

LANDMARK 7
INDIA FIRST COUNTRY TO
CULTURE UK VIRAL STRAIN**WORLD 9**
UK JUDGE TO RULE ON
ASSANGE'S US EXTRADITION**SPORT 12**
NATARAJAN REPLACES
UMESH IN TEST TEAMPublished From
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**USUAL SUSPECTS**

SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Modi brought reforms to forefront of politics

Since 1991, "reform" has been a buzzword in Indian politics. It was realised in most circles that the system of doing things that had steadily evolved since the time of Jawaharlal Nehru and more specifically, Indira Gandhi, was no longer fit for purpose. It was not merely the case that the so-called socialist system had throttled Indian entrepreneurship. It was simultaneously acknowledged that the way the Government functioned had contributed immeasurably to inefficiency, waste and, above all, corruption. Unless India had made up its mind to remain an impoverished Third World state, blundering from crisis to crisis and unduly dependent on international hand-outs, reforms were imperative.

The easy part was to secure an intellectual consensus over the need to change and move in a direction that would unleash the full potential of the country. The more difficult part lay in galvanising the political forces that would make reforms a reality. At every stage of the reforms process that began during the prime ministership of PV Narasimha Rao and continues under Narendra Modi, it has been a case of two steps forward and at least one step backward. Sometimes, the retreat has been so great as to make the reforms near-invisible.

The pressure to let sleeping dogs lie has been visible since Manmohan Singh's landmark Budget of 1991. Those who follow the history of decision-making may care to remember the dogged fight put up by the so-called Bombay Club of Indian industrialists who were keen to preserve their special protected privileges of the licence-permit-quota raj. They packaged their resistance to the opening up of the Indian markets to international competition in the disingenuous garb of swadeshi.

The play didn't work but it ensured that the dream of radical reforms was kept in abeyance. Instead, the political consensus was that change must be in baby steps and

insulated, as far as possible, from political discourse. This meant that the priority was put on reform by stealth. In the mid-1990s, confronted by a formidable challenge from the so-called Congress Left that had found a new messiah in Arjun Singh, the Congress tried to present economic reforms as the highest stage of Nehruvian creativity. It was laughable but, alas, the political class didn't laugh uproariously. They also didn't laugh when the Congress crashed to an ignominious defeat in the elections of 1996 and 1998. The political class also took heed at the unexpected defeat of the NDA under

In India, where change, in any case, proceeds at a snail's pace, the anger is specifically directed at Modi who actually believes that he has the political mandate to push through larger changes. Modi threatens the cosy world of the status quo and those who benefit from stagnation

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, despite having ushered landmark reforms that were well appreciated throughout the democratic world.

In hindsight, it was Narendra Modi who brought reforms back into the forefront of politics. As Chief Minister of Gujarat for 13 years, Modi changed the culture of governance in the State. Making the State administration more responsive to the needs of investors and business wasn't terribly difficult in a province where making money was always a cherished goal. What was revolutionary was the fact that this was combined with efficiency, transparency and honesty. The fact that corruption in Government services came down exponentially was a big factor in making Modi the star draw in the 2014 election. He came to be perceived as a politician with a difference.

The extent to which Modi's image as a man of unimpeachable integrity became a factor in pushing through reforms should not be underestimated. The demonetisation of 2016 was widely perceived by political pundits and economists as a disastrous step that would kill the BJP politically. They were wrong because the dramatic step was widely believed by people to be a decisive step against black money. Regardless of its avowed objective, what is now clear is that demonetisation prepared the ground for the stupendous expansion of banking services and, consequently, the Government's ability to deliver welfare payments to actual beneficiaries without intermediaries. The big leap in cashless transactions owe entirely to the stir resulting from demonetisation. This infrastructure, it may be added, played an enormous role in delivering relief to people during the Covid-19 lockdown. This, however, was an unintended consequence.

The resistance to reforms is highlighted in the context of the farmer's agitation in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh. The stir, to negate all agricultural reforms, is aimed at preserving the pre-eminence of those who used to be pejoratively described by Leftists as kulaks. This time, since the target is the Modi Government, the rent-a-cause Left has made a seamless shift from the barricades of Shaheen Bagh to the langars along the Delhi-Haryana border. In search of a cause that will cripple the Modi Government and, in the process, the modernisation of agricultural marketing, they have enlisted the support of all those who had in earlier years lamented the fact that successive Governments had left Indian agriculture insulated from reforms. Their U-turn is understandably political and aimed at somehow forcing a retreat. The calculation is that if Modi steps back, it will make future reforms impossible. And if the reforms process comes to a screeching halt, the Modi Government will lose its momentum and merely go through the motions of governance for the rest of its second term.

Opposition to change has been a feature of democratic politics for long. In India, where change, in any case, proceeds at a snail's pace, the anger is specifically directed at Modi who actually believes that he has the political mandate to push through larger changes. Modi threatens the cosy world of the status quo and those who benefit from stagnation.

2 vaccines get emergency use nod

DCGI to take final call on mass use of Covaxin, Covishield; vaccination free of cost across India, says Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India inched closer to launching a country-wide vaccination drive against coronavirus with a Government-appointed panel of experts on Saturday approving two vaccine candidates for emergency use in the country.

The final call on approval of these vaccines — the Serum Institute of India's coronavirus vaccine Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin — for mass use will be taken by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan announced that vaccination will be free across the country.

"In 1st phase of #Covid19 vaccination, free vaccine shall be provided across the nation to most prioritised beneficiaries that include 1 crore healthcare & 2 crore frontline workers," the Minister tweeted.

However, he later on said that modalities to vaccinate 27 crore people will be worked out soon.

Covaxin, which is still in the clinical trial phase, was granted approval in "public interest as an abundant precaution" in connection with the



mutated strain of the coronavirus, the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

"Grant of permission for restricted use in emergency situation in public interest as an abundant precaution, in clinical trial mode, specially in the context of infection by mutant strains, to Bharat Biotech International," the Centre said in a statement.

The Subject Expert Committee of the DCGI also recommended approval to Cadila Healthcare for conducting the third phase trials of its vaccine.

The Serum Institute is the local maker of the vaccine developed by Oxford University and pharmaceuticals company AstraZeneca.

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Won't trade off protocol for vaccine approval: Vardhan

Dry run across India to understand best way to administer vaccine and plug loopholes, if any

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India gears up to launch world's largest vaccination drive, select hospitals across the country conducted an inoculation dry run on Saturday. The nationwide rehearsal was to understand the best way to administer the vaccine and plug loopholes in logistics and training, if any.

A key aspect of the massive exercise which came the day a Government-appointed panel of experts gave nod to two vaccine candidates for emergency use in the country, was to decide how to manage any possible adverse events following immunisation.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, who reviewed the process at GTB Hospital in Delhi, said the Government would not compromise on any protocol in approving a vaccine. He also appealed to peo-



Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan attends the Covid-19 vaccine trial programme (dry run) at Maternity & Child Welfare centre in Daryaganj, New Delhi on Saturday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

ple not to be misguided by rumours regarding the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

As per the Centre's directive, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana along with Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Gujarat were among many States and UTs which conducted a dry run for Covid-19 vaccination. The dry run was aimed at testing the laid out mechanism for the vaccination roll-out.

As per the guidelines

issued by the Union Health Ministry, all States selected their particular areas and districts to hold the dry run exercise at various Government medical college, hospitals, medical centres and the community health centres.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Health Organization (WHO) supported the drive.

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Vaccination likely from Makar Sankranti: Yogi

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that the dry run for COVID-19 vaccination was underway in the state and it was possible that the vaccination would commence from Makar Sankranti.

"The dry run of Covid vaccination process is underway in Lucknow and it will be held in the entire state on January 5. The vaccination will commence near Makar Sankranti," he said. Laying the foundation stone of the multi-storey Lawyers Bhawan at the collectorate in Gorakhpur on Saturday, Yogi Adityanath said that the country, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was set to

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It's BJP's vaccine, won't take shot, says Akhilesh

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday termed the COVID-19 vaccines to be rolled out in the country as "vaccine of the BJP" and said he would not take the shot, drawing a sharp retort from the ruling party which accused him of "insulting" the doctors and

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CAPSULE

GST COLLECTION FOR DEC '20 HIGHEST EVER

New Delhi: GST collections surged to an all-time high of over ₹1.15 lakh crore in December as economic activities picked up after lifting of stringent lockdown restrictions.

'MODI'S HIGH APPROVAL RATING MATTER OF PRIDE'

New Delhi: Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approval rating is the highest among world leaders in a survey conducted by a US data firm, BJP president JP Nadda on Saturday said this is a testimony to his able leadership and a matter of pride for all Indians.

FORMER HM BUTA SINGH PASSES AWAY

New Delhi: Former Union Home Minister Buta Singh, 86, who remained in public service for a long time and served under four Prime Ministers, died at the AIIMS here on Saturday.

MAOIST, WIFE BEATEN TO DEATH IN JHARKHAND

Medininagar: A Maoist and his wife were beaten to death by his village folks in Palamu on Saturday after he shot dead a man over a land dispute.

Farmers threaten tractor parade on Republic Day

Unions to intensify stir if demands not met on Mon meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The farmers' union on Saturday delivered an ultimatum to the Centre and said they will take out a tractor parade towards Delhi on January 26, when the country will celebrate Republic Day, if their demands are not met in the next meeting scheduled for January 4.

Addressing a Press conference at Press Club, the farmers' leaders said that they intend to be peaceful and they have told long ago to the Government during their talks that it has only two options — either repeal the three Central farm Acts or use force to evict us.

The Press conference was addressed by Balbir Singh Rajwala, Darshanpal Singh, Gurnam Singh Chadhuni, Ashok Dhawale, Jagjit Singh



Farmer leaders during a press conference at Press Club in New Delhi on Saturday

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Dallewal, Abhimanyu Kohad and Yogendra Yadav.

"The time has come for decisive action here, and we have chosen January 26 because the Republic Day represents the supremacy of the people and also because we would complete on the day two months of peaceful demon-

stration at Delhi's borders in extreme weather conditions with our resolve to get our demands met," said the farmer leaders.

Sanyukt Kisan Morcha also announced their plan of action according to which they will intensify their movement.

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Trump extends freeze on H-1B, until March 31; Indians to be hit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has extended the freeze on the most sought-after H-1B visas by Indian IT professionals, along with other types of foreign work visas and green cards through March 31 to protect American workers, saying that the reasons for which he had imposed such restrictions amid the pandemic have not changed.

The freeze on visas was ordered by Trump through two proclamations on April 22 and June 22 last year. Hours before the freeze was set to expire on December 31, Trump issued a proclamation, ensuring his sweeping limits on legal immigration remains in place when President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in on January 20.

Detailed report on P9

UK fliers need to carry Covid -ve report on arrival in India from Fri

Govt issues SOP, allows 15 flights a week for carriers till January 23

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India-United Kingdom flights resume partially from January 8 with a new set of SoP, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday said all passengers coming from the UK between January 8 and January 30 would be subjected to self-paid Covid-19 tests on arrival. Besides, they will also be required to carry a negative test report which should be done 72-hour prior to their journey.

The Ministry has come up with a new standard operating procedure (SOP) for travelers arriving from the UK. These



SOPs shall be valid till January 30 or till further orders.

The guidelines came after Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, "Operations till January 23 will be restricted to 15 flights per week each for carriers of two countries to and from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad only."

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will

issue necessary permission for a limited number of flight operations between India and UK (as per the directions from the Ministry of Civil Aviation), to the eligible airlines. India had suspended all flights to and from the United Kingdom from December 23 to 31 to check the spread of the mutated, more contagious variant of coronavirus found there.

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Sourav stable after angioplasty for 90% heart blockage, to stay in hospital for 4-5 days

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Sourav Ganguly is stable and out of danger for now after undergoing angioplasty for 90 per cent blockage in the right artery, doctors treating him for myocardial infarction or triple vessel disease that caused him a mild heart attack on Saturday morning said, adding that the other two arteries too had 70 per cent blockage and the decision regarding them would be taken subsequently.

The BCCI president suffered a mild cardiac arrest on Saturday morning while he was through a routine workout session in the gym at his home, sources said, adding he experienced pain in his hand and back and then passed out for a while before being rushed to a private health facility in south Kolkata where doctors after



conducting various tests, including angiogram said he had been suffering from myocardial infarction.

The former India captain would be monitored for the next 48 hours and would be required to remain in hospital for the next 4-5 days when a team of senior doctors would decide whether more angioplasty would be conducted on him or whether he would require a bypass surgery immediately.

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Government checked Covid spread to give pace to development: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that even during the pandemic, the government did not let the pace of development to slow by putting a break on the spread of the coronavirus. Speaking after laying the foundation stone of the multi-storey Lawyers Bhawan at the collectorate in Gorakhpur on Saturday, Yogi Adityanath said in the 2016 aviation survey, it was said that only six passengers would be available in Gorakhpur but we rejected the findings and today there was a flight from Gorakhpur to eight cities. “A network of roads is being laid along with the Purvanchal Expressway and the Gorakhpur Link Expressway for speedy development of the state. From 1947 to 2017, there were only 12 state medical colleges in UP and in the past three years, we have started building 30 new medical colleges. After Gorakhpur and Rae Bareilly, an AIIMS-like medical institution is also being set up in Varanasi,” the CM said, adding that UP had

CM congratulates Modi for being most-popular global leader

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on behalf of the people of Uttar Pradesh, congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the latest global survey chose the PM as the most popular leader in the world. The CM said that it was a matter of pride for all the countrymen. Yogi Adityanath, who was in Gorakhpur on a two-day visit, on Saturday said that the prestigious institution Morning Consult in its net approval survey had found PM Modi as the most popular leader in the world. “This, indeed, is a proud moment for all of us,” he said. The CM said that the PM had rendered relentless service to the 135 crore population of the country during the last six years and ensured their well-being in the most selfless manner. “It was his towering leadership and efficiency that the country could successfully control the coronavirus epidemic. Even the World Health Organisation (WHO) was compelled to praise India for this endeavour,” Yogi Adityanath pointed out. In the survey, PM Modi received 74 percent net approval rating to emerge as the most popular global leader followed by Brazil president (46 percent), US president (41 percent) and United Kingdom prime minister (39 percent), the CM said, adding that it could be made possible due to the body of work of the PM and his unquestionable popularity among the masses.

ranked 26th in the country in urban housing scheme in 2016 and now it ranked 1st.

“All the tehsil of the state will soon be equipped with advocate chambers and the

beginning has been made from Gorakhpur. These chambers are not just built for the lawyers but they will also become a platform for the common man to get justice. This is actually

the beginning of work for providing justice to the victims,” the CM said.

Yogi Adityanath also said that the state government had decided to bring all the divisional and departmental offices in a unified building and it had been started from the Gorakhpur and Varanasi commissionerates. “By this, the public and the advocates will get all the facilities at one place. Arrangements will also be made for a canteen so that people coming from villages get food at cheaper rates. Like divisional offices, the district level offices will also be brought in a single integrated building,” the CM said.

He also said that the state government was committed to providing all possible assistance to the advocates’ society.

“The government has paid Rs 23.11 crore in 471 cases under the Advocate Social Security Fund and Rs 4.46 crore in 662 cases under the Advocate Welfare Fund. Along with this, Rs 1.87 crore has been sanctioned and Rs 1.6 crore has been disbursed under the Rs 5,000 per month assis-

tance scheme to young advocates. Besides this, Rs 573 crore and Rs 184 crore have also been sanctioned to Prayagraj High Court and Lucknow bench respectively for constructing multi-storey buildings and parkings,” he said.

Calling upon the advocates to get connected with technology, the CM said that it would assist in providing speedy justice to people.

“During the coronavirus pandemic period, only by getting connected to technology, we were able to send funds in the accounts of millions of farmers, elderly widowed women and disabled people. Not only a temple is being constructed in Ayodhya but it will also help in giving employment to lakhs of people in the coming times,” he said.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP from Gorakhpur, Ravi Kishan, said, “Today Gorakhpur is shining in the country and it is just because of the struggle of the CM. He has destroyed the mafia and their fear from Gorakhpur and the district is developing at a fast pace.”

Panchayat polls may delay UP Board exams

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The high school and intermediate examinations conducted by the UP Board of Secondary Education are likely to be delayed due to the panchayat elections. These examinations are likely to commence after the Holi festival.

The government has appointed administrators in place of gram pradhans in over 59,000 village panchayats after the terms of the elected gram pradhans ended on December 25.

Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma, who holds the Education portfolio, will be holding a meeting with senior UP Board officials on January 14 to announce the dates of the Class 10 and 12 examinations.

In 2020, the UP Board examinations were held in February and completed before

the Holi festival. According to the State Election Commission, the three-tier panchayat polls could be conducted between March 15 and 30, probably in four phases.

The election schedule for the panchayat bodies is likely to be announced by February 15.

Panchayati Raj minister Bhupendra Chaudhary said that the work of reorganisation of gram sabhas had been completed while the process of delimitation of wards was under process. The four districts of Moradabad, Gonda, Sambhal and Gautam Buddha Nagar were under full delimitation and the work for districts under partial delimitation was going on, he said.

The minister said that by January 14, the delimitation work would be completed, following which the work of reservation would be concluded.

As of now, the reservation for gram panchayat seats was fixed at district headquarters, however, this time the process has been made online. The reservation of seats for gram sabhas, block development committees, pradhans and zila panchayat members in gram panchayats will be decided from Lucknow. The population of revenue villages will be assessed to implement reservation in panchayats.

Talking about how the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party will gain in panchayat elections, Chaudhary said, “The Panchayati Raj department has built more than 2.5 crore toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission. Panchayat buildings, and community toilets in rural areas. More than 80,000 primary schools have been rejuvenated under Operation Kayakalp.

Properties worth Rs 733 cr of mafia seized in 2020

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government said it had seized property worth around Rs 733 crore of alleged mafia elements and criminals involved in gangster activities in 2020. The properties of listed mafia and criminals and their associates in gangster cases were attached under Section 14 of the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, according to the Home department.

A special drive was run against

mafia and criminals involved in gangster activities to break their spine, said Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi.

Of the Rs 733 crore, most property was attached in Lucknow (Rs 88.15 crore), Gautam Buddha Nagar (Rs 66.80 crore), Balrampur (Rs 58.80 crore), Ghazipur (Rs 42.09 crore), Gorakhpur (Rs 38.20 crore), Auraiya (Rs 31.22 crore), Jaunpur (Rs 29.40 crore), Muzaffarnagar (Rs 28.83 crore), Prayagraj (Rs 26.17 crore) and Deoria

(Rs 24.39 crore) districts, the government said. The UP Gangsters Act defines a gangster as a member or leader or organiser of a gang and includes any person who abets or assists in the activities of a gang.

According to the Act, a gang is a group of persons who act either individually or collectively by violence or threat or show of violence or intimidation or coercion with the object of disturbing order or gaining any undue temporal, pecuniary, material or other

advantage for himself or any other person. Section 14 of the Act empowers the district magistrate to attach properties of alleged gangsters.

