by the Sanyuta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of 40 farmers' unions, and is scheduled to start from Ghazipur border in Ghaziabad towards Palwal in Haryana and back through the expressway.

"In view of this, vehicles will not be allowed to get on the eastern peripheral expressway



from Beel Akbarpur and Sirsa cut towards Palwal from 12 pm to 3 pm. Similarly, vehicles won't be allowed on the expressway from Sirsa Cut and Beel Akbarpur towards Sonapat from 2 pm to 5 pm and will be diverted," the police said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Police Commissioner Alok Singh on Wednesday inspected the situation along the Eastern

## 2 more Delhi residents test +ve for UK corona strain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two more Delhi residents have tested positive for the new coronavirus strain as a result of door-to-door medical check up of people who have recently arrived from the United Kingdom and those who came in their contact in the city, an official said on Wednesday.

With this, nine residents of the national capital have so far been found infected with the new coronavirus variant that has emerged in the UK.

So far, 66 people, including those who recently returned from UK and their contacts, have tested positive for coronavirus. Most of them have been kept in separate isolation facility at LNJP Hospital, sources said.

Sixty have been admitted in the separate isolation unit and rest in other separate wards. Thirteen of them have been discharged since December 29, a source said.

## EOW arrests 2 men for fraud

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested two men, including former senior manager of Bank of India for alleged embezzlement and misappropriation of funds of several people through fraudulent transactions.

The accused have been identified as Ram Pat Singh (62), who is a retired senior bank manager of Bank of India, Najafgarh branch and Amit Jangra (40), who runs a timber business in Najafgarh area.

According to OP Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, two customers of the bank informed them that there are fraudulent transfers from their bank accounts.

"On enquiry Bank of India found that money from both of the aggrieved persons were transferred to the account of Mani Traders. A complaint was made by the officials of the bank in which they alleged that Amit Kumar Jangra deposited the cheques in the CC Limit of Mani Traders," said the Joint CP.

# 6 from Mewat held for extorting money using morphed videos

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of six men from Mewat region, the Delhi Police on Wednesday claimed to have busted an "extortion racket" being operated from Rajasthan Bharatpur. Police said that the accused were blackmailing people, after contacting them over social media, in the name of edited and morphed videos.

Earlier, on October 4, *The Pioneer* had reported regarding the extortion and virtual sex racket being run on social media platforms such as "Facebook" and Instagram.

"During the activity, they will ask for the access of your camera or they will hack it. They will take your financial records from the phones or computer and they will take your photos, edit it or create an obscene photo and later extort you on the pretext of putting your picture in public domain. These cyber criminals will harass the victims due to which many decide to end their lives as they think that their image

would be harmed in the society," the pioneer report stated.

The accused have been identified as Waris (28), Rayees (22), Anufay Khan (21), Wahid (23), Muneef (30) and Akram (21), all residents of village Ishnaka in Bharatpur area.

According to Anshay Roy, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Cyber Crime Unit (CyPAD), multiple complaints were received in the last few weeks regarding an online extortion racket which was blackmailing people in the name of edited and morphed videos.

"As per the complaints, the victims were contacted over social media platforms such as Facebook through profiles of attractive individuals. The victims were engaged in a brief chat and guided to a video call over Messenger or WhatsApp. During the call the victims were shown an adult clip and their video call was simultaneously recorded," said the DCP.

"After sometime, they got extortion calls in the name of the offensive video made from the captured video chat.

Amounts ranging from two to thirty thousand rupees were demanded and some of the victims succumbed to those demands before reporting it to the police," said the DCP.

"Subsequent to receipt of these complaints, the matter was taken up for investigation and a police team was formed to nab the accused. With technical help the location of the accused was zeroed in to Bharatpur area," said the DCP.

"A raid was conducted and six accused were arrested. During investigation, it was also found that the accounts in which money was transferred were of Alwar, Rajasthan. The accused used multiple SIM cards in commission of crime which were obtained on fake identities," he added.

"Total 17 mobile phones used in making extortion calls and sex chats and two ATM cards along with bank account documents in which extorted money had been transferred by various victims have been recovered from their possession," the DCP said.

## 55% people above 60 years suffer from chronic disease: Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Around 55 per cent people above the age of 60 years suffer from a chronic disease, according to the wave one of the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) released on Wednesday.

According to the report, around 40 per cent have some form of disability and 20 per cent suffer from mental health issues. Also, 27 per cent of this population group, which translates to roughly 35 million people, have multi-morbidities. The LASI Wave 1 field survey, which was conducted across 35 States and Union Territories from April 2017 to December 2018 was released by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan virtually on Wednesday.

Vardhan said that in the 2011 census report, people above 60 years accounted for 8.6 per cent of India's population, that is 103 million elderly people. Growing at around 3 per cent annually, the elderly population will rise to 319 million in 2050.

## No improvement on ground, SC says, posts matter for Jan 11

From Page 1

Venugopal, however, wondered how a person could challenge a constitutional amendment in a writ petition.

The Supreme Court had on December 17 refused to interfere with the ongoing agitation against farm laws by farmers from Punjab and some other States who have blocked certain entry points to the national Capital for weeks, saying it was their fundamental right. The court had asked the Centre to consider to put on hold the three laws and form a panel to go into the concerns raised by the farmers.

Later, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said those farmer unions, which are protesting against the farm laws, will understand the idea behind

bringing laws for reforms in the agricultural sector and actively arrive at a solution after discussion.

"The Government of India is committed to the welfare of farmers. We meet those who are supporting the laws and those opposing it. I am sure that farmer unions who are agitating will understand the idea behind agriculture laws and they will think about the welfare of farmers and actively arrive at a solution by a positive discussion," Tomar told reporters.

Meanwhile, the All India Farmers Association (AIFA) headed by former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's grandson Sanjay Nath Singh on Wednesday extended support to the three new agriculture laws against which 40 farmers' unions have been protesting at various borders of the national capital for over a month now. Singh, in a representation, made to Tomar made some suggestions to the Centre that would be of help in negotiating with the protesting farm unions in the next round of meeting to be held on January 8.

## 12 bird flu...

From Page 1

The Health Ministry has deployed multi-disciplinary teams to Avian Influenza affected Alappuzha and Kottayam districts in Kerala, and Panchkula District in Haryana. The Health Ministry has also issued an action plan which says dead birds should be handled with utmost caution and scientific supervision. As per the action plan on Avian Influenza, the Ministry has suggested the affected States for strengthening the biosecurity of poultry farms, disinfection of affected areas, proper disposal of dead birds/carcasses, timely collection and submission of samples for confirmation and further surveillance, intensification of surveillance plan as well as the general guidelines for prevention of disease spread from affected

birds to poultry and human. "In India, the disease spreads mainly by migratory birds coming into India from September - October to February - March. The secondary spread by human handling (through fomites) cannot be ruled out," it said. To allay fears about transmission of the disease from poultry to humans, Union Minister for Animal Husbandry, Giriraj Singh, on social media advised people to properly cook eggs and meat before consuming them. "In some places there have been reports of migratory and wild birds dying from bird flu. Cook the meat and eggs completely before eating. There is nothing to worry. All possible help is being given and states have been alerted," Singh tweeted in Hindi. His deputy Sanjiv Balyan said that five states have reported Bird flu but there has been no case of transmission of

the Avian Influenza to humans in India. Accordingly, an advisory was issued to the States of Rajasthan and MP on January 1 to avoid further spread of the infection. As per the information received from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, control measures have been taken as per the guidelines of the National Action Plan of Avian Influenza. "Another advisory has been issued on January 5 to HP advising it to take measures to avoid further spread of disease to poultry. As per the report received, Kerala has already initiated control and containment operations at epicentres and culling process is in operation," it said. According to Kerala Animal Husbandry Minister K Raju, over 69,000 birds including ducks and chicken were culled in the districts of Alappuzha and Kottayam to contain the H5N8 strain of bird flu. The Minister said 19 Rapid

Response Teams have been engaged in culling birds in both the districts and the regions suspected to have infected the birds will be sanitised on Thursday. Trade of poultry meat and eggs has been banned in the affected districts. Haryana has reported the death of around 4 lakh birds in the past 10 days in Panchkula district following which the authorities have issued an advisory on poultry products. Barwala-based poultry farms in the Hisar district of Haryana reported deaths of around 1.5 lakh birds in the past one week. At the epicentre in Rajasthan, about 100 crows died on Wednesday. Other than this, peacocks, pigeons, and koyals have died. The number of birds which died in Rajasthan in the recent days reached over 700. The fatalities were reported in 16 of the 33 districts of Rajasthan.

Nearly 400 crows have died due to viral infection in Indore, Mandsaur, Agar-Malwa, Kharogone, Neemuch, Dewas, Ujjain, Shajapur, all in Malwa region; Sehore in central region and Guna in Gwalior-Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has claimed that Bird flu not found in any poultry farm in the affected area. More than 2,300 migratory birds have died in Himachal Pradesh due to bird flu outbreak. Most of the birds to have died of H5N1 avian influenza are bar-headed geese in the Pong Dam reservoir area in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The first outbreak of H5N1 in India was recorded 15 years ago in February 2006 at a poultry industry in the Maharashtra's Nandurbar district. There was a major outbreak in West Bengal in 2008 and another one in Kerala in 2014.

## SC to hear pleas against religious...

From Page 1

The Bench said that this is not the transfer petition where it can transfer to itself all the cases on the law after one of the petitioner said that the issue should be examined by the top court. Senior advocate CU Singh, appearing for the NGO, referred to the judgement of Justice (ret'd) Deepak Gupta and says that similar laws are being made in various states.

He sought stay of the provisions of the law and said that people are being in the middle of wedding ceremonies.

Singh added that some of the provisions of these laws are oppressive and horrible in nature and requires prior consent of government to marry which is absolutely obnoxious.

The Bench said that it is issuing notice and sought response from both the state governments within four weeks. When Singh insisted for stay of provisions, the CJI said that now stay is sought on some provisions without hearing the states.

"How can it be done?" the Bench said.

## R-Day...

From Page 1

Niti Ayog members say Government can't buy and store food, while Government says procurement will continue, said the AIKSCC. This dichotomy should end, it added. "Meanwhile on the call issued by the AIKSCC and the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, several mass programmes have been planned. People all over the country shall burn copies of the three Acts on occasion of Lori and Makar Sankranti. January 18 shall be observed as Mahila Kisan Diwas and we have also decided that sit in and relay fasts shall continue," said the AIKSCC. Since the farmers arrived at the national Capital's borders, the Delhi Traffic Police has been posting alerts on its official Twitter handle to inform commuters about road closures across the city. In a series of tweets on Wednesday, it said Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari, Saboli and Mangesh borders were closed for traffic movement. "Please take alternate route via Lampur Safiabad, Palla & Singhu school toll tax borders.

Traffic has been diverted from Mukarab & GTK road. Please avoid Outer Ring Road, GTK Road & NH-44. "The Chilla and Ghazipur borders are closed for traffic coming from Noida & Ghaziabad to Delhi because of farmer protests. Please take alternate route for coming to Delhi via Anand Vihar, DND, Bhopra & Loni Borders," the traffic police said. It said Tikri and Dhansa borders are also closed for traffic movement. "Jhatikara Border is open only for LMV (Cars/Light Motor Vehicles), two wheelers and pedestrian movement," another tweet read. According to the traffic police, people travelling to Haryana can take the routes via Jharoda (only single carriageway), Daurala, Kapashera, Badusarai, Rajokri NH-8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundahera borders.

## Petrol price...

From Page 1

Alongside, state-owned fuel retailers cut prices by another ₹1 a litre, which they recouped later.

However, no tax cut is under consideration as of present, a senior government official said on Wednesday.

Though petrol and diesel rates are to be revised on a daily basis in line with benchmark international price and foreign exchange, Government-controlled fuel retailers have been moderating rates since the pandemic broke out. They first did not pass on to the customers a reduction in price warranted from the slump in international oil rates, witnessed due to demand erosion beginning March 2020.

While they promptly passed on an increase in sales tax by State Governments such as the one in Delhi, they adjusted a steep increase in excise duty by the Central Government against the reduction in retail price warranted. The Government raised excise duty by ₹13 per litre on

petrol and by ₹15 a litre on diesel in two instalments in March 2020 and May 2020 to garner additional revenue of ₹1.6 lakh crore.

That adjustment of rate revision against excise duty hike resulted in a 52-day status quo in prices between March 17, 2020, and June 6, 2020. This was followed by no change in rates between June 30, 2020, and August 15, 2020, and 58-day hiatus in petrol price revision and 48-day status quo on diesel rates from September 22, 2020, and October 2, 2020, respectively.

Rates were again frozen after last revision on December 7, 2020. Since May 2020, petrol price has risen by ₹14.28 per litre and diesel by ₹11.83 a litre, price notifications of oil companies showed.

When petrol scaled its highest levels in Delhi on October 4, 2018, the fuel touched a new high of ₹91.34 in Mumbai. On Wednesday it costs ₹90.60 a litre in Mumbai. Diesel in Mumbai on Wednesday at ₹80.78 a litre is higher than the October 4, 2018 rate of ₹80.10.

## Complaint against illegal hutments in Gurugram

Gurugram: Over hundreds of illegal hutments are being developed on more than 6 acres of agricultural land at Sikanderpur Badha village in Sector-82 of Gurugram.

A complaint in this regard was filed by a Gurugram resident named Bir Singh, at the district town and country planning (DTP) department on November 11, 2020.

The unhygienic condition at the slum, which is spread over 6 acres, has forced Singh to complain to authorities. The area has over 100 hutments, most of them constructed over the last year. The complainant alleged that the land owner had intentionally developed these hutments and had rented them out to Rohingyas.

Singh had reported the matter to the town planners and other officials, but no action has been taken yet. SR

## Nirbhaya revisited in Budaun: 50-yr-old gangraped, killed

From Page 1

"The 50-year-old woman, who had gone to a temple on Sunday, was found dead under mysterious circumstances. Family members of the woman have accused the temple mahant (priest) and his accomplices of raping and murdering her. Based on this, a case was registered against the accused. Two of the accused persons were arrested on Tuesday night while the mahant is still absconding," he said.

Four teams have been formed to nab the priest, the SSP said. Following the incident, Bareilly ADG Avinash Chandra too visited the crime spot and announced a reward of ₹50,000 on the arrest of the absconding priest.

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sanjay S/o Vijay Pal Gupta R/o D-29, Lalita Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, hereby declare that Sanjay and Sanjay Gupta both names are of one and the same person.

PD(8871)C

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Kuldip Sodani is owner of eastern portion of Property bearing No WZ-6543, area measuring 200 sq. Yds., out of 600 sq. yds. out of Kharsa No. 3522 Situated in the abtold known as Sacha Nagar, Palam Colony, area of Palam, Delhi State, New Delhi. Said property by virtue of four Sale Deeds dt. 1. 07.02.2019 registration No. 10410, 2. dated 12.06.2019, registration No. 5933, 3. dated 12.07.2019, registration No. 6382 & 4. dated 22.10.2020, registration No. 6072 All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to Sell his No. 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Known to all that my client Anuj Tyagi is mortgaging property area 67.50 sq. yds., Kharsa No. 620, Near Saket Nagar, Pargana Loni, Ghaziabad-UP with Satin Housing Finance Ltd. Anuj Tyagi has lost original sale deed executed by Anita Yadav in favour of Savitri Devi, registered with SR-II Ghaziabad, vide doc. no. 8018 on dated 16.09.2004. Police complaint dt. 30.12.2020 was lodged with UP Police. It is informed that any deal with said lost deeds by any person except my said client with said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person found said deeds or is having right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned and within 8 days of this publication.

For AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Ch. No. 780, Dwarka Court, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110028. MC-9899013918

## Shapoerji Pallonji emerges as lowest bidder for Central Vista project

From Page 1

Apart from Shapoerji Pallonji and Company Limited and Tata Projects Limited, NCC Ltd and ITD Cementation India Limited had qualified for the opening of financial bids. ITD Cementation India Limited quoted the bid amount of Rs 490.59 crore while NCC Ltd quoted ₹601.46 crore as

**BRAINSTORMING**

# Schools won't reopen till vaccine available: Dy CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said that the Government is brainstorming on how early schools can be reopened in the national Capital.

"Brainstorming is on for how early schools can be reopened in Delhi, especially for board classes as the dates for exams have already been announced," he said while addressing a Press conference.

Sisodia also said that "our future strategy (on reopening schools) will depend on how early a Covid-19 vaccine is available for public after front-line workers are vaccinated".

Schools in the national Capital are closed since March last year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. While a few States have partially reopened schools, the Delhi Government had announced that schools will not reopen till a vaccine is available. Sisodia announced that the Delhi Government is



organising an international education conference from January 11 to 17 on how should the education sector be in a post-Covid world.

"The conference will reflect on Delhi's education reforms, learn from global best practices and explore the possibilities of collaboration with other stakeholders as a way forward," he said.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday the Delhi Government also directed schools here to submit the innovations done by teachers and management committee members to ensure education in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the practices undertaken by them for Covid-19 management.

"Considering teachers and SMC (School Management

Committee) members have played a crucial role both in the management of Covid-19 and innovations in the light of school closures, they must be highlighted," the Directorate of Education (DoE) said in a letter to school principals.

The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) is soon launching a journal called "Children First: Journal on Children's Lives" and the first issue of the journal is on the theme "Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of the children", it said.

"Thus, the DCPCR has requested that teachers and SMC members may learn about the journal and may make submissions of their innovations and practices," the DoE said.

Teachers have been asked to submit entries by February 20. "Principals must disseminate the information among all the teachers and SMC members and encourage them to highlight the innovations," the DoE said.

## Sisodia reviews tree transplantation meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday reviewed a meeting with environment and forest officials and directed to expedite work on several projects focusing recently notified Tree Transplantation Policy (TTP) which includes setting up a dedicated tree transplantation cell.

Sisodia directed the Forest Department to initiate the process of empanelment of agencies that have the technical skills and experience of tree transplantation, and to conclude the same in time bound manner.

Delhi Government under its campaign "Yudh Pradushan Key Virudh" has taken several steps to control dust pollution. Along the same lines, Delhi Pollution Control Committee has been working on formulating new dust pollution control norms for big (greater than 20,000 sq m) construction sites. These norms would ensure that all big construction sites take adequate measures to control dust.

## DTC board okays fund for procurement of 1,000 AC buses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport department on Wednesday approved funds for procurement of 1,000 AC Low Floor CNG (BS-VI compliant) buses.

The Delhi Transport Board also approved funds for the annual maintenance of buses up to 7,50,000 kms per bus covering 12 years Comprehensive Maintenance Insurance.

These new Low Floor CNG Buses would be equipped with State of the Art facilities like, Real-Time Passenger Information System, CCTV's, Panic Buttons, GPS and Other facilities besides being differently-abled friendly.

In another important decision concerning welfare of the DTC employees, the Board approved an increase in the ceiling of Gratuity from ₹10 lakhs presently to ₹20 lakhs. This move will benefit all the DTC employees and enhance their retirement benefits.

In a statement issued, Minister (Transport) Kailash Gahlot said, "Today, we have approved funds for the procurement of 1000 Low Floor



**The Delhi Transport Board also approved funds for the annual maintenance of buses up to 7,50,000 kms per bus covering 12 years Comprehensive Maintenance Insurance**

CNG Buses as well as for Comprehensive Annual Maintenance of these buses for their entire life time. This will help in reducing down time of buses and increase overall user experience."

## Chadha accuses Punjab CM of implementing farm laws, demands his resignation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hitting at Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), national spokesperson and Punjab Unit's co-in-charge Raghav Chadha on Wednesday claimed that the Punjab CM has betrayed the farmers. Chadha called the Punjab CM a traitor and demanded his resignation.

"It is indeed sad to note that this year has begun on such a grim note, with the biggest fraud and betrayal committed by the Congress and Captain Amarinder Singh, who have implemented the black farm laws in Punjab. The AAP demands his resignation," said Chadha.

Calling out the Punjab CM and Congress' farce Chadha said that they have seen how the

Congress claimed to openly oppose the three black farm laws.

"We've seen Rahul Gandhi's regular tweets. Different members of the Congress Party will do press conferences, some would go to Jantar Mantar to protest, they would give media bites — all of this only to show to the public and to the media that they oppose the laws. But it is they who have committed the biggest fraud," he said.

Referring to Punjab's Minister of Food and Civil Supplies Bharat Bhushan Ashu, recent media address, where he confirmed that Punjab had opened its doors for farmers from neighbouring regions to sell their produce in Punjab Chadha claimed that Bharat Bhushan had clearly said that the three farm laws have been implemented in Punjab.

**COVID VACCINATION**

# Dry run held at Hindu Rao Hospital, other civic facilities

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Another dry run for the Covid-19 vaccination roll-out was held at the Hindu Rao Hospital and a few other civic facilities in the city on Wednesday.

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash also inspected the preparations for corona vaccination at Hindu Rao Hospital during the dry run. Mayor himself participated in the dry run of the Corona vaccination.