If the DM has reason to believe that any property, whether moveable or immovable, in possession of any person has been acquired by a gangster as a result of a commission of an offence under this Act, he may order attachment of such property whether or not cognisance of such offence has been taken by any court, the Act says.



NOTICE
I, Army No. - 14431955 Y, Hav MANORANJAN GIRI S/o SHIVJI GIRI. Here by declared that the name of my son in my army record is BITU KUMAR which is wrong and his wright name is BITTU KUMAR, Which is registered in his school record, Aadhar Card and vide affidavit on 23. 12. 20.

NOTICE
BE it known to all men that in the documents of my ICSE and ISC Certificate the name of my father has been wrongly endorsed as FAROOQ. which is incorrect. The correct name of my father is MOHD FAROOQ. Mohd. Siddiq Zafar, UID No. 5582994, R/o A 1082/6, GTB Nagar, Kareli, Prayagraj.

NOTICE
I, Praveen Kumar Mishra S/o Shri Prem Shankar Mishra, R/o New Lakhnpur Housing Society, Vikas Nagar, Kanpur declares that Original Paper of my H.No. 312, Lakhnpur Housing Society Vikas Nagar, Kanpur, in blue hand bag has been lost nearby Mandhana Chauraha, If any person found this bag please contact on mobile no. 9839104475

NOTICE
I, army No. 14424330F Hav (Dresser) S Ramesh S/o G Subramani R/o Vellore, Tamil Nadu an apply for correction of my son name which is wrongly written as Mr. Bharath instead of correct spelling Bharath R in my service document of army.I request to do the needfull for the same.Objectin if any may be conveyed to concerned authority within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice.

आवश्यकता

आवश्यकता है
राज्यानुदागित श्री त्रिवेणी संस्कृत महाविद्यालय, दारगंज, प्रयागराज में सहायक लिपिक का एक पद रिक्त है। शैक्षिक योग्यता इण्टरमीडिएट उत्तीर्ण एवं CCC का प्रमाणपत्र आवश्यक है। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी समस्त शैक्षिक प्रमाणपत्रों को संलग्न कर आवेदन पत्र पंजीकृत डाक से प्रेषित कर सकते हैं। 200 रु० के बैंक ड्राफ्ट के साथ आवेदन पत्र प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि 24 जनवरी 2021 है। किसी भी प्रकार का यात्रा भत्ता देय नहीं होगा।

आवेदन पत्र भेजने का पता गोपाल कृष्ण अवस्थी, प्रबंधक 1228/859, दारगंज (निकट बड़ी कोठी) प्रयागराज

Govt concentrating on more startups

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Always committed to opening new vistas of opportunity for the youth, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his government are focusing to establish more and more startups in Uttar Pradesh.

The UP government is encouraging youth through various means to set up new startups under the Start-up Policy 2020. As a result of this, where only 200 startups could be established in the entire state before 2017, a total of 3,406 startups have been set up in just three years. This has also provided employment to more than 22,000 people.

Additional Chief Secretary (IT and Electronics) Alok Kumar said, “Startups established in 73 districts have provided direct employment to 10,000 people and indirect employment to 12,000 people. Soon, 100 new incubators will be set up in every district of the state. Currently, 18 incubators are functioning. By providing management training or other essential services through these incubators, new startup companies will be developed. After this, approximately 10,000 new startups will be established which will provide direct employment to over 50,000 people and indirect employment to over one lakh people.”

At present, 1,154 startups have been established in Noida and a total of 1,219 startups have been established in Ghaziabad (533), Lucknow (500), and in the districts of Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions of the state, he added.

Appreciating CM Yogi’s effort to provide employment to the migrants, Kumar said, “During the lockdown, when the entire country was facing death threats due to coronavirus, CM Yogi-led Uttar Pradesh government provided employment to more than four lakh migrant workers who returned to UP from other states. The aim of the government was to provide such jobs to the migrant workers which fit their employment profession as well as promote self-employment opportunities in various sectors. For this, new startups are being provided to them in the information technology sectors, public services sectors, education, health, agriculture, textiles, and other important sectors.”

The additional chief secretary said, “Courses of innovation and entrepreneurship development will be included in universities and schools. The new Startup Policy 2020 will promote an efficient business environment and establish a state-of-the-art centre of excellence. The startups will give equal importance to various areas of medicine, health, agriculture, khadi, energy, education, transport, tourism, etc. To promote this, the first instalment of subsidy of Rs 15 crore has also been provided by the government. Soon UP will join the states providing the most employment opportunities through new startups.”

Uttar Pradesh’s exports rebound

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As India gradually came out of the Anation-wide lockdown enforced due to the coronavirus pandemic, Uttar Pradesh witnessed a rebound in terms of exports which otherwise had taken a hit and is now at the fifth position in the country.

According to a comparative study undertaken by the state government, products worth over Rs 1.48 lakh crore were exported from April 2019 to November 2019, of which products worth Rs 80,058.44 crore were exported from Uttar Pradesh alone.

During the pandemic crisis, products worth Rs 1.3 lakh crore were exported from the country between April 2020 and November 2020, of which products worth Rs 72,508 crore were exported from Uttar Pradesh.

According to the state’s statistics, exports from UP had decreased by as much as 30 percent during the pandemic, following which Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had ordered to focus on increasing exports and had taken many decisions in this regard.

The state government took swift action and made efforts under its ease of doing business to offer huge concessions

Logistic hub to script a new saga of UP’s development

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Greater Noida will soon become the Ghub of world class multi-model logistics.

Built at a cost of about Rs 7,725 crore, the Multi-Model Logistic Hub (MMLH) and the Multi-Modal Transport Hub (MMTH) will script a new story of development of Uttar Pradesh in the coming time. While reducing the costs, these will also provide rail, road and metro facilities to the commuters at one place.

A new authority, Integrated Industrial Township of Greater Noida Limited (IIT-GNL), has also been formed for this project in Greater Noida.

An official government communiqué released on Saturday confirmed that the process to complete the project in 750 acres of land near Dadri had been started and about 85 percent of land for both the projects had also been acquired.

All facilities, including warehousing and cold storage, will be available for keeping the products and the entire area is being developed as a freight village.

IITGNL CEO Narendra Bhushan said that there was a railway station, Boraki, just three kilometres from the Greater Noida Authority office and in the coming time, 15 trains would be running from this station and the passengers could go to any place in the country.

The MMTH project, located near the

Boraki railway station, will also serve as a transport hub with easy access to passengers by rail, road and MRTS.

The MMTH will also have space for inter-state bus terminal (ISBT), local bus terminal (LBT) metro, hotel and open green space.

The rapidly growing population will get world class passenger transport facilities in the future in the state, sub-region of national capital region (NCR) and areas served by the congested Delhi.

These projects are expected to generate employment for about one lakh people and will also have a positive impact on the development opportunities in the surrounding areas.

The MMLH and the MMTH projects in Greater Noida are close to Eastern Peripheral Expressway, NH-91, Noida-Greater Noida Expressway, Yamuna Expressway and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors.

The logistic hub project is being developed as a world-class facility, where adequate storage and dedicated freight corridors (DFCs) will facilitate transportation of goods. Also, the freight companies and customers will be getting all facilities at the same point.

The centre will not only have standard container maintenance activities, but will also provide various value-added services to reduce logistics costs with better operational efficiency.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned for and on behalf of LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Area Office, Shahzafal, Lucknow pursuant to Circular No. 422/Annexure-E of LIC HFL that the Original sale dated 17.02.2019 executed Ram Chandir S/o-Sarju Prasad in favour of Lateen Kumar Singh S/o-Shubrohan Singh and Smt. Vimal Singh W/o-Laveen Kumar Singh The said Sale deed is registered in the Office of Sub Registrar list Lucknow in Book No. 1, Volume 11034 on pages 273/292 Serial No. 2038 dated-17-02-2019 in respect to Plot Kharsa No.369, area 125.464 sq.mtr. Situated at Vill-Hathnagar, Pargana-Bijnor, Distt.-Lucknow has been lost by its present owner Anur Kumar Pandey S/o-Late Shyam Narayana Pandey has applied for housing loan for which has proposed the said property to be mortgaged by depositing aforesaid Original Sale dated - 17-02-2019 with LIC HFL and as such any person claiming to be the said property covered by the said document may file claim before me within 15 days from the date of publication of notice failing which it will be presumed that the property in question is free from any encumbrance and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 days of lication of the notice.

Mahendra Mohan Mishra, Advocate Chamber: Shop No. 4 & 5, Ground Floor, Khirna Tower, Near CMC Office, Kaiserbagh, Lucknow. Mob.: 9559985554, 9559975554

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, द्वितीय निर्माण खण्ड, उ०प्र० जल निगम, वाराणसी अत्यकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना पत्रांक : 2031/एम-14/241 दिनांक: 31.12.2020

उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम द्वारा जनपद वाराणसी में पेयजल योजनाओं पर पी-ट्रैवेल आपूर्ति के कार्यों हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से निविदा दिनांक 29.01.2021 के अपराह्न 17:00 बजे तक ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो दिनांक 30.01.2021 को अपराह्न 15:00 बजे कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, द्वितीय निर्माण खण्ड, उ०प्र० जल निगम, वाराणसी में खोली जाएगी। निविदाओं को उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की e-procurement website https://etender.up.nic.in के माध्यम से ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया द्वारा दिनांक 05.01.2021 से दिनांक 29.01.2021 तक वेबसाइट पर अपलोड किया जा सकता है। निविदा सूचना से सम्बन्धित विवरण जल निगम की वेबसाइट www.jn.upscdc.gov.in पर एवं कार्यों का विस्तृत विवरण e-procurement website https://etender.up.in से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।

उ०प्र० नवीन एवं नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा विकास अधिकरण
निविदा खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-226010
दूरभाष सं० 0522-2720852, फैक्स सं० 0522-2720779, 2720892
Website : http://upneda.org.in; E-mail: ho_chinhat@rediffmail.com


निविदा सूचना				
निविदा सं०-०1/यूपीनेडा/आरटीसी/कैटरिंग/2020-21				
यूपीनेडा प्रशिक्षण केन्द्र, देवा रोड, विनहट, लखनऊ हेतु निम्नवत् सील बन्द अल्पकालीन निविदाएं दिनांक 20.01.2021 समय 03:30 बजे अपराह्न तक अनुपवी देकेदारों से आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो यूपीनेडा, मुख्यालय विभूति खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ पर उसी दिन अपराह्न समय 04:00 बजे खोली जाएगी।				
क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	निविदा संख्या	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (जीएसटी सहित)	घरोहर मूल्य (रु०)
1	केन्द्र पर समय-समय होने वाले विभिन्न प्रशिक्षण कार्य/क्रमां हेतु भोजन/स्वचायाार की सेवाएँ।	01/यूपीनेडा/आरटीसी/कैटरिंग/2020-21	रु० 525.00	रु० 30000.00

निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण एवं निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि से यूपीनेडा प्रशिक्षण केन्द्र, देवा रोड, विनहट से कार्यालय दिनांक में शाम 06:00 बजे तक प्राप्त किया जा सकता है या अधिकरण की वेबसाइट (Website : upneda.org.in) से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। डाउनलोड करने पर निर्धारित मूल्य का डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट तथा विपरीत घरोहर धनराशि का डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट यूपीनेडा विनहट के नाम से निर्मित कर निविदा में माग किया जा सकता है। किसी भी निविदा/निविदाओं को बिना कोई कारण बताये निरस्त किये जाने का अधिकार निदेशक, यूपीनेडा के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। निदेशक, यूपीनेडा

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
No.: T/GOODS/TU/UN.AB.-2018/49 Traffic Branch
Dated: 24.12.2020 Divi. Railway Manager's Office
N.C. Railway, Prayagraj

ABSENTEE NOTICE
This is to inform to Shri Vinayak Parmar S/o Shri Akhilesh Singh, **SM/PORA, Division-PRYJ**, R/O- AT + P.O.- Kobil, P.S.- Islampur, Distt.- Nalanda (Bihar), Pin- 801303 who has been running absent since **20.05.2018**, that you must report to the **office of Sr. DOM (C&G)/PRYJ, ground Floor, DRM Office, NCR, Prayagraj within ten(10) days** from the date of publishing of this notice. Otherwise, it will be deemed that you are not at all interested to continue in Railway Service and Railway administration will be compelled to ex-parte decision against you as dismissal or Removal from service.

Name: Shri Vinayak Parmar S/o Shri Akhilesh Singh SM/PORA, Division - PRYJ R/O: AT + P.O. - Kobil, P.S. - Islampur, Distt. - Nalanda (Bihar) Pin - 801303
Sr. Divi. Operations Manager (C&G) North Central Railway, Prayagraj
f North central railways @ CPRO NCR 1460/20(A)



भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

कार्यालय प्रधान मुख्य आयकर आयुक्त, उ.प्र. (पूर्वी)
o/o THE PR-CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF INCOME TAX UP (EAST)

5-अशोक मार्ग, लखनऊ
5-ASHOK MARG, LUCKNOW
PHONE & FAX : 0522-2233205
E-mail : Lucknow.ito.hq.pr@incometax.gov.in

फा.सं.प्रमुआ.आ./आ.अधि.(प्र.स.)/लख./स्टाफ कार./वाल्सु-3/2020-21 दिनांक-01.01.2021

निविदा सूचना स्टाफ कार किराए पर लेने हेतु

प्रधान मुख्य आयकर आयुक्त, उ०प्र० (पूर्वी), लखनऊ आयकर विभाग लखनऊ में किराए पर वाहन लेने हेतु ख्याति प्राप्त व्यक्तियों /फर्मों से दो बोली प्रस्ताव के अधीन कोटेशन आमंत्रित करते है नियम व शर्तों को समाविष्ट करते हुए विस्तृत निविदा दस्तावेजों को आयकर विभाग की वेबसाइट www.incometaxindia.gov.in से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। हर तरह से विधिवत भरे हुए निविदा फॉर्म कार्यालय प्रधान मुख्य आयकर आयुक्त, उ०प्र० (पूर्वी), आयकर भवन, 5-अशोक मार्ग, लखनऊ में 13 जनवरी 2021 को 2.00 बजे अपराह्न तक या इससे पहले जमा हो जाने चाहिए। निविदाओं को उसी दिन 3.00 बजे अपराह्न को खोला जाएगा। निविदाओं को खोलते समय बोलीदाताओं के आगमन का स्वागत है।

(एस०एल० कनोजिया)
आयकर अधिकारी (मु०)(ज.स.)
कार्यालय प्रधान मुख्य आयकर आयुक्त लखनऊ।

First dry run of Covid vaccination carried out at five city hospitals

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The first Covid-19 vaccination dry run was successfully carried out at six hospitals in Lucknow on Saturday. The dry run was conducted at KGMU, SGPGI, RMLIMS and Sahara Hospital besides Maal and Mahabadi CHCs.

District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash took stock of the dry run at Sahara Hospital, KGMU and RMLIMS. The exercise which started at 9 am was carried out for an actual hands-on experience for the health personnel. The DM said that a dry run of transportation of vaccine from the cold storage to immunisation centres was also carried out and it witnessed the participation of administration, police and health officials.

Prakash said the second dry run would be carried out shortly and it would see the coordination of police department, district administration and health department at the 59 vaccination centres.

"In the first dry run, there were 25 participants at each centre. There was a standard procedure which included five stages of vaccinations. After beneficiaries are vaccinated, they will be given vaccine cards and they will be vaccinated again after 28 days and have to be under observation. If the beneficiaries face any problem, a contingency plan has also been prepared," the DM said.

The DM said that a workshop would also be carried out for better orientation, team work and coordination so that the vaccination is 100 percent successful.

Divisional Commissioner Ranjan Kumar also carried out an inspection of the dry run at SGPGI.

A senior official at the CMO office said the dry run was conducted smoothly. He said the exercise was a preparation before the actual run and was limited to a single day. He said that preparation for the vaccination was a continuous process.



(Top) Covid vaccination dry run at KGMU on Saturday. (Above) District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash taking a stock of the exercise at Sahara Hospital

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"All necessary equipment should be arranged on priority for testing the new strain of the novel coronavirus in the state laboratories," he said, adding that contact tracing and surveillance systems should also be maintained effectively. The CM stressed on regular monitoring of the arrangements being made in the state for COVID-19 vaccination. He said proper safe storage, cold chain and trans-

portation of the vaccine should be ensured as per the prescribed standard.

The CM also instructed officials to constantly make people aware about prevention from COVID-19 infection and use various publicity mediums along with public address systems for this.

He directed the officials to widely publicise the e-Sanjeevani App through which people get online medical consultation. He also instructed officials to ensure all preparations for the Mukhya Mantri Arogya Mela being restarted from January 10.

been placed to manage the after effects of the vaccine, if any.

SGPGI director Dr RK Dhiman also inspection the dry run at the hospital. About the current Covid situation, he said it was pretty much under control in Uttar Pradesh.

"Very few patients are coming in and the recovery rate is very high. The situation is under control and the only cause of concern is the new virus strain. The situation is likely to become normal in the lat-

est part of 2021 when people may be able to move out without having to wear masks," he added.

Meanwhile, Organised Medicine Academic Guild (OMAG) secretary Dr Ishwar Gilada welcomed the decision of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) for recommending the Serum Institute of India's Covishield Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use

authorisation to Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

"OMAG appeals to people, not to rush for the vaccine. Those below 18 have to wait till small trials are done in people their age. OMAG also appeals to those who already suffered from Covid-19 infection to wait as they do not need the vaccine right now or for several months from now. People should get their Covid antibody tests done. If positive for IgG, wait. It's impossible to vaccinate all. We could give the polio vaccine to 90% of the children as it is an oral vaccine and could be done by Anganwadi and ASHA workers, and it took several years. This vaccine is different," he said.

"Currently, most of the world, particularly the developing world, depends on India for healthcare, especially for medicines and several vaccines, and it will be the same for Covid-19 vaccines as well. Even now, 60% of all the vaccines used globally are manufactured in India," he added.

Meanwhile, 137 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Saturday. City death toll stands at 1,114 while there are 2,638 active cases in the district. The fresh cases included 12 from Gomtinagar, 13 from Indiranagar, and 10 each from Jankipuram, Rae Bareilly road, Cantt & Aliganj. Across the state, 728 persons tested positive, including 26 in Kanpur, 23 in Ghaziabad, 20 in Gautam Buddh Nagar, 45 in Varanasi and 55 in Meerut, taking the UP case tally to 5,87,434.

There were eight deaths in the state, including two each in Varanasi & Gorakhpur, and one each in Lucknow, Prayagraj, Gonda & Balrampur, taking the toll to 8,387. Besides, 1,190 patients recovered, taking the total number of recoveries to 5,65,731 while there are 13,316 active cases in the state.

Gram pradhan hit on head with chair by irate villager

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A gram pradhan was attacked in Mohanlalganj on Saturday by an irate villager who was upset over the former's ignorance towards development in the area. The victim was identified as Umesh Kumar Bajpai while the accused as Ram Kumar. Police arrested Ram Kumar and his application was accepted later.

As per reports, a contractor is getting interlocking bricks fixed in Barwalia village these days but the area around Ram Kumar's has remain untouched. Since the gram pradhan had a say in the work, Ram Kumar suspected

The villagers were upset over the gram pradhan's ignorance towards development in the area

that the area was deliberately left at his behest.

On Saturday, Ram Kumar reached the office of the block development officer and complained about the ignorance. The BDO asked the panchayat secretary to conduct a probe into the matter. Thereafter, Ram Kumar went to meet the panchayat secretary. When Ram Kumar was talking to

him, the gram pradhan also reached there. Both indulged in a verbal spat and exchanged blows. In a fit of rage, Ram Kumar picked up a chair and hit it on the gram pradhan's head. The injured gram pradhan was rushed to a hospital.

Block employees alleged that the police arrived at the scene late even after being called instantly after the incident. Later, a case was registered on the complaint of the victim and Ram Kumar was arrested. The police said Ram Kumar is a PWD employee. He told the police that the gram pradhan had deliberately stopped laying bricks around his house.

2 dozen persons killed in separate mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two dozen people were killed in separate mishaps during the past 24 hours.

In a tragic accident on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Auras area of Unnao on Friday, a high-speed private bus hit a container parked on the roadside, claiming half-a-dozen lives and leaving six people seriously injured.

Reports said that a bus was going from Araria Bihar to the national capital Delhi when due to dense fog, the driver crashed the vehicle into the container. According to the police, 65 to 70 people were present on the bus. Bus driver Salahuddin also died on the spot.

The collision was so severe that the bus entered five feet inside the container and was pulled out with the help of a crane. Traffic on the expressway was affected for about two hours.

In Meerut, three car-borne youths were killed while two

others sustained critical injuries when the vehicle hit a tree amidst dense fog in the Ganganagar area on Saturday morning. The car, which was going towards Inchauli from Meerut, rammed into a roadside tree near JP Institute situated at the Mawana road.

In Auraiya, four members of a family were killed when a speeding truck hit a scooter at a national highway in the Sadar area on Saturday morning.

In Agra, five people were killed in two accidents on Yamuna Expressway early Friday, again due to fog.

In Ballia, a motorcycle rider was killed and another injured after they were hit by a pick-up.

In Budaun, a 50-year-old man and his son died of electrocution in a village, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in Noorpur village on Friday, police said.

CM expresses satisfaction with Covid recovery rate

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing satisfaction with the 96.6 percent recovery rate of COVID-19 in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to keep the prevention and treatment systems completely intact.

He also said that full care should be taken at every level and even a little carelessness in this regard could prove to be costly. He also instructed officials to be extra vigilant in view of the new strain of the novel coronavirus.

The CM, who was presid-

ing over an unlock review meeting at his official residence here on Saturday, said that the medical testing should be conducted with full capacity.

"All necessary equipment should be arranged on priority for testing the new strain of the novel coronavirus in the state laboratories," he said, adding that contact tracing and surveillance systems should also be maintained effectively. The CM stressed on regular monitoring of the arrangements being made in the state for COVID-19 vaccination. He said proper safe storage, cold chain and trans-

portation of the vaccine should be ensured as per the prescribed standard.

The CM also instructed officials to constantly make people aware about prevention from COVID-19 infection and use various publicity mediums along with public address systems for this.

He directed the officials to widely publicise the e-Sanjeevani App through which people get online medical consultation. He also instructed officials to ensure all preparations for the Mukhya Mantri Arogya Mela being restarted from January 10.

Chill continues, rains predicted today



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Meteorological department has forecast rains in the state, including Lucknow, on Tuesday. Director JP Gupta said the rains are expected because of the presence of a western disturbance near Pakistan. On Monday, the cold weather conditions continued to prevail but the sunny skies spelled relief.

Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature at 24.4 degree Celsius, which was 3.5 degrees above normal. The minimum temperature at 6.8 degree Celsius was 0.8 degree below normal. In the state, Faizabad was the coldest at 3.5

degree Celsius, followed by Fatehgarh and Bareilly at 3.7 degree Celsius each and Muzaffarnagar at 3.8 degree Celsius.

Lightning and thunder-showers are likely in Lucknow, Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Hapur, GB Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Mathura, Hathras, Etah, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Bijnor, Amroha, Moradabad, Rampur, Sambhal, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Badaun, Kasganj, Lakhimpur Kheri, Hardoi, Sitapur, Bahraich and adjoining areas.

The forecast for Lucknow is partly cloudy skies while rains and thunderstorms are likely in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to be around 26 degree Celsius and 9 degree Celsius, respectively.

In the state, thunderstorms are likely at isolated places over eastern UP and at a few places over western UP, with shallow to moderate fog in the morning. There is a warning of thunderstorm accompanied by lightning at isolated places over eastern UP while thunderstorm accompanied by lightning and hailstorm at isolated places over western UP.



शिक्षा व्यवस्था में बढ़ते कदम

वर्चुअल स्कूल

कक्षा-10 एवं 12 के विद्यार्थियों के लिए दूरदर्शन, उत्तर प्रदेश (DD UP) चैनल और कक्षा-9 एवं 11 के विद्यार्थियों के लिए चैनल e vidya-9 एवं e vidya-11 पर शैक्षणिक वीडियो के माध्यम से

04.01.2021 से 08.01.2021 तक ई-लर्निंग प्रसारण का बीसवां चरण

दूरदर्शन, उत्तर प्रदेश (DD UP) चैनल पर यू.पी. बोर्ड की कक्षा-10 एवं 12 हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी								
दिनांक तथा समय	कक्षा-10				कक्षा-12			
	अपराह्न 1:00 से अपराह्न 1:30 बजे तक	अपराह्न 2:30 से अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 4:00 से अपराह्न 4:30 बजे तक	सायं 5:30 से सायं 6:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 1:30 से अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 3:30 से अपराह्न 4:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 4:30 से अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक	सायं 6:00 से सायं 6:30 बजे तक
04-01-2021 सोमवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 (Poetry) The Psalm of Life भाग-1	गणित अध्याय-12 सूत्रों से सम्बन्धित क्षेत्रफल भाग-1	विज्ञान अध्याय-4 कार्बन और उसके यौगिक भाग-1	विज्ञान अध्याय-4 कार्बन और उसके यौगिक भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-10 हेलोएल्केन तथा हेलोएरीन भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-10 हेलोएल्केन तथा हेलोएरीन भाग-3	भूगोल अध्याय-1 मानव भूगोल के मूल सिद्धांत भाग-1	इतिहास अध्याय-2 राजा, किसान और नगर भाग-1
05-01-2021 मंगलवार	विज्ञान अध्याय-4 कार्बन और उसके यौगिक भाग-3	विज्ञान अध्याय-4 कार्बन और उसके यौगिक भाग-4	विज्ञान अध्याय-9 अनुवांशिकता एवं जैव विकास भाग-1	विज्ञान अध्याय-9 अनुवांशिकता एवं जैव विकास भाग-2	इतिहास अध्याय-2 राजा, किसान और नगर भाग-2	नागरिक शास्त्र अध्याय-2 दो प्रवीणता का अंत भाग-1	नागरिक शास्त्र अध्याय-2 दो प्रवीणता का अंत भाग-2	भूगोल अध्याय-4 मानव विकास भाग-1
06-01-2021 बुधवार	विज्ञान अध्याय-13 विद्युत धारा के चुम्बकीय प्रभाव भाग-1	विज्ञान अध्याय-13 विद्युत धारा के चुम्बकीय प्रभाव भाग-2	विज्ञान अध्याय-13 विद्युत धारा के चुम्बकीय प्रभाव भाग-3	विज्ञान अध्याय-13 विद्युत धारा के चुम्बकीय प्रभाव भाग-4	भूगोल अध्याय-4 मानव विकास भाग-2	हिन्दी अध्याय-5 श्रद्धा मनु जयशंकर प्रसाद भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-5 श्रद्धा मनु जयशंकर प्रसाद भाग-2	हिन्दी अध्याय-5 श्रद्धा मनु जयशंकर प्रसाद भाग-3
07-01-2021 गुरुवार	सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 लोकतन्त्र और विविधता भाग-1	वाणिज्य अध्याय-3 बैंक सम्बन्धित लेन-देन भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-7 स्वदेश प्रेम रामनरेश त्रिपाठी भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-1 (काव्य) काव्य सौन्दर्य का तत्व भाग-1	संस्कृत अध्याय-संस्कृत-ग अभिज्ञानशाकुंतलम् भाग-2	संस्कृत अध्याय-संस्कृत-ग अभिज्ञानशाकुंतलम् भाग-3	संस्कृत अध्याय-संस्कृत-ग अभिज्ञानशाकुंतलम् भाग-4	संस्कृत अध्याय-संस्कृत-ग अभिज्ञानशाकुंतलम् भाग-5
08-01-2021 शुक्रवार	हिन्दी अध्याय-1 (काव्य) काव्य सौन्दर्य का तत्व भाग-2	हिन्दी अध्याय-5 चंद्रलोक में प्रथम बार भाग-3	हिन्दी अध्याय-8 पुष्प की अभिलाषा भाग-4	सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-2 वन एवं वन्य जीव संस्थान भाग-1	गणित अध्याय-5 सांतत्य एवं अवकलनीयता भाग-1	गणित अध्याय-5 सांतत्य एवं अवकलनीयता भाग-2	गणित अध्याय-5 सांतत्य एवं अवकलनीयता भाग-3	गणित अध्याय-5 सांतत्य एवं अवकलनीयता भाग-4

नोट : DD-UP, अब आप इन चैनलों पर भी देख सकते हैं, डी डी फ्री डिश-45, डेन-137, नेटविजन-138, डिश टीवी-229, लखनऊ 9-237, बिग टीवी-250, एयरटेल-400, हाथवे-400, सिटी केबल-671, वीडियोकॉन डी 2 एच-889, टाटा स्काई-1195

चैनल e vidya-9 पर कक्षा-9 एवं चैनल e vidya-11 पर कक्षा-11 यू.पी. बोर्ड हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी

दिनांक तथा समय	कक्षा-9		कक्षा-11	
	प्रातः 8:30 से प्रातः 9:00 बजे तक	प्रातः 9:00 से प्रातः 9:30 बजे तक	सायं 6:30 से सायं 7:00 बजे तक	सायं 7:00 से सायं 7:30 बजे तक
04-01-2021 सोमवार	हिन्दी अध्याय-6-हिन्दी काव्य जयशंकर प्रसाद-पुनर्मिलन भाग-1/2	विज्ञान अध्याय-2 क्या हमारे आस-पास के पदार्थ शुद्ध हैं ? भाग-1/2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-2- (रसायन भाग-1) परमाणु की संरचना भाग-8/8	संस्कृत अध्याय-6-संस्कृत-च-व्याकरण धातुरुप-परस्मैपद-भू पठ, पा, गम् दृश, स्वा, नी, प्रच्छ। भाग-1/3
05-01-2021 मंगलवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 Parts of Speech (Words & Expressions Workbook) भाग-1/4	हिन्दी अध्याय-6-हिन्दी काव्य जयशंकर प्रसाद-पुनर्मिलन भाग-2/2	हिन्दी अध्याय-इकाई-1-संखंड-क जीवित ऊतकों की कोशिकीय बनावट भाग-1/2	अध्याय-1-संखंड-क-सा-काव्य संस्कृत व्याकरण-संस्कृत दिग्दर्शिका सविन-गांध, कथा साहित्य, भाग-2/2
06-01-2021 बुधवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 Parts of Speech (Words & Expressions Workbook) भाग-2/4	विज्ञान अध्याय-2 क्या हमारे आस-पास के पदार्थ शुद्ध हैं ? भाग-2/2	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 सरल रेखा में गति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-5/6	अध्याय-6-संखंड-च-व्याकरण धातुरुप-परस्मैपद-भू पठ, पा, गम् दृश, स्वा, नी, प्रच्छ। भाग-2/3
07-01-2021 गुरुवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 Parts of Speech (Words & Expressions Workbook) भाग-3/4	विज्ञान अध्याय-5 जीवन की मौलिक इकाई भाग-1/2	गृह विज्ञान अध्याय-इकाई-1-संखंड-क जीवित ऊतकों की कोशिकीय बनावट भाग-2/2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक आवंजन तथा आयनिक संरचना (रसायन भाग-1) भाग-10/10
08-01-2021 शुक्रवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 Parts of Speech (Words & Expressions Workbook) भाग-4/4	विज्ञान अध्याय-5 जीवन की मौलिक इकाई भाग-2/2	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-3 सरल रेखा में गति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-6/6	संस्कृत अध्याय-6-संखंड-च-व्याकरण धातुरुप-परस्मैपद-भू पठ, पा, गम् दृश, स्वा, नी, प्रच्छ। भाग-3/3

नोट: e vidya-9, जियो टीवी एप, डिश टीवी चैनल-950, वीडियोकॉन चैनल-447, एयरटेल चैनल-440, फ्री डिश-128 तथा टाटा स्काई चैनल-756 पर उपलब्ध है। e vidya-11, जियो टीवी एप, डिश टीवी-952 तथा NCERT OFFICIAL YouTube पर उपलब्ध है।

माध्यमिक शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश की एक पहल

Stalked, harassed by youth, girl ends life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A girl ended her life due to allegedly being bullied by a youth who was stalking her for long time in Bakshi-Ka-Talab police station area to force her into submission. Police detained the accused, identified as Tannay Yadav of the same village.

As per reports, the girl ended her life at her house on Friday night. Her family members said she returned home sad and went straight into her room on Thursday. “She did not eat anything on Thursday and Friday. On the evening of Friday and Saturday, she locked herself in a room avoided talking to us. We opened the doors late in the night and found her hanging from the ceiling,” her kin said. They said the youth was harassing the girl for a long time to force her into submission. On Thursday, the accused broke her mobile phone when she was returning home. Upset over the harassment, she ended her life.

Meanwhile, three persons, including a woman, ended their lives in separate incidents in the last 24 hours.

In Naka police station area, a man, identified as Nirmal Sahu (30) of Nehrubagh locality, ended his life at his house on

Friday night when he was all alone. His wife and children had gone to their native house in Siwan, Bihar. Police said Nirmal was found hanging from ceiling with a dupatta tied around his neck. Nirmal used to repair gas burners and stoves for a living. It surfaced during police investigation that Nirmal had complained of heart palpitations and was in depression for the last few days. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

Elsewhere in Hasanganj, a 22-year-old boy, identified as Sachin Kumar Singh of Barabanki, was found hanging at a house where his elder brother stays on rent. Reports said Sachin had visited his brother Sudhir Kumar Singh’s house a week ago. On January 1, Sudhir left for his office while Sachin stayed back. “I returned home around 4 pm and found Sachin hanging from the ceiling,” Sudhir told the police.

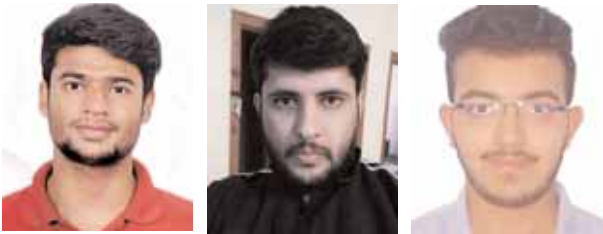
In Gosainganj, a woman, identified as Uma Verma of Jaisana village in the area, was found hanging at her house. She was hanging from ceiling with a saree tied around her neck. Her husband Kuldeep works in New Delhi and they were staying away from their parents at another house.

On cloud nine after belling CAT

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

City achievers were on cloud nine after cracking CAT, results of which were declared on Saturday. Piyush Trivedi, who secured 99.98 percentile, attributed his achievement to his coaching and said it was the right platform. “It has to be a sustained practice because there are going to be good and bad days. This was essentially my preparation strategy,” he said. It was the second attempt by Piyush who is working with a firm. He has completed civil engineering from Bengaluru. “I hope to get admission to IIM-Ahmedabad and pursue either product management or consultancy,” said Piyush, whose sister is also studying in IIM-Ahmedabad.

Shikhar Mahendra, who scored 99.25 percentile, is a



Piyush Trivedi, Shikhar Mahendra, Abhinav Srivastava

student of BA in Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University. He said his success mantra was hard work and mock tests. “Covid did not make much of a difference as far as his preparations were concerned. Hoping to join IIM-Lucknow, he said he was aiming at becoming a marketing manager and that it was his second attempt.

Abhinav Srivastava, who scored 99.11 percentile, said constant practice and hard

work were his success mantras. A student of IET-Lucknow, he is currently working in an MNC as a software engineer.

Ashish Sinha, director of a coaching institute, said Covid did not make much of a difference as far as results were concerned because the students used online platforms, online testing and doubt solving in WhatsApp groups for cracking the exams with good percentiles.

26/11 brains Lakhvi...

From Page 1
Proscribed terrorists and entities are subject to an assets freeze, wherein all states are required to freeze funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities, a travel ban that prevents the entry into or transit through nations’ territories by the designated

individuals and an arms embargo. Last month, the UN Security Council’s 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee allowed for a monthly payment of Pakistani Rupee 1.5 lakh for Lakhvi to meet his personal expenses. The LeT, led by Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed, is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The global terror financing watchdog Financial Action

Task Force (FATF) is instrumental in pushing Pakistan to take measures against terrorists roaming freely in Pakistan and using its territory to carry out attacks in India and elsewhere.

The Paris-based FATF placed Pakistan on the Grey List in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019 but the deadline was extended later on due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Girl drugged, molested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A girl was drugged after being offered liquor and was later molested on her way from Jalesar to Agra.

All the three accused later dumped the unconscious victim and escaped. The police, however, arrested all the three accused. The incident took place on 31 December, 2020 (New Year’s eve), when celebrations were on to welcome 2021.

Three youths, Gaurav, Yameen and Salman were conspiring to rape the victim after giving her liquor but as she turned unconscious, they left her and escaped.

The incident was reported from Asulabad area of Rasulpur police station in Firozabad. The cops at Rasulpur police station were

shocked to find a girl in an unconscious state on Thursday midnight.

They immediately took the woman to the Government Trauma Centre and admitted her. After about two hours, when the girl came to her senses, she disclosed how the incident happened with her.

The girl was so scared that even after coming to her senses she fainted again and again. The woman disclosed that she was going from Jalesar to Agra when three young men talking to her in the hotel said that they would make her sit in the bus and take her to Gaurav’s Dhaba. She was first forced to drink alcohol and when she fell unconscious, the youths undressed her and allegedly made a video of the act.

The woman was sent for medical examination on Friday.

Taking immediate action on the complaint of the woman, the police have arrested the three youths.

Meanwhile, a female sub-inspector posted at Anupshahr police station in Bulandshahr district allegedly committed suicide in her house on Friday night. “She was found dead hanging from a fan by the neck, by a landlady. On being sent to hospital she was pronounced dead. A note suicide was found,” said Bulandshahr SSP Santosh Kumar Singh.