He said that North Delhi Municipal Corporation's Hospitals are fully prepared for



A medic conducts the dry run at Hindu Rao Hospital in New Delhi on Wednesday  
Ranjani Dimri | Pioneer

the Corona vaccination for which dry run had been carried out at Hindu Rao Hospital

and Kasturba Hospital of North DMC. Prakash said that the long

wait for the Corona vaccine in India has over now, the Prime Minister of our country deserves commendation for the indigenous vaccine of Covid-19. He said that scientists of our country have successfully researched and formulated the indigenous vaccine within only 10 months of period and now we are on the way to become a Corona-free nation.

He said that only a few nations are in this world who have got success in the field and India is one of them, it is a matter of pride for all Indians. Prakash said that NDMC is

following all the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, Government of India for the vaccine in the dry run process. In the reception area in the hospitals, a waiting zone has been made, where people will come and after verification of their names through CoWIN app, they will be taken one by one for vaccination.

Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network or CoWIN app and its ecosystem will be used to manage and scale up the massive vaccination drive that is expected to begin soon across the country.

## 654 fresh corona cases, 16 deaths

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 654 fresh coronavirus cases on Wednesday, even as the positivity rate stood at 0.88 per cent, authorities said. With this, the tally of Covid-19 cases in the national Capital has reached over 6.28 lakh, while the death toll mounted to 10,625 and 16 more fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, they said.

According to a health official in the Delhi Government, 74,650 tests conducted in the last 24 hours, including 39,623 RT-PCR tests and 35,027 rapid antigen tests. **SR**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man for allegedly attacking a calf in east Delhi's Mandawali and leaving the animal wretched in pain. The video of the incident also went viral on social media. The accused has identified the man as Kamal Singh, a resident of the locality.

According to a senior police official, after a police control room call regarding the incident was received a police team rushed to the spot and found the calf in injured condition.

"The calf was taken to the Sanjay Gandhi Hospital for medical examination and a proper treatment was given to it," he said.

The CCTV footage of the incident shows the man pass-

## Man arrested after his attack on calf goes viral

ing through a road with some documents in his hand when the calf, standing near to a cow, charges towards him and just about hits him. The man gets unnerved as his documents fell on the ground, leaving him angry. The video then shows the man spanking and kicking the animal before he collects his documents. He then again thrashes the calf multiple times with a stone, leaving it in pain so much so that it struggles to even stand on its feet, the footage shows.

"On the basis of DD (daily diary) entry and the CCTV footage, a case has been registered under section 11.1 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the accused arrested," said Deepak Yadav, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district.



# CHHATTISGARH IS GROWING RAPIDLY

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### Why Chhattisgarh?

- Industry friendly Government
- Burgeoning steel and sponge iron sector
- Special impetus on Ethanol based industry
- 24 x 7 uninterrupted and quality power
- Hassle free Industrial permitting system
- Skilled workers in abundance
- Land diversion for industry in 15 days
- Discounts up to 30%-60% for land allotment on premium land. 60% discount for high priority industries.
- 30% discount in industrial land rate

### Achievements in the last 2 years:

- 2136 crore GST in December 2019 – 2349 crore GST in December 2020 (increased by 10%)
- No. 1 in steel manufacturing during the first 3 months of nationwide lockdown (27 lakh tonne)
- No. 2 in MSME promotions and development
- 505 start-ups received recognition
- Chhattisgarh 'Best Emerging Start-up Ecosystem State'
- More than 15,000 entrepreneurs have invested in the state



**Shri. Bhupesh Baghel**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



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# Work for Atmanirbhar Bharat: PM to 7 JSs

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Concerned over the resignation of lateral entry bureaucrats, Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted a 'rare' direct interaction with seven Joint Secretaries (JS) who joined the Government of India after quitting private sectors 14 months ago.

Modi interacted with the officers after *The Pioneer* reported on December 16, 2020 about one of the nine Joint Secretaries resigning from the service and choosing to get back to an MNC abroad. He was a JS in the Commerce Ministry.

Sources in Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said the PM urged the officers to continue working for the country with a lot of zeal as the nation looks towards their expertise in diversified fields and which can contribute in the shaping of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

One of the Joint Secretaries who participated in the interaction with Modi on December 20, however, termed the interaction as "routine". "It was a routine first interaction after the first batch completed a year in various offices of the Central Government," he stressed.

While Modi was inquisitive about the feeling, work culture and acclimatisation of the private-professionals-turned-



bureaucrats, one of the JS posted on his social media profile that "the PM's energy level even after a long day in office is inspiring and infectious".

Those who interacted with Modi on that day were Amber Dubey, who left KPMG and joined Civil Aviation Ministry, Sujit Bajpayee, who left NHPS to join the Environment Ministry, Dinesh Jagdale, the erstwhile CEO of Panama Renewable Energy Group who was posted in the New Renewable Energy Ministry, Kakoli Ghosh, who joined the agriculture ministry, Saurabh Mishra in Financial Services, Rajeev Saxena in the economic affairs department, Suman Prasad Singh in the Road Transport Ministry and Bhuhan Kumar in the Shipping Ministry.

Launched with much fanfare by the Narendra Modi Government in 2018, the lateral entry scheme for senior-level officers drawn from various professions and expertise

suffered a setback when Arun Goel resigned.

Sources close to Goel said after having served for about a year at a very powerful post he called it a day due to too much of "bureaucratic grind" in the system. Modi had himself announced senior-level bureaucratic posts in several departments for people who are "talented and motivated" and willing to contribute to nation building.

Sources said the decision of Goel to leave the Government sector could also be because of his insubordination in the Ministry as he had a background of heading a global company. "He had come to join the Government after leaving a handsome package earlier also," sources said. The JS report to the secretary/additional secretary in the Ministry or Department and are normally appointed from all-India services like the IAS, IPS, IFS and other allied services.

# Cong appoints Gehlot, Baghel as observers for Assembly polls in States, Union Territory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday appointed its senior leaders including Chief Ministers Ashok Gehlot and Bhupesh Baghel as observers to oversee the party's election campaign management for the upcoming Assembly polls in several States and a Union Territory. Assembly elections are due to be held in the States of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the UT of Puducherry by the middle of this year.

An official communication from the party said Congress president Sonia Gandhi has appointed the leaders as senior observers for overseeing the election campaign management and coordination in states where assembly elections are going to be held in 2021. Their appointment is with immediate effect. They will discharge their duties in close coordination with AICC general secretaries and in-charges in the respective states, the party said.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, former Goa chief minister Luizinho Faleiro and Karnataka's former deputy chief minister G Parameswara have been appointed as senior observers for the Kerala assembly polls.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the party's general secretary

Mukul Wasnik and senior leader Shakeel Ahmad Khan have been appointed as senior observers for the Assam assembly polls. For the elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, senior party leaders and former union ministers M Veerappa Moily and M M Pallam Raju, besides sitting cabinet minister in Maharashtra Nitin Raut have been appointed as senior observers.

For the West Bengal assembly elections, senior party leader B K Hariprasad and Alamgir Alam, besides Punjab minister Vijay Inder Singha have been appointed as observers. The party is keen to retain power in Puducherry and is seeking to wrest power back in Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Congress is in the process of finalising seat-sharing with its allies in these states, the statement said.

The Congress is also contesting the West Bengal assembly polls in alliance with the left parties and final seat-sharing arrangements are being worked out in the state, it said. The party's electoral fortunes were on the decline last year when it lost power in Madhya Pradesh after its leader Jyotiraditya Scindia and his supporting MLAs switched over to the BJP. The Congress also lost the assembly elections in Delhi and Bihar last year.

# People have rejected Opp's lies, hypocrisy, says BJP after local polls' win in Karnataka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Showing their "success" in the Gram Panchayat polls in Karnataka, the BJP on Wednesday claimed that the people have rejected the Opposition's politics of "lies and hypocrisy" in the ongoing farmers' agitation and asserted that voters had put their faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development politics".

Addressing a press conference here, BJP spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Chandrasekhar alleged that opposition parties have been trying to instigate groups of citizens as he referred to farmers' protest against three farm laws and also the earlier agitation against the

Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Noting that he is speaking in the context of a string of elections in Karnataka, he said the BJP has been winning them, be it assembly bypolls or MLC elections or the recent rural body polls.

This "overwhelming" mandate in favour of the BJP against some opposition parties' politics of "lies and hypocrisy" shows people's trust in the leadership of Modi and Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, he said.

People have backed the measures taken by the central government for the agriculture sector, he claimed.

The BJP leader said the Government is sincere in its talks with farmer unions to

end their protests and said commitment to farmers is an "article of faith" for the party. Over 55.4 per cent gram panchayats in the state are BJP-supported and 53 per cent members are BJP supporters, he claimed.

This result has come against the backdrop of opposition parties' "falsehoods" to mislead farmers, he said.

Since the BJP came to power at the Centre, the party has won 14 of 17 Assembly bypolls and emerged victorious in all four MLC seat elections, he said.

Over a month, the BJP has cited results in a number of elections across the country to assert that the farm laws enjoy support from a vast majority of farmers.

# Dense foggy weather, poor visibility from Jan 7 to 10 in northwest India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday forecast dense foggy weather and poor visibility from January 7 to 10 in northwest India. The minimum temperatures are likely to fall by 4-6 degree Celsius over plains of Northwest India during the next 4-5 days. Cold wave conditions are likely over the plains of Northwest India during 11th-13th January," it said.

Under the influence of western disturbance from January 2 till January 6 (today), significant rainfall occurred in plains of northwest India, due to which, there is a significant amount of moisture

available in lower tropospheric levels and other favourable meteorological features, dense to very dense fog is very likely in some to many pockets over plains of Northwest India in the morning hours of 07th to 10th January," the IMD said. "The minimum temperatures are likely to fall by 4-6 degree Celsius over plains of Northwest India during the next 4-5 days. Cold wave conditions are likely over the plains of Northwest India during 11th-13th January," it said.

Under the influence of western disturbance from January 2 till January 6 (today), significant rainfall occurred in plains of northwest India, due to which, there is a significant amount of moisture

across the region. The ongoing spell of rainfall over southern parts of India is expected to continue at least until Saturday. Therefore, the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka are expected to keep receiving scattered to fairly widespread showers and thunderstorms.

According to IMD, a trough in low-level easterlies runs from the east-central Arabian Sea off Karnataka coast to south Madhya Maharashtra. This active easterly wave spell is set to cause scattered to fairly widespread rains, thunderstorms, and lightning over southern peninsular India during the next 4-5 days.

# SC shows exasperation on limitation of virtual courts' functioning



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has expressed its exasperation at the inability of the virtual court system to work satisfactorily in the apex court, saying it is becoming very difficult to continue with the proceedings in an appropriate manner.

The court also noted that there were no such problems being faced in the virtual court system in the Delhi High Court next door.

The apex court is hearing matters through video-conferencing since March last year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We at the inception must note our exasperation at the inability of the virtual court system to work satisfactorily in the Supreme Court while there is no such problems in the Delhi High Court next door!," a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said in its January 5 order.

"We have been since yesterday trying to cope with the problem of disconnections, resonance of voices, even when there is single person arguing. It is difficult to understand this despite more licences stated to have been

The top court made these observations while hearing a plea against the December last year order passed by the Chhattisgarh High Court

taken. The only voice we hear is the resonance of our own voices!," said the bench, also comprising justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy.

The bench directed the secretary general of the apex court to look into the issue.

"We thus direct the secretary general to look into this issue as it is becoming very difficult to continue with proceedings in the virtual courts in an appropriate manner," the bench said.

The top court made these observations while hearing a plea against the December last year order passed by the Chhattisgarh High Court.

# BJP slams Tharoor for seeking R-Day parade cancellation on Covid account

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Congress MP Shashi Tharoor sought a cancellation of the Republic Day parade in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic and British Prime Minister's decision not to visit India, BJP's national spokesperson Sambit Patra on Wednesday slammed him for making the demand.

In a sharp riposte to the Congress leader, Patra asked as to why Rahul Gandhi's foreign trips are not cancelled instead and also lambasted him for referring to Republic Day as a mere 'festivity' in his tweet.

"Mr Tharoor, Republic Day Parade is not just any 'Festivity' that it ought to be cancelled! Further Rahul couldn't cancel his festivities & continues to travel to 'farther'



destinations often but the Congress wants Republic Day to be cancelled?," tweeted the BJP leader.

Issuing a statement on calling off the visit, the UK government had said, "The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will

be unable to visit India later this month as planned. In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading, the Prime Minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus."

# Polls to legislative council seats in UP, Bihar, AP on January 28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Polls to 12 legislative council seats in Uttar Pradesh getting vacant later this month and bypolls to two legislative council seats in Bihar and one in Andhra Pradesh will be held on January 28. According to the Election Commission, all the elections and by-elections would be held on January 28 and counting of votes will be held one hour after the completion of polls as per established practice.

Polls to 12 seats in the UP legislative council are getting vacant on January 30 as the term of the members is coming to an end. One of the 12 members is Nasimuddin Siddiqui, who already stands disqualified. The 12 members



would be elected by members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) in the biennial elections.

The MLAs who are retiring include Swatantra Dev Singh, Dinesh Sharma and Laxman Acharya (BJP), Naseemuddin Siddiqui (disqualified), Dharmavir Ashok and Pradip Jatav (BSP), and Ahmed Hasan, Ashu Malik, Ramesh Yadav, Ram Jatan Rajbhar, Virendra Singh and Sahib Singh Saini (SP).

Bypolls to two Bihar legislative council seats were necessitated following the election of BJP leader Modi to Rajya Sabha recently and election of Vinod Narain Jha

Bypolls to two Bihar legislative council seats were necessitated following the election of BJP leader Sushil Modi to Rajya Sabha recently and election of Vinod Narain Jha to the State legislative Assembly in the recently-held Bihar elections.

In Andhra Pradesh, the legislative council bypoll was necessitated following the resignation of Pothula Sunitha in November last year.

# ITBP signs MoU with KVIC for supply of cotton khadi durries



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central paramilitary jawans will now use Khadi durries procured from KVIC as part of the vocal for local campaign. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for supplying 1,71,520 numbers of Khadi Durries for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

The cotton khadi durries for CAPF jawans will be procured in a purchase order worth Rs 8.73 crore. The ITBP has become the first paramilitary force among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to have supplies from the KVIC.

The MoU was inked by Vinay Kumar Saxena, Chairman, KVIC and Anand Swarop, Inspector General of ITBP. Vivek Bharadwaj, Additional Secretary, Police Modernisation, Union Home Ministry also attended the event.

The ITBP had signed an agreement with the KVIC in July last year for procurement of 1,200 quintal of mustard oil with a total financial implication of ₹1.73 crore. It was decided during a meeting held

at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Directors General of the CAPFs in October, 2019 that use of Terry Khadi uniform and other items of swadeshi origin should be made available to the CAPFs. The government was celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2019.

During the visit of Home Minister Amit Shah in December, 2019 to the ITBP Force headquarters here, an exhibition stall was prepared to exhibit the KVIC products.

"The ITBP had suggested that durries, blankets, towels, mustard oil, yoga kit, hospital bed sheets, pickles and similar items can be purchased for jawans of the Force through KVIC," ITBP Spokesperson Vivek Pandey said in a statement.

"The process of procuring khadi bed sheets and pillow covers from KVIC for all CAPF hospitals is also underway and it is expected that it will be procured in this financial year itself. Many such items will be procured from the KVIC for promoting the local products in the CAPFs," it added.

# Centre bars TN Govt from opening cinema theatres with full capacity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry on Wednesday asked Tamil Nadu Government not to allow opening of cinema theatres with full capacity and asked to keep only 50% of the seating capacity. In a direction Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed the state to reverse their earlier order and "immediately issue necessary order" to bring their guidelines in line with the MHA guidelines. "Government of Tamil Nadu order of permitting increase the seating capacity of Cinema/theaters/multiplexes from existing 50% to 100% is dilution of MHA order. States and UT shall not dilute guidelines issued under DM act in any manner," MHA said in a statement.

"Govt of Tamil Nadu is requested to immediately issue necessary order to bring their Guidelines in line with the MHA guidelines dated 28 December 2020 and inform compliance to this Ministry," the ministry further said. Home Secretary wrote to Tamil Nadu Chief secretary to issue orders aligned to MHA guidelines, allowing multiplexes to operate outside containment zones with up to 50% occupancy.

On Monday, Tamil Nadu Government had permitted to increase the seating capacity of cinemas, theatres, multiplexes from existing 50% to 100% following COVID-19 protocols. The order comes days after actors and theatre owners requested Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to allow theatres to function at their full capacity. As per the COVID-19 safety protocol, since last October, the theatres in the state were allowed to fill up only 50 per cent of their seats to ensure social distancing.

**कार्यालय मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान**  
जल भवन, बी ब्लॉक, नेहरू कालोनी, देहरादून।

पत्रांक : 7050/ई-निविदा/2020-21 दिनांक : 06/01/2021

**ई-निविदा सूचना**

उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा, दू-बिड सिस्टम (तकनीकी बिड एवं कॉमिशियल बिड) आधार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा संख्या	कार्य विवरण	घरोहर धनराशि रु०	निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड करने की तिथि एवं समय	ई-निविदा द्वारा निविदा प्रपत्र जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	निविदा की वैधता	बि-बिड मीटिंग की तिथि एवं समय
1	दर अनुबन्ध आधार पर उत्तराखण्ड राज्य के विभिन्न जनपदों में स्थापित विभागीय कलेक्शन सेटर्स पर विभागीय साफ्टवेयर के माध्यम से जलमूल्य आदि के बिल तैयार करना, बिलों के विरुद्ध कलेक्शन प्राप्त करना एवं तत्सम्बन्धित कार्य	33000.00	07.01.2021 from 11.00 a.m	21.01.2021 upto 5.00 p.m	22.01.2021 at 11.00 a.m	90 days	12.01.2021 at 11.00 a.m
2	वार्षिक दर अनुबन्ध पर 100 जी.एस.एम. साईज 10x19 सेंटीमीटर के पेपर पर डाट मैट्रिक्स प्रिंटर हेतु प्रिंटेड कैंस रसीद मय कार्डन कोपी एवं नम्बरिंग लाल रंग में की आपूर्ति का कार्य।	21000.00	07.01.2021 from 11.00 a.m	21.01.2021 upto 5.00 p.m	22.01.2021 at 11.00 a.m	90 days	12.01.2021 at 11.00 a.m

ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त जानकारियाँ व शर्तें उत्तराखण्ड की वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर ऑन लाइन देखी/प्राप्त की जा सकती हैं।

सचिव (प्रशासन)

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male Age : 25 years, Height : 168 Cm., Complexion : Sallow, Build : Normal, Face : Long, Identification : A tattoo OM on right hand, was found unconscious on 28.12.2020 in road accident, he was admitted in Trauma Centre Hospital, Civil Lines, Delhi by PCR Van, vide MLC No. 13151/20 dated 28.12.2020, where Doctor Declare him brought dead. In this regard a FIR No. 569/20 dated 29.12.2020 u/s 279/304-A has been registered at P.S. Civil Lines, Delhi. The Dead body has been preserved for identification in the mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

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

**SHO : P.S. Civil Lines, Delhi**  
**Tel. No. 011-23815444**

DP/859/N/21

**Office of the Executive Engineer Provincial Division, P.W.D., Hapur**  
E-Mail Id: [pwcd03@gmail.com](mailto:pwcd03@gmail.com)

No.: 2139/GA Short Term E-Procurement Notice Inviting Tenders Date : 24-12-2020

On behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites online bids through e-tendering from the registered firm for Road Category A, B, C and D as per applicable. The bid document may be uploaded from dated 12.01.2021 to 21.01.2021 up to 2.00 PM. Technical bids will be opened online on date 21.01.2021 at 03.00 PM. by the Committee in the office of the Executive Engineer, Provincial Division, PWD, Hapur. Date of financial bid will be inform separately to the technically qualified contractors. In case of holiday or office closed the technical bid/financial bids will be opened on next working day in the same manner.

S. No.	District	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Tender	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Hapur	Special repair on Bahadurgarh to Chandner road	10.95	1.10	225+500+ GST @18%	1 Month	E.E. PD, PWD Hapur	SE,BSR-Circle PWD, Bulandshahr	CE MZ,PWD Meerut

1- The Bid Security and Tender Document fee must be deposited through Internet Banking Only  
2- All registered contractors have to upload Turnover certified by CA of last 5 years and details of maximum cost work satisfactorily completed in last 5 years on Chanakya Software before submission of tender.  
Details of E-Tender uploaded on <http://etender.up.nic.in> shall also be uploaded on UP PWD Chanakya Software before last date and time of submission of Tender.  
3- Bidder has to upload required documents as per Government order No. 879(1)/23-7-2020 P.W. anubag-7 Lucknow Dt. 25.08.2020 for "Prati Application" in Chanakya Software by accessing hyperlink available for Tendering process UR for Prati is <http://wms.upwd.gov.in/Prati/>  
4- Terms and other conditions related to bid available on Website <http://etender.up.nic.in>

Assistant Engineer P.D. PWD, Hapur

UP: 158476, Date : 04.01.2021  
मिशन वेबसाइट [www.up.gov.in](http://www.up.gov.in) पर उत्तर है।

Executive Engineer P.D. PWD, Hapur

# BJP churning out fake news in Bengal, instigating riots: TMC

**Kolkata:** The Trinamool Congress on Wednesday accused the BJP of producing fake news items and described saffron party leaders visiting West Bengal from outside the state as "tourists" who have no idea of its heritage and language.

Senior TMC MP and party spokesperson Dr Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar also charged the BJP with seeking to cling to power by "killing people, instigating riots and dividing people". "They (BJP) are flush with cash. They have deployed some youngsters in a big building to churn out one fake news after another," she said.

Referring to certain videos and news items being circulated on social media, Ghosh Dastidar described them as "fake news produced from the factory of the BJP".

She alleged that the saffron party is bringing in leaders from outside the state who utter "wrong Bengali words with distorted accent. In West Bengal, the BJP has turned into a party of

tourists." These "visitors" are ignorant of the heritage and traditions of West Bengal as they sit on the chair of icons like Rabindranath Tagore and place their own photo above that of the Nobel laureate poet in festoons, she alleged.

Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Bolpur close to Santiniketan, which is famous as the Rabindranath Tagore's abode for long years, in December, hoardings with his picture above that of the bard in the same frame appeared in the town causing outrage. The hoardings were later removed.

"Tagore had composed the song, 'Amar Sonar Bangla' (My Golden Bengal). The BJP is also promising to make a sonar Bangla (after coming to power in the state). But these people are insulting the state and its people by distorting Bengali words by pronouncing them incorrectly.

"They have no idea about the sacrifice of thousands of Bengalis for the

language. They only know how to vandalise the bust of Vidyasagar and sit on the chair used by Tagore," Ghosh Dastidar said.

A bust of the iconic social reformer was desecrated in a college in Kolkata during Amit Shah's roadshow in May 2019. The TMC alleged that BJP activists were behind the incident.

Shah had also visited Visva-Bharati university in December and went to the Rabindra Bhavan, a museum, and the Upanasa Griha (the prayer hall) and other buildings on the campus.

There were reports on social media that Shah had sat on Tagore's chair during the visit. However, it was not confirmed by the university authorities. Stating that several BJP leaders from outside Bengal are visiting North 24 Parganas district in which her constituency Barasat is located, Ghosh Dastidar said, "They may not be aware that a revolutionary like Titumir was born on the soil of district, they don't know Bengal." **PTI**

# Abhishek Banerjee slaps libel notice on Babul Supriyo

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

**The Minister had earlier accused Banerjee of benefiting from the coal and cow smuggling racket against which a CBI investigation was on saying the oft repeated word Bhaipo stood for none other than the junior Banerjee**

Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee again slapped a libel notice on Union Minister of State Babul Supriyo for making defamatory remarks against him and has asked him to apologise within 72 hours.

This is the second such incident, as Supriyo is already contesting a previous defamation suit filed by the same petitioner. A civil court issued an injunction order against the Minister last December directing him not to use libelous language against Banerjee. The MP has threatened the Union Minister with contempt proceeding for his latest remark.

The immediate trigger for the legal action was a remark made by Supriyo who said that the alleged "Bhaipo" (nephew) being referred to by the opposition parties including the BJP leaders while referring to corruption charges was none other than Abhishek Banerjee who is also the nephew of Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee. The Minister had earlier accused Banerjee of benefiting from the coal and cow smuggling racket against which a CBI investigation was on saying the oft repeated word Bhaipo stood for none other than the junior Banerjee.

The CBI investigating the rackets has been after two businessmen Lala and Mishra who had alleged connection with the Trinamool Congress' topmost echelon and who reportedly acted as a medium of money transfer in the multi-crore coal and scam. Properties of both the businessmen, who have gone underground, been sealed. Meanwhile, in a related

development the Chief Minister on Wednesday paid a sudden visit to the Raj Bhavan meeting Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar for more than an hour. With no love lost between the two constitutional authorities the meeting is seen as extraordinary as it took place after a gap of about 11 months.

In fact the Governor made a circuitous attack on the State Government and the ruling party on Wednesday morning saying political violence should be shunned and Bengal should present itself as a violence free state insofar as the conduct of elections were concerned. He also criticized the way the national BJP leaders were referred to as "outsiders" by the TMC leadership in Bengal.

Elsewhere more TMC leaders continued to speak incoherently --- the latest being Rathin Chakrabarty the Mayor of Howrah.

Alleging that all was not well in the Trinamool scheme of things Chakrabarty said while

referring to the resignation of State Sports Minister and former cricketer Laxmi Ratan Shukla "the issues that had to be addressed had never been addressed despite attention of the top leadership was drawn to solve them ... this is why many people are today quitting the party."

On whether he was thinking of quitting the party he quoted the famous words of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa saying "jato mat, tato path" implying there are as many roads as here are views.

Apart from Chakrabarty, senior Minister Rajib Banerjee's conduct too continued to bother the TMC leadership with the said leader continuing to skip the Cabinet meeting besides maintaining a cold silence.

"He is not in touch with any enior leader neither has he clarified his stance with the Chief Minister after speaking in public about the ongoing nepotism in the party," a TMC insider said.

**Govt. of Bihar**

**Prohibition, Excise & Registration Department**  
Bihar Society for Computerization of Registration Offices (BISCORE)

Vikas Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna, Bihar  
Pin-800015, Mobile: 91100-36305  
Website: <https://state.bihar.gov.in/registration/>  
e-Mail: [biscorebihar@gmail.com](mailto:biscorebihar@gmail.com)

Tender / NIT No.:- Registration/Biscore/MPLS-01/2021

**E-Tender Notice**

E-Tenders are invited for Selection of Service Provider for Installation, Testing, Commissioning and Maintenance of MPLS/VPN Connectivity for District Registry Offices and Sub Registry Offices of Prohibition, Excise and Registration, Government of Bihar and to State Data Center at Beltron Bhawan, Patna, Bihar. For further details bid documents with all timeline are available on the website: <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>. Last date of submission of bid is 16/02/2021 till 03:00 PM.

The important information about the Bid is as under:

- Any contract that may result from this Government procurement competition will be issued for provisional term of three years.
- The Prohibition, Excise & Registration Department / Government of Bihar reserves the right to extend the term for a period of up to one year with a maximum of two years, such extension or extensions on the same terms and conditions, are subjected to the Prohibition, Excise & Registration Department's obligations at law.
- Proposals must be received not later than time, date and venue mentioned in the Fact Sheet. Proposals that are received late will not be considered in this procurement process.

Sl.No	Information	Details
1.	RFP No. and Date	Registration/Biscore/MPLS-01/2021, Dated :04.01.2021
2.	Bid Submission start date and time	15/01/2021 : at 11.00 AM
3.	Bid Submission End Date and time	16/02/2021 : till 15.00PM
4.	Bid validity period	180 days from the last date (deadline) for submission of proposals.
5.	Tender Processing Fee (TPF) (Non-Refundable)	INR. 10,000/- (Exclusive of GST @ 18%) to be paid through e-Payment mode (i.e. NEFT / RTGS, Net Banking, Credit / Debit Card) only.
6.	Tender Fee / Cos of BOQ (Non-Refundable)	INR. 5000/- only (Rupees Five thousands only) exclusive GST payable online through e-Procurement
7.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	INR 2, 00,000/- only (Rupees Two lakhs only). Earnest Money should be deposited in form of a demand draft / pay order issued by a scheduled commercial bank favoring Bihar Society for Computerization of Registration Offices (BISCORE), payable at Patna.
8.	Pre Bid Meeting	25/01/2021 at 13.00 PM Registration Dept., Vikas Bhawan, Room No- 148, Bailey Road, Patna, Bihar-800015. (Bidder's queries should reach at <a href="mailto:biscorebihar@gmail.com">biscorebihar@gmail.com</a> on or before 22/01/2021:15.00 Hrs)
9.	Opening of Technical Bids	17/02/2021 : 11.00 AM Hours
10.	Opening of Financial Bids	19/02/2021 : 15.00 PM Hours
11.	Place, Time and Date of opening of Financial proposals received in response to the RFP notice	Registration Dept., Vikas Bhawan, Room No- 148, Bailey Road, Patna, Bihar-800015.
12.	Contact person for queries	Awadhesh Kumar Jha, Assistant Inspector General of Registration -Cum -Secretary, BISCORE, Bihar, Patna. Mobile: 91100-36305 email id: <a href="mailto:biscorebihar@gmail.com">biscorebihar@gmail.com</a> Address: - Prohibition, Excise and Registration Department, Vikas Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna - 800 001.

- The document should be purchased and submitted online via e-Proc portal (<https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>) only.
- In the event of the date specified for receipt and opening of bid being declared as a holiday for Prohibition, Excise & Registration Department office the due date for submission of bids and opening of bids will be the following working day at the appointed times.
- Financial bids of only those bidders who qualify on the basis of evaluation of technical bids will be opened.
- The bidders are expected to examine all instructions, forms, terms, project requirements and other information mentioned in the RFP documents and Bid Response Checklist. Failure to furnish all information required as mentioned in the RFP documents or submission of a proposal not substantially responsive to the RFP documents in every respect will be at the Bidder's risk and may result in rejection of the proposal and forfeiture of the Bid Security (EMD).
- Bids along with necessary online payments must be submitted through e-procurement portal <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in> before the date and time specified in the NIT.
- The department doesn't take the responsibility for the delay/non-submission of tender/non-reconciliation of online payment caused due to non-availability of internet connection, network traffic/holidays or any other reasons.
- All further notifications/Corrigendum/Addendum, if any shall be posted on e-Procurement Portal ([www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)).
- For registration log in to <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>.

**e-Procurement Help Desk**  
Toll Free Number: 1800 572 6571  
Email Id: [eproc2support@bihar.gov.in](mailto:eproc2support@bihar.gov.in)  
Working Hours: 8AM to 7PM (All days in week except few selected state holidays)

बिस्तृत जानकारी के लिए [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](https://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) पर देखा जा सकता है।

**Authority Signature**  
(Assistant Inspector General of Registration -Cum -Secretary, BISCORE, Bihar, Patna)

PR- 10640 ( Registration ) 2020-21

नोवल कोरोना का संकट में बिस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहायता हेतु Toll Free No. 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

# Srinagar airport to resume flights from today

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After remaining grounded for four days during a fresh spell of snowfall between January 3-6, Srinagar Airport authorities on Wednesday announced the flight operations would begin from January 7 to clear the rush of stranded passengers.

The information was shared by the Srinagar Airport Authorities along with images of ongoing snow clearing operations. Large number of tourists were stranded in different parts of Kashmir valley after a fresh spell of snowfall grounded all the incoming and outgoing flights since January 3. As the weather conditions improved partially on Wednesday the snow clearing

operations were launched on war footing to clear the runway for flight operations. The Twitter handle of Srinagar Airport posted a tweet which stated, "The Airport Authority of India executives at Srinagar Airport have been working very hard in coordination with Beacon staff and continuously monitoring the area to avoid snow accumulation in apron area keeping in view that stranded passengers may reach to their destination."

Ironically, travelers hoping to visit the cold desert region of Ladakh may have to wait a little longer. The snow clearing operations in the newly created Union Territory of Ladakh were being done manually at an altitude of 9800 ft above sea level.



This interesting piece of information was shared by the Airport Director, Leh Airport himself. In a series of tweets, the

Airport Director said, "At 9,800 ft above sea level, Leh Airport woke up to a snow covered valley. With temperatures as low as -12°C, the

snow removal process from the apron of KBR Airport is done manually in extreme temperatures". Posting a picture of an ongoing inspection visit, the Airport Director in his second tweet said, "AAI Leh officers in the process of inspecting snow removal from Leh Airport apron so that flights can be operated. Snow removal at Leh Airport is done manually presently. Talks for procurement of snow removal machines at headquarter level".

According to the MeT department the temperature in Leh hovered around -10 degrees celsius on Wednesday. "Day's maximum temperature would hover at -7°C, while minimum temperature is predicted to be -14°C", the MeT department report said.

# Kerala HC sets aside acquittals in Walayar minors' rape-murder case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In what could be a major embarrassment to the Government of Kerala as well as the police, the Kerala High Court on Wednesday set aside the verdict of the trial court in the infamous Walayar Sex Abuse case and ordered retrial of the case.

A bench of Justices A Hariprasad and M R Anitha lambasted the Kerala Police, prosecution and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Court at Palakkad for goofing up the case through lackadaisical probe and trial.

The High Court also set aside the acquittal of all the four accused in the case. They have been asked to present themselves before the court on January 20. But Pradeep, one of the accused had committed suicide after the trial court verdict.

All the accused are reportedly CPI(M) activists and associates of party leaders.

Two Dalit sisters aged 13 and nine respectively at Walayar in Palakkadu district were found dead under mysterious conditions in January and March of 2017. The autopsy had found that both the girls were victims of 'cruel sexual abuse'.

Though there were enough hints and evidences suggesting foul play behind the deaths, the police looked the other way and did not pursue the case by applying the mind, said the verdict. The justices said the POCSO Court judges and the police needed basic training in dealing with cases like this.

The mother of the victims said after the High Court verdict that the CBI should be entrusted with the investigation of the case as the parents had lost confidence in the Kerala Police. The father of the girls told the media that he was under pressure by the police to own up the responsibility behind the deaths. "I was told be the police that they would make sure that I was set free during the trial," he said.

# AP logs 289 new cases, 428 recoveries

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh reported 289 Fresh cases of COVID-19, 428 recoveries and three deaths in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Wednesday.

The overall infection positivity rate slid to 7.30 per cent after 1.21 crore sample tests for the virus so far turned out a total of 8,83,876 confirmed cases, the latest bulletin said. The total recoveries climbed to 8,73,855 and deaths to 7,125, leaving 2,896 active cases in the state, it said.

Guntur reported 42, Chittoor and Visakhapatnam 40 each, East Godavari 39, West Godavari 33 and Krishna 27 new cases in 24 hours, the bulletin added. The remaining seven districts added less than 20 cases each.

All districts now have less than 500 active cases each, with Krishna the top-per seeing 59 recoveries in a day and dropping its caseload to 470.

Krishna, incidentally, crossed 48,000 total positive cases on Wednesday. **PTI**

# Mason kills labourer for demanding dues

**Muzaffarnagar (UP):** A 26-year-old labourer was allegedly stabbed to death by a mason in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district on Wednesday after he asked him to clear his dues of Rs 2,500, police said.

The labourer was identified as Salman and the incident took place at Mandwari Budhana police station area, they said. Circle Officer (CO) Girija Shankar Tripathi said the mason, Shueb Rana, allegedly attacked Salman with a knife when an argument broke out between them over the dues the labourer had asked him to pay. Salman died on the way to hospital, the CO said.

The body has been sent for post-mortem and the matter is being probed. Efforts are under way to nab Rana, who has gone absconding after the incident, the official said.

Tripathi said security has been tightened in the village in view of the incident. **PTI**

# 10,000 Govt offices to be declared green in Kerala on January 26

**Thiruvananthapuram:** A total of 10,000 state Government offices and public sector undertakings in Kerala will be declared "green" on January 26, the Republic Day. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan would make the official announcement in this regard at a virtual function, which would be chaired by LSGD minister A C Moideen on the day.

After the declaration, functions would be held in various offices across the state in which the certificate for the compliance of the green protocol would be

submitted to its heads by the chairpersons of the local self-government institutions or jointly by the ward member/councillor and a member of the green action force, an official statement said here.

Those offices, which avoid using plastic and disposable items in day-to-day activities and encourage the use of articles that can be reused and recycled, would get the green tag. The institutions are going green by meeting criteria of the Green Protocol Verification Index, it said. **PTI**

# Naxals kill man on suspicion of being police informer in Maha

**Gadchiroli:** A 25-year-old man has been Killed by Naxals on suspicion of being a police informer in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, an official said on Wednesday.

Some ultras forcibly took away the victim, Vinod Madavi, to a forested area on Tuesday night from his house in Kothi (Tola) village in Bhamragad tehsil of the district.

The body of Madavi bearing injuries inflicted with sharp weapons and his head smashed, was found near the village on Wednesday morning, he said. **PTI**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that I, Neeta Saxena w/o Sh. B.M. Saxena, R/o Flat No. 28, Neel Kamal Apartments, H-3, Block Vikas Puri, New Delhi-110018 has disowned my son Sh. Kuldeep Saxena and daughter-in-law Smt. Bhawna Saxena along with his family from all my movable and immovable property for their misconduct and disobedience and they shall have no claim over any of my property/ies. I am not responsible for their actions.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my client Sh. AMARJEET SINGH S/o Late Sh. IQBAL SINGH and Smt. GULJEET KAUR W/o Sh. AMARJEET SINGH both R/o J-8 Third Floor Back side, Vikas Puri, New Delhi-18, hereby sever all their relations from his son & daughter-in-law namely Sh. SUMMEET SINGH S/o Sh. AMARJEET SINGH & Smt. ISHPREET KAUR W/o Sh. SUMMEET SINGH both R/o J-8, Third Floor Back side, Vikas Puri New Delhi -110018, due to their disobeying, misbehavior and hereby disowned & debarred them from all movable & immovable properties forever. Any person dealing with them shall be doing so at his own risk and responsibility in future my clients will not be responsible for any act and deeds done by them.

DAYA NAND (Advocate)  
RZ11-694, Gali no. 15, Raj Nagar-II, Palam Colony, New Delhi-77

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)  
Website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tenders are invited from firms / contractors registered with for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes / amendments & corrigendum etc.

S. No.	Job no. / Work name	Amount
1.	127/D(H)DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park with two year Maintenance (Gas Godowan & Garbage park) Sector-54.	Cost Rs. 72.80 Lacs
2.	183/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, D/o Park Sector-34 B-1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12A, 14 & Neel Giri with two year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 40.57 Lacs
3.	184/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, D/o Park Sector-77 Open Gym with five year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 30.82 Lacs
4.	175/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, M/o RSP MP-11Ird Metro Station Sector-74, 76, 78, Meghduta park & Bal Udhyan Park.	Cost Rs. 37.84 Lacs
5.	218/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, M/o Park with Two Year Maintenance of Sector-108, Loop Park.	Cost Rs. 97.43 Lacs
6.	228/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, D/o Park with Two Year Maintenance in Century Apartment Sector-100.	Cost Rs. 48.71 Lacs
7.	21/D(H)DD(H)-II/20-21, M/o Park Sector-93, SK-II (Sh: Open Gym) with five year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 30.98 Lacs
8.	149/D(H)DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o RSP, Beautification of Express Highway (Subhead Suppling at site of R.C.C Pots) with two year maintenance. (0.00 km to 5.00 km)	Cost Rs. 33.30 Lacs
9.	150/D(H)DD(H)-III/2020-21, M/o RSP, Beautification of Express Highway (Subhead Suppling at site of R.C.C Pots) with two year maintenance. (0.05 km to 10.00 km)	Cost Rs. 33.30 Lacs
10.	151/D(H)DD(H)-III/2020-21, M/o RSP, Beautification of Express Highway (Subhead Suppling at site of R.C.C Pots) with two year maintenance. (10 km to 15.00 km)	Cost Rs. 33.30 Lacs
11.	152/D(H)DD(H)-III/2020-21, M/o RSP, Beautification of Express Highway (Subhead Suppling at site of R.C.C Pots) with two year maintenance. (15 km to 20.00 km)	Cost Rs. 33.30 Lacs
12.	122/D(H)DD(H)-III/2020-21, Two year M/o Park Plot No. 11, LIG, MIG Flat & Pocket-06 & 12 in Sector-82	Cost Rs. 41.46 Lacs
13.	124/D(H)DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park with Two year maintenance Sector-12, Noida	Cost Rs. 56.67 Lacs
14.	133/D(H)DD(H)-III/2020-21, D/o Master Green Green Belt Sector-168 with two year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 43.67 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 13/01/2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date 14/01/2021 at 11.00 AM. Director (Hort.) Noida

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The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Kanhैया Lal, Alekh Kumar Gupta, 5/128, HIG Duplex Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. A/c No.-LBDEL00001331569	Flat No. AE-25, Avantika, Chiranjiv Vihar, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh.	05-Dec-2020 Rs.1533069/-	29/02/2020

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : 07-01-2021  
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer Secured Creditor

# China's vaccine gambit

Xi Jinping hopes that his 'Health Silk Road' can justify his refusal for a WHO-led probe into the pandemic



There is no doubt that China has been stained by its mishandling of the Wuhan contagion and the world had to pay a huge price for its wilful suppression of facts that led to the pandemic of our lifetime. And though it has been trying to buy back goodwill by supplying vaccines and medical kits to the needy and affected countries, its rigidity against the global probe into the origins of the virus is proving counter-productive. Porosity has to work both ways but China is adamant about the denial of its role in the spread of COVID-19, claiming it was as much a victim as everyone else. The problem is that the more

it tries to disown its part in exacerbating matters, the more the trust deficit piles up against its "Health Silk Road", a diplomatic initiative to heal the world and, thus, silence the critics. Now even the World Health Organisation, which came under fire for buying into China's story in the initial days of the outbreak, is "very disappointed" with it. That's because China has still not cleared the entry of a team of international experts tasked with investigating the origins of the virus. But China sees the mission as part of yet another global shaming effort and this stand-offish approach is certainly not doing anything to obviate its complicity in hiding the scale of the pandemic.