The SI, identified as Aarju Pawar (30), hailing from Shamli district had joined UP Police in 2015 as SI and was staying as a tenant in a house in Nehru Ganj.

Suspended BSP leader’s kin join SP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ranjit Patel, husband of suspended BSP MLA Sushma Patel, joined the Samajwadi Party in presence of Akhilesh Yadav here on Saturday. Patel lost the election from Pratapgarh Sadar assembly constituency 2017 as Bahujan Samaj Party candidate while his wife Sushma

won the election from Mungra Badshahpur seat in Jaunpur district on BSP ticket. Along with Ranjit Patel, his father Dudhnath Patel and mother-in-law Savitri Patel also joined the SP.

Sushma Patel was suspended from the BSP after she met Akhilesh Yadav along with her husband ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections in

UP in October last.

Sushma, after her suspension, had said that there was no fault in meeting any leader and she would continue to work for the people and meet anyone she liked.

Four other BSP MLAs had also met Akhilesh Yadav during that period and were suspended from the party by the BSP high command.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, द्वितीय निर्माण खण्ड, उ०प्र० जल निगम, वाराणसी

पत्रांक 2031 / एम-14 / 241

दिनांक 31.12.2020

अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सूचना

उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम की ओर से जनपद-वाराणसी में पेयजल योजनाओं पर भी-ग्रेवेल आपूर्ति के कार्यों हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से निविदा दिनांक 29.01.2021 के अपराह्न 17:00 बजे तक ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो दिनांक 30.01.2021 को अपराह्न 15:00 बजे कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, द्वितीय निर्माण खण्ड, उ०प्र० जल निगम, वाराणसी में खोली जाएगी। निविदाओं को उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की e-procurement website <https://etender.up.nic.in> के माध्यम से ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया द्वारा दिनांक 05.01.2021 से दिनांक 29.01.2021 तक वेबसाइट पर अपलोड किया जा सकता है। निविदा सूचना से सम्बन्धित विवरण जल निगम की वेबसाइट www.jn.upscdc.gov.in पर एवं कार्यों का विस्तृत विवरण e-procurement website <https://etender.up.nic.in> से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।

उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना (अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सूचना 89-विपाम (प्र.ज. / 2020-21, विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड-प्रथम, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. एवं 220 के.वी. उपकेंद्रों पर कोरर सिग्नलिंग की परम्पना, सिग्नलिंग एवं पेल्टाई इत्यादि कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 01.01.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत 4.9 लाख का कार्य की अवधि 01 माह घरोहर धनराशि रु. 4,50,000, ऑन लाइन ई-निविदा करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 18.01.2021 को 16.00 बजे तक है। (2)अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सूचना 90-विपाम (प्र.ज. / 2020-21, विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड द्वितीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्र गोमती नगर पर स्थापित 132 / 33 के.वी. 40 एम.बी.ए. परिवर्तक-प्रथम के परिवर्तक आयल की सेंट्रीफ्यूजिंग का कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 01.01.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत 0.62 लाख का कार्य की अवधि 01 माह घरोहर धनराशि रु. 10,00,00, ऑन लाइन ई-निविदा करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 18.01.2021 को 16.00 बजे तक है। (3) अत्युत्कृष्ट ई-निविदा सूचना 91-विपाम (प्र.ज. / 2020-21, विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड-द्वितीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्र एन.के.एन. पर स्थापित 132 / 33 के.वी. 40 एम.बी.ए. परिवर्तक-प्रथम के परिवर्तक आयल की सेंट्रीफ्यूजिंग का कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 01.01.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत 1.19 लाख का कार्य की अवधि 01 माह घरोहर धनराशि रु. 15,00,00, ऑन लाइन ई-निविदा करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 18.01.2021 को 16.00 बजे तक है। (4) ई-निविदा सूचना 92-विपाम (प्र.ज. / 2020-21, विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड-द्वितीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेंद्र सुल्तानपुर रोड (आवास विकास) 33 के.वी. सिस्वगार्ड क्षेत्र में घास, कुश इत्यादि की कटाई एवं छोटे पौधों को जड़ से निकालने का कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 01.01.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत 0.60 लाख का कार्य की अवधि 01 वष घरोहर धनराशि रु. 10,00,00, ऑन लाइन ई-निविदा करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 27.01.2021 को 16.00 बजे तक है। अतः उपरोक्त वर्णित ई-निविदाओं के कार्य की कुल मात्रा ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण व अन्य नियम एवं शर्तों www.etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी भी ई-निविदा अथवा सभी ई-निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विमाजित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तार तथा शुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित सूचना यदि कोई होगी केवल वेबसाइट पर डाली जाएगी। अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेबसाइट को नियमित देखते रहना चाहिए। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारंपरिक मण्डल-प्रथम, उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन लिमिटेड, ब्लाक सं-111 से 114, मू-तल, पारंपरिक मदन, विद्युति खण्ड-I, लखनऊ नगर, लखनऊ पत्रांक- 05 दिनांक - 1.1.2021 “साक्षरित में बिजली बचाये”

FARMERS THREATEN...

“A fortnight of nationwide campaign will be started to counter the Government’s propaganda called “Desh Jagriti Abhiyan” during January 6 to 20 which will include rallies, conferences and dharnas all over the country,” said the farmers’ union.

“Lohri and Sankranti festivals will be marked as Kisan Sankalp Diwas by burning the copies of these three laws. On January 18 farmers will celebrate Mahila Kisan Diwas to underline the role of women farmers while Azad Hind Kisan Diwas will be marked on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose’s birth anniversary on January 23 by protesting outside Governors’ official residence in all State capitals,” said the farmers’ union. On Friday, the farmers had announced that if the talks on January 4 do not succeed, farmers will march on KMP Expressway on the January 6 and subsequently the Shahjahanpur blockade will also move towards Delhi. “It is a “plain lie” that the Government had accepted 50 per cent of the farmers’ demands. In last round of talks, the Government agreed to two minor demands of the farmers’ movement and even these are yet to be secured in writing or legal form while the major demands of the protesting farmers remain unresolved,” said Yogendra Yadav. “On the demand to repeal the three Central farm laws, the Centre had asked the farmers’ organisations to come up with ‘alternative proposals, and the farmer leaders responded by saying that there is no alternative other than repeal. The Government has refused to agree, even in principle, to our demand for legal right to purchase at MSP,” said Gurnam Singh Chadhuni.

“We have no alternative and if the Government does not meet our demand by the 26th of January, we will be left with no option other than to start marching peacefully into Delhi,” he said.

 NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Works : Tender Notice No. DYCE-CON-LJN-06-2020

On behalf of the President of India, Chief Administrative Officer/Con, North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders: S.N.: 1, Open Tender No.: DYCE-CON-LJN-06-2020 Dated: 28-12-2020 Name of work: Left Over work of Earthwork, Blanketing and Construction of Minor Bridges, RUB between Tehsil Fatehpur (Incl.) to Biswan (Excl.) from Km. 22 to Km. 60 in connection with formation work of Main Line etc. for Burhwal-Sitapur Doubling Project of Lucknow Division of N.E. Railway, Approximate Value (Rs.): 35,53,98,816.88, Earnest Money (Rs.): 19,27,000/-, Completion Period: 08 Months. Sl. No. 1 : The last date/time of submission of E-Tender on 27-01-2021 upto 15:30 hrs. and will be opened at 15:30 hrs. on same day in the office of Chief Administrative Officer/Con/N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur. Detailed tender notice, eligibility, criteria, terms & conditions are available on website <http://ireps.gov.in> and Tender Notice is also available on website www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in In case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed.

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction CPROMV-204 Lucknow Jn.

Submit any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955

Do Not Smoke Bidi/Cigarette in train

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IT’S BJP’S VACCINE...

scientists. The controversial statement of the SP president comes when the UP government is holding a dry run for the COVID-19 vaccination process in Lucknow and is preparing to start a vaccination programme from Makar Sankranti.

A trial drill for distribution of COVID-19 vaccine began across the country on Saturday, officials said. The Centre had on Thursday stated that the exercises aim to test the linkages between planning and implementation and identify challenges. “How can I trust the vaccine, which will be used for vaccination by the BJP? We cannot get vaccinated by the BJP’s vaccine,” Akhilesh Yadav told reporters here. He also said his party would come to power in the state after 2022 elections and everybody would get the vaccine free. His remarks prompted an instant rebuttal from BJP leader and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, who termed the statement as an “insult to the doctors and scientists of the country.”

“Akhilesh Yadav does not have trust in the vaccine and the people of Uttar Pradesh do not have trust in Akhilesh Yadav. His raising questions on the vaccine are an insult to doctors and scientists of the country. He should tender an apology,” Maurya told reporters.

Akhilesh Yadav also claimed that there was no coronavirus anywhere in the country. “The BJP is using the pandemic as a tool to frighten the opposition political parties and the people from exercising their democratic right to protest against the government. I have come here without any face mask and am sitting amongst you all,” the SP chief said.

“The BJP is carrying out its political activity all over the country as per its electoral needs but the government is preventing the opposition from carrying out political activities and holding rallies due to coronavirus,” Yadav charged.

On Saturday, Akhilesh Yadav also met several saints and monks from Ayodhya and sought their blessings for the 2022 assembly polls.

Later, he announced that when the Samajwadi Party government would come to power in UP, the entire Ayodhya would enjoy tax-free status so that every day or 365 days in the year people could celebrate the festival of Diwali in the temple city. Yadav said Ayodhya was a symbol of unity and integrity but the BJP had turned it into a place of religious conflict to gain vote mileage. “We have tried to save democracy and humanity by supporting all the religions. I believe in God and hence have made a temple inside my house. But the BJP is making all efforts to divide the community on religion,” he alleged.

2 VACCINES GET...

The UK has already given nod for vaccination to the shot developed there. Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin is India’s first

indigenous vaccine for coronavirus. The inactivated virus vaccine has been developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology (NIV).

Bharat Biotech’s interim findings of Phase I trials showed the drug induced an immune response and led to no serious side effects. Data from Phase II trials showed “tolerable safety outcomes”, suggesting antibodies may persist for six to 12 months.

The Subject Expert Committee met for the second time this week on Friday to review the applications of the vaccine candidates. Both Serum Institute and Bharat Biotech had made presentations before the expert panel on Wednesday. Meanwhile, biopharmaceutical company Pfizer has requested more time to present its data.

Emergency use authorisation will pave the way for vaccine rollout in India, which is the world’s second-worst affected country by the virus after the United States. Adar Poonawalla, chief executive officer of the Serum Institute of India, had on Monday said that the company has already made 40 million to 50 million doses of the vaccine. However, the Government has not yet signed a deal with the firm.

UK FLIERS NEED...

Later, the suspension was extended till January 7. According to the SOP, all the passengers arriving from the UK are required to carry a negative RT-PCR test report which should be obtained 72 hours prior to the journey.

“The same will also need to be uploaded on the same portal mentioned above. After arriving at the Indian airports, all passengers will be subjected to self-paid RT-PCR tests. In the case of positive test results, passengers will be isolated in an institutional isolation facility in a separate (isolation) unit coordinated by the respective state health authorities,” it said.

Meanwhile, passengers seated in the same row of the Covid positive patient, three rows in front and three rows behind would also be subjected to institutional quarantine in separate quarantine centers. The passengers who are found Covid-negative after the tests conducted at the airport would be advised home quarantine for 14 days and the concerned state or district administration should regularly follow up with them. “In case, the genomic sequencing indicates the presence of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2, then the patient will continue to remain in a separate isolation unit. The patient will remain in the isolation unit as per the existing protocol. The patient will be kept in the isolation facility till his sample is tested negative,” it said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation will ensure proper separation of flights coming from the UK to avoid crowding at airports for testing and waiting for results. To ensure stringent following to all protocols, only 15 flights per week by air-

lines of India and as many by carriers of the UK - 30 in all weekly - will be allowed to and from the four metros of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad only till January 23, 2021.

As per the SOP, airlines and airports will inform passengers about the new protocols and also make in-flight announcements about the same. “The State-wise passenger manifest of the flights from UK landing at Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai airports in India (from Jan 8-30, for now) shall be conveyed by the Bureau of Immigration to state government/integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) so that this data would be provided to the surveillance teams,” it said.

“All the contacts of those travellers who arrived at various airports between January 8 and 30 and tested positive on arrival during air travel would be subjected to institutional quarantine in separate quarantine centres and would be tested as per ICMR guidelines (or earlier if the passenger develops any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19). Contacts testing positive shall be (done),” it said.

SOURAV STABLE...

Informing that the cricketing legend was stable, Dr Aftab Khan of the hospital where he was being treated said, “Sourav Ganguly has undergone angioplasty. He is stable now. He will be monitored for 48 hours. He is completely conscious. There are two (more) blockages in his heart for which he will be treated. As of now he is stable, we will have a meeting on Monday and then we will decide what needs to be done further, priority is to let him settle down after heart attack. He is risk-free and he is talking as well.”

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who met him during the visiting hours “his spirit is so high... when I went to see him... before I could ask a question he asked me as to how I was... I wonder how a youngster like him can get a heart attack... I could also know after speaking to him that he would never get any test done.”

WON’T TRADE...

The States and Union Territories have been asked to ensure that the data of beneficiaries is uploaded on Co-WIN, an online platform for monitoring the delivery of the vaccine. Similar exercise for the distribution and administration of Covid-19 vaccine was conducted in various States and UTs separately on different occasions in December.

“The purpose was to check the various steps of the vaccination process, including the efficiency of the CoWIN app, internet accessibility, and the management of any possible adverse events,” said the official from the Ministry.

The Central Government plans to vaccinate nearly 30 crore people in the first phase of the immunisation drive. The vaccine will be administered to one crore healthcare workers, along with 2 crore frontline and essential workers, and 27 crore elderly, mostly above the age of 50 with co-morbidities.

Vaccination likely from Makar Sankranti...

From Page 1

wipe out the deadly novel coronavirus from the country. He also said that UP had done a commendable job in controlling COVID-19 and even the World Health Organisation (WHO) had appreciated the government’s efforts. “The number of active coronavirus positive cases was 68,000 two months back and now there are just 13,000 active cases in the state. The recovery rate of 97 per cent is the best in the country.... We will win the fight against this pandemic,” he said.

Meanwhile, the state government on Saturday commenced its preparation for the COVID-19 vaccination in UP by conducting dry runs in six hospitals in the state capital.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said here on Saturday that dry run of vaccination preparation in the state capital was successful and it took note of any lapses which could arise during the actual vaccination drive.

In Lucknow, the dry run was held at Mall and Malihabad community health centres, Sahara Hospital, King George’s Medical University, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Sanjay Gandhi Post-graduate Institute of Medical Sciences.

Prasad said on January 5, a similar dry run would be held at six places each, three rural and three urban, in all the 75 districts of the state.

He said the government was taking all steps to make foolproof arrangements for the vaccination.

“The government has ordered installation of CCTV cameras in all the vaccination storage rooms and at other places where the process would be completed,” he said.

Meanwhile, fresh cases of COVID-19 further came down to 728 on Saturday and the recovery percentage went up further to 96.351 per cent. There are still 13,316 active coronavirus cases in the state out of which 5,518 are in home isolation, 1,305 in private hospitals and the rest in government-run Covid hospitals.

A total of 5,65,731 COVID-19 patients have recovered in the state while the total casualty stands at 8,387 with the case fatality rate coming down to 1.42 per cent. After six months, the number of casualties in a day came down to just eight on Saturday.

Till date over 5.01 lakh health teams have covered 3.10 crores houses under surveillance and have checked the health of over 15.08 crore people. On Friday, the labs conducted 1,29,111 lakh Covid sample tests and now the number of total tests in the state has gone up to 2,42,16,483, the highest in the country.

The UP government has decided to re-start the Mukhya Mantri Arogya Mela from January 10 in all the government hospitals where people will get non-Covid treatment.

CITYBRIEFS




SBI CGM EXTENDS NEW YEAR GREETINGS

Chief general manager of Lucknow Circle Ajay Kumar Khanna extended best wishes to all the staff members of State Bank of India on the occasion of new year. Khanna said everyone should take care of their health and be positive. Blankets and masks were donated by the CGM to people belonging to the weaker sections of the society in collaboration with Seva Sankalp. Saplings were also planted by Khanna and other officials of the bank.

WHITEHAT JR CERTIFIED GAME DEVELOPER

Rakshit Rao, a student of class VI, City Montessori School, Kanpur Road Campus, has earned the prestigious title of WhiteHat Jr Certified Game Developer, thus bringing laurels to the institution. The title was awarded to Rakshit by dint of his in-depth knowledge and creativity in computer science which he displayed while participating in a coding session. WhiteHat Jr is an online global coding platform for honing and showcasing the computer talent and skills of children aged 6-14 years. CEO of WhiteHat Jr Karan Bajaj presented him with a certificate of merit as a Certified Computer Game Developer.




NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

Notification No. 168/2020

It is notified for information of general public that following Special Express trains will run as under:

02180/02179 Agra Fort - Lucknow Superfast Intercity Special Train (Except Sat & Sun)

Ex Agra Fort : 02180 from 04.01.2021 to 31.03.2021 = 63 Trips
 Ex Lucknow Jn. : 02179 from 04.01.2021 to 31.03.2021 = 63 Trips

02180 Agra Fort-Lucknow		Stations	02179 Lucknow-Agra Fort	
Arr.	Dep.		Arr.	Dep.
-	06:31	Agra Fort	21:49	-
06:42	06:43	Yamuna Bridge	21:11	21:12
07:20	07:22	Tundla	20:48	20:50
07:38	07:39	Firozabad	20:15	20:17
07:53	07:54	Shikohabad	19:55	19:57
08:25	08:26	Etawah	19:18	19:20
08:41	08:42	Bharatpur	18:59	19:00
09:14	09:15	Phophund	18:33	18:34
09:29	09:30	Jhinjhak	18:18	18:19
09:44	09:45	Rura	18:04	18:05
10:05	10:06	Panki Dham	17:43	17:44
10:45	10:50	Kanpur Central	17:20	17:25
11:18	11:20	Unnao	16:45	16:47
12:25	-	Lucknow Jn.	-	15:55

Composition : SLR/D-02, General Second Class-03, Second Class Chair Car- 09, AC Chair Car-02 = 16 Coaches

Please Note : 1. The above train will run with full reserved accommodation 2. It is mandatory for the passengers to follow the guidelines issued for prevention and safety from Covid-19.

CPRO/T-88 **Chief Passenger Trans. Manager, Gorakhpur**
 About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No. 05794845955

Do not travel with flammable items in trains

BLW to manufacture 9K HHP locomotives soon: GM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Railway Board (RB) has Directed Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) to be in readiness for undertaking transfer of technology (ToT) agreement for manufacturing new 9,000 HHP (high horse-power) freight locomotives. 'The project, which will span over four years, will see production of 200 locomotives with progressive increase in value addition from the workshops of BLW,' said the General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal while talking to the reporters at BLW Officers' Club here on Saturday.