Its seemingly altruistic effort to offer test kits earlier and the vaccine now has clearly backfired. With the First World and even its allies like Turkey rejecting the faulty test kits, it had hoped to dump its vaccines on lesser developed countries. But with domestic scepticism over them and little or no information available about their safety or efficacy *vis-à-vis* Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, even its neighbours are wary of picking them up. Besides, the conditional nature of the deals has put even ASEAN nations on the back foot, with China demanding that they withdraw support to a demand for a global probe into the origins of the virus. So, some of these nations have ended up sealing deals with the Western pharma majors. Suspected of hegemonistic designs by nations it had debt-trapped, they are even going cold on its much-touted Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), seemingly a strategic cooperation but practically an economic slavery of sorts. So China is betting big on healthcare dependence, not only to deflect the negativity against it but to boost the market for its science and bio-tech sectors. Its desperation can be gauged from the fact that its controlled media is publishing images of normal life with concerts, parties and celebrations to show how it has tamed the pandemic. But reports of cluster outbreaks demolish such planted narratives. Despite the unease of nations, China is continuing to accelerate its production line of vaccines and supplying millions of doses in lesser time than the other pharma majors so that even countries not keen on sourcing from it are bound to do so. It has already signed deals with Malaysia and the Philippines, hoping that it would prevent them from talking against Beijing's expansionist ambitions. China is cleverly using its vaccine as a bait to push its agenda. In fact, its "health first" is just an umbrella approach to spread wings across the greatest constituency it can mine for its use, the public health systems of various nations. A Hong Kong-based brokerage firm has estimated that if China can capture just 15 per cent of the market in the middle and low-income countries, it would net around \$2.8 billion in vaccine sales and command the global health economy. In fact, China's vaccine push could help it revive its infrastructure invasion in other nations, which has clearly been hit by the pandemic. It's believed that it has already got E-commerce giant Alibaba to build warehouses in Ethiopia and Dubai that will serve as vaccine distribution hubs for Africa and the Middle East. And that it is already building vaccine production facilities in countries like Brazil, Morocco and Indonesia which have participated in trials, too. But the question is will it be able to negotiate its image through such deals while being allergic to global scrutiny? For the world has seen through much of China's designs and is unlikely to be taken in by President Xi Jinping's new agenda of building a "community of common health".

# Pakistan's sophistry

Its terror-conducive justice system, backed by the machinations of the politico-military-clergy triad, is a hoax. The country had better be prudent



BHOPINDER SINGH

Pakistan's overall criminal justice system on terrorism is a creaking sham, not just owing to the complicity of the politico-military-clergy triad but also due to the compromised nature of the two essentials of any criminal justice system, i.e. prosecution and the judiciary. Despite various Anti-Terrorism Acts (ATAs), Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) and even more grandiloquent National Action Plan (NAP) — the conviction rates in terror cases in Pakistan remain abysmally low, if at all the convictions take place. The judiciary has historically been an integral part of the Pakistani establishment's machinations as exemplified in the mid-50s when Chief Justice Muhammad Munir had propounded the "doctrine of necessity" to legalise General Ayub Khan's extralegal takeover of the country by suggesting that "which is otherwise not lawful is made lawful by necessity". But the fickle nature of intrigues and inter-institutional one-upmanship can result in the judiciary taking on the politicians and Generals also — not necessarily to uphold the law but pursuant to their own institutional turf wars. A special court trying the former Pakistan Army chief and President, Pervez Musharraf, had stunningly announced for him the death penalty by majority votes (which was later overturned) and, more recently, the Pakistani Chief Justice had rejected a petitioner's last-minute withdrawal plea that had initially challenged the extension of the Pakistan Army chief's tenure. It was followed by a tense three-day drama which kept the politicians and the Generals on the tenterhooks. The wheels-within-wheels of manipulation and vested interests by all the competing arms of governance have ensured the perpetuation of the rot that facilitates "terror nurseries".

Pakistan is precariously poised to potentially get "blacklisted" for supporting and financing terror and is under constant review by the watchdog agency, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). But a few weeks ago, the Sindh High Court had set aside the provincial Government's detention orders pertaining to the four terrorists held for the abduction and gruesome murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl. The horrifying case of the journalist's decapitation had shocked the conscience of the international community but the provincial court declared it "null and void" and not warranting "any sort of detention". The acting Attorney-General of the US, Jeffrey Rosen, indignantly



remarked that the "separate judicial rulings reversing conviction and ordering release are an affront to terrorism victims everywhere", and the family of the journalist called it a "travesty of justice". For its part, India is well versed with the Pakistani judicial system as a similar fate was bestowed upon the likes of Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and the other masterminds of the Mumbai 26/11 carnage who are often "detained", "kept under house arrest" and even "sentenced" to appease the international community and keep the FATF proceedings from reaching harsh and punitive action, but are able to indulge in their nefarious activities nonetheless.

Intelligence sources had named the terror and Sunni-supremacist organisation, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, as being one of the key participants in the Daniel Pearl murder case. The dilly-dallying, obsequiousness and the long rope afforded by the courts to such organisations ensure that they continue to thrive irrespective of their crimes. The complicated history of the Pakistani military and its intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), in nurturing and supporting such outfits from time to time has always ensured that there are crucial "contacts" and "sympathisers" within the military and the additional pusillanimity by other levers like the judiciary, completely enfeebling the anti-terror commitments that exist only in name. Unsurprisingly, last week, the

same Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and ISIS (ISIS) cadres were said to have killed 11 Hazara Shia coal miners after abducting them, tying up their hands and shooting them in cold blood — another statistic was added to Pakistan's bloody societal violence that is unmatched in its brutality, and apparent acquiescence and leniency from the Government's side, at the same time.

To add insult to injury in the lamentable circus that besets Pakistan, Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari inconceivably said: "India-funded terrorists in Balochistan are getting more desperate as development comes to the province!" The reality of the supposed "development" in the region barely masks the fact that the persecuted Shia Hazara community, from which these miners had come, is huddled in two heavily guarded ghettos in Quetta and surrounded by high walls and barbed wire, after hundreds of them were killed in sectarian violence over the past couple of decades. For the religious minorities and the "deemed minorities" like Shias, Ahmediyas and several others, justice is a far cry.

Even if the odd individual wishes to stand up for justice and for upholding the constitutional provisions, the societal regression that envelops the Pakistani judicial system is all-pervasive and powerful, as was seen when the proud murderer Mumtaz Qadri (who had killed Punjab Governor Salman Taseer in broad daylight) was showered with rose petals by the resident lawyers when he attended court. The judge who finally gave Qadri the death sentence had to face an impromptu strike by the District Bar Association, had his office vandalised and was forced into exile out of the country, fearing for his life. Further, the witness protection programmes in Pakistan are completely ineffective as "influential" bodies routinely and

brazenly ensure intimidation and retractions, and people are simply too scared to testify.

The patent sophistry of ascribing the booming terror network in Pakistan onto the so-called "non-State actors" is a bogey that has lost all credibility. No such apparatus or ecosystem can survive for so long with such impunity despite so many Acts, laws and military exercises aimed at "uprooting terror" — unless the elements of the law-makers (politicos), law enforcers (police/paramilitary), military, religio-social leaders and the judiciary themselves are hand in glove with the perpetrators. Indeed, many a time these terror elements also turn onto their one-time benefactors to settle scores and, therefore, the disentanglement of the murky terror wrings is not very obvious, linear or simple, given the multiplicity of the individual and institutional cross-support afforded to them from time to time. Therefore, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's unconvincing posturing as the "victim of terror" is akin to crying wolf as the Frankensteinian reality convinces nobody. The quartet of Pakistan's military-politicians-clergy-judiciary can never come clean or abort their inter-linkages with such elements. But they will do well to remember that the slippery slope of terror spares absolutely no one.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

# Clipping an outbreak

The bird flu is no good news but India seems to be putting to good use the lessons learnt during the COVID pandemic



The new decade has not begun on a good note for India. Anyone who followed what the health experts and virologists had been predicting about the path the pandemic would take must have been mentally prepared for the fact that the Coronavirus would continue to haunt humanity at least till the winter of 2021. However, with the start of a new year and in spite of a new, mutated strain of the Coronavirus wreaking havoc which made even the British Prime Minister cancel his India visit, people had hoped to put the nightmarish experience of 2020 behind them. But now New Delhi has another, emerging worry on its hands. At least four States — Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Rajasthan — have reported confirmed bird flu cases. Thankfully, already in fighting mode due to the pandemic, the Government sounded an alert with speed and the health authorities have stepped up efforts to contain the spread of the flu's H5N8 strain. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu too are on their toes as thousands of ducks have died in the neighbouring Kerala. Similarly, Haryana, where over four lakh poultry birds perished at Panchkula farms in the past 10 days, and Jammu and Kashmir are alert and taking evasive action. Though there have been no reported cases of transmission to humans despite the disease being zoonotic, health authorities are not taking any chances as the avian flu's mortality rate is 30-50 per cent as against the casualty rate of COVID-19, which is pegged at 0.31 per cent. But even if the nation is able to avoid human infections, the avian flu will be a body blow to the domestic poultry and meat industry as bird flu viruses can infect both birds and animals. As it is, the poultry industry suffered the most on account of rumours during the pandemic and chicken sales in India dipped to over 50 per cent in 2020 and the prices fell by 70 per cent. The sales had started to pick up only towards the end of the year as COVID fatigue set in.

Now, the fresh outbreak will sound the death knell not just for thousands of birds; it will make it difficult for the industry to survive. We are already seeing its effects as the slaughter, sale, purchase and export of any poultry birds, fish and related products have been banned in Kangra district, marked as the epicentre of the infection in Himachal. In Kerala, around 24,000 birds, mostly ducks, were culled and more States are expected to follow suit. But one good thing is that India has learnt many vital lessons from the COVID outbreak and the Government and health authorities are now putting these to good use. As many as 12 epicentres in the affected States have been identified and the Centre has issued an advisory apart from setting up a control room in Delhi. In Indore, the health department has begun door-to-door medical check-ups of people living in areas where hundreds of crows were found dead. Such quick, coordinated and concerted action by all stakeholders, including the Centre and States, would have been unthinkable a year ago. Yes, the pandemic did ruin our economy and resulted in major socio-economic trauma but every dark cloud has a silver lining. And the bright side for India is a ramped-up healthcare infrastructure, lessons in speedy response to a health emergency, quick identification of hotspots, testing, quarantining and evasive action.

## SOUNDBITE

The 444-km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline commissioned on Tuesday would benefit industrial, commercial entities and households in Karnataka's coastal districts.



Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa

I am very disappointed that China has not yet finalised the permissions for our team's arrivals, given that two members have already begun their journey.



WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

There are some films that are made only for the big screen. There are a few films of mine that are going to be released this year, so I hope audiences watch those films in theatres.



Actor Anil Kapoor

Rohit Sharma will open the innings for India in the third Test against Australia which begins at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Thursday.



Indian cricket captain Ajinkya Rahane

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Give up, Trump!

Sir — The 45th US President Donald Trump's adamancy to give up his office despite having lost to his political rival Joseph Biden comes across as a bizarre challenge to the very ideals, values, norms and standards the world's oldest democracy stands for. Joe Biden's oath-taking ceremony, scheduled for January 20, remains just a *fait accompli* now. That the outgoing US President's defeat seems to be not going down well with him is evident from his desperate attempt to overturn the public verdict in the recently-held presidential election, given the recent revelations about a phone call that he made to the Secretary of State in Georgia that he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency.

At the end of the day, both President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have jointly been entrusted with a major responsibility to uphold the unity of the US which seems to be sharply divided in 'Blue' and 'Red' States. The world is closely observing.

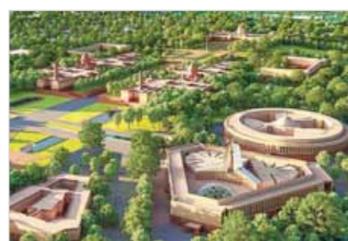
Azhar A Khan  
Rampur

### Govt must allay apprehensions on Central Vista

This refers to the editorial 'SC nod to makeover' (January 6). The Supreme Court's nod to the controversial Central Vista redevelopment project clears the way for the construction of a new Parliament building envisaged to be ready by August 2022, when the nation will celebrate its 75th Independence Day. Now that the project has been approved, the Centre needs to reach out to leaders across the political spectrum and be mindful of their apprehensions. The groundbreaking ceremony held last month was boycotted by the Opposition and frowned upon by the apex court.

The project's proponents must take adequate measures to allay the fears of environmentalists who allege that the project is detrimental to the flora and fauna. The top court said that the Government will have to take approvals from the Heritage Conservation Committee and municipal authorities before starting the construction.

The Central Vista project aims for an integrated administrative block and synergised functioning of ministries spread across 47 buildings in the region. The Government claims that the new structure



would save crores of rupees which are paid as rent for the offices by the exchequer. It also claims that the new building will not face issues like inadequate space, structural weaknesses and so on. That may sound logical but building an edifice for a forum meant for informed discussion and debate while giving these very considerations the go-by is a false start.

N Sathasiva Reddy  
Bengaluru

### Let the stalemate end

Sir — The seventh round of talks between farmers and the Central Government have failed and the next round of talks is slated for January 8. The Centre is dragging the issue and doesn't seem to be interested in really solving the problem. The demands of thousands of farmers who are protesting in

severe cold and rain at Delhi's borders cannot be ignored in such an apathetic manner. The farmers are adamant on their demands for the repeal of three new farm laws and a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) but the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA Government is in no mood to concede to their

demands. Keeping in view the large section of people from all walks of life supporting the agrarian protest, the Government must take it seriously and resolve to end the stalemate, else it would prove to be counterproductive for the incumbent regime.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

### Boost new enterprises

Sir — The entrepreneurship in the fields of livestock and fisheries has proved to be a game-changer for the rural economy. Livestock contributes handsomely to the income of small farm families and provides self-employment to millions of people, especially the villagers. It has contributed significantly to the empowerment of women by increasing their income. Instead of migrating to cities for employment, the youth must take to livestock farming.

The Government should do advance research and encourage farmers to adopt an integrated farming approach. A public-private partnership for sustainable livestock rearing should also be promoted, not to mention the need to have advance technological intervention and increase in market connectivity and processing chain. The Centre, along with the State Governments, should frame a comprehensive policy for the same.

Dr Satywan Saurabh  
Hisar

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## FIRST COLUMN

## Assange is safe, for now

America had worked hard to get around natural British reluctance to extradite a non-American, non-resident to the US, for a political crime



GWYNNE DYER

Recently, a British judge finally rejected America's attempt to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and jail him forever (or at least for 175 years in a high-security "super-max" prison) on the grounds that he is, as US President-elect Joe Biden once called him, a "high-tech terrorist."

The vindictiveness of the American security establishment towards whistle-blowers is awesome to behold. The American Government had worked quite hard to get around natural British reluctance to extradite a non-American, non-resident to the US, for a political crime. Washington always tried to assure London that Assange's sentence would "probably" be only four to six years (but there was no guarantee that it wouldn't turn out to be 10 times that once he was on American soil).

The US prosecutors too, tried to make their desire to get their hands on Assange look non-political by charging him with a civil crime (conspiring to hack into a Pentagon computer network) but if extradited to the US, he also faces 17 charges under the Espionage Act for soliciting and publishing confidential information.

Chelsea Manning, the former US Army Intelligence analyst who gave WikiLeaks that spectacular dump of 7.25,000 classified cables from American embassies a decade ago, was jailed again for eight months in 2019-20 in an attempt to force her to incriminate Assange. (She had already served four years of a 35-year sentence before being pardoned by Obama in 2016.)

To her credit, Manning held out under huge pressure, accumulating \$1,000 fines for each day she refused to talk and was finally released in March 2020 after attempting suicide. The fines still stand, however, and she is now a bankrupt activist who owes the US Government a whopping \$2,56,000.

Vindictive is definitely the word for the US Government and Judge Vanessa Baraitser at the Old Bailey (Central Criminal Court) in London had to work quite hard to thwart America's campaign to get its hands on Assange. Thankfully, she found a way in the end. She ruled that while the American prosecutors had met the legal criteria for Assange to be extradited to the US for trial, their request was denied because the US authorities could not prevent him from attempting to take his own life. He has effectively been in solitary confinement for the last eight years and his psychological state is too shaky to survive back in solitary (as he certainly would be) in a US prison.

Assange now goes back to Belmarsh prison in London and back to solitary confinement because the COVID pandemic is raging at Belmarsh. But his application for bail will probably be granted later this week. He's not completely out of the woods yet, since the US Government undoubtedly will appeal. However, Judge Baraitser probably based her decision on health grounds because a higher court would be less likely to reverse it. In the meantime, Assange could be at home for the first time ever with his partner (whom he met while taking political asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy) and his two young sons.

The road of the whistle-blower is long and lonely. Edward Snowden, who alerted the world about the scale of the US' global electronic surveillance operation in 2013, is still in exile in Russia. But such people are among the few protections we have against the misdeeds of the overweening security State. Daniel Ellsberg, celebrated for his theft and publication of the *Pentagon Papers* detailing the US Government's crimes in Vietnam, put it best: "The American public needed urgently to know what was being done routinely in their name. And there was no other way to learn it than by unauthorised disclosure."

Julian Assange is firmly in that tradition. His accusers trot out the usual allegation that the confidential material he published endangered people's lives, but if that were true you would certainly have heard those people's names and details by now.

His revelations about the US military's misdeeds in Iraq were as valuable as Ellsberg's about Vietnam. Few who saw it will ever forget the video in which the crew of a US Apache helicopter over Baghdad machine-guns innocent civilians, while saying things like "Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards" and "It's their fault for bringing their kids into battle."

There are aspects of Assange's private life that still cast a shadow, like two charges of sexual assault (now dropped) against women in Sweden. But it is also the case that serious attempts were being made to discredit Assange and WikiLeaks even before the famous 2010 dump of the US embassy cables. And in any case his professional behaviour has nothing to do with his private life, even if any misdemeanour could be condoned. So, as the UK court gives the beleaguered whistle-blower a breather for now, take a moment to honour Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning. These hounded, unsung heroes have earned it.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is *Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work*. The views expressed are personal.)

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—ACTOR  
KANGANA RANAUT

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT



IT'S ABOUT RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF UNPAID WORK AND ENSURING A BASIC INCOME TO EVERY WOMAN. I'D LIKE ALL TO BE EMPOWERED LIKE YOU.

—CONGRESS LEADER  
SHASHI THAROOR

# A case for Mount Sikdar

Changing the name of Mount Everest to Mount Sikdar Everest will perhaps do full justice to Radhanath and give him global recognition which was his legitimate due



KK PAUL

All of us are aware from the days of our childhood that the highest mountain peak in the world is Mount Everest and it was named after George Everest. It was only much later that one came to know that Sir George Everest was the Surveyor-General of India and the peak was so named as he had "discovered" it to be the highest in the world. As the Surveyor-General he had his offices at Dehradun and used to stay in Mussoorie. He left India in 1843, almost 200 years ago, but his house in Mussoorie is still being preserved and is now a place of tourist interest.

The truth, however, is somewhat different. It is indeed a fact that Sir George Everest was the Surveyor-General of India from 1830 to 1843, but it is also a fact that during his tenure, Mount Everest, as we know it today, was known only as peak XV. Everest had neither initiated the process of measuring the height of this peak, nor was he instrumental in its naming, which was done much later, long after he had proceeded to England, to enjoy his retirement after 1843.

Located on the border of Nepal and Tibet, peak XV was worshipped as a holy place by Tibetans, who called it Chomolungma, the mother goddess of the world. In Nepal this peak is known as Sagarmatha, meaning the peak of the heavens. Even these days this peak is addressed by its traditional names both in Tibet and Nepal, while we have followed what was given to us by the British i.e. Mount Everest. In fact the name Everest was given by Colonel Sir Andrew Waugh of Bengal Engineers, who succeeded Everest as the Surveyor-General of India from 1844 to 1861. The circumstances under which peak XV was named as Mount Everest are rather peculiar and reveal a very biased handling of the matter so that the entire credit went to the British officers of the East India Company.

Going through the historical records of the *Survey of India Volume IV, 1830 to 1843*, pertaining to the tenure of Everest, one can at a glance observe that he had shown no interest in peak XV during this time in office. It was his successor Andrew Waugh, who made the official announcement of peak XV being the highest-known peak of the world in 1856. The measurements had of course been initiated much earlier and finalised by our own Radhanath Sikdar.

Recognising the work of the brilliant mathematician Radhanath Sikdar, the Government of India issued a postage stamp in his honour in 2004. However, his work is of such great importance that issuing a postage stamp and then forgetting about him does not do justice to him or his contribution. Ironically, it was Everest, who recruited Sikdar in the Great Trigonometrical Survey and became extremely fond of him. Volume IV of the *Historical Records of the Survey of India*, pertaining to his tenure, has the following mention about Sikdar.

"Radhanath is high in favour with everybody, and universally beloved in the GT Survey. You will not know him for the same person when you see him again, for he is no longer a puny stripling, but a hardy, energetic young man, ready to undergo any fatigue and acquire a practical knowledge of all parts of his profession..."

"There are few of my instruments which he cannot manage; and none of my computations of which he is not thoroughly master... Eventually he will furnish a convincing proof that the aptitude of your countrymen for the practical, as well as the theoretical, parts of mathematics is in no wise

inferior to that of Europeans."

“Of the qualifications of the young man himself I cannot speak too highly. In his mathematical attainments there are few in India, whether European or Native, who can at all compete with him, and...even in Europe those attainments would rank very high.”

Later, on account of a special technique developed by Sikdar for accurate computation of heights and distances through spherical trigonometry, he virtually became indispensable to the organisation and rose to become the Chief Computer in the office of the Surveyor-General of India. In that position he moved from Dehradun to Kolkata in 1849. As to why Andrew Waugh gave the name Everest, even though he had left the scene long ago, is an interesting piece of history.

Had Sidney Gerald Burrard, a later Surveyor-General of India, not acknowledged the good work of Sikdar through a research paper published in 1904 in the scientific journal *Nature*, these facts would not have come to light. He published in detail various steps taken for the measurement of peak XV.

This, in a way, also exposed the machinations of Waugh, who had tried his level best to take credit away from Sikdar. It is human nature that, in case something important is achieved, one tries to take or give credit to someone but in this case Waugh specifically mentioned that Sikdar had nothing to do with this work, indicating his bias.

Later, he could be seen placating Sikdar by telling him that he should be happy that the peak had been named after his mentor. Waugh also gave the additional charge of the Indian Meteorological Department to Sikdar, raising his salary to ₹600 per month,



which was unheard for an Indian in those days. Clearly all these efforts were to keep him happy but away from the core of the survey work.

Burrard's publication in *Nature* specifically mentions that the Chief Computer (who was Sikdar) from Kolkata (then Calcutta) had informed Waugh in 1852 that the peak designated XV had been found to be higher than any other highest measured peak in the world at that time.

The raw data from theodolites taken from seven observation stations at Jiro, Mirzapur, Janjati, Ladiva, Haripur, Minai and Doom Dongi was collected at the trigonometrical survey at Kolkata. This was processed by Sikdar who then conveyed to Waugh that peak XV had been measured at 29,002 feet taking the mean value of all the observations.

Considering that the scientific instrumentation available at that time was only of a rudimentary nature, the level of accuracy reached was almost 100 per cent and this figure has not undergone any major change despite the current state of technological progress.

Significantly, after years of debate, China and Nepal recently agreed on a precise elevation for Mount Everest. The new agreed height of 29,031 feet was announced at a virtual ceremony. Such a minuscule change in the height of the peak despite the sophisticated technology used is a great proof of Sikdar's excellence.

Correspondence between Waugh and Sikdar reveals that Waugh did privately acknowledge the achievement of Sikdar, but did not recognise his work on record and in public. In his letter dated August 25, 1856, Waugh wrote to Sikdar that he was glad to hear that naming the peak as Everest had given the latter a lot

of satisfaction. Thus it is clear that the name Everest was given to ensure that Sikdar, who could have been the rightful claimant for credit, did not object as he was extremely fond of Everest who had recruited him in service. This information would have remained obscure, but for the research paper of Burrard in 1904. Later, Professor Meghnad Saha acknowledged this feat in 1938 by giving Sikdar full credit. Earlier Kenneth Mason in 1928 had recognised his work as also John Keay in his book, *The Great Arc*.

Changing the name of Mount Everest to Mount Sikdar Everest will perhaps do full justice to Sikdar and give him worldwide recognition which was legitimately his due, long time ago. We do not have to seek anybody's approval for such a change as the rationale is well-documented. Even if the world continues to call it Everest, in India, we could still call it Sikdar Everest.

On several occasions, achievements of Indian scientists have not been recognised. For instance, Sir JC Bose could have got the Nobel Prize for Physics or at least shared it with Marconi for his work on the wireless and radio.

SN Bose could have got the Nobel Prize way back in 1932 for his work with Einstein on the Bose-Einstein condensate but at least he was recognised, though belatedly by the naming of the God particle, Higgs-Boson after him. Naming Everest as Sikdar Everest would be a recognition of a scientist whose work has stood the test of time. Besides it would also justifiably add to our national pride.

(The writer is a former Police Commissioner and ex-Governor of Uttarakhand. The views expressed are personal.)

# The Blue Economy can dispel economic blues

With many traditional industries currently stagnated, India urgently needs an eco-friendly sector whose economic potential has not yet been fully realised



KOTA SRIRAJ

The rapidly spreading new strain of the COVID-19 virus indicates that the fight against the pandemic and its fallouts is far from over. The UK has announced a complete lockdown until mid-February in order to cut the spiralling infection rate, while India is also witnessing a sudden spurt in cases of the new strain in various States. These developments are bound to take a heavy toll on an already beleaguered economy. However, humanity has not lost hope and believes that the global economy will bounce back.

The socio-economic destruction in the wake of the COVID-19 pan-

demical brought the Indian economy to its knees. Unemployment rose sharply from 6.7 per cent in March 2020 to 26 per cent in April 2020. This translates to nearly 140 million people losing their jobs in a shockingly short span of time. The same period also witnessed a fall in business activity from 82 per cent to 44 per cent, eventually followed by the largest-ever Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contraction of minus 24 per cent in the First Quarter of the Financial Year 2020-21.

In fact, India suffered a staggering loss of ₹32,000 crore per day during the first 21 days of the lockdown. These tremendous economic reverses need the intervention of innovative measures such as an increased focus on marginally leveraged areas such as the 'Blue Economy.'

The World Bank defines the Blue Economy as sustainable use of the global oceanic resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and for sustaining a healthy ocean ecosystem. Originally coined by Belgian economist Gunter Pauli in

2010, the term 'Blue Economy' holds tremendous environmental and economic relevance for the Indian economy which holds fifth position in the world.

Judicious development of the Blue Economy is critical for the country's efforts to revive its crippled fiscal health. This sector will not only help resurrect the comatose economy but can also lead to sustainable growth in the coming decade and beyond. With many traditional sectors currently stagnated and bogged down in the recession, India urgently needs an eco-friendly and long-term sector whose economic potential has not yet been fully realised.

The oceans abutting India's nearly 7,000-km-long coastline have the capacity to provide just what the nation needs. According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences, currently the Blue Economy in India comprises just 4.1 per cent of the GDP, which demonstrates the need to scale up this sector.

India already has robust traditional oceanic activities such as fisheries,



tourism, maritime transport and so on. For the Blue Economy, the Government can increase its focus on certain emerging areas such as maritime renewable energy, seabed extractive activities, marine biotechnology and bioprospecting. Of all the avenues, bioprospecting is the most exciting because it has the potential to become a long-term economic resource as it involves eco-friendly exploration and harnessing of plant and animal species from which medicinal drugs, biochemicals and other

commercially valuable material can be obtained. With a sea of opportunities waiting to be tapped, the Blue Economy can prove to be the next level of growth for India but at the same time, we need to exercise extreme caution in order to ensure that any harm to the environment or the delicate marine biodiversity is not only predicted beforehand but also avoided properly. For instance, bioprospecting can sometimes cause overharvesting of individual species which leads to their extinction. If cause-

es immense damage to the environment as the role of any particular species in the ecosystem cannot be replicated by any other breed. The Government must also ensure that the private sector enterprises engaged in the Blue Economy abide by strict norms and regulations for safeguarding the marine ecosystem. Only then we will be able to have environmentally responsible economic growth for our nation.

As a first step towards leveraging the oceans for responsible economic growth, India needs to up the explorative extent of the oceans under its purview. This area definitely needs improvement. Furthermore, the achievements and potential of Blue Economy-related activities mostly go unreported which results in less awareness among the citizens and investors regarding its potentiality. Therefore, it does not attract private sector enterprises or investments and these conditions are detrimental to its development and growth.

The Blue Economy can turn the proverbial economic page for India as

it entails multiple socio-economic benefits. It can not only help in livelihood generation, providing energy security and improving the health and prosperity of coastal communities but can also increase the ecological resilience of the oceans surrounding India. If piloted properly, the Blue Economic development drive will help India achieve its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and also pave the way for marine sector services to assist the Indian economy to become a \$10 trillion one by 2030. But careful planning and implementation are needed for these goals to be achieved. Oceans constitute over 70 per cent of the Earth's surface and if their vast resources are harnessed with a sense of responsibility and due respect for the environment, they can provide infinite assets for our economy. India is gifted with abundant oceanic resources making it possible to power the country's future with the aid of the Blue Economy.

(The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

# India calls on Lanka to meet expectations of Tamils

## India will always be a dependable partner and reliable friend of Sri Lanka, says Jaishankar

**Colombo:** India on Wednesday called on Sri Lanka to meet the expectations of its minority Tamil community for equality, justice, peace and dignity within a united country for its "own interest", as part of the reconciliation process.

During a joint media interaction with his counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is in the island nation for his first overseas visit of the year, underlined India's backing for Lanka's reconciliation process and an "inclusive political outlook" that encourages ethnic harmony.

"As we promote peace and well-being in the region, India has been strongly committed to

the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Our support for the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka is long-standing, as indeed for an inclusive political outlook that encourages ethnic harmony," he said.

"It is in Sri Lanka's own interest that the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace and dignity within a united Sri Lanka are fulfilled. That applies equally to the commitments made by the Sri Lankan government on meaningful devolution, including the 13th Amendment to the Constitution," Jaishankar added.

The progress and prosperity of Sri Lanka will surely be

advanced as a consequence, he asserted.

The 13th Amendment provides for devolution of power to the Tamil community. India has been pressing Sri Lanka to implement the 13th amendment which was brought in after the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987.

His remarks assume significance in the backdrop of moves by the ruling Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) allies to mount a public campaign for abolition of Sri Lanka's provincial council system.

The SLPP's Sinhala majority hardliners have been advocating a total abolition of the island's provincial council system established in

1987.

The issue of Tamil reconciliation process had also figured prominently at a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa in September last year.

Modi had pitched for full implementation of the constitutional provision by the Sri Lankan government to ensure devolution of powers to the minority Tamil community.

While expressing India's commitment to help enhance Lanka's capability to deal with growing maritime challenges, Jaishankar said New Delhi also looked forward to the early return of the Indian fishermen

detailed in the island nation. Jaishankar said India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group had recently met and discussed all outstanding issues related to fisheries in an open and candid manner. "We naturally look forward to the early return of our fishermen," he said.

Indian fishermen, apprehended in Sri Lanka for allegedly poaching in its territorial waters, were provided consular assistance by the Consulate General of India in Jaffna last week.

The Indian High Commission here said it was in touch with the Sri Lankan Government to facilitate the early release of the detained fishermen.

India and Sri Lanka last week held through video conferencing a meeting of the joint working group on fisheries and discussed the issues related to fishermen and the ways to overcome challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters.

Jaishankar is on a three-day visit here from December 5 to 7 at the invitation of his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena.

This is the first visit by a foreign dignitary to Sri Lanka in the new year. **PTI**

**Colombo:** Assuring that India will always be a "dependable partner and reliable friend" of Sri Lanka, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said the country is open to strengthening its relationship with Colombo on the basis of "mutual trust, mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity".

Speaking at a joint media briefing here with his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena, Jaishankar also said that the coronavirus pandemic has not been able to dent the bilateral relationship and that the two countries are now

looking at post-COVID cooperation.

"COVID hasn't been able to dent our bilateral cooperation. In fact, high level contacts were maintained and indeed strengthened during the past year and the virtual summit between our prime ministers was a high watermark for us in 2020," he said.

Jaishankar, who earlier met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, said he discussed cooperation for post-COVID health and economic recovery. "India will be a reliable partner in Sri Lanka's development," he said. **PTI**

## Joint Session of US Congress set to formally certify Joe Biden's presidential victory

**PTI ■ WASHINGTON**

A joint session of the US Congress, presided over by Vice President Mike Pence, on Wednesday is scheduled to count the result of the November 3 presidential election and officially confirm the Electoral College votes won by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

However, a large number of Republican lawmakers, including more than 100 members of the House of Representatives and over a dozen Senators, are expected to raise their opposition to the counting of votes and election results.

"When the Congress meets tomorrow, this resounding victory will be recognised, and Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be officially

declared the next President and Vice President of the United States," House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in her "Dear Colleague" letter on Tuesday.

Observing that the Joint Session should be a solemn occasion, Pelosi said there are no speaking roles during the session, except for announcing the votes of the states.

"If Republicans bring a challenge to a state, we then break into separate House and Senate sessions to debate. The state delegations and our leaders - Representatives Zoe Lofgren, Jamie Raskin, Adam Schiff and Joe Neguse - have been working on our Democratic presentation of the Constitutional, historical and thematic justification for respecting the will of the people," Pelosi said.

## Pence told Trump he lacks power to challenge election results: Report

**Washington:** Vice President Mike Pence has told Donald Trump that he lacked the power to challenge President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the November 3 election despite the US president's insistence that he did not, according to a media report.

The New York Times reported on Tuesday that Pence delivered the message to Trump during his weekly lunch with the president.

Pence is set to preside over the US Senate on Wednesday as it receives the results of the state-by-state Electoral College that determines the winner of presidential election.

Biden, a Democrat, beat Trump 306-232 in the Electoral College and in the popular vote by more than 7 million ballots. Trump, a Republican, has not conceded the election, reiterating unverified claims that the presidential polls were rigged.

Dozens of lawsuits by his campaign challenging election results have failed in US courts.

"Vice President Mike Pence told President Trump on Tuesday that he did not believe he had the power to block congressional certification of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory in the presidential election despite Mr Trump's baseless insistence that he did," the daily reported, citing unnamed people briefed on the conversation. Trump, however, has denied the report as "fake news", asserting that Pence never told him what the report said. **PTI**

## Thousands converge in Washington for Trump rally

**Washington:** Thousands of supporters of Donald Trump have converged here to attend a massive rally to be addressed by the US president on Wednesday in protest against what he alleges to be a rigged presidential election.

"Washington is being inundated with people who don't want to see an election victory stolen by emboldened Radical Left Democrats. Our Country has had enough, they won't take it anymore! We hear you (and love you) from the Oval Office. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" Trump said in a tweet on Tuesday.

Trump is scheduled to address the rally at about 11 a.m. The rally is being held at the same time, when in a joint session, the US Congress is scheduled to count the votes of the Electoral College and certify the results of the November 3 presidential election.

Trump, the Republican incumbent, has not conceded the election, reiterating unverified claims that the presidential polls were rigged. Dozens of lawsuits by his campaign challenging election results have failed in US courts. Biden, a Democrat, is set to be inaugurated as the 46th US President on January 20.

Thousands of Trump supporters gathered at various places in downtown Washington with posters and banners "Stop the steal" to "Trump is my president." US media feared a violent clash between Republican and Democratic supporters. **PTI**

## Trump orders ban on transactions with eight more Chinese apps

**Washington:** President Donald Trump has signed an executive order barring transactions with eight Chinese apps including Alipay and WeChat Pay to protect America's national security, citing the steps taken by India to ban more than 200 Chinese connected software applications.

Trump's order said action is needed to "deal with the national emergency" caused by the "pervasiveness of the spread" of apps created and controlled in China.

The ban against the eight Chinese apps -- Alipay, CamScanner, QQ Wallet, SHAREit, Tencent QQ, VMate, WeChat Pay, and WPS Office -- will come into effect in 45 days from Tuesday.

"The pace and pervasiveness of the spread in the United States of certain connected mobile and desktop applications and other software developed or controlled by persons China, to include Hong Kong and Macau (China), continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States," Trump said on Tuesday.

"At this time, action must be taken to address the threat posed by these Chinese connected software applications," Trump said in his executive order.

The orders follow two others Trump signed in August banning dealings with the popular video app TikTok as well as the main WeChat app.

Trump said that India has banned the use of more than 200 Chinese connected software applications throughout the country. **PTI**

## China criticises US order against dealing with Chinese apps

**Beijing:** China's Government on Wednesday accused Washington of misusing national security as an excuse to hurt commercial competitors after President Donald Trump signed an order banning transactions with payment services Alipay and WeChat Pay and six other apps.

Tuesday's order escalated a conflict with Beijing over technology, security and spying accusations that has plunged U.S.-Chinese relations to their lowest level in decades.

It followed confusion in financial markets after the New York Stock Exchange announced last week it would remove three Chinese phone companies and then withdrew that plan Monday. **AP**

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one female **Namely: Manorama, W/o: Deepak, R/o: H. No. 128, Street No. 2, Nehru Nagar, Anand Parbat, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped with her son since **29.12.2020** from her house in the area of **P. S. Anand Parbat, Delhi**. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 12A dated 31.12.2020** has been lodged at P. S. Anand Parbat, Delhi. The description of the missing female and her son are as under: **Age: 23 years, Height: 4'8", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Fatty, Wearing: Black colour shawl and unknown colour clothes, and her son: Name: Ansh, Age: 4 years, Height: 2'6", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Unknown clothes and slipper in his feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female and her son but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female and her son kindly inform to the following.**

**Website: http://cbi.nic.in**  
**E-mail Id - cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639**  
**DP/583/CD/2021**

**SHO P.S. Anand Parbat, Delhi**  
**Tel.No. 011-28762468, 8750870435**

## WikiLeaks founder Assange denied bail in UK

**London:** A British judge on Wednesday denied bail to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, ordering him to remain in a high-security prison while U.K. Courts decide whether he will be sent to the United States to face espionage charges.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser said Assange must remain in prison while the courts consider an appeal by U.S.

Authorities against her decision not to extradite him.

The judge said Assange "has an incentive to abscond" and there is a good chance he would fail to return to court if freed.

On Monday, Baraitser rejected an American request to send Assange to the U.S. **AP**

## Hong Kong arrests 53 activists under national security law

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong police arrested 53 former lawmakers and democracy proponents on Wednesday for allegedly violating the new national security law by participating in unofficial election primaries for the territory's legislature last year.

The mass arrests, including of former lawmakers, were the largest move against Hong Kong's democracy movement since the law was imposed by Beijing last June to quell dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

"The operation today targets the active elements who are suspected to be involved in the crime of overthrowing, or interfering (and) seriously destroy the Hong Kong governments legal execution of duties," John Lee, Hong Kong's security minister, said at a news conference.

He said those arrested were suspected of trying to paralyze the government, via their plans to gain a majority of the seats in the legislature to create a situation in which the chief executive had to resign and the government would stop functioning.

In a video released by former lawmaker Lam Cheuk-ting on his Facebook page, police turned up at his house and told him he was "suspected of violating the national security law, subverting state power." Police told those recording the video to stop or risk arrest.

The legislative election that would have followed the unofficial primaries was postponed by a year by Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who cited the public health risks during the coronavirus pandemic. Mass resignations and disqualifications of pro-democracy lawmakers have left the legislature largely a pro-Beijing body.

Lee said the police would not target those who had voted in the unofficial primaries, which were held in July last year and attracted more than 600,000 voters even though pro-Beijing lawmakers and politicians had warned the event could breach the security law.

All of the pro-democracy candidates in the unofficial primaries were arrested, according to tallies of the arrests being reported by the South China Morning Post, online platform Now News and political groups. **AP**

## EU calls for immediate release of HK activists

**Brussels:** The European Union called for the immediate release on Wednesday of the 53 former lawmakers and pro-democracy activists who have been arrested in Hong Kong after being accused of violating a new security law.

The mass arrests, including of former lawmakers, were the largest crackdown on Hong Kong's democracy movement since the law was imposed by China last June to quell dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

EU spokesman Peter Stano told a press conference that the arrests send "a signal that political pluralism is no longer tolerated in Hong Kong."

He added that the security law is being used "to crush dissent and stifle the exercise of human rights and political freedoms." **AP**

## WHO disappointed as Chinese delays letting experts in

**Geneva:** The head of the World Health Organization said on Tuesday that he is "disappointed" Chinese officials haven't finalised the permissions to allow a team of experts into China to examine the origins of COVID-19.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a rare critique of Beijing, said members of the international scientific team began departing from their home countries over the last 24 hours as part of an arrangement between WHO and the Chinese government.

"Today, we learned that Chinese officials have not yet finalized the necessary permissions for the team's arrival in China," Tedros said during a news conference in Geneva. **AP**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the public in general that Khetarpal Nursing Home, GN-5, Shivaji Enclave, New Delhi-110027 will destroy Medical records from 2014 till 2017.

Anybody interested in his / her records may contact on 011-45600000 within a month.

### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sanjeev, S/o Lt. Shri Mahavir, R/o H.No. 10627, Gali No. 6, Pratap Nagar Delhi**, has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 168/2020 U/S 307/186/353 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act, PS Gulabi Bagh, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Sanjeev** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Sanjeev** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Sanjeev of FIR No. 168/2020 U/S 307/186/353 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act, PS Gulabi Bagh, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said case on or before **07.02.2021**.