Disclosing further the ongoing projects, she said that under 'Mission Raftaar', Indian Railways (IR) increased the average speed of trains by running in 'Push-Pull' mode. 'The operation of WAP-7 passenger loco in Push-Pull mode is done by placing a locomotive at the head and at the rear of the rake. Push-Pull arrangement requires modification in locomotive software, cabling scheme and driver desk. All these modifications have been done on the first pair which was successfully tested and dispatched in February last year and since then, the BLW has put Push-Pull features in all newly manufactured WAP-7 locomotives,' she said.

Anjali Goyal also informed that the BLW has been selected by the RB to roll out a flagship mission project of IR which seeks to replace Guard & Brake Van (BV) in freight trains by a revenue



GM Anjali Goyal addressing a press conference at BLW in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

earning vehicle while improving safety and productivity. 'It is a low cost radio telemetry device which is used to establish communication between the locomotives driver and last wagon of the train to ensure that the train is running with all coaches/wagons as a complete unit,' said the GM, adding that BLW is convener of task force for smooth coordination and streamlining the project implementation.

According to her, in spite of the COVID-19 lockdown in April and May last year, when loco production was nil in April and eight in May, BLW has manufactured 200 electric locomotives up till December last, against 195 produced during the corresponding months in 2019, following all Covid protocols. 'BLW has completely repurposed its infrastructure to switchover from making diesel to electric

locomotives. The staff and officers have risen to the challenge of re-skilling and reorganising the shop floors, machines, jigs and fixtures and planning process for transition to electric locos,' she said, adding that the shift of the production line is in line with Ministry of Railways' multi-pronged strategy of lowering the fuel bill, reducing carbon footprint and dependence on import of fuel apart from enhancing average speed and hauling capacity of trains.

Highlighting the BLW's achievements further, Anjali Goyal said that our electric loco production line has 98 per cent indigenous materials input, supporting MSMEs and domestic manufacturing sector in a large way. The annual procurement in 2020-21 is ₹ 3,000 crore including a substantial share from MSMEs. In 2019-20, purchases from

MSMEs were nearly ₹ 1,400 crore. The turnover of nearly ₹ 4,000 crore per annum adds to the manufacturing GDP of the economy.

'BLW is now in a unique position of leveraging its multipurpose infrastructure to produce multi gauge and multi traction rolling stock towards achieving the Government's visionary policy of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat,' said the GM, adding that BLW is also working on a prestigious export order of six cape gauge 3,000 HP diesel locomotives to Mozambique worth ₹ 51.6 crore. This was put on fast track in November last. Under this order, for the first time a 12 Cylinder Crankcase is being manufactured in BLW.

'BLW also has the credit to successfully convert HHP diesel locos into electric locos for the first time anywhere in the world. First such twin unit of 10,000 HP converted locomotive WAGC3 was flagged off by the Prime Minister from BLW and is successfully hauling 6,000T freight load trains. Since then, eight locos have been converted,' she said, informing that BLW has a state-of-the-art Welding Research Institute, capable of certifying welders. 'Our hospital, which served the COVID-19 positive patients remarkably recently, is planning to provide internship facilities of medico students. Under Skill Development initiatives, a total of 521 local youths have been trained free of cost in various trades and certificates have been awarded,' she informed.

39 more test positive in Prayagraj KN Tripathi admitted to SGPGI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the increase in the number of corona infected on the first day of New Year, the Coronavirus infection has also knocked the Magh Mela Police Line. In the 24 hours on Friday, 39 new cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Prayagraj district. Eight jawans including the ASI of the RAF have also been infected. The Covid report of an advocate, a doctor from SRN E&T department, has come positive. One infected died during treatment. With this, the number of people who lost their lives to Corona infection has increased to 377.

According to Nodal Officer Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, corona testing of 5,670 people was conducted on Friday. In which the report of five homeguards who came in the Magh Mela Police Lines has come positive. He informed me that the scope of testing is being extended.

The New Year began with a figure relieving the corona infection. On December 31, after about six months, the number of infected was

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party veteran leader and former Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi is in the grip of coronavirus infection. Keshari Nath Tripathi, who is undergoing treatment in Prayagraj, has been referred to Sanjay Gandhi PGI, Lucknow on Friday due to ill health.

Former West Bengal Governor Pandit Keshari Nath Tripathi was tested for Coronavirus infection two days ago. He was still in home isolation since the report came positive. On Friday morning, he was admitted to the Covid ward of Swaroopnani Nehru Hospital of Motilal Nehru Medical College where doctors have referred him to Sanjay Gandhi PGI, Lucknow after seeing his health. He was admitted to Sanjay Gandhi PGI on Friday itself.

Earlier on Thursday, 15 people, including his

family members and the staff working at the residence, underwent a coronavirus test after former Governor Pandit Keshari Nath Tripathi became infected with the coronavirus. Some people who came in contact with him at the honour ceremony held at NCZCC on Wednesday have become home quarantined, while many guests have gone to Delhi and Lucknow. It is a matter of relief that the primary report of the people of Keshari Nath Tripathi's family and all the staff has come negative, Keshari Nath Tripathi attended the annual session of Etawah Hindi Seva Nidhi at NCZCC on Wednesday. After this, his health worsened he was tested for COVID-19, he was found to be Coronavirus positive. On the second day, 15 people, including his son, son-in-law, junior staff and people working in the kitchen, tested for corona infection.

reduced to just 22. At the same time, the number of those who beat Corona was almost three times i.e. 65 of the infected. With the death of an infected during treatment, the number of people who lost their lives to Covid has gone up to 375.

According to Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, a total of 5,675 people were test-

ed for Covid on Thursday. The infection has been confirmed in 22 new people. The relief is that the initial signs of corona are not reflected in most of the infected. A corona sufferer suffering from other diseases has died in a very serious condition. According to the nodal officer, on the list of infected on Thursday, the Chief

Accounts Officer of the NCR Railway, a High Court employee and a teacher of the primary school. He said that the number of active patients in the district has also come to 543 after about six months. Meanwhile, the Corona infected West Bengal Governor Kesharinath Tripathi is in better health than before.

Tripathi gets additional charge of NCR GM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Vinay Kumar Tripathi has assumed the additional charge of General Manager, North Central Railway after the outgoing General Manager Rajeev Chaudhry being given a farewell here on Thursday.

Vinay Kumar Tripathi has taken over the charge of General Manager, North Central Railway. Tripathi has been working as General Manager of North Eastern Railway since October 27, 2020.

After obtaining his B.Tech degree in Electrical Engineering from Roorkee, Tripathi joined the Railway service as a 1983 batch Indian Railway Electrical Engineering Service (IRSEE) officer. His first appointment was as Assistant Electrical Engineer in Northern Railway. Thereafter, he performed the duties of various important posts of



Vinay Kumar Tripathi

Electrical Engineering Department in Northern Railway, Central Railway, Western Railway. Tripathi worked efficiently in important

positions like Divisional Railway Manager, North Central Railway, Allahabad and Chief Electrical Locomotive Engineer and

Additional General Manager, Western Railway.

He has obtained training in higher management in Switzerland and the United States. Tripathi has made commendable contribution in the development and indigenisation of the three-phase electric locomotive of the latest technology.

These engines are the pioneers of Indian Railways today. Tripathi has extensive experience in railway administration and management. He is popular among officers and employees alike.

The experience of Tripathi, Divisional Railway Manager Allahabad (now Prayagraj) and North Central Railway will be of great benefit for working in other posts of this railway.

Officers and employees of North Central Railway congratulated Tripathi on becoming General Manager North Central.

45 new Covid cases in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 45 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Saturday, increasing the total number to 21,289. The day also saw one more death, increasing the toll to 362. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 45 and 40 of them have been recovered from home isolation while five from the hospitals, increasing the number to 17,583 and 2,926 respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 20,509, leaving 415 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.33 per cent while

the mortality rate is 1.70 per cent.

In the first report of the day, 34 positive patients were found out of 2,231 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,23,139 and the results of 2,917 are awaited. Out of them, 5,01,864 were negative while 21,275 positive. The total number of samples collected was 5,49,354. Earlier, a female aged 66 and a male aged 59, both from Karaundi, succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of two new red zones, the total number of

hotspots has increased to 2,647 including 191 red zones. One green zone has been converted into a red zone again. There are 2,456 green zones with six new ones.

Besides, for safety, respect and self-confidence of women under the 'Mission Shakti' campaign being run in the district, the girls/ women of various schools / colleges and public places in different police station areas were made aware by giving information about the helpline numbers (112, 1098, 1090, 181, 1076, 108, 102) issued by the government through posters / banners / pamphlets / audios / video

clips. A total of 9,158 women / girls were mobilised at 134 places and 828 leaflets were distributed. A total of 6,117 women / girls were sensitised by the Anti-Romeo Squads at 120 places. As many as 75 eve teasers were warned.

Apart from this, the police arrested 15 persons under Section 151 of CrPC while challaned under Section 188 and took action under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act against 10 persons. During checking at various points, 843 vehicles were challaned and three seized. Apart from this, ₹ 59,400 were realised from 62 vehicles.

Rush of devotees at temples

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Heavy rush of people was seen at all the famous temples not only in Varanasi but all in adjoining places including Vindhyachal as usually like previous years on the occasion of New Year. The rush was heavy at almost all the temples including Kashi Vishwanath, Sankatmochan, Kaal Bhairav, Durga Mandir, Bada Ganesh, Mahamritunjaya Mahadev, Vishwanath temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and many others where there were long queues of devotees. Many leading roads witnessed traffic jams. As a large number of people preferred to begin their New Year offering prayer of Lord Ganesh, all temples of Lord Ganesh saw rush and maximum rush was seen at Bada Ganesh. Normally, the temples do not see much rush during the 'Kharwas' month as per Hindi Calendar but due to New Year there was heavy rush.

Besides, there was rarely any picnic site in the city and its adjoining areas where there was no heavy rush of people, especially those who visited



Heavy rush of devotees at Sankatmochan temple on the occasion of New Year in Varanasi on Friday

Pioneer

there along with their families. The rush may be imagined by the facts that there were massive traffic jams at some places on the roads approached to Sarnath, which provides an ideal picnic site for the people due to spacious places and presence of nearly a dozen Buddhist temples with good space to enjoy the New Year.

Heavy rush of visitors was also seen at all the famous 84-odd ghats and even across the river at the sandy site there was celebration mood throughout the day.

Not only this, it was also a picnic time for thousands of families who preferred to visit natural beauty sites and almost all the famous waterfalls located

in adjoining areas in Chandauli and Mirzapur districts including Rajdhari, Devdhari, Lakhania Dhari, Vindham Fall and many others. Apart from the same, some families preferred to enjoy the same visiting historic sites including Chunar and Ramnagar forts and many other places.

One killed, many hurt in mishap

VARANASI (PNS): One was killed and more than half-a-dozen sustained injuries in a road mishap that occurred early morning on Saturday when a four-wheeler dashed against the divider near Ugapur, under the Chaubeypur police station. The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital. The condition of two injured was found critical and the doc-

tors referred them to the divisional government hospital in Kabirchaura where the doctors declared one brought dead.

According to the information, eight youths had come to Varanasi from Buxar to celebrate the New Year. After the celebration, they were returning to Buxar by four-wheeler this early morning. It was said that when they were on way

near Ugapur, the vehicle dashed against the divider and overturned when the driver tried overtaking a truck.

The villagers rushed the spot and also informed the local police about this. On getting information, the police reached the site and the injured were rushed to nearby private hospital. One of two injured Sonu (25) was referred to the

divisional government hospital where the doctors pronounced him dead. The others injured were Vittu (24), Babaloo (24), Mantu (24), Suraj (23), Monu (24), Dani (18) and Mixture (18).

The seriously injured driver could not be identified. The police informed the family members of the deceased and injured.

Atique's 37 bigha land attached

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Thirty seven bigha of land, said to be of mafia don Atique Ahmed was attached in Pipari area of the adjoining district of Kaushambi. Process of plotting was in progress at this land to sell it out at higher price. Value of this land is assessed to be around ₹50 crore.

In the same area a building of Badrul, son of Atique's close associate Gulful Pradhan, was also pulled down under Operation Mafia launched by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. A dreaded criminal Gulful was

involved in over a dozen cases of serious nature. Badrul is also a history sheeter and was involved in a good number of property deals with Atique Ahmed.

During the last couple of months properties of Atique Ahmed and dozens of his close associates has either been razed to earth, attached, or put under seal for gross irregularities. The properties were either grabbed, or huge buildings were raised without an approved layout.

Though many other mafia dons have been targeted under this operation, the biggest sufferer is Atique Ahmed of

Prayagraj and his close associates and sharp shooters.

FIRE BREAKS OUT IN HOSIERY STORE: A mysterious fire broke out in a hosiery store here in Khoya Mandi area, under the Kotwali police station on Friday night. Clothes worth ₹60 lakh went up in smoke besides ₹ 40,000 in cash as the cash chest in the counter was also reduced to ashes by the towering flames.

The owner of the shop Mahendra Malviya went home late in the night from the shop after arranging new stocks of woollens. The local residents of area witnessed smoke oozing out from the hosiery shop

around mid-night and informed Malviya and also the fire brigade. Within minutes the flames turned furious and the whole stock went up in smoke.

Four fire fighting units combated the fire and tamed it around 4 am on Saturday and went back. Suddenly the fire broke out once again and this time one unit of fire brigade was pressed to bring the situation under total control.

Timely arrival of fire fighting units saved the adjoining shops, otherwise it could have been a major disaster. Malviya said that the loss was of around ₹ 60 lakh.

Uttarakhand CM urged to hold Maha Kumbh of Haridwar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

At a meeting of the Akhara Parishad in Magh Mela area, the chairman Mahant Narendra Giri said that they would ask the Uttarakhand Chief Minister to prepare for the forthcoming Maha Kumbh of Haridwar. The meeting was attended by the representatives of all the 13 Akharas, and they inspected the Magh Mela preparations of Prayagraj on the Sangam banks.

The Akhara Parishad chairman said that when Kumbh can be organised by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, the Uttarakhand government should also come forward and organise Maha Kumbh under Covid guidelines.

Shahi Snans at Haridwar Kumbh are scheduled in the month of March and April this year. Mahant Narendra Giri said that the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has made it clear that the religious tradition would not be broken under Covid threat, and the same should be the spirit of the Uttarakhand Chief Minister.

ABAP OPPOSES ORDI-



Akhara Parishad members offering Ganga puja on the occasion of New Year in Prayagraj

Pioneer

NANCE: The Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), the largest institution of saints, has opposed the Religious Places Registration and Regulation Ordinance 2020 being brought by the Yogi Government.

Mahant Narendra Giri, president of Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), has said that all the monasteries and temples in UP are safe and there is no threat to them. He said that if it is very important to bring an ordinance to religious places

and it is necessary to set up a directorate for this, then the opinion of saints should also be taken before that.

He said that it would not be appropriate to subject saints and seers to the state government and officials in any way. Mahant Narendra Giri said that the system that is already prevailing in UP regarding religious places is justified. Mahant Narendra Giri has also said that the Chief Minister of the state, CM Yogi Adityanath is himself a saint and is also a

Peetadheeshwar of Goraksha Peeth, so he will take steps after pondering over.

Mahant Narendra Giri said that even after this, the government should take the opinion of saints once before bringing the ordinance. Akhara Parishad president Mahant Narendra Giri has demanded from UP CM Yogi Adityanath that if the government brings the law, then there should be a simple law that does not make the monastery and temple under the government.



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar inspecting the cow shelter at Jana village on Saturday

Pioneer

DC directive to tag all cows in Jana village shelter by Jan-end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar, while inspecting the huge cow shelter home, Brihad Gau Ashray Sthal, at Jana village in Sarsaul, directed the Kanpur municipal commissioner to ensure that all the cows in this shelter were tagged by the end of this month.

He also directed him to set up a separate short time holding area for about 100 cows for tagging purpose in the next 15 days so that daily tagging could be ensured effectively.

The divisional commissioner said tagging of all the cows in the shelter was mandatory for better tracking and individual care.

He was informed that as on date only 2,300 cows were tagged. He said as nearly 1,200 cows were left out of the tagging drive, the KNN should ensure they all were tagged by

month end.

He said cow protection was one of the priorities of the UP government, which had set up several cow shelters at various places.

The divisional commissioner said to assess the ground realities and also to plan better scheme, he had been asked by the government to inspect all the cow shelters.

He was also informed that the total number of unprotected cows stood at 13,000 and that out of the total nearly 6,300 cattle had been secured and taken care of at various cow shelters in the city.

He said as per records, there were 60 per cent of cows and rest were bulls and the current number of shed was seven and each shed accommodated 300 cows and thus the centre needed around four sheds more to cater to the needs of the cows. He directed the municipal commissioner to ensure the additional cow sheds

were set up within two months.

The divisional commissioner said the ill and diseased cattle need to be kept separately for better care and treatment and this should be done by the end of this month.

He said as there was no full time veterinary doctor in the Kanpur Nagar Nigam because the post was lying vacant, the municipal corporation was dependent on the chief veterinary officer for deputing a veterinary officer on a routine basis.

He said the KNN needed at least two full time veterinarians for these cattle. The divisional commissioner asked the municipal commissioner to send a request to the government for the posting of regular veterinary officer on deputation.

He said till that time the KNN could take help from retired veterinarians on a nominal remuneration for taking care of these cattle.

He also directed the municipal commissioner to plan one more huge cattle shelter with the capacity of at least 5,000 cattle. He said as the nagar nigam had around 30 acre of vacant land near Jana Gau Ashrey Sthal, ten acres could be used for sheds and other amenities and the rest 20 acres could be used for growing fodder.

He also directed him to take up this project in the new year and get it completed in next one year.

He was informed that the KNN was spending more money on care of cattle with the budget. He said it needed to recoup the money from government. He said around Rs 5 crore was to be received from the government.

He also directed the municipal commissioner to send all details to the commissioner so that follow-up action could be taken for the budget.

31 more test positive in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said 31 more people tested positive of coronavirus infection in Kanpur Nagar during the past 24 hours.

With this, the tally of confirmed coronavirus infections detected in the city reached 32,345 on Saturday evening.

The CMO said 10 COVID-19 patients were discharged. He said no COVID-19 death reported in the city during the past 24 hours.

Dr Mishra said 481 active cases were undergoing treatment in the city at present. He said 3344 samples were taken in the city on Saturday for testing.

Four of a family killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Four persons of a family were killed when a speeding dumper knocked down their scooter in Chiruhali village on Kanpur-Delhi highway under Auraiya Kotwali police station early Saturday morning. They were returning from their sister's house after attending the New Year celebrations. According to reports, Raj Gautam (23) of Bhikhampur Dayalpur, Auraiya, was employed in a private company in Vadodara (Gujarat). He had arrived here on December 25 and planned to celebrate New Year at the house of his sister in Babarpur village. As per plan, he along with his sister Priti (20), cousins Vijay (10) and Chhaya (12) had gone to Babarpur on scooter on December 31. When they were returning home on Saturday and reached Chiruhali over-bridge around 11 am, a speeding dumper hit their scooter from behind. All the four fell apart on the road and sustained serious injuries. The police took all the injured to the district hospital where the doctor pronounced them dead. Police have impounded the dumper and taken its driver into custody.