By Order  
**Sh. Harun Pratap,**  
**Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,**  
**Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi**  
**DP/844/N/2020/Court Matter)**

### PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Gautam Malik/ Puneet Malik LBDEL00001295071 & LBDEL00001295075	H 307, Third Floor, DDA Built MIG Flat, With Scooter Garage On Ground Floor And Roof Rights, Naraina Vihar, New Delhi 110028/ January 05, 2021	October 30, 2018 Rs. 803294/-	Delhi/ Ncr

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

Date : January 07, 2021  
 Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer  
**ICICI Bank Limited**

### GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	FOR CHECKING OF HT/LT CONNECTIONS AND MTC. AUDIT OF 33 KV S/STN.	CLOSING DATE 12.01.2021	6000/-	uhbvn.org.in	0184-4075500 xennmpkarnal@uhbvn.org.in
2	UHBVN	ONE NO. MAHINDERA BOLERO WITH DRIVER FOR DIVN UHBVN NARAINGARH	CLOSING DATE 15.01.2021	6000/-	uhbvn.org.in	9354726356 xenopnaraingrah@uhbvn.org.in
3	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, INDRI	SUPPLY OF OFFICE STAFF FOR MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, INDRI ON DC RATE FOR 6 MONTHS	CLOSING DATE 14.01.2021	10000/-	etenders.hry.nic.in	9416435945 secmhc.indri@gmail.com
4	DAIRY DEV. COOP. FED. LTD.	HIRING OF ONE BOLERO/EQUAL AND ONE DESIRE VEHICLE/EQUAL FOR FIELD	CLOSING DATE 28.01.2021	3 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9996324596 vitajind@gmail.com
5	HVPNL	PROVIDING AND FIXING INTERLOCKING BLOCKS & REPAIRING OF BOUNDARY WALL AT 220 KV S/STN. SAFIDON AND PROVIDING AND FIXING INTERLOCKING BLOCKS AT 132 KV S/STN.ALEWA UNDER. XEN T/5 DIVISION, HVPN, JIND	01.01.2021 14.01.2021	3.72 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
6	HVPNL	REPAIR & CIVIL MAINTENANCE WORKS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT 132 KV S/STN COLONY, HVPNL, SIRSA	04.01.2021 11.01.2021	4.17 LACS	https://www.hvnpn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
7	HVPNL	PAINTING OF RUSTED STEEL STRUCTURE AT 220/132KV S/STN. HVPNL, SIRSA.	04.01.2021 11.01.2021	4.91 LACS	https://www.hvnpn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
8	HVPNL	REPAIR AND INCREASE OF HEIGHT OF OUTSIDE BOUNDARY WALL (BASANT VIHAR SIDE) OF POWER HOUSE COLONY AT 220/132 KV S/STN., HVPNL, POWER HOUSE COLONY, KARNAL	04.01.2021 13.01.2021	2.66 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
9	UHBVN	CONST. OF SHED, PAVILION BLOCK, RAISING OF FALLEN BOUNDARY WALL AND RENOVATION OF EXISTING COMPLAINT CENTRE OLO SDO OP MADANPUR IN COMPLAINT CENTRE SECTOR-25, PANCHKULA.	CLOSING DATE 13.01.2021	15.75 LACS	www.uhbvn.org.in	9356063248 xenciviluhbvnpanchkula@gmail.com
10	HSAMB, KKR.	RE-CONST. OF LINK ROAD FROM JOGI MAJRA TO GHILLOUR MAJRI ROAD IN MC LADWA (ROAD ID : 3795) + 3 OTHER WORKS	08.01.2021 21.01.2021	EMD 3.47 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01744-231420 xenkr2019@gmail.com
11	MC PANCHKULA	REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF PARK NEAR HOUSE NO. 739, SECTOR-12A, PANCHKULA + 2 OTHER WORKS	06.01.2021 20.01.2021	62.87 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9050060000 xenmcpkl@gmail.com
12	DHBVN	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF ELECTRIC LINES UP TO 11 KV VOLTAGE LEVEL ON TUENKEY BASIS BY EXECUTING THE WORK UNDER MGJG SCHEME ON 05 NO RDS FEEDERS UNDER XEN/OP DIVISION NO-II, HISAR NIT NO - 09/SE/OP/HSR/2020-21	05.01.2021 27.01.2021	4.47 CRORE	www.dhbvn.org.in	01662-232629 seophisar@dhbvn.org.in
13	DHBVN	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF ELECTRIC LINES UP TO 11 KV VOLTAGE LEVEL ON TUENKEY BASIS BY EXECUTING THE WORK UNDER MGJG SCHEME ON 23 NO RDS FEEDERS UNDER HANSI DIVISION NIT NO - 08/SE/OP/HSR/2020-21	05.01.2021 27.01.2021	29.79 CRORE	www.dhbvn.org.in	01662-232629 seophisar@dhbvn.org.in
14	DHBVN	FIXING THE RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF ACSR RABBIT CONDUCTOR 80 MM2( NIT NO. 671/DH/MM DATED 05.01.2021 AGAINST QD - 852.	08.01.2021 28.01.2021	12.46 CRORE	www.dhbvn.org.in	8059888680 semmdhbvn@gmail.com
15	DHBVN	FIXING THE RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF ACSR RABBIT CONDUCTOR 50 MM2( NIT NO. 670/DH/MM DATED 05.01.2021 AGAINST QD - 851.	08.01.2021 28.01.2021	24.15 CRORE	www.dhbvn.org.in	8059888680 semmdhbvn@gmail.com
16	POLICE HOUSING CORN. LTD.	SITC OF HVAC SYSTEM IN OFFICE BUILDING OF UHBVN SECTOR 14, PANCHKULA	07.01.2021 14.01.2021	576.89 LACS	www.pnhpc.org.in	dbpanchkula@yahoo.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO NO. 320/1270

# COVID-19 IMPACT Housing sales down 37%

**OFFICE LEASING  
DIPS 35PC IN 2020  
ACROSS 8 CITIES**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales fell 37 per cent year-on-year during the 2020 calendar year while gross office space leasing declined 35 per cent on low demand because of the coronavirus pandemic, but demand improved significantly in the last quarter to cross pre-COVID level, property consultant Knight Frank India said on Wednesday.

In its 'India Real Estate - Residential and Office Update H2 2020' report released on Wednesday, the consultant reported that sales of residential properties fell 37 per cent to 1,54,534 units in 2020 across eight cities as compared with 2,45,861 units in the previous year. Similarly, the gross office

space absorption declined 35 per cent to 39.4 million sq ft from 60.6 million sq ft.

However, both housing sales and gross office leasing during October-December 2020 were higher than the corresponding period of the previous year. The sales of residential properties in the fourth quarter of the 2020 calendar year rose to 61,592 units from 58,402 units in the year-ago period on pent-up and festive demand, while office absorption increased to 17.5 million sq ft from 16.4 million sq ft.

As per the annual data, housing sales fell in all eight major cities during 2020, with demand falling most in Ahmedabad and least in Pune. In the office market, Hyderabad witnessed maximum decline in leasing activities and Ahmedabad the least.

Knight Frank India tracks eight property markets -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, and

Ahmedabad.

In the residential property market, housing sales fell 18 per cent in Pune to 26,919 units during 2020 from 32,809 units in the previous year, while Mumbai saw 20 per cent decline at 48,688 units from 60,943 units. The Maharashtra government's decision to temporarily cut stamp duty on registration of properties led to higher sales in Mumbai and Pune region during the last four months of the 2020 calendar year, the consultant said.

Housing sales in Delhi-NCR decreased 50 per cent to 21,234 units in 2020 from 42,828 units in the previous year, while demand slumped 51 per cent in Bengaluru to 23,579 units from 48,076 units.

In Chennai, sales fell 49 per cent to 8,654 units in 2020 from 16,959 units in the previous year. The sales of residential properties in Hyderabad declined 38 per cent to 10,402 units from 16,267 units. Kolkata saw 21

per cent fall in sales to 8,912 units from 11,266 units.

Ahmedabad was worst hit, with sales down by 61 per cent to 6,506 units in 2020 from 16,713 units in the previous year. "Despite the on-going pandemic, the H2 2020 sales growth in some cities is fairly encouraging. In Q3 2020, the real estate market started witnessing revival signs, further recording a significant improvement in home sales during Q4 2020," Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal said.

Out of the total sales number in the second half of 2020, he said Mumbai and Pune contributed around 50 per cent in home sales.

"This marvellous performance can be largely attributed to the state government's decision of reducing stamp duty in Maharashtra. The other state governments would need to jump into the bandwagon or offer something similar to bolster demand across their markets," Bajjal said.

# RBI to be on a long-pause in rates on sticky non-food inflation, says DBS report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The non-food component in the price basket will continue to keep inflation at a high level and result in a "long pause" in interest rates, a foreign bank said on Wednesday.

The central bank is likely to pare the pandemic-driven emergency response as well, the report by Singaporean lender DBS said. It can be noted that the high inflation driven by the food prices has forced the RBI to go for a status quo in rates for the three consecutive reviews of the bi-monthly policy meetings, even as growth continues to be in the negative territory. The RBI expects the GDP to contract by 7.5 per cent over a six month period, food inflation is likely to ease, but non-food may be sticky on account of rigidity in domestic fuel taxation, marginal hikes in manufacturing costs after months of the shutdown, com-

modity price rises, telecom price adjustments and return in demand impulses in certain core categories. The recent rally in commodities lends to fresh cost-push impact, especially industrial metals, it said, pointing out that generic steel hot-rolled coil futures are up by over 80 per cent since late-September 2020, while on oil, Brent crude rallied 30 per cent in the December quarter.

"While India's CPI inflation is expected to ease, 2021 average inflation will stay above the 4 per cent target. Room for outright rate cuts is, thereby, limited, but the central bank will settle into a long pause, with a bias to anchor rates through strong dovish guidance," as per the report.

It added that an upcoming review of the inflation targets is "unlikely" to result in a material change. The 4 per cent inflation target given by the Reserve Bank of India is up for review post-March.

# WhatsApp updates terms of service, privacy policy for users

New Delhi: WhatsApp has updated its terms of service and privacy policy regarding how it processes user data and partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the social media giant's products. Users have received in-app prompts informing them of the update in terms of use that take effect on February 8, 2021.

The message to users noted that the key updates include more information about WhatsApp's service and how it processes user data; how businesses can use Facebook hosted services to store and manage their WhatsApp chats; and how WhatsApp partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the company products.

The message added that users will need to accept these updates to continue using WhatsApp. When contacted, a WhatsApp spokesperson said, "As we've previously talked as part of WhatsApp's business

in October 2020, in order to enable small businesses better, we are updating our terms of service and privacy policy as we work to make WhatsApp a great way to get answers or help from a business." The spokesperson said the updated terms of service and privacy policy include additional information on how the company handles user data.

"Our updated Terms and Privacy Policy provide more information on how we process your data, and our commitment to privacy. For example, we've added more information about more recent product features (like catalogs/add to cart feature, etc) and functionalities, how we process your data for safety, security and integrity, and added more direct links to user settings, Help Center articles and how you can manage your information," the spokesperson said.

# Prime Minister Narendra Modi to interact with leading economists tomorrow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with leading economists and sectoral experts on Friday to deliberate on measures that may be included in the upcoming budget for promoting growth, amid uncertainty on multiple fronts caused by Covid-19. The meeting, being organised by the government think tank Niti Aayog will be held virtually and will also be attended by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.

"The PM will meet economists on Friday to seek their inputs for the next budget," said

a government official on condition of anonymity. The meeting assumes significance as according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's economy is projected to contract 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal ending March 31, 2021, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank estimates the contraction at 10.3 per cent and 9.6 per cent, respectively. India's economy recovered faster than expected in the September quarter as a pick-up in manufacturing helped GDP clock a lower contraction of 7.5 per cent and held out hopes for further improvement on better consumer demand.

# Large number of farmers supporting agri laws: Tomar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Wednesday said a large number of farmers from across the country are coming out in support of three farm laws and urged protesting unions to understand the sentiments behind reforms brought through these legislations.

He also expressed confidence that the protesting unions will focus on farmers' interests and help the government reach a solution through constructive dialogue.

Speaking to reporters after meeting a group supporting the laws, Tomar said the government is committed towards all farmers of the country and

their interests.

"Therefore, we are meeting those farmers who are coming out in support of the three laws, in addition to a continuing dialogue with those opposing the Acts," the minister said.

He further said, "A large number of farmers from across the country are coming out in support of the laws."

We are meeting them and also getting their letters and phone calls. We welcome and thank all of them."

Seven rounds of talks between the government and representatives of protesting farmers have failed to resolve a long-running agitation against the three laws enacted in September.

# India Inc's aid to kisan to obviate stubble burning

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: At a time when all-out efforts are being made to cut down air pollution in Delhi-NCR, including by incentivising ways to dispose of stubble without setting it afire, India Inc is coming forward to contribute towards the august cause.

New Holland Agriculture donated farming equipment to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Chhauha, Dadri, and Greater Noida in Gautam Budh Nagar district for carrying out economically viable and environmentally sustainable straw management. Local MP Dr Mahesh Sharma and Dadri MLA Tejpal Nagar were present on the occasion.

# CIL optimistic of closing current fiscal with auction bookings of 120 MT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) on Wednesday said it is optimistic of closing the current financial year with auction bookings of 120 million tonnes (MT).

CIL's concentrated efforts to book increased volumes of coal under e-auction to bolster sales revenue, especially in view of the narrowed margins in add-ons during the COVID-19 pandemic period, paid off with the company scoring a strong 76.2 per cent growth during April-December of the current fiscal, the PSU said in a statement.

"Encouraged by the buoyancy in its e-auction coal sales, CIL is optimistic of closing the current fiscal with auction bookings of 120 million tonnes (MT). It would be the highest ever since coal sales began under the auction hammer," the PSU said.

The auction sales have surpassed the company's previous estimates and the company said that it is sure of allocating 120 MT of coal by the end of the current fiscal.

The PSU booked 81.4 MT of coal under five auction windows progressive up to December of the current fiscal,

displaying a robust 35.2 MT volume expansion compared to 46.2 MT it booked during the same period a year ago.

Beginning October, CIL introduced special spot auction for coal importers, under which it had already booked 7.3 MT in three months. Apart from increased volume bookings, premium over notified price has been gaining steadily since October with CIL as whole netting a 15 per cent premium during April-December. Among the subsidiaries, Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL) clocked the highest 40 per cent increase over the notified prices with Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) and Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) registering 23 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively. The company has identified specific mines in ECL, BCCL, CCL and SECL from where the response has been positive in e-auction and there is potential for further increase, the company said.

# Govt clears India-Japan pact to institutionalise mobility of skilled workers

New Delhi: The Govt has approved the signing of an agreement to institutionalise a mechanism for cooperation between India and Japan in sending and accepting skilled Indian workers, who have qualified the skill and Japanese language test. The memorandum of cooperation on a basic framework for partnership pertaining to "Specified Skilled Worker" between India and Japan was cleared at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It will enhance people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of workers and skilled professionals. "The present Memorandum of Cooperation would set an institutional mechanism for partnership and cooperation between India and Japan on sending and accepting skilled Indian workers, who have qualified the required skill and Japanese language test, to work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan."

# Udaan raises \$280 million in funding from Lightspeed Venture Partners, Tencent, others

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce major Udaan on Wednesday said it has raised \$280 million (about ₹2,048 crore) in funding from existing and new investors, including Lightspeed Venture Partners and Tencent. Existing investors of Udaan - Lightspeed Venture Partners, DST Global, GGV Capital, Altmetric Capital, and Tencent - participated in the latest funding exercise, in addition to two new investors - Octahedron Capital and Moonstone Capital, a state-

ment said. With the latest capital infusion, Udaan has raised \$ 1.15 billion in total till date. While the company did not disclose the details around valuation, sources said the valuation has crossed USD 3 billion post this transaction. The latest capital infusion is additional financing to the company's series D round. Udaan had announced raising \$585 million in series D funding round in October 2019 from a clutch of investors, including China's Tencent.

# Iron ore prices expected to remain elevated over mid-term: India Ratings

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Iron ore prices are expected to be elevated over the near-mid-term due to supply-side constraints clubbed with a simultaneous robust revival in demand post Covid-19 led demand shocks, India Ratings and Research said on Wednesday.

In its iron ore market review, the agency said the domestic supply shortage is primarily driven by a delay in the ramp-up of Odisha iron ore mines post auctions in March

2020 due to the high, unviable premiums and Covid-19 led disruptions. As per the review, various measures have been taken by the central and state governments to address the short supply, but they are likely to be insufficient in meeting demand over the near term.

Further, it predicted a slight softening of prices, once supply improves, it would remain at elevated levels due to the structural change in the cost of miners paying premium, it said.

The global supply side has

also been constrained by the supply disruptions in Brazil and South Africa. "Conversely, both domestic and global steel production levels have been on the rise post Covid-19 disruptions. Domestic production has improved since 2QFY21 with output reaching pre-Covid levels."

**KIMIA BIOSCIENCES LIMITED**  
 Regd. Off.: Vill. Bhonds, Tehsil Sohna, Gurgaon-122102, Haryana  
 E-mail: compliance.kimia@gmail.com Web: www.kimiabiosciences.com  
 CIN: L24239HR1993PLC032120, Tel: 011-47063600, Fax: 011-47063601/02

**Notice of Loss of Share Certificate**

NOTICE is hereby given that the following Share Certificates issued by the company are reported to have been lost or misplaced or stolen and the registered holder/legal heir thereof have applied to the company for the issue of Duplicate Certificates.

Folio No.	Share Certificate No.	No. of Equity Shares	Distinctive No.	Name of Registered Holder
0000151	42	2500	137001 to 139500	JAGDISH CHANDER GULATI
0000229	97	2500	402601 to 405100	RASHMI SINGHAL

The company has notified the loss of these share certificates to the Stock Exchange where these shares are listed. The public is hereby warned against purchasing or dealing in any way with the above Share Certificates. Any person(s) who has/have any claim(s) in respect of the said Share Certificates should lodge such claim(s) with the Company at its corporate office at the address 97A, Aggarwal Millennium Tower-II, Netaji Subhash Place, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 within 15 days of publication of this notice, after which no claim will be entertained and the Company will proceed to issue duplicate Share Certificates.

For Kimia Biosciences Ltd.  
 Sd/- Sameer Goel  
 Chairman & Managing Director

Date: 06.01.2021  
 Place: New Delhi

**LIFELINE HOSPITAL**  
 42, Sector-12B, Dwarka, New Delhi-75

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

For Disposal of Medical Records Older Than 06/01/2018

Notice is hereby given that lifeline hospital plot no-42, Sector-12B, Dwarka, New Delhi 110075 proposed to dispose of all medical records of all patients who have not visited the hospital on or after 06/01/2018. A copy of concerned patients medical records will be furnished to any patient/next to kin/legal representative on written request addressed to medical director, lifeline hospital Plot No 42, Sector-12 B, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 within 30 days of publication of this notice, hospital will not comply with any request and cannot be held responsible thereafter as all records up to 06 Jan 2018 would have been destroyed. If no such request is received, the records of the said period shall be liable to be destroyed & no claim be entertained thereafter no further notice shall be given in this regards.

MRD Incharge-lifeline Hospital

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The general public is hereby notified of the loss of original Leasehold Title Deed in favor of Smt. Bhagwan Devi & Shri Hans Raj Miglani in respect of the property known and situated at R-877 New Rajender Nagar New Delhi 110060 measuring about 199 square yards. The said Lease Deed dated 30.10.1994 was registered as Document No. 6240 in Adm. Book No. 1 Volume No. 5142 on pages 84 to 87 in the Office of Sub Registrar, New Delhi. All efforts to find the said original lease deed in respect of the landed property situated at R-877 New Rajender Nagar New Delhi 110060 have not yielded any result and accordingly intimation has been made to police about such loss. GENERAL PUBLIC is hereby informed that any member of public who may discover or find the aforesaid document may contact the undersigned within 15 days of this Notice.

Rajender Kumar Miglani  
 New Delhi Phone - 8227819963

**WESTERN RAILWAY**

**LEASING OF SPACE IN PARCEL CARGO EXPRESS TRAIN**  
 (Tender Notice No. COMM-CLOC-12-2020-PCET-3)

The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager Office, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008 invites tenders from registered lease holders, for leasing of Parcel Cargo Express Train of 20 VP and 1 SLP on round trip basis Ex Karambeli (KEB) to New Guwahati (NGC) and Back on payment of lump sum rates for loading and unloading of parcels by the following train for stipulated period. However, for an initial six month minimum composition of 15 VP and 1 SLR shall be made available.

Name of Train	From to and back	Frequency	Period of Lease in Years	Route (via)	Reserve Price per round trip* (IN ₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (IN ₹)
KEB-NGC Parcel Cargo Express	KEB -NGC -KEB	Bi-Weekly	Six	JL, KMM, ET, JBP, STA, MKP, ACOI, DDU, FUT, KIR & AZA	21,88,780/-	10,00,000/-

\*Note: Development Charges and Goods & Service Tax shall be levied additionally over and above the quoted rate as applicable. Presently, percentages are 2% and 5% respectively.