CRIMINAL NABBED

The Babupurwa police arrested a criminal carrying a cash reward of ₹.25,000 involved in anti-CAA/NRC protest and sent him to jail on Saturday. Police have already arrested several others involved in the protest in the past.

It may be recalled that during the anti-CAA/NRC protests, hundreds of people had staged a massive agitation in Babupurwa police station area and indulged in violence and arson causing loss to property worth lakhs of rupees. During the violence, they had attempted to attack a police party and incite a riot. In the incident, Babupurwa police had lodged FIR against over 500 persons. After a high-level probe, police have so far arrested 25 persons. Station House Officer Janardan Pratap Singh said the wanted criminal, Mohammad Ali alias Raju Kaprewala of Ajitganj, was arrested on Saturday and he was carrying a cash reward of ₹ 25,000. He said three more wanted criminals named in the FIR and carrying cash rewards were yet to be arrested. He said nine other wanted criminals would also be arrested.

Registration, renewal made online

KANPUR (PNS): Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra said that the private hospital registration and renewal had been made online with immediate effect and this would bring in more transparency in the working of these hospitals.

He said earlier the officials of nursing homes and private hospitals had to visit the CMO office for registration or renewal of licence which not only wasted a lot of time but there was a lot of opacity in the new registration and renewal process. He said now documents and everything had to be uploaded directly and the special extension under COVID-19 had come to an end on December 31, 2020.

Agra Fort- Lko Jn spl to run from Jan 4

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers will run the following special train. All coaches will be reserved and passengers traveling will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said. The 02180 Agra Fort- Lucknow Jn superfast intercity special train will be run daily from January 4 to March 31 (except Saturday and Sunday). This train will depart from Agra Fort at 06.31 hrs, from Yamuna Bridge at 06.43 hrs, Tundla at 07.22 hrs, Firozabad at 07.39 hrs, Shikohabad at 07.54 hrs, Etawah at 08.26 hrs, Bharthana at 08.42 hrs, Phaphund at 09.15 hrs, Jhijnjhak at 09.30 hrs, Rura at 09.45 hrs, from Pankidham at 10.06 hrs, from Kanpur Central at 10.50 hrs, from Unnao at 11.20 hrs and reach Lucknow at 12.25 hrs. The 02179 Lucknow Jn- Agra Fort superfast intercity special train will be run daily from January

4 to March 31 (except Saturday and Sunday). The train will depart from Lucknow Jn at 15.55 hrs, from Unnao at 16.47 hrs, from Kanpur Central at 17.25 hrs, from Pankidham at 17.44 hrs, from Rura at 18.05 hrs, from Jhijnjhak at 18.19 hrs, from Phaphund at 18.34 hrs, from Bharthana at 19.00 hrs, from Etawah at 19.20 hrs, Shikohabad at 19:57 hrs, Firozabad at 20.17 hrs, Tundla at 20.50 hrs, Yamuna Bridge at 21.12 hrs and reach Agra Fort at 21.49 hrs. In this train a total of 16 coaches, including three of general second class, nine of second class chair car, two of AC chair car and two of SLR/SLRD will be attached.

STOPPAGE: The railway administration has decided to temporarily provide additional stoppage to 01015/01016 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak Terminus special express train at Nepanagar station, CPRO Pankaj Kumar Singh said. From January 1 to 31 the

01015 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Gorakhpur special express train departing from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus will reach Nepanagar at 09.19 hrs and leave at 09.20 hrs. Similarly, from January 3 to 31 the 01016 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak Terminus special express train will reach Nepanagar at 15.14 hrs and leave at 15.15 hrs. As per another decision, the temporary stoppage provided to 05120/05119 Manduadih-Rameswaram-Manduadih weekly special express at Melmaruvathur has been extended. The 05120 Manduadih-Rameswaram weekly special express train to depart from Manduadih on January 3, 10, 17 and 24 will reach Melmaruvathur at 09.33 hrs and leave 09.35 hrs. Similarly, 05119 Rameswaram-Manduadih weekly special express to depart from Rameswaram will on January 6, 13, 20 and 27 arrive at Melmaruvathur at 11.18 hrs and leave at 11.20 hrs.

3,469 rly personnel given virtual farewell

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Union Minister of Railways and Commerce and Industry and Consumer Affairs Piyush Goyal while giving emotional farewell to 3,469 railway personnel retiring from the entire Indian Railways on December 31 via video link from New Delhi extended New Year greetings to them and wished them a happy future. In his address Piyush Goyal said the future of Indian Railways was very bright and secure. He said due to dedication and hard work of its personnel, Indian Railways is developing day by day which was confirmed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address at the inauguration of the first phase of the dedicated freight corridor. He said the entire country is watching the progress of Indian Railways. "We have recorded an expected growth in the field of goods loading, which has also increased the income," he said. Goyal said that Indian Railways has a huge contribution in the economy of the country. He said the railway personnel have an amazing ability to innovate and make progress due to which we are constantly seeing the Indian Railways moving forward. "We are changing with times and our safety record has also been the best in the last few years," the minister said. By completing all the construction projects with best quality within the time limit, the railway personnel are engaged in ensuring rail movement without hindrance. He said it is a result of our progressive thinking that we are growing rapidly in the direction of achieving the goal of pollution-free environment. He said railwaymen feel happy to do their work and it's result is the multifaceted development of Indian Railways. Goyal suggested to all the retiring railway personnel to remain active in their future life and said the doors of railways will always remain open for them. Piyush Goyal, while appreciating the working of Vinod Kumar Yadav, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board, New Delhi, who was retiring on December 31, said that working with him was a very pleasant experience for him. Yadav has made matchless contribution in the development of Indian Railways, he said. As the General Manager of South Central Railway (SCR) too, he gave new direction to the working of the railways by doing many new experiments. His positive attitude as Railway Board Chairman has been very commendable and team motivation, strengthening of mutual relations and always thinking about development of railway have been his speciality, Goyal said. Many important works were completed during his tenure, including the most important task of changing the set up of railways, he said.

On the other hand, in his address Vinod Kumar Yadav while wishing the retiring personnel a very happy New Year, said that all of them have served the people of the country through Railways. He appreciated the remarkable contribution of retiring railwaymen to effectively meet the challenge caused by Covid-19. Yadav said that owing to the guidance of the Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and hard work of all railway personnel they had succeeded in developing their organisation rapidly. He said that it was a clear indication that we would be successful in realising the vision of Prime Minister to make Indian Railways a world-class one. On North Eastern Railway (NER) headquarters one gazetted officer and 46 non-gazetted employees retiring on Thursday were honoured by being given gold-plated medal, service cer-

tificate etc, CPRO PK Singh said. During the programme Chief Personnel Officer/IR Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer /Headquarters RP Chand and Assistant Personnel Officer, Headquarters Anirudh Prasad etc. were present. Social distancing and safety guidelines were followed during the programme.

NERPOA MEETING ORGANISED: A meeting of North Eastern Railway Promotee Officers' Association (NERPOA) was organised on Friday at its office here under the presidency of its president, Krishna Singh, its joint secretary/Publicity, CP Chauhan, said. On December 31 Krishna Singh presented memento to retired officer Pramod K Singh, Assistant Signal and Telecom Engineer, and extended his best wishes for his healthy and happy life. Conducting the meeting, its general secretary, Ramesh Pandey, discussed the promotion of officers and future plans for their welfare. Pandey stressed on remaining cautious in view of Covid infection, always sanitise their hands for safety and protection, wearing face masks and maintaining physical distancing and also make other officials aware about it. In the meeting Deputy Chief Personnel Officer and Secretary, Indian Railways Promotee Officers' Federation (IRPOF) RP Chand, joint secretaries, Digambar Jha and Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Finance Secretary, Subhash Yadav, besides RN Mishra, Munni Lal Gupta, Ajay Rishi, Basant Lal, SK Sagar, Ashish Joshi, Afzal Ahmed, DK Saxena, SK Kannaujia, MD Shukla, Amuday, Aniruddh Kumar, Sunil Kumar Singh, KPS Saini, RC Prasad, Anand Kumar, JP Gupta, VK Singh, Satya Prakash, DC Saxena, GS Pandey, JP Maurya, SK Srivastava, Ashok Kumar and CV Srivastava Kumar and other officials were present.

Lost cell phones returned to owners

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The first day of the year turned out to be a one of joy for those who had lost their costly mobile phone sets while travelling on train. They thanked the GRP for it at Mirzapur railway station on Friday. The GRP handed over 11 mobile phone sets worth about ₹2.50 lakh to their owners. The lucky persons who received their mobile sets were Kishor Ojha of Arrah and Johra Hodo of Muzaffarpur, (both in Bihar). Mukesh Maurya of Sonbhadra, Shubham Tiwari of Bikna, Hemant of Akodhi, Ashok Chaudhary of Pahada, Tejdhari of Vindhyachal and Harikesh of Fataha, (all in Mirzapur), Naresh Vishwas of Bhilwara, Rajasthan, Babloo of Ghaziabad and Abhimanyu Yadav of Chandauli. About the recovery of the mobile phone sets SHO Uday Shankar Kushwaha said that constables Mithilesh Pandey and Ravindra Kushwaha worked hard and through surveillance succeeded in recovering them and finding their owners. He appealed to passengers to inform the GRP in case of any mishappening and get help.

GANGA 'MAHA AARTI': On the occasion of its fourth foundation day Vindhya Heritage Foundation organised the Ganga 'maha aarti' at Pakka Ghat on Thursday. A 'bhajan sandhya' was also organised on the occasion. The programme started with soulful rendition of Ganesh Vandana by renowned singer Khushboo Tiwari. She was followed by Amit Dubey and Mohan Swami. The tableau dance presented by Bobby mesmerised the audience. After the cultural programme Ganga 'maha aarti' was organised by a team of Ramanand amidst the chanting of Vedic shlokas by a team of Nitin Awasthi. Speaking on the occasion DM Sushil Kumar Patel said it was his good luck that he became DM of a district which is very rich regarding Indian art and culture. He hoped that Vindhya Corridor would pave the way to establish the place on the world map of tourism. Chairman Nagar Palika



Parishad Manoj Jaiswal praised the team of 'Ganga aarti' which had continued it since it started in the year 2017. He said that he was trying his best to introduce a museum in the city for which building had already been arranged. The programme was conducted by Vibhuti Mishra and vote of thanks was proposed by president of the organisation, Amresh Mishra. Among those who worked hard for making the event a success were Dr Rajesh Mishra, Sameer Verma, Akash Dubey, Alok Mishra, Manish Rawat and Nandini Mishra.

SEMINAR: On the direction of District Judge Lal Chand Gupta a seminar was held under the aegis of District Legal Services Agency at civil court on Friday. Addressing it secretary Amit Yadav emphasised over education and culture of children. He said it was the need of the hour that we keep their education at top. Underlining the importance of girls' education he said an educated one was capable of teaching three generations so every parent should educate their girl child without any discrimination. Prominent who also spoke on the occasion were Suresh Tripathi, Amanullah Ansari, Surendra Kumar Dubey, Ashok Yadav along with Parwati Pandey and Deepak Srivastava.

TWO KILLED: Two motorcyclists died when an unidentified truck hit them in Barenwan village under Chunar police station on Thursday. Reports said the incident took place when Suraj Uraanv (25) of Sahupuri under the same police station in Chandauli was on the Chunar-Varanasi highway along with Karan Munda (14) of Chhapar village under Hindi police station in Ranchi, Jharkhand. They died on the spot. Police took the bodies of the deceased into custody for completing the legal formalities.

Kanpur's guava farmers demands relief package

KANPUR (PNS): The Kisan Kamgar Sammelan has demanded a relief package for guava farmers, saying that they have suffered massive losses this winter season.

In a representation to UP Governor Anandiben Patel, the Kisan Kamgar Sammelan (KKS) has urged her to use her good offices to ensure quick relief to the guava farmers who have suffered huge losses this winter season.

It said when the UP government was concerned about the plight of the state farmers then it should ensure that it provided immediate relief to the guava growers of 35 villages of Kanpur.

KKS state president KK

Shukla said the region of Kanpur and Bithoor and its surrounding areas were famous for this special variety of guava but this year the yield had been negligible as it had been affected by blight and pests which resulted in massive losses to the guava growers.

He said the farmers were in fact forced to purchase seeds from the MNCs (multi-national companies) and then the massive farm inputs, which were mainly taken by the farmers from the local moneylenders, had proved to be a bane to the guava growers.

He said although the yield of this region was always good, this year on account of some disease, the yield of guava was

hardly 23 per cent, that too deformed yield, which had failed to fetch the farmers even the input cost.

He said every year the farmers took loans from local moneylenders on high rate of interest and were able to repay once they got a bumper crop but this year they had suffered massive losses and thus the UP government must provide them financial aid to tide over this crisis.

Shukla said the prominent guava production villages mainly affected were Shivdeenpurwa, Khyura Katri, Hindupur, Dharampur, Pratappur, Hari, Laxmikhed, Mangalpurwa, Devnipura, Bada Mangalpur, Gillipurwa,

Baniapurwa, Ishwariganj, Ramael, Khushhalganj, Chiran, Tisjha, Dharamkhed, Darshanpurwa and two dozen villages falling under Unnao as well. He said this had led to poor production of guava this season and the blight-affected crop had no takers. He said in such a situation the guava farmers were unable to repay their loans and interest and were looking up to the state government to come up with a special package for them at the earliest.

Prominent among those who took part in the meeting on Thursday were Somendra Sharma, Anil Sonkar, Anurag Mishra, Suresh Gupta, Mintu Yadav and Sipahilal.

India first country to culture UK viral strain



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has become the first country to successfully culture the new viral strain originating from the UK even as more cases of the new Covid-19 variant, which is more infectious, are trickling in.

Within five days of tracing first case of the new coronavirus variant, India has now 29 people infected with the disease even as the ICMR on Saturday said it has successfully isolated and cultured the new strain on the horizon.

The UK Government had recently announced that the newly identified strain of the virus found in their population is up to 70 percent more transmissible, following which India sprung into action.

The country put in place a pro-active and preventive strategy to detect and contain the variant. So far, the new variant has been detected in 29 UK returnees through genome sequencing.

“India successfully cultures the new viral strain on the horizon (UK variant of SARS-COV-2). UK-variant of the virus, with all signature changes, is now successfully isolated and cultured at the National Institute of Virology from the clinical specimens collected from UK-returnees,” the apex research council tweeted.

Notably, no country has yet reported successful isolation and culture of the UK-variant of SARS-CoV-2. In India, Vero cell lines were

used by the scientists of ICMR-NIV to culture the UK-variant of the virus.

The new UK Variant has already been reported by Denmark, Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Sweden, France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Japan, Lebanon, and Singapore.

From November 25 to December 23 midnight, about 33,000 passengers had disembarked at various Indian airports from the UK. All these passengers are being tracked and subjected by States and UTs to RT-PCR tests to track down the mutant coronavirus strain.

Those found infected with the new variants are being kept in isolated for treatment as per their need.

Talent pool of IIMs could help in turning India ‘atmanirbhar’: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday urged the students of Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) to work towards turning local into global and to come up with ways to this end. Laying the foundation stone of the permanent campus of IIM Sambalpur, Modi said that the talent pool of IIMs could help in turning India ‘atmanirbhar’.

“To turn local into global, students of IIM need to come up with new ways. The country had 13 IIMs in 2014. Now it has 20 IIMs. This huge talent pool will help the vision for a self-reliant India,” Modi said after laying the foundation stone for IIM-Sambalpur in Odisha.

Modi also asked the student to research the way Covid crisis was handled in India with innovation and collaboration at such a big scale. He asked them to study how capacity and capability was expanded in such a short time. He expressed happiness that the country is coming out of the short-term approach of problem solving and how the focus now is on long term solutions.

“It is our responsibility to get ‘brand India’ global recognition. Those who will be part of this institution need to encourage development and focus on inclusivity of all,” Modi added.

“This decade will be devoted to the development of new multinational corporations in India. Today’s startups are tomorrow’s MNCs. These are largely growing in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. These startups need able managers and those passing out of these institutions will lead the way,” Modi said.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Governor Ganeshi Lal and Union min-



isters Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Chandra Sarangi also graced the occasion.

“Education in Odisha is witnessing a rapid transition. I am happy that our state continues its dominance in education sector and has emerged as the education hub of Eastern India,” said Patnaik at the virtual event.

Earlier the Prime Minister said that the permanent campus of the IIM Sambalpur will not only showcase the culture and resources of Odisha but will also give Odisha a global recognition in the field of management.

The Prime Minister talked about the new management challenges in the light of new technologies like additive printing, changing production techniques, logistics, and supply chain management.

These technologies coupled with digital connectivity, and work from anywhere concept have turned the world into a global village. India has undertaken rapid reforms in recent months and has tried not only to keep pace with the changes but also tried to anticipate and surpass them, Modi added.

The Prime Minister said that the changing work styles are impacting demands on management skills and top-down or top-heavy management skills are being replaced by collaborative, innovative and transformative management. With bots and algorithms in picture, technological management is equally important as human management.

Senior Cong leader Buta Singh breathes his last at AIIMS at 86

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Buta Singh died at Delhi’s AIIMS early on Saturday morning. He was 86 years old. He was in coma since October last year after he suffered a brain haemorrhage.

President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the country in offering condolences to Singh, who was a member of the Shiromani Akali Dal before joining the Congress in the 1960s.

His demise was announced by his son Arvinder Singh Lovely Sidhu on Facebook. “My father, Buta Singh, passed away today morning. May Waheguru bless his soul,” read the post in Hindi.

Kovind said: “In the passing of Shri Buta Singh, the country has lost one of the longest serving parliamentarians with rich administrative experience. He championed the cause of the oppressed and marginalized. Condolences to his family and supporters.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as an “experienced administrator”, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said he was a loyal leader who devoted himself for the service of the country.

“Shri Buta Singh Ji was an experienced administrator and effective voice for the welfare of the poor as well as down-trodden. Saddened by his passing away. My condolences to his family and supporters,” PM Modi tweeted.

Tributes also poured in from Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Chief Ministers Ashok Gehlot and Amarinder Singh besides many others including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

“The country has lost a true public servant and a loyal leader with the death of Sardar



Buta Singh Ji. He devoted his entire life to service of the country and people’s well-being. For this, he will always be remembered. My condolences to his family members during this difficult time,” Rahul tweeted.

Born in 1934 in Punjab’s Jalandhar, Buta Singh joined the Congress under Jawaharlal Nehru’s leadership and was close to Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, both.

Singh was first elected to the Parliament in 1962. Over the years, he served as the Home Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi government from 1986 to 1989, National President of Scheduled Caste Commission, governor for West Bengal and Bihar, and Union minister for Agriculture, Railways, Commerce and Sports, among other departments.

Singh’s last political assignment was a two-year term as the Governor of Bihar in 2004, after which he only held organisational posts within the Congress.

Sad to learn about the demise of former Union minister, senior Congress leader and former MP from Rajasthan, Shri Buta Singh ji. My heartfelt condolences to his family members in this difficult time, may God give them strength to bear this loss. May his soul rest in peace,” Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot wrote about the former four-time MP from State’s Jalore.

CBI raids Shakti Bhog Foods Ltd premises for cheating banks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Saturday conducted searches against Delhi-based Shakti Bhog Foods Ltd for allegedly cheating a consortium of banks, led by the State Bank of India (SBI), to the tune of ₹3,269.42 crore.

The searches followed the registration of a case under various Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, forgery of valuable security, forgery for cheating, using forged documents as genuine and relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act for falsification of accounts. The agency registered the case on Thursday on a complaint from SBI against the private company (borrower company) based at Delhi and others including its MD/Guarantor; Directors and unknown public servants/others for causing an alleged loss of ₹3,269.42 crore to the SBI and other consortium member banks.

“It was alleged in the complaint that the said accused had cheated the State Bank of India led consortium banks by ways of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery of valuable security, forgery for the purpose of cheating, using forged documents as genuine etc.,” the agency said in a statement.

Searches were conducted at eight locations in Delhi at the official and residential premises of the borrower company/other accused, which led to recovery of incriminating documents, it added.

Besides Shakti Bhog Foods Ltd., others named in the FIR are promoters/directors Kewal Krishan Kumar, Siddharth Kumar, Sunanda Kumar, unknown public servants and unknown others.

US study upholds Modi’s ‘farsighted leadership’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pointing that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has scored the ‘highest rating’ (55 per cent) in a survey conducted by a US data firm, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Prakash Javedkar claimed on Saturday that it was a vote for Modi’s “farsighted leadership”.

While complimenting the Prime Minister for an “increase” in his popularity within the country and outside, Javedkar hoped that the farmers’ agitation will be resolved by January 4 and “all will return home..we are hopeful”. He was addressing a press conference.

The minister said Modi leads by 29 percent from the leader (Mexican President) placed in the second position by the survey. “In six years, Modi’s popularity has not diminished..It is increasing..normally it doesn’t happen so”, he said.

BJP president JP Nadda

BJP president JP Nadda also cited Modi’s approval rating among world leaders in the survey

also cited Modi’s approval rating among world leaders in the survey saying this is a testimony to his able leadership and a matter of pride for all Indians. American firm Morning Consult, which regularly tracks approval ratings of world leaders, said over 75 per cent people approve of Modi while 20 per cent disapprove, putting his net approval rating at 55 per cent.

This is higher than any other world leader the firm tracks. Referring to the survey, Nadda tweeted that Modi has yet again emerged as the most popular head of government for his efficient handling of various issues and management of the COVID-19 crisis.

“PM @narendramodi ji’s popularity not only rises unabated across all demographic groups & geographic regions of the country and he also gets a thumbs up globally for his dedication to his country. PM Modi ranks Number 1 among all global leaders in this (these) challenging times,” he said.

Ever since the Modi-led government came to power, people’s trust in the government and the faith that the nation is progressing in the right direction have risen drastically, he added.

“This rating is testimony of his able leadership and hard work and is a thing of pride for all Indians,” Nadda said. According to Morning Consult’s survey, German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s approval rating was 24 per cent while it was in the negative for UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson as more people disapprove of his work than those who approve.

Plea seeks direction to Centre, States to publish draft laws on websites before House voting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A PIL seeking a direction to the Centre and States to publish draft legislations prominently on Government websites and in the public domain at least 60 days before they are introduced in Parliament and State Assemblies has been filed in the Supreme Court.

The plea filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has also sought a direction to the Centre to ensure that all the draft and final legislations are put in the public domain in all regional languages.

“In today’s democratic process, with the advent of advanced media and technology, it is no longer appropriate for Governments, both Central and State, to suddenly pass laws overnight with scarcely any legislative debate and no wider consultation at all, the plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said.

Protests against the farm reforms show how the message of a law is lost in the legal jargon and the consequences of lack of such a discussion prior to the bills being tabled in the legislature, it said.

The petition said any draft legislation, except those related to national security, must be published on government websites at least 60 days before they are introduced in Parliament or state legislature.

As far as central laws are concerned, it said, the proposed legislations should be translated into regional languages and published online at least 60 days prior to their introduction in Parliament so that citizens have a complete Referring to the protests against the new farm laws, the PIL stated

that farmers have been misguided by politicians as the draft laws were not published for wide consultation and feedback before being introduced in Parliament.

This has led to a lot of misinformation and protest among the farmers and people with vested interests are using this chaos to advance their cause, using the farmers as a front, it said.

CDS Bipin Rawat visits key forward military bases in Arunachal Pradesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat on Saturday visited several frontline air bases in forward areas near the Line of Actual Control in Arunachal Pradesh and undertook a detailed review of India’s overall military preparedness in the region amid the nearly eight-month-long Sino-India standoff in eastern Ladakh.

Official sources said Gen Rawat interacted with personnel of the Special Frontier Force (SFF), the Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) deployed in the “forward most” posts in Dibang valley and Lohit sector of Arunachal Pradesh and complimented them for maintaining effective surveillance and operational readiness in the region.

“Nothing can deter the Indian Armed Forces from remaining steadfast in their call for duty,” a source quoted the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as saying during one of the interactions.

The sources said Gen Rawat will visit several other key bases in Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday as well to gain first-hand experience of the security scenario.

Most of the forward locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are currently under the grip severe cold-wave with temperatures dropping to sub-zero level.

The Army and the Indian



Air Force (IAF) have significantly bolstered their combat readiness in all the key formations along the LAC including in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim in view of the border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh.

In November, Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane paid a three-day visit to various formations under the Army’s Eastern Command and reviewed their overall operational preparedness. The Kolkata-headquartered Eastern Command is responsible for guarding the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh as well as the Sikkim sectors.

The sources said the CDS complimented the soldiers for the innovative measures adopted to maintain effective surveillance and enhanced operational readiness.

He said only Indian soldiers could remain vigilant under such “challenging situations” and ever willing to go well beyond the call of duty to safeguard the borders, according to the sources.

On Friday, Gen Rawat completed one year as India’s first CDS, a post which was created to bring in convergence in functioning of the Army, the Navy and the

Indian Air Force in dealing with national security challenges.

A key mandate of the CDS was also to facilitate restructuring of military commands for optimal utilisation of resources by bringing about jointness in operations, including through establishment of theatre commands.

In the last one year, Gen Rawat along with the top brass of the three services carried out ground work to establish an air defence command and a Peninsula command initially. The IAF will helm the air defence command and all-long range missiles as well as air defence assets will come under it.

The CDS has been part of the top military brass framing strategies to enhance India’s military prowess in view of the eastern Ladakh row.

Nearly 50,000 troops of the Indian Army are deployed in a high state of combat readiness in various mountainous locations in eastern Ladakh as multiple rounds of talks between the two sides have not yielded concrete outcome to resolve the standoff.

China has also deployed an equal number of troops, according to officials.

The eighth and last round of military talks had taken place on November 6 during which both sides broadly discussed disengagement of troops from specific friction points.

Halted by Covid in 2020, Delhi Metro zooms into 2021 with driverless trains

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Metro’s journey may have been halted for over five months due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the year gone by, but the urban transporter is zooming into 2021 riding on next-generation driverless trains, while accomplishing a major technological feat for the country.

The first case of novel coronavirus in Delhi was reported on March 1 and soon the daily cases began to multiply and number of containment zones grew rapidly. Flight services were soon suspended to check the spread of the virus.

Metro services in Delhi-NCR were stopped on March 22 to contain the spread of the pandemic and the ensuing nationwide lockdown from March 25 meant the services remained suspended in that period.

The raging virus that has claimed over 10,000 lives in the national capital in 2020 alone, wreaked havoc in June when the city witnessed the first major wave of the pandemic, followed by two more lethal waves in mid-September and November.

Following guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Delhi Metro resumed operations in a graded manner on September 7, after a hiatus of 169 days, even as both the DMRC and commuters trod with caution amid the new normal in the rapid transport system.

Bill to raise age bar for tobacco buyers, sellers in the offing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, persons below 21 years of age would not be able to sell or buy cigarettes and other tobacco products as a bill to raise the age bar from the current 18 years is in the offing.

Sources in the Union Health Ministry said that the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Act, 2020 has been drafted in this regard to be put up for seeking comments and objections from the stakeholders.

The provision for raising the age limit to 21 years is part of the new Bill being piloted by the Union Health Ministry. The bill seeks to amend further the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.

Under the amendments proposed in the bill, “No person shall sell, offer for sale, or permit sale of, cigarette or any other tobacco product - (a) to or by any person who is under twenty-one years of age, and in an area within a radius of one hundred meters of any educational institution.”

Section 7 is being amended to say, “Provided that the trade and commerce in ciga-



rettes or any other tobacco product shall be in sealed, intact and original packaging.”

It also adds a provision, “No person shall, directly or indirectly, produce, supply or distribute cigarettes or any other tobacco products unless every package of cigarettes or any other tobacco products produced, supplied or distributed by him is having minimum quantity as may be prescribed.”

Contravention of this Section 7 will lead to imprisonment of two years or fine going up to ₹1 lakh and second conviction leading to prison for 5 years or fine going up to ₹5 lakh.

The Bill also has a provision for coming down on manufacture and sale of illicit cigarettes and tobacco products.

Sale of illicit products will lead to punishment of imprisonment of 1 year and a fine of ₹50,000 and a second conviction of imprisonment of 2 years and ₹1 lakh, said a senior official from the Ministry about the draft Bill.

The fine on manufacture of illicit cigarettes is imprisonment of 2 years and fine of Rs 1 lakh. The penalty for smoking at restricted areas is being increased from ₹200 to ₹2,000.

The amendment on advertising says, “No person shall directly or indirectly advertise cigarettes or any other tobacco products through any medium and no person shall take part in any advertisement that directly or indirectly promotes the use or consumption of cigarettes or any other tobacco products,” as per the official.

Abandon obstinate attitude: Cong to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday urged the Government to abandon its “obstinate attitude” and agree to the demands of the farmers protesting the new farm laws amid cold weather conditions.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said reports of deaths of farmers while protesting at the Delhi border amid harsh winter conditions are “disturbing”.

“According to media reports, 57 farmers have lost

their lives while scores are unwell. The government is showing gross insensitivity by not acceding to the demands of the protesting farmers,” said the Congress general secretary and its Uttar Pradesh in-charge.

Reacting to a media report that a protesting farmer had reportedly committed suicide, Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said in a tweet, “After Sant Baba Ram Singh from Karnal (Haryana) and Amarjeet Singh from Fazlika (Punjab), the news of Kashmir Singh from Bilaspur

(Uttarakhand) sacrificing life in the farmers’ movement is very distressing.”

“The ruthless government should abandon its obstinate attitude and withdraw the three black laws immediately,” Surjewala said in the tweet in Hindi.

Senior Congress leader and former Union minister P Chidambaram saluted the resoluteness of the farmers. “The Government must relent and agree to keep the farm laws in abeyance pending its repeal. Any new law must take into

account the needs and desires of the farming community,” he tweeted.

After the sixth round of formal negotiations on Wednesday, the government and farm unions reached some common ground to resolve protesting farmers’ concerns over rise in power tariff and penalties for stubble burning, but the two sides remained deadlocked over the main contentious issues of the repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP).

Today’s Indian start-ups are tomorrow’s MNCs: PM

PTI ■ SAMBALPUR (ODISHA)

The Indian start-ups of today are the Multinational Corporations of tomorrow that can go a long way in achieving the goal of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

The last few decades saw Multinational Corporations from abroad do business and prosper in India but this decade will belong to the Indian MNCs, he said, after laying the foundation stone for the permanent campus of IIM-Sambalpur in Odisha through video conference.

“Today’s start-ups can become tomorrow’s MNCs as India seeks to make its start-up ecosystem inclusive to ensure speedy development,” he said.

Noting that start-ups are mostly coming up in Tier-II and Tier-III cities in the coun-

try, Modi said, they need professional managers, and the youth require to be prepared for the massive opportunities that lie ahead.

“In this new decade, we all are accountable to give a new image to brand India globally,” he said, asking young managers to align their career goals to the aspirations of the country.

The country had 13 IIMs in 2014 and 20 now, and this talent pool can expand the scope and boost the mission of creating a self-reliant India, he said. Innovation, integrity and inclusion have emerged as the key mantras in the field of management which are important for ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ mission. The goal of a self-reliant India will also be achieved with the help of collaborative, innovative and transformative concepts in management,” Modi said.

“Technology management

is as important as human management,” he said, adding the country has been able to build substantial capacity over the last decade which was evident in the handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Modi said the new campus of IIM Sambalpur will give Odisha a new identity in the world of management education with proper recognition of the state’s great culture and resources.

Management experts, who are coming out with new experiences in fresh areas, will play a big role in taking India to new heights, Modi said, underlining that despite the COVID-19 crisis the country has given more unicorns this year than the previous years. A unicorn is a term used in the venture capital industry to describe a privately held start-up company with a value of over USD 1 billion.

Poster politics in Bihar heats up post Arunachal Pradesh

IANS ■ PATNA

Following the souring of ties between Janata Dal United (JDU) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), political temperatures in Bihar continue to soar defying the winter.

An evidence of can be found in posters of BJP leaders cutting CM Nitish Kumar’s chair pasted at prominent locations of state capital Patna. However, it is not clear who is behind the action.

The poster has several

provocative messages including ‘Arunachal to bas jhanki hai, ye kursi abhi baki hai’ (Arunachal was just a trailer, the BJP will now cut this chair as well.)

After the Arunachal Pradesh episode in which several JD (U) leaders crossed over to the BJP, CM Nitish Kumar and his party members are reportedly miffed with its ally in Bihar.

The opposition is cashing in on it by claiming that Nitish Kumar will soon join the Mahagathbandhan (Grand

Alliance). Former CM Rabri Devi said as much on Friday. The JDU on the other hand has made it clear that the RJD and the Congress are desperate to grab power. Hence they are spreading these falsehoods.

Chitranjan Gagan, the state spokesperson of RJD, said: “Nitish Kumar has had a healthy relationship with Lalu Prasad in the past. Moreover, Nitish is facing humiliation in the NDA. In this case, the claim of former CM Rabri Devi may turn out to

be true in the next few months.”

In a tweet on Friday, Rabri Devi said that discussions are underway to include CM Nitish Kumar in Mahagathbandhan. BJP MP Ajay Nishadh said: “There is no chance of Nitish Kumar leaving the NDA. After returning to the NDA for the second time, he won’t go anywhere. A few differences between the JDU and the BJP and will soon be resolved. Both parties want the government to complete its five-year tenure.”

Shah: Govt making efforts for equal attention to all security aspects

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Emphasising that national security is paramount, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the central government is making sincere efforts to give equal

attention to all aspects related to security.

The Minister expressed his views after releasing an inaugural issue of “National Police K-9 Journal” here. It is first such publication in the country on Police Service K9s

(PSKs) or police dogs.

“National security is paramount and our government is making sincere efforts to give equal attention to all aspects related to security. The police dog squad can act as a force

multiplier to ensure the safety of society, much like the way drones or satellites are used in the country,” Shah said.

The Minister said that the dogs can be used effectively to detect drugs and even in the fight against terrorism.

Pak Army shells areas along LoC in Rajouri

Jammu: The Pakistan Army opened heavy fire and shelled mortars at forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir’s Rajouri district on Saturday, prompting Indian troops to retaliate, officials said.

“At about 1645 hours today, the Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Nowshera sector in district Rajouri,” a defence spokesman said. The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, he said.

On Friday, JCO Naib Subedar Ravinder died after being injured in shelling by Pakistan in Nowshera sector, spokesmen said.

Jammu & Kashmir recorded 5,100 instances of ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in 2020, official sources said. **PTI**

Jaishankar acts on a letter written by Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having taken cognisance of Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi’s appeal seeking intervention to rescue and evacuate 39 sailors stranded in China since July, the Ministry of External Affairs has taken up the matter to China’s Vice Foreign Minister and sought Beijing’s assistance for evacuation of the stranded sailors.

“On December 31, I had appealed via a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar ji, requesting him to intervene in prioritizing the rescue and evacuation of 39 of our sailors stranded since July in China,” Priyanka said here on Saturday.

According to Chaturvedi, the two ships -MV Anastasia and the Indian bulk carrier Jag Anand — were refused permission by the Chinese authorities to offload their cargo nor did they allow other sailors to be

sent in so as to relieve the crew.

The Anastasia has been docked at China’s Bohai Sea and Jag Anand anchored at the Chinese port of Jingtang. “It has been widely reported that on board, the merchant ship the Anastasia, four crew members are on suicide watch. Many of the crew members have developed skin infections due to contaminated water supply. There is no medical help,” Priyanka said.

“The families of the sailors, many of whom are based in Maharashtra, have been running from pillar to post with no help in sight. Hence I had appealed to GoI through our Hon. Minister to ensure that we give this issue the importance it deserved,” the Sena MP said.

“It was heartening to note that GoI has taken cognizance of the matter and Indian Ambassador has personally taken up this issue with China’s Vice Foreign Minister. The

MEA has also conveyed to the Chinese that assistance should be provided in an urgent, practical and time-bound manner given the humanitarian situation developing on board these ships,” Priyanka said.

The Sena MP, however, said that the Chinese authorities continued to maintain that “the crew change isn’t being permitted from these ports due to Covid related restrictions”. “This is an untenable situation and has to be pursued diligently till a solution is found,” she said.

Priyanka also thanked the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for taking suo moto cognizance of the issue and for pursuing this with MEA Secretary and Director General Shipping, Ministry of Ports and Waterways. “I will continue to pursue this with the relevant authorities till our sailors are brought back home,” the Sena MP added.

Syrian Orthodox Church hurt as Vijayan snubs spiritual man

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The five lakh strong Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in Kerala is upset over the “humiliation” meted out to the representative of the church by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his recent interaction with community leaders at Malappuram.

Vijayan, who is touring the headquarters of all districts in the State as part of the 2021 Assembly election campaign, blamed the Orthodox Church when a priest tried to draw his attention towards the discrimination shown by the Government towards the

MOSC during the former’s interaction with citizens of Malappuram. The Priest had tried to draw the Chief Minister’s attention to the ongoing tussle between the MOSC and the breakaway faction of the community for control of Churches.

The Chief Minister and the CPI(M) are peeved over the recent meeting the Orthodox Church bishops had with Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the intervention of the latter’s office to resolve the issue.

Vijayan blamed the Orthodox prelates for the dispute with the Jacobite faction

and asked the Church representative to behave properly. “The Chief Minister’s reaction should be seen as a challenge to the judicial system in the country,” said Dr Yuhanon Mar Diacoros Metropolitan, secretary of the holy synod.