The reserve price for leasing of Parcel Cargo Express Trains has been worked out with a minimum composition of 15 parcel Vans (VPHs / Vps / VPUs / VPHUXs etc. of 23 tonnes) - one Brake van (two compartments of SLR, having parcel capacity of 04 tonnes each). On enhancement / reduction of Parcel vans in the train, lumpsum leased freight will be charged in pro-rata basis.

Tender Document Cost and Earnest Money Deposit shall be accepted only through Net banking or E-payment gateway.

Date & Time of Submission of Tender: Upto 03/02/2021 at 15.00 hrs through online <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) Follow us on: [twitter.com/WesternRly](https://twitter.com/WesternRly)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Arpit Bhargava, Ruchi Bhargava, Flat No. 301 Block-K, Princess Park NR Sai Dham Sector-86, Old Faridabad Haryana. A/c No- LBGUR00004867732	Flat No-1601, 16th Floor NCR One- Tower- C Tower- H, Sector 95, Gurgaon- 122001, Haryana	05-Dec-2020, Rs. 9755019/-	29/02/2020
2.	Ajay Kumar Upadhyay, Kirti Upadhyay, H No. C 10 GH 9, Sector- 56 Gali Apartment, Vill Ghata Sohna Gurgaon Haryana. A/c No- LBDEL00002072771	Flat No. B GF- 12 Ground Floor Gardenia Gateway, Plot No.10 Sector- 75 Noida, Noida-201305, Uttar Pradesh	05-Dec-2020, Rs. 4400977.52/-	31/01/2020
3.	Krishan Kanooja, Gracious Hotels Pvt Ltd, H- 11 Akash Bharti Apartments 24, I.P Ext, Patpargang, Delhi- 110092 Akash Bharti Cooperative Group Housing Society Limited	Flat No-11, 2nd Floor, Akash Bharti Apartment Plot No- 24, IP Ext, Patpargang, Delhi- 110092	05-Dec-2020, Rs. 1857345/-	29/02/2020
4.	Basant Kumar Jha, Vandana Rani, Quaint Media Consultant Private Limited, A 279 Ground Floor Amarpari Leisure, Valley Plot No- GH 02 Tech Zone- 04 GR Noida West, Gautam Buddha Nagar Uttar Pradesh. A/c No- LBNOD0000446999	Shop No- 169, Ground Floor Shoppers Gaur City Center Shops , Plot No- C1 A GH 01 At Gaur City Sector- 4 Greater Noida, Noida-201307, Uttar Pradesh	05-Dec-2020, Rs. 1028649/-	29/02/2020
5.	Vikram Mishra, Aanchal Mishra, A-7-2, Yarrow's IA & AS Society, Sec- 62, Noida Uttar Pradesh. A/c No LBNOD0000893323 & LBNOD0001173221	Flat No- 1014, Plot No. 1/5, Vibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad- 201001, Uttar Pradesh	05-Dec-2020, Rs. 11,77,587/- & Rs. 2,51,499/-	29/02/2020

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : January 07, 2021  
 Place: Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer  
 ICICI Bank Limited

**Appeal for Identification**

General Public is hereby informed that a Female dead body Name: Sumitra, W/o Ramjane, R/o: Unknown, Age: about 61 years, Height: 4'9", Gender : Female, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing : Red Sweater and Blue Pajama Place of recovery: SGM Hospital, Mangol Puri, Delhi ID Mark: A scare mark on right forearms she was admitted in Hospital



vide MLC No. 16187/20 from Sewa Viridha Ashram Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard, DD No. 66A dated 31.12.2020 at 04:04 P.M. has been lodged at PS Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this female but no clue has come to light so far. Any, person having any information or clue about this female may kindly inform to the following.

SHO  
 P.S., Nihal Vihar, Delhi  
 Ph. : 011-25946700,  
 25946710, 7065036129

DP/614/OD/2021

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Adiba D/o Late Mujammil R/o H.No. 704, Chandni Mahal, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from her residence since 12.12.2020. In this regard, a case FIR No. 332/2020 u/s 363 IPC Dated 13.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi. The descriptions of the missing girl is as under.



Age: 16 Years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 4' 9", Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Mehroon colour suit-pajama and sleepers in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped girl, please inform PS: Chandni Mahal, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641  
 Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- SHO  
 PS: Chandni Mahal, Delhi  
 Ph.: 011-23279338, 23271751

DP/586/CD/2020

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Yasmin D/o Mohd. Firoz Ansari, R/o Village Karken, PS Putki, Distt. Dhandbad, Jharkhand, Age: 21 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Built: Medium, wearing White colour Top, White Pajama and Yellow & Red colour Hawai Chappal in feet, has been missing from 3504, Kucha Lal Man, Darya Ganj, Delhi in the area of P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi since 27.03.2019. In this regard a FIR No. 63/2019, dated 27.03.2019 has been registered at P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about her please inform undersigned.



Website : http://cbi.nic.in  
 E-mail : cbc@cbi.gov.in  
 Fax: 011-24368639  
 Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO  
 P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi  
 Ph. No. : 011-23279331, 232746833

DP/573/CD/2020

**SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), Namely: Deepali Gupta, D/o: Shiv Kumar, R/o: H.No. 310, Baba Haridass Colony, Tikri Border, Delhi Aged: 17 years, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of P.S. Mundka, Delhi since 24.12.2020. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 600/20 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 26.12.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Mundka, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:



Height: 5' Feet, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Clothing: Gree Colour Suit, Black Colour Pajami and Pink Colour Shoes in feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Mundka, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O.  
 P.S. Mundka, Delhi  
 Ph. 011-28352010, 28352011

DP/590/OD/2020.

Trend Slazer

Go get what's yours: Varun

Actor VARUN DHAWAN has shared his mantra of success. He has urged everyone to go get what is theirs.

Varun posted a picture on Instagram where he flaunts washboard abs in a shirtless pose, wearing black basketball shorts, against the backdrop of a bright blue sky and the ocean.

"Go get what's yours," he wrote.

Varun was recently seen in his digitally released film *Coolie No. 1*, which also stars Sara Ali Khan.

He will next be seen in *Jug Jugg Jeeyo*. The film also features Maniesh Paul and YouTube sensation Prajakta Koli in her Bollywood debut role.



The 2021 Grammy Awards will no longer take place this month in Los Angeles and will broadcast in March due to a recent surge in Coronavirus cases and deaths.

The annual show would shift from its original January 31 broadcast to March 14, according to a joint statement released from the Recording Academy and CBS, which broadcasts the ceremony. The statement said the decision was reached "after thoughtful conversations with health experts, our host and artists scheduled to appear."

"The deteriorating COVID situation in Los Angeles, with hospital services being overwhelmed, ICUs having reached capacity, and new guidance from state and local governments have all led us to conclude that postponing our show was the right thing to do. Nothing is more important than the health and safety of those in our music community and the hundreds of people who work tirelessly on producing the show," read the statement from Recording Academy interim CEO Harvey Mason Jr, CBS executive Jack Sussman and Grammys

GRAMMY AWARDS SHIFT TO MARCH



executive producer Ben Winston. "We want to thank all of the talented artists, the staff, our vendors and especially this year's nominees for their understanding, patience and willingness to work with us as we navigate these unprecedented times."

The Grammys will be held in Los Angeles at the Staples Center. Los Angeles County, the epicenter of the crisis in California, has surpassed 11,000 COVID-19 deaths and has had 40 per cent of the deaths in California. It is the third state to reach the 25,000 death count.

An average of six people die every hour from COVID-19 in Los Angeles County, which has a quarter of the state's 40 million residents. County health officials fear the incoming Christmas and New Year's surge.

The new Grammys date coincides with the scheduled hosting of the Screen Actors Guild Awards, which is typically

held at another downtown Los Angeles venue, the Shrine Auditorium. That show honors the best performances in film and television.

The *Daily Show* host and comedian Trevor Noah is set to host the 2021 Grammys, where Beyoncé is leading contender with nine nominations. She scored nominations for song and record of the year with *Black Parade*, which she released on Juneteenth, while *Savage* — her No. 1 collaboration with Megan Thee Stallion — picked up bids for record of the year, best rap song and best rap performance.

Beyoncé's *Black Is King*, which aired on Disney+, is nominated for best music film while *Brown Skin Girl*, a song dedicated to dark- and brown-skinned women, is nominated for best music video. Her daughter Blue Ivy Carter sings on *Brown Skin Girl* and also earned a Grammy nomination.

Taylor Swift, Dua Lipa, Roddy

Rich, Jhené Aiko, Post Malone, Renée Zellweger, Billie Eilish and her producer-brother Finneas also scored nominations. First-time nominees include The Strokes, Megan Thee Stallion and Harry Styles.

Since the pandemic, a number of awards show were postponed and later revamped due to COVID-19 restrictions. The BET Awards was the first major awards show during the pandemic and was a success thanks to its artsy, highly produced, well-crafted pre-taped performances. The MTV Video Music Awards featured Lady Gaga winning awards and performing onsite in a mask, and the Latin Grammys pre-taped several performances the week of the show, handing out some of its awards to the winners who attended the show.

Performers at the forthcoming Grammys will be announced at a later date.

—AP

There are a few films that are made for the big screen only. There are a few films of mine that are going to be released this year, so I hope the audience watch those films in theatres. I am sure about that because people are eager to watch films in theatres. There are few films that give you the same joy on big screen and on OTT platforms, and *AK Vs AK* is one of those.'

—Anil Kapoor

*KGF Chapter 2* has emerged as one of the most anticipated films of the year.

The makers of the film launched the first edition of KFG Times. The newsletter is a treat to all the fans of the film as it offers them a sneak peek into the world of KGF. It gives a glimpse into the behind the scene photos, trivia and stills of the film.

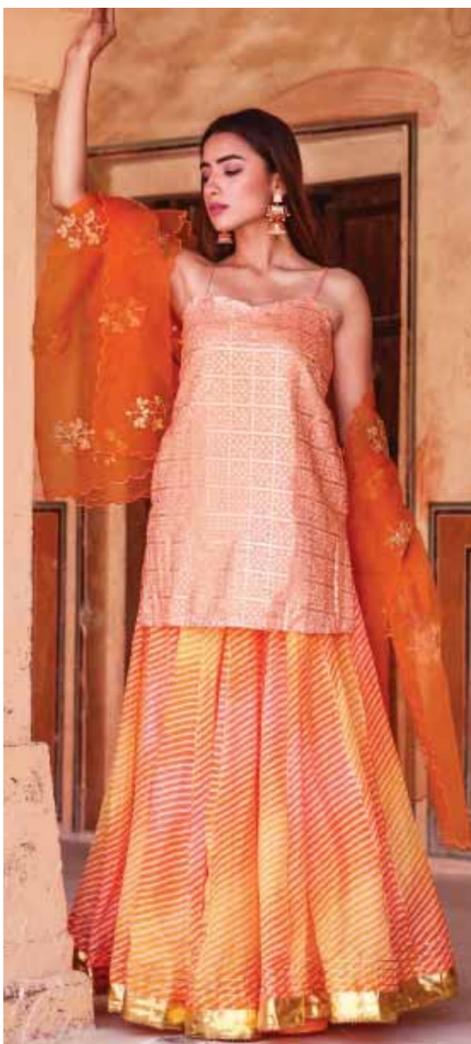
Talking about it, director Prashanth Neel says, "We came up with *KGF Times* because we understand the kind of excitement surrounding *KGF Chapter 2*. We wanted to offer a glimpse into the world of the film and share some exclusive images and trivia."

Parenting is painful & rewarding: Sia

Singer SIA, who adopted two teenage boys a couple of years ago, says she finds parenting a task that is rewarding as well as painful.

"It's hard. It's been both painful and rewarding. All I can say really is that I just have to just keep reminding them that I'll be here, I'm never going anywhere, and I love them. I think it's just scary to have someone say 'I'll love you forever' when you've been in 28 different homes your entire life," Sia said.

The singer had earlier described motherhood as the "best thing she's ever done."



THE BRIDESMAID LOOKBOOK

If you're caught between the madness of organising wedding favours, planning activities and overlooking details of various functions, you shouldn't have to fret about one more thing, that is looking your best during all the ceremonies. Here are a few ensemble ideas

The only underrated group of individuals who can change a Brideszilla to a total Bridechilla are her squad of loyal bridesmaids! And we do know the importance for all bridesmaids to match up to the charm and charisma of the bride, while not completely outshining her!

But if you're caught between

the madness of organising wedding favours and planning activities and overlooking details of various functions, you shouldn't have to fret about one more thing, that is looking your best during all the ceremonies.

It is for this reason, we present to you the ultimate list of outfit ideas that all bridesmaids can take cues from for every



occasion during your best friend's wedding!

EVENING OF THE ENGAGEMENT

Kickstart the wedding festivities with romantic colours, flowy fabrics and dainty embroideries in contemporary silhouettes, such as Ridhi Mehra's. Style your regal ensemble with minimal jewellery and clean pulled-back hair to complete the posh avatar!

HALDI CEREMONY

Serve some serious fashion goals with warm tones, *lehariya* prints and immaculate floral embroidery for the auspicious *haldi* ceremony by designers Sukriti & Aakriti and Gulabo Jaipur. Add that remarkable touch to your traditional ensemble by styling your dupatta over the shoulders for a demure look.

RITUAL OF MEHNDI

Channel a vivacious vibe for the ritual as you are caught between collating all the *mehndi* favours

and other wedding frenzy! Gulabo Jaipur's bright pastels with floral detailing and intricate thread-work reflects the essence of traditional chic while Sukriti & Aakriti's revival of *phulkari* evokes a sense of pride in our hearts — both of which are apt for the merriment around the *mehndi* ceremony.

SANGEET SHENANIGANS

What can be more breathtaking than a saree or a lehenga for your best friend's *sangeet* ceremony? An opulent pre-draped pant or lehenga saree by Ridhi Mehra! Beautiful pearl embroidered blouses, ruffled hems and chiffon plush fabrics in rich hues embody all the dreamy and fun shenanigans of the *sangeet* or cocktail evening.

THE SACRED VOWS

Be it doling up in the prettiest of lehengas or adorning the most gorgeous floral jewellery, bridesmaids today are all game for making spectac-

ular style statements, (sometimes even co-ordinated) for their close friend's *pheras*. Sukriti & Aakriti's resuscitation of the intricate craft of *phulkari* commemorates this special occasion while being an absolute treat for the bohemian admirers.

RECEPTION UNDER THE STARS

As you save the best for the last, the evening of the reception demands a certain amount of extravagance, so no shying away! Instead, slip into those gorgeous jewel-toned lehengas, embellished blouses and elaborately embroidered sarees and shararas to complement the grandeur of the night. Even better, pair your minimal looks with *navratna* ornate belts like Ridhi Mehra's or strikingly magnificent *dupattas* by Sukriti & Aakriti.

So go big or go home for your best friend's wedding festivities this wonderful winter season as there is no time for it such as now!



Everyone is hoping that 2021 will bring relief and it is more important than ever. Taking a big leap, Bhuvan Bam has launched Youthiapa 2.0, an incubator for the young and driven youth of today to carry the fun energy while preserving a little spice. The house of BBKivines' official merchandise seems to not want to rest on past laurels.

The idea of launching Youthiapa 2.0 was simply to be able to express individuality, identity, boldness, and self-awareness, the characteristics which are predominant in the youth. An interesting new brand logo represents a "V" hand gesture which adds another

Youthful take

Digital star BHUVAN BAM expands his merchandising brand with the launch of Youthiapa 2.0

er dimension to the brand's identity. It accurately describes the youthful zeal and enthusiasm in today's generation. The collection features pieces such as sweatshirts, hoodies, T-shirt and more which are colorful yet mature.

Staying true to the brand name, Youthiapa has remained a consistent resource for an everyday streetwear wardrobe. This offset carries the brand

message of "For The Youth, By The Youth" and is made of pieces that have not only been designed to look stylish but also resonate with our favorite memories of childhood.

Launching the collection for the consumers, Bhuvan Bam said, "Youthiapa 2.0 encapsulates versatile and easy to wear pieces. The designs and the colours are such that it reverberates with the youth. This is the

clothing that makes sense for them today. It's what they want to wear, whether it's for work, college, or [a reflection] of what they're seeing on the street."

Rohit Raj, partner at Youthiapa, said, "Every piece of clothing features unique, signature prints. Youthiapa has found its niche as a go-to place for streetwear staples among our generation. Keeping that in mind, we have launched a capsule collection which will cater to a new generation of young shoppers. As the name goes, the designs are developed by the line's target audience: a hand-picked group of young, on-the-rise talent. In all its literal sense, it is 'For The Youth, By The

Youth.' The response has been great so far that we are planning to team up with experts to foray into fragrances. That is something we are really excited about."

Youthiapa has erstwhile popularly mastered the balance between usability and addressing cultural, national and world issues through its tongue-in-cheek fashion. It's trending slogan 'Hustle Karo Bhasad Nahi' has caught a lot of attention among the industry and his fans. The slogan translates as a message to teenagers to galvanise and work hard, without creating any chaos — something Bhuvan considers his life's motto.

# HIGH VIGILANCE FOR NEW STRAIN OF COVID REQUIRED: GEHLOT

The new strain of Coronavirus has become a major cause of concern," said Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. "Any kind of negligence towards it can land us in a huge crisis. We need to pay special attention to the travellers coming to the state from other countries, including those affected by the virus. COVID tests and intensive screening of the passengers should be done. Due to the new strain, a terrible situation has arisen in England and lockdown has to be imposed again. Taking lessons from this, we need to take extra precautions. Necessary ideas should be sent to the Central Government from the state regarding the important measures soon," he added.



Minister Dr Raghu Sharma said that special vigilance is being done in the state regarding the new strain of Coronavirus. The medical department is sending contact-tracing and screening of passengers from the UK as well as sending them to the ICMR lab in Delhi for a sample test.

Principal Secretary, Home Affairs, Abhay Kumar said that the number of positive cases in the state has reduced. In such a situation, it is possible to conduct intensive monitoring of people coming from other countries including the UK to prevent contraction of new strains. Government Secretary Medical and Health Siddharth Mahajan said that the maximum number of active cases in the state on November 29 was 28,758, which came down to 8,189 on January 4. Similarly, the number of positive cases per day, which reached 3,314 on November 24, came down to 457 on January 4. He also informed about the preparations being done for providing vaccination in the state.

Vice Chancellor of Rajasthan Health Sciences

University, Dr Rajababu Panwar said that it is necessary to be vigilant in the state regarding the new strain. He said that in our country, the risk of new strain will be reduced due to good immunity levels of the people.

Principal of SMS Medical College, Dr Sudhir Bhandari said, "The traffic from the affected countries should be kept to a minimum. Also, effective scanning should be done at the entry point of all passengers. He informed that the facility of testing new strains is currently available in eight institutions in the country. In three weeks, the facility of investigation will also be available in Rajasthan."

Medical expert Dr Ashok Panagadia said, "Due to the continuous effort by the state government, the concentration of Corona in the state has been controlled and the death rate has been very low. He also stressed on giving necessary training to health workers for vaccination. Other specialist doctors of SMS Medical College also expressed their views regarding the new strain, vaccination and health protocol."

Medical and Health

Gehlot also highlighted that with the best management and cooperation of the people of Rajasthan, the situation is currently under control. The recovery rate has increased to an all-time high of 96.31 per cent. With positive cases being zero in some districts, the situation is getting better. In view of this, he

advised to open schools for classes from 9 to 12, university and colleges, coaching centres and government training institutes from January 18. Medical, Dental, Nursing and Paramedical colleges were also directed to open from January 11.

Medical and Health

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Vice Chancellor of Rajasthan Health Sciences

## Clean and green India

The ICAR-Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibres (CRIJAF), Barrackpore, is dealing with research and promotion of scientific production technologies of jute and allied fibre crops in the country and now playing leadership role in promoting sustainable jute based eco-farming and eco-friendly conversion of agricultural waste into wealth.

During last fifteen days ICAR-CRIJAF and CRIJAF-KVK, North 24 Pgs, have organised awareness and sensitisation programme, quiz and painting competitions to propagate the message of cleanliness and sustainable agriculture among the students, farmers and general public.

The emphasis was given for waste recycling, vermicomposting, organic agriculture and by product utilisation with special reference to jute and allied fibre crops. Being a natural fibre institute, ICAR-CRIJAF has taken many initiatives on Swachhata particularly in disseminating the knowledge to make wealth from the waste, which will fulfill the dream of clean environment vis-a-vis higher income for the farmers.

The institute is dedicated

to support the government mission on Swachha Bharat and is making all efforts in realising the dream of clean and green India.

India, which uses about 14 million tonnes of plastic annually, lacks an organised system for management of plastic waste, leading to widespread littering. Realising the consequences of plastic pollution, which can handicap the sustainable developmental goal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call on minimising the consumption and ban on 'single use of plastics' in the country has created nationwide awareness to go for alternate to plastics. We are fortunate that jute of which India is the world's largest producer is the best alternative to plastics.