Dr Geevarghese Mar Yuliose Metropolitan, who heads the media wing of the MOSC said that fascism has set its foot in Kerala through the Communists. “What is happening in Kerala under the regime of Vijayan is unfortunate. Fascism and authoritarianism are at its peak under the CPI(M) rule. We feel as if we are living under an auto-

cratic regime. This was in expected lines as Communist rulers are not known for their love for democracy,” said while reacting to the incident.

The Metropolitan heads the media wing of the Orthodox Church and usually stays away from all controversies.

He said that the Prime Minister has made no interference in the legal dispute between the Orthodox and Jacobite sections. “If someone feels that Thiruvananthapuram is the national capital, it would be better if he changes that notion at the earliest,” said the

Metropolitan.

The Supreme Court in its verdict had pronounced that the chief of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church as the controlling authority of all the Churches that fall under the Orthodox sect. “The Jacobite sect fighting for the rights to worship in these churches are welcome to do so provided they have the permission from the head of the MOSC,” said the Metropolitan.

The MOSC laity plays a crucial role during election in the districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam.

Kerala logs 5,328 new cases, 21 more deaths

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala recorded 5,328 new coronavirus cases on Saturday even as 4,985 more patients recovered in the last 24 hours. Health Minister KK Shailaja’s office said. Twenty-one more fatalities took the state’s death toll to 3,116. As many as 65,374 people are undergoing corona treatment in the state at present. Ernakulam district led with 743 new cases, whereas Kasargod with 83 cases was at the lowest position. The positivity rate of Kerala is 9.85 per cent.

Of the 5,328 new cases, 78 emerged outside the state. As many as 4,801 persons tested positive after contact with corona patients while the source of contact of 392 patients was yet unknown.

Fifty-seven health workers tested positive on Saturday, followed by Ernakulam with 14, Thiruvananthapuram with seven, Kozhikode with five, and Kollam, Kottayam and Kannur with four cases each. Thiruvananthapuram with three, and Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasargod with two cases each, and Idukki and Malappuram with one case each. As many as 2,40,490 persons are under observation in Kerala, including 2,28,679 in home quarantine.

schools.

The department has released a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the opening of the schools.

It said only the schools outside containment zones shall be allowed to reopen and students, teachers, employees living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the school.

Covid vaccines don’t belong to any party, but humanity: Omar Abdullah

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Covid-19 vaccines do not belong to any political party, but humanity, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said on Saturday, hours after Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav termed coronavirus vaccines to be rolled out in the country as “vaccine of the BJP”.

Taking to Twitter, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said, “I don’t know about anyone else but when my turn comes I’ll happily roll up my sleeve & get a Covid vaccine.”

The more people get vaccinated, the better it will be for the country and the economy, the National Conference (NC) vice president said.

“No vaccine belongs to any political party, they belong to humanity & the sooner we get vulnerable people vaccinated the better,” he tweeted.

While talking to reporters in Lucknow, Yadav, said, “How can I trust the vaccine, which will be used for vaccination by the BJP? We cannot get vaccinated by the BJP’s vaccine.”

On Saturday, an expert panel of India’s central drug authority recommended grant-



ing permission for restricted emergency use of the indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin with certain conditions, a day after giving similar directions for the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine.

The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on COVID-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) had on Friday recommended granting permission for restricted emergency use of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

Covishield, being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

The NC leader also tweeted that this “virus has been far too disruptive & if a vaccine helps bring about a semblance of normalcy after all the chaos then sign me up.”

Gujarat: Four UK returnees detected with Covid strain

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Four persons who recently returned to Gujarat from the United Kingdom (UK) have tested positive for the new strain of coronavirus, a top State health department official said on Saturday.

Results of the 15 samples that had tested positive for coronavirus on arrival in Ahmedabad from the UK are currently pending with the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, the official added.

“All the passengers who had reached Ahmedabad from the UK were screened, and the samples of those who had tested positive for coronavirus were sent to the NIV. We have received intimation that the UK strain of coronavirus has been detected in four such cases,” Principal Secretary (Health), Jayanti Ravi told reporters.

Ravi said all the four patients have been kept in “special isolators” at the SVP Hospital in Ahmedabad as per the Centre’s guidelines.

“Results of the 15 samples tested positive for coronavirus on arrival in Ahmedabad are pending with the NIV,” she added.

Ravi further said, “Passengers sitting in flights in three rows ahead and three rows behind of the passengers who have tested positive for coronavirus have been identified through contact tracing and are kept under observation and isolated. Health teams are following up with screening of these passengers on a regular basis.”

She said the infectivity of the UK coronavirus mutant is much higher though there is no evidence regarding its virulence.

Responding to a query, Ravi said the treatment protocol for the patients detected with the new coronavirus strain and other positive patients is similar.

“Contacts of all UK returnees who have been kept in isolation are being tested through RT-PCR test after a gap of one week,” she said.

The state health department had last week said that 12 out of 1,720 passengers who arrived in Gujarat from the UK and other European countries between November 25 and December 23, tested positive for coronavirus.

Samples of these patients - 11 of whom tested positive for the virus between December 9 and 23 -- were sent to the NIV Pune and Gujarat Biological Research Centre in Gandhinagar for genome mapping to determine whether they were carrying the mutated variant, the department had said.

India suspended flights to and from the UK from December 23 in view of the rapid spread of the new viral strain, that was first detected there in September. **PTI**

Mumbai cops seize banned gutkha, pan masala worth ₹1.22 cr

PNS ■ MUMBAI

In a raid conducted on a godown in south Mumbai, the Mumbai Police on Saturday seized banned gutkha and paan masala products worth ₹1.22 crore. Acting on a tipoff, the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) team headed by Sachin Waze, raided the premises at Nagpada’s Bhandi Bazar locality in south Mumbai and seized a huge stockpile of banned gutkha and paan masala.

Schools to reopen in Odisha for Class 10 and 12 from January 8

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government on Saturday decided that schools will reopen for Class 10 and Class 12 from January 8. In a statement, School and Mass Education Department informed that students will be taught for 100 days including Saturdays and Sundays.

Classes will be held for Class 10 students from January 8 to April 26 and Class 12 stu-

dents will attend their classes from January 8 to April 28.

Notably, the schools have been closed in the state since March 17 due to Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Board of Secondary Education (BSE) will conduct the High School Certificate (HSC) examinations from May 3 to May 15. The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) will conduct the 12th

examinations between May 15 and June 11.

The practical exam of Class 10 students will be held from April 27 to May 2 and Class 12 students will be held from April 29 to May 14, the statement said.

The guidelines issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department and the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) will be followed strictly at the

schools.

The department has released a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the opening of the schools.

It said only the schools outside containment zones shall be allowed to reopen and students, teachers, employees living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the school.

Noida Police starts campaign to check forced child begging, send kids to schools

Noida (UP): The Gautam Buddh Nagar Police has launched a campaign to check forced child begging and send the rescued children, who have lost their way out of education for myriad reasons, back to classrooms, officials said on Saturday.

The police would also ensure presence of teachers in slums across Noida and Greater Noida after it emerged that their absence since the COVID-19 outbreak has been an impediment in children’s education, they said. Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Women and Child Safety) Vrinda Shukla said a larger campaign is underway in entire Uttar Pradesh with a focus on rescuing children engaged in beggary.

In pursuance of that we have started the campaign in Gautam Buddh Nagar also with the support of the district child helpline and some NGOs,” Shukla said. As part of the campaign, she said, the police have identified some major slums in the district from where children are found engaged in beggary. “In the first phase, we are

focusing on raising awareness in these places and encouraging adults there to send their children to school instead of engaging them in begging,” the officer said.

Shukla said when the police started reaching out to people in slums some residents informed them about difficulties in sending their wards to school.

The people said some schools which had shut down at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic have not resumed, impacting the education of their children, she said **PTI**

AMID US TENSIONS

Iran Guards vow decisive response to any action

Tehran: Iran's Revolutionary Guards chief Hossein Salami vowed on Saturday to respond to any "action the enemy takes," in a visit to a strategic Gulf island, amid rising tensions with the US.

Salami was speaking on the eve of the first anniversary of the US killing of top Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani in a Baghdad drone strike on January 3, 2020.

"We are here today to evaluate and be assured of our powerful capabilities at sea and against enemies who sometimes boast... and threaten," Salami said according to the Guards' official website Sepahnews.

Salami inspected the troops stationed on Abu Musa island, accompanied by the Revolutionary Guard Corps navy commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri.

"We would respond with a reciprocal, decisive and strong



blow to whatever action the enemy would take against us," Salami warned.

Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands are located in the Gulf near the entrance to the strategic Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of world oil output passes.

The islands are under Iranian control but are also claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

Tensions have been build-

ing up in the run-up to the anniversary of Soleimani's killing, with two American B-52 bombers recently flying over the region.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday accused outgoing US President Donald Trump of aiming to fabricate a "pretext for war" after Trump blamed Tehran for a rocket strike on the US embassy in Baghdad on December 20.

APF

Iran plans 20 per cent uranium enrichment as soon as possible

Dubai: Iran said on Saturday it plans to enrich uranium up to 20 per cent at its underground Fordo nuclear facility "as soon as possible," pushing its programme a technical step away from weapons-grade levels as it increases pressure on the West over the tattered atomic deal.

The move comes amid heightened tensions between Iran and the US in the waning days of the administration of President Donald Trump, who unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal in 2018.

That set in motion an escalating series of incidents capped by a US drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad a year ago, an anniversary coming Sunday that has American officials now worried about possible retaliation by Iran.

Iran's decision to begin enriching to 20 per cent a decade ago nearly brought an Israeli strike targeting its nuclear facilities, tensions that

only abated with the 2015 atomic deal. A resumption of 20 per cent enrichment could see that brinkmanship return.

Even Ali Akbar Salehi, the US-educated head of the civilian Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, offered a military analogy to describe his agency's readiness to take the next step.

"We are like soldiers and our fingers are on the triggers," Salehi told Iranian state television. "The commander should command and we shoot. We are ready for this and will produce (20 per cent enriched uranium) as soon as possible."

Iran's decision comes after its parliament passed a bill, later approved by a constitutional watchdog, aimed at hiking enrichment to pressure Europe into providing sanctions relief. It also serves as pressure ahead of the inauguration of US President-elect Joe Biden, who has said he is willing to re-enter the nuclear deal.

Trump extends freeze on H-1B, other work visas until March 31

Indian IT professionals to be hit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has extended the freeze on the most sought-after H-1B visas by Indian IT professionals, along with other types of foreign work visas and green cards through March 31 to protect American workers, saying that the reasons for which he had imposed such restrictions amidst the pandemic have not changed.

The freeze on various categories of work visas was ordered by Trump through two proclamations on April 22 and June 22 last year.

Hours before the freeze was set to expire on December 31, Trump issued another proclamation on Thursday to extend it until March 31.

He said that the reasons for

which he had issued such a restriction have not changed.

The continuation of the restrictions, which comes with just 20 days left in the Republican President's term, is the latest effort to bar the entry of immigrants to the US.

Restricting immigration has been a focus of the Trump administration since its first days when it issued the travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries, and it has continued into Trump's final year in office as the White House uses the coronavirus pandemic as cover.

US President-elect Joe Biden has promised to lift the suspension on H-1B visas, saying Trump's immigration policies are cruel.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from

countries like India and China.

They would now have to wait at least till the end of March before approaching the US diplomatic missions to get stamping. It would also impact a large number of Indian IT professionals who are seeking renewal of their H-1B visas.

President Trump said that the effects of COVID-19 on the US labour market and the health of American communities are a matter of ongoing national concern, and the considerations present in the two previous proclamations have not been eliminated.

"The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to significantly disrupt Americans' livelihoods. While the November overall unemployment rate in the United States of 6.7 per cent reflects a marked decline from its April high, there were still 9,834,000 fewer seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in November than in February of 2020," Trump said in his proclamation.

Palestinians say Israeli gunshot in the neck paralysed man

Ramallah (West Bank): The Palestinian Health Ministry said on Saturday a youth is suffering from paralysis a day after he was shot in the neck by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank.

The man, Haron Abu Aram, 24, was left quadriplegic, the ministry said.

Witnesses said the incident was triggered when Israeli forces tried to stop Palestinians building a house in a village in southern Hebron and seized an electricity generator belonging to Abu Aram.

Israel prevents Palestinians from building houses on areas under its control in the West Bank without hard-to-obtain building permits. The Israeli military said "a violent riot" was instigated when the troops were

evacuating "an illegal building" in the At-Tuwani village. The military said Palestinians attacked the forces with "massive amount of rocks." "We are aware of a report regarding a Palestinian who was injured by live fire during the incident. The incident is being investigated," the Israeli military told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Video showed a group of Palestinians trying to recover the generators from the hands of the soldiers before a gunshot is heard and Abu Aram appears on the ground.

In 2020, Israeli has demolished the homes of more than 900 Palestinians in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, according to the Israeli rights group BTselem.

AP

UK Judge to rule on Assange's US extradition

London: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will find out Monday whether he can be extradited from the UK to the US To face espionage charges over the publication of secret American military documents.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser is due to deliver her decision at London's Old Bailey courthouse at 10 am. Monday. If she grants the request, then Britain's home secretary, Priti Patel, would make the final decision.

Whichever side loses is expected to appeal, which could lead to years more legal wrangling.

However, there's a possibility that outside forces may come into play that could instantly end the decade-long saga.

Stella Morris, Assanges

partner and the mother of his two sons, has appealed to U.S. President Donald Trump via Twitter to grant a pardon to Assange before he leaves office on Jan. 20.

And even if Trump doesn't, there's speculation that his successor, Joe Biden, may take a more lenient approach to Assange's extradition process.

US Prosecutors indicted the 49-year-old Assange on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse that carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

Lawyers acting on behalf of the U.S. Government said in their closing arguments after the four-week hearing in the fall that Assange's defense team had raised issues that were neither relevant nor admissible.

AP

Britain will allow mixing of virus vaccines on rare occasions

London: Britain will allow people to be given shots of different Covid-19 vaccines on rare occasions, despite a lack of evidence about the extent of immunity offered by mixing doses.

In a departure from other strategies globally, the government said people could be given a mix-and-match of two Covid-19 shots, for example if the same vaccine dose was out of stock, according to guidelines published on New Year's Eve.

"(If) the same vaccine is not available, or if the first product received is unknown, it is reasonable to offer one dose of the locally available product to complete the schedule," according to the guidelines.

Mary Ramsay, head of immunisations at Public Health England, said this would only happen on extremely rare occasions, and that the government was not recommending the mixing of vaccines, which require at least two doses given several weeks apart.

"Every effort should be made to give them the same vaccine, but where this is not possible it is better to give a second dose of another vaccine than not at all," she said.

Covid-19 has killed more 74,000 people in Britain - the second-highest deaths in Europe, and health officials are racing to deliver doses to help end the pandemic as fears grow that the health service could be overwhelmed.

FRANCE

Charges against hundreds of people for Covid violations

Rennes, France: Hundreds of revellers were booked for breaking coronavirus restrictions as an illegal rave in north-western France ended on Saturday after more than two days of partying that saw clashes with police.

Police had failed to stop the underground event, which drew around 2,500

people from Thursday night in two disused warehouses in Lieuron, south of the city of Rennes in Brittany.

Such mass gatherings are banned across France to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and a nationwide 8:00 pm curfew -- which was not lifted for New Year -- has been in force across the country.

Techno music blared out during the night from the warehouses, which had been transformed into illegal nightclubs for partygoers who had flocked to the site from across France and even from abroad.

The local prefecture said Saturday the music had been switched off and sound systems dismantled after two nights,

and the first revellers began leaving the site before dawn.

By 10:15 am it was under the control of police, the local prefecture said.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said in a tweet that police had booked more than 1,200 people and seized a truck, sound equipment and generators from the site of the "illegal rave party."

The large police presence at the site had led to the break-up of the event "without violence", he added.

The regional prefect, Emmanuel Berthier, said 800 people had been booked specifically for coronavirus-related offences such as failing to respect the curfew restrictions

or wear masks, or for participating in an illegal assembly.

Police fined several hundred others for use of narcotics, he told reporters.

Police on access roads were checking all those leaving the site, on foot or in vehicles, using torches to check their eyes for signs of drugs use, an AFP photographer said.

AFP

GST collections at all-time high of over ₹1.15 lakh cr in Dec

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GST collections touched a record high of over ₹ 1.15 lakh crore in December, reflecting festive demand and reflation economy.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of December 2020 is ₹1,15,174 crore and is the highest since the introduction of Goods and Services Tax from July 1, 2017, the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

"This is the highest growth in monthly revenues for the last 21 months. This has been due to combined effect of the rapid economic recovery post-pandemic and the nation-wide

drive against GST evaders and fake bills along with many systemic changes introduced recently, which have led to improved compliance," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The total number of GSTR-3B Returns filed for the month of November up to 31st December 2020 is 87 lakh.

During the month, revenues from import of goods were 27 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 8 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. In line with the recent trend of recovery in the GST

revenues, the mop-up in December crossed Rs 1 lakh crore mark for the third month in a row and was 12 per cent higher than over Rs 1.03 lakh crore collected in December 2019.

During December Central GST mop-up is Rs 21,365 crore, State GST is Rs 27,804 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 57,426 crore (including Rs 27,050 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is Rs 8,579 crore (including Rs 971 crore collected on import of goods). The government has settled Rs 23,276 crore to CGST and Rs 17,681 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement.

DoPPW instructs to appoint nodal officer

The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW), vide its order dated, December 14, 2020 had instructed all the Ministries/Departments of Government of India to appoint nodal officers and conduct nation-wide Pension Adalats in the last week of December 2020 and first week of January, 2021.

All India Pension Adalats are being organised every year since 2017 by the Department of Pensions & Pensioners' Welfare, under the aegis of Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State, Ministry of Personnel, PG & Pensions.

Approximately 64 Departments/Organisations of Govt. of India are engaged in this exercise as per preliminary reports 1800 cases shall be taken up in these Adalats. Another unique feature of the Adalats, as per the directions of DoPPW, shall be to leverage technology and conduct the proceedings online through video conferencing so that Pensioners or their representatives can participate from the comfort of their homes. All stake-holders of a grievance shall meet on a single platform and give a resolution on-the-spot.



J&K signed and MoU with NAFED India for high density plantation of apple, walnut, almond, cheery in JK. LG Manoj Sinha presiding over the meeting observed that NAFED will also work on high density plantation of apple and other horticulture produce in Jammu division

SEBI imposes fine on Mukesh Ambani, RIL for 'manipulative trading'

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 25 crore and Rs 15 crore respectively on Reliance Industries (RIL) and its Chairman Mukesh Ambani for manipulative trading.

The SEBI order observed

that RIL had entered into a well-planned operation with its agents to corner the open interest in the RPL (Reliance Petroleum) futures and to earn undue profits from the sale of RPL shares in both cash and futures segments and to dump large number of RPL shares in the cash segment during the last ten minutes of trading