In coming decades, it is expected that a number of jute mills and mini-jute plants will be seen engaged in a big way in the production of jute and jute blended yarns for manufacturing jute bags. If a biodegradable jute bag is used instead of a regular plastic bag, it can reduce the amount of waste formed significantly. Consumers can be encouraged to always carry a jute bag to put their items in when they go to the market.

### IN SHORT



Continuing its mission to improve the livelihoods of the tribals (both forest dwellers and artisans), TRIFED has now decided to explore a convergence and build a partnership with Akhil Bhartiya Varvasi Kalyan Kendra, an organisation that has been working for the welfare of tribals in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand since 1952. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding was exchanged between the two organisations to work together for setting up of TRIFOOD Parks in five districts in Madhya Pradesh. The MoU was signed by Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED and Yogesh Bapat, General Secretary, Akhil Bhartiya Varvasi Ashram.



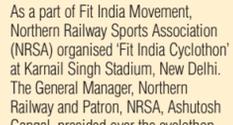
Punjab National Bank (PNB) announced the extension of its popular 'PNB Festival Bonanza Offer-2020', till March 31, 2021. The promotional scheme has been rechristened now as 'PNB NEW YEAR BONANZA-2021'. The promotional bonanza was designed to further accentuate the retail credit growth of the bank as well as to encash the opportunities emerged in the market during the festive season. Under the scheme, the bank will offer full waiver of upfront/processing fees and documentation charges on all fresh housing loans, takeover housing loans, car loans and myProperty loans.



Li Gen Tarun Kumar Aich, DG NCC, formally inaugurated the National Cadet Corps Republic Day Camp 2021 at Delhi Cantt. The inauguration ceremony started with Sarv Dharam Pooja. Around 1,000 cadets are participating in the camp, which will culminate with the Prime Minister's rally on January 28, 2021. Speaking on this occasion, Li Gen Tarun welcomed the cadets and congratulated them on getting selected for the most prestigious camp of the NCC. He said that the aim of the camp is to enhance self-confidence of cadets, deepen their value system and provide an exposure to the rich culture and traditions of our nation.



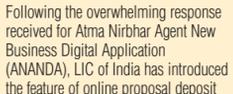
Surpassing the previous records, National Fertilizers Limited (NFL) has achieved ever highest production of 9.99 Lakh MT Urea in the third quarter during FY 2020-21. The company successfully maintained its operations during constraints posed by COVID-19. The plants at Nangal and Panipat achieved their ever best urea production during October-December 2020. The company through meticulous planning worked past the disruptions caused by COVID and Rail Roko agitation in Punjab and Haryana. NFL has been increasing its non-urea business as well. In Q3, NFL produced ever highest quantity of 4,981 MT of Bentonite Sulphur at its Panipat Plant. The company has also undertaken a number of energy saving schemes.



As a part of Fit India Movement, Northern Railway Sports Association (NRSA) organised 'Fit India Cyclothon' at Karnali Stadium, New Delhi. The General Manager, Northern Railway and Patron, NRSA, Ashutosh Gangal, presided over the cyclothon event. Speaking on this occasion, he said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the slogan of Fitness Ka Dose, Aadha Ghanta Roz, whose aim is that every Indian citizen should dedicate half an hour every day for his health. As part of that initiative, this cyclothon was organised. These days cycling has emerged not only as a hobby but as an economical means to keep oneself fit."



The District Magistrate of Baghpat, Shakuntala Gautam and MP representative Thakur Pradeep Singh inaugurated the Kisan Mela, organised under the aegis of the welfare mission in the district headquarters premises. This fair has been organised by the Farmers Welfare Mission. On this occasion, a seminar and agricultural exhibition was also organised in the fair. The District Magistrate visited the exhibition and apprised all the farmers about all the agricultural equipment related to the farmers' fair.



Following the overwhelming response received for Atma Nirbhar Agent New Business Digital Application (ANANDA), LIC of India has introduced the feature of online proposal deposit collection in ANANDA, where the customer can pay online proposal deposit through payment gateway using various options such as Credit Card, Debit Card, Netbanking, Wallets, UPI etc. The digital application is a tool for the onboarding process to get the Life Insurance policy through a paperless module.

## A BATTLE WON

Ghaziabad DM Dr AJAY SHANKAR PANDEY says an integrated control room can help citizens negotiate departmental problems. By ASHOK NIRWAN

The Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh is counted in the sensitive and developing districts of the country. To solve the departmental problems of the citizens of Ghaziabad, the district administration has established an integrated control room. The special thing is that now complaints related to the functioning of 19 different departments of district administration can be easily registered under one roof. The Dynamic District Magistrate, Ghaziabad, Dr Ajay Shankar Pandey, shares more. Excerpts:



Meerut-Expressway should be constructed as the country's first rapid rail project. We are trying to clear all the hurdles for the progress. The construction of Dasna-Meerut Express was hampered at more than 252 points, which were removed after mutual discussion. Disputes related to land of farmers were also settled. Its construction was to be completed on November 30, 2020, but due to the pandemic, it had to be extended. Now, the project will be completed by the end of this month. As far as the Rapid Rail Project is concerned, land has been made available on Meerut Road after talking to farmers for Rapid Rail Depot.

Do you want to talk about any important scheme which is yet to be launched for the public?

After getting the green signal from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, work to establish an integrated control room in a district has begun. However, due to the pandemic, the first integrated control room was established in the state, which received a very good response. Now, the integrated control room, the problems of the general public related 19 departments, including medical, health and family planning, education, railway, food and logistics, disaster and relief, agriculture and pollution will be addressed. The control room will be constructed in Raj Nagar.

Ever since you were appointed as the District Magistrate of Ghaziabad, you have been facing one challenge after another but dealing with them successfully. Who would you want to give credit to?

I took charge of Ghaziabad District on July 15, 2019. It was a big challenge for me to successfully complete the Kavar Yatra. After this, the movement against the NRC and CAA, the removal of Section 370 and the decision on Ram Janmabhoomi brought challenges to the law and order. Apart from this, the biggest challenge was COVID-19. During this time, it was a huge task to provide treatment to the victims and also save the district from rumours, but succeeded in tackling these challenges by way of self-confidence, public support and the support of its administrative officers.

What steps have you taken to curb corruption in government departments?

When I had joined, initially, there were a lot of complaints regarding corruption in the city's government departments. For the same, we made action plans regarding the lands so that the common man can complain and his name can stay confidential. This way, there will be no threat to his safety. We kept a black box in the Collectorate premises and kept the key with ourselves. Through this black box, the public filed their complaints in a confidential manner and after investigation of these letters, many major cases of corruption were revealed. Required action was also taken against many officers and employees.

What about the smart development of Ghaziabad metropolis. What were the steps taken?

I feel the National Highway of Delhi and

In its 50 years of existence, Taparia Tools Limited (TTL), a hand tools manufacturing company, has deployed every known right method to market its products across the country. This was necessary as it initially had formidable competition, mainly from tool manufacturers in the unorganised sector and other Indian companies. TTL today commands almost 70-75 per cent market share in the organised sector. Marketing a high quality hand tool is quite a task, says the CMD of the ₹500 crore TTL in a market.

Taparia Tools Ltd, an ISO-9001 accredited company, started manufacturing hand tools in 1969 in India in technical collaboration with a reputed company by the name of AB Bahco of Sweden. The company has a well laid out fully equipped factory located at Nashik. All the manufacturing facilities required for production of hand tools are under one roof.

The company's research and development department is manned by mechanical engineers and metallurgists equipped with latest CAD design facilities from its inception. It has laid high emphasis on the quality of its products.

## Tools for all



Taparia Tools are guaranteed against manufacturing and raw material defects and are replaced free with no questions asked.

The factory has a fully equipped Quality Assurance Department and laboratory for meticulous and continuous testing of materials up to the final finished product. All tools are built tough for prolonged use and are tested to conform to strict highest international standards.

The company has received award for export excellence since 1974-75 onwards. Over the years, TTL has developed a network of over 300 distributors. It has also expanded its retail

network to over 1 lakh stores across the country. In addition, for direct marketing, the company has prepared a database of manufacturing companies that do bulk purchases of hand tools. There is also an ever-increasing demand for newer and heavier industrial hand tools such as pipe wrenches, truck wheel spanners, flat and ring and combination spanners.

Seeing the recent trend of quality conscious consumers opting for 'do-it-yourself' tools, the company has launched a variety of home tool kits. Taparia believes that hand tools are an extension of a human hand.

## DMF assures irrigation in Keonjhar

In many parts of the country, the lack of proper irrigation avenues limit farmers to cultivate their land only once a year. The district of Keonjhar was no different from other parts of the country and in the entire district, not more than 15 per cent of the land was sown more than once.

To cope with the challenge of limited irrigation, District Mineral Foundation (DMF) came up with the novel concept of using the river Baitarini for the benefit of the farmers. The river passes through different blocks in the district and being a perennial river, the flow is certain even in summers. Building upon the geographical advantage, the DMF launched a project called Surface Based Solar Lift Irrigation.

Under this project, farmers with continuous land were formed in groups and provided

with Lift Irrigation Points. The water was lifted using renewable source of energy and solar panels were installed for lifting the water through 5 HP pump. Once such solar based surface lift point covers more than five acres of land. About 125 such points are installed within the district with a cost of about ₹5.5 crores. Another 74 points are yet to be installed.

"We used to cultivate only once a year despite a channel of Baitarini flowing near our fields. The solar lift irrigation point has helped us to cultivate the land even in summers. Also, we have started growing vegetables as we now have an assured source of irrigation, which we never had earlier," said Janardhan Dehuri, a farmer in Bhatunia village of Padmapur, GP of Sadar block of Keonjhar.

## Bird flu poses fresh challenge: Gehlot



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot gave instructions to maintain special vigilance in view of the death of crows and other birds. The bird flu (Avian Influenza) caused by the virus H5N1 is contagious

and fatal. He said that special incidents should be monitored in dense bird sanctuaries. The incidence of death of birds including crows in 46 districts of the state is a matter of concern. Veterinarians and bird

experts analyze these incidents closely and keep adequate arrangements to prevent them.

The Chief Minister said that people have special association with birds here. Due to carelessness and non-adher-

ence to protocol, this virus can also affect humans. In view of this, special care needs to be taken.

Gehlot informed that at present there is no information for the spread of this disease in

chickens in Rajasthan. So far, 625 birds have been reported dead in the state, out of which 122 samples have been sent to a laboratory in Bhopal. Avian influenza virus has been confirmed in 29 crows.

## THE VOICES ONLINE

An acclaimed corporate lawyer and a social activist, RUHAIL CHOUDHURY, creates a digital platform for children across the globe to engage in constructive communication and various developmental activities



During this pandemic, lifestyle for children across the world has drastically changed. They are now mostly confined within the four walls of their apartments with various restrictions and are compelled to follow the new normal. Several experts dealing with children psychology have raised serious concerns over the expected negative impacts of the new restrictive lifestyle on children in particular. Being worried with such concerns, Ruhail Choudhury, an acclaimed corporate lawyer and a social activist, who also specialises in Child Rights from Harvard University, created a

digital platform for kids across the globe to share their talent and creativity. He wanted them to engage in constructive communication and various developmental activities. Ruhail has been involved with various social activities particularly relating to the welfare of children for more than a decade now.

The digital platform provides news and articles related to education, health and community development exercises involving school students. The website also aims at developing friendship among children of various nations and thereby ensures international peace and

friendship in future. To facilitate such objectives, it also recognises icons from all over the world, who have not only championed means of attaining global peace but have also contributed in betterment of society.

The website managed to get global icons of peace — Danish Ambassador To India, Freddy Svane, CGO Tata Sons from Delhi, Tanmoy Chakrabarty, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Anoop Bose, James Strock, Lawyer and Writer from California, and Acclaimed Journalist and Former Sheriff of Calcutta, Utpal Chatterjee from Kolkata.

# India ready to change Sydney script



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

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Having touched nadir and zenith in a span of 10 days, Ajinkya Rahane's India will look to start afresh against Australia with the big-hitting Rohit Sharma's presence adding a new dimension to what promises to be an enthralling third Test starting here on Thursday.

The Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), despite being witness to some extraordinary batting performances from the touring Indian sides over the years, has not exactly been a happy hunting ground with six defeats. The lone win came a good 42 years back.

If Rahane's side can go 2-1 up and ensure the retention of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, it will be one of the finest hours in the history of Indian cricket. Making it even more special is the fact that the side has been without two world class performers and a senior pacer against a nearly full-strength Australian team.

Seldom has an Australian batting unit, that boasts of a

player of Steve Smith's calibre, looked so circumspect and literally intimidated by an Indian bowling unit, which isn't operating at full-strength.

Pacer Navdeep Saini will make his debut here, replacing Umesh Yadav who went home following an injury.

The pressure is understandable as Australia are literally pushing a 70 per cent fit David Warner out there in the middle to combat fire with fire even as his statements make it clear that he is not at all comfortable with the idea.

"He is energetic, professional, who could make an instant impact and fills guys with confidence," Paine's words on the eve of the match indicated their desperation.

And in this backdrop, enter Rohit Sharma, whose last couple of months have been loads of off-field drama.

First it was his absence from the initial part of the tour due to a hamstring injury sustained while playing the IPL.

Then his subsequent quarantine for two weeks in a Sydney apartment.

And when he finally unit-

INDIA-AUSTRALIA AT SCG					
Team	Matches	Win	Loss	Draw	Win%
Australia	108	60	28	20	55.55
India	12	1	5	6	8.33

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTAL		
India	705-7 dec in 187.3 overs	2003-04
Australia	659-4 dec in 163 overs	2011-12

TOP INDIVIDUAL SCORE		
India	241* Sachin Tendulkar	2003-04
Australia	329* Michael Clarke	2011-12

BEST BOWLING (INNINGS)		
India	8-141 Anil Kumble	2003-04
Australia	5-48 Glenn McGrath	1999-00

ed with his teammates, an excited fan inside a Melbourne restaurant led to an inquiry against him and four other teammates for what was called by the local media, a potential bio-security breach.

But the white-ball legend has learnt the art of being unfazed, which was evident from his intense net session on Tuesday when he was comfortably facing the first team bowlers like Ravichandran Ashwin.

His mere presence has added spring in the strides of the team and the youngsters in

this current set-up swear by him, the reason he replaced Cheteshwar Pujara as vice-captain after just one Test.

The Sydney track has traditionally favoured the batsmen as Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri, Sachin Tendulkar and even Pujara and Rishabh Pant, who got centuries here during last tour, will vouch for.

If Rohit and Shubman Gill can give the team a good start, the under-pressure Pujara will be much more relieved while playing his own defensive game.

Rahane, after one of his more copybook hundreds con-

structed in adversity during the last game, will enter the arena with more confidence while facing the Australian quartet of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon.

KL Rahul's injury has given Hanuma Vihari one more chance despite his returns being as underwhelming as Mayank Agarwal, who has been forced to make way for Rohit.

But it is Australia's wobbly batting that will again be put to test by Ashwin on a track, that has traditionally helped spinners.

With 10 wickets and a new-found confidence, Ashwin has won both on and off-field battle against opposition's key players such as Smith and Marnus Labuschagne.

It's not just the wickets that he has scalped but the manner in which the intelligent Chennai engineer has managed to create doubts in the minds of world class batters is worth its weight in gold.

As much as Australia needs Smith to be back in form, they would also need someone like Travis Head to deliver as he has

failed to get a hang of both pace and spin.

Jasprit Bumrah, who is still some games short of 20 Tests, will be leading the pace attack and is expected to show the way with his bagful of tricks.

Whether it's Siraj or Saini, whoever shares the new ball will have their task cut out as they aim to match the highest standards set by the likes of Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma.

#### SQUADS

**Australia:** David Warner, Matthew Wade, Will Pucovski, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Cameron Green, Tim Paine (captain and wk), Nathan Lyon, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Marcus Harris, Mitchell Swepson, Michael Neser

**India (XI):** Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Navdeep Saini.

## Kiwis become No 1 in Tests



**Christchurch:** Towering pace-man Kyle Jamieson completed an 11-wicket match haul on Wednesday as New Zealand thrashed Pakistan in the second Test to become the world's top-ranked team.

Jamieson was near unplayable in Pakistan's second innings, finishing with 6/48 to go with his 5/69 in the first innings, as Pakistan were all out for 186 during day four's final session to give New Zealand victory by an innings and 176 runs.

The win, which saw them sweep the series 2-0, also confirmed New Zealand had overtaken Australia as the world's number one Test side.

Pakistan resumed the day at eight for one, needing to bat for the better part of two days to salvage a draw but they were never in the hunt.

Trent Boult captured the first wicket when he had night-watchman Mohammad Abbas out for three in the fifth over and after that the day was mainly about Jamieson, who recorded his best match performance.

Although he is the junior member of a pace attack headed by higher-ranked veterans Tim Southee and Boult, the 26-year-old has rapidly advanced to playing a senior role.

In his sixth Test after making his debut against India 10 months ago, Jamieson has taken 36 wickets at a stunning 13.27 average and with four five-wicket hauls to his credit.

After Abbas departed, Abid

Ali and Azhar Ali looked to be laying the ground work for a solid third-wicket stand and moved the score to 46 when the 2.3 metre (6ft 8in) Jamieson went to work and removed Abid Ali for 26.

After using his height to create extra bounce and force Abid Ali on to the back foot, Jamieson whipped up a fuller delivery and the batsman's attempt to switch to a drive was sliced to backward point where substitute Will Young took a one-handed, diving catch.

In a potent middle session, Jamieson had Haris Sohail and Azhar Ali caught behind, and bowled Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan as he moved through his repertoire.

Sohail did not get his feet moving as he poked at a rising delivery on 15 and was caught behind.

Azhar attempted to take the fight back to Jamieson, moving into a short delivery and pulling it through mid-on for four as he advanced to 37.

Azhar did not add another run as Jamieson responded with a ball that reared up towards the ribs and it was gloved to the wicketkeeper.

Rizwan was bowled for 10 by a full inswinger that zipped between bat and pad. Boult completed the four-wicket session when he dismissed Fawad Alam for 16 and Pakistan were 134/7 at tea. Jamieson, Boult and Kane Williamson shared in the final three wickets. AFP

## Sampdoria's winning streak

AP ■ GENOA

Inter Milan's chances of winning its first Serie A title in more than a decade took a hit with a 2-1 loss at Sampdoria on Wednesday as veteran coach Claudio Ranieri's team got the better of Antonio Conte's Nerazzurri.

Both of Sampdoria's goals were scored by former Inter players to end the visitors' eight-match winning streak.

Antonio Candreva put Sampdoria ahead with a penalty before Keita Baldé Diao finished off a well-worked counterattack before the break.

Stefan de Vrij pulled one back for Inter with a header in the 65th but the visitors' sorely lacked a fully fit Romelu Lukaku, who came on only for the final half hour as he returns from injury.

The defeat left Inter trailing Italian leader and city rival AC Milan by one point ahead of the Rossoneri's showdown with nine-time defending champion Juventus later.

Also, third-place Roma moved within three points of Inter with a 3-1 win at last-place Crotona before hosting the Nerazzurri on Sunday.

Borja Mayoral, on loan from Real Madrid, scored twice for Roma and won a penalty that Henrikh Mkhitaryan converted.

Sassuolo beat relegation-threatened Genoa 2-1 with a late header from Gianluca Raspadori to move into fourth, holding

on to the final Champions League spot.

Atalanta remained one point further back after defeating Parma 3-0. Lazio defeated Fiorentina 2-1.

## Rail Corridor of Progress

A major stride towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat



Dedication to the Nation of  
**Madar - Rewari section (306 K.M.)**

and

Flagging off of  
**1.5 K.M. Long Double Stack Container Trains**  
from New Ateli, Haryana and  
New Kishangarh, Rajasthan Stations  
of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC)

#### SALIENT FEATURES

- Running of freight trains now possible at faster speed
- Increased capacity of freight transportation due to Double Stack Container Trains
- 148 Underbridges and Overbridges have led to hassle free operations
- Boost to 'Roll on - Roll off' facility
- Faster delivery of goods at much lesser cost
- Easy access of local produce and products to bigger markets
- Direct benefit to various industrial areas like Kishangarh, Bhiwadi, Dharuhera, Rewari, Manesar, Ajmer and Pushkar
- Special encouragement to Small and Medium Enterprises

by

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister

(Through Video Conferencing)

07 January, 2021 at 11:00 am

In the august presence of

**Satyadeo Narain Arya**  
Governor, Haryana

**Kalraj Mishra**  
Governor, Rajasthan

**Manohar Lal**  
Chief Minister, Haryana

**Ashok Gehlot**  
Chief Minister, Rajasthan

**Piyush Goyal**  
Union Minister for Railways,  
Commerce and Industry, Consumer  
Affairs and Food & Public Distribution

**Rao Inderjit Singh**  
Union Minister of State (Independent  
Charge) for Statistics & Programme  
Implementation and Planning

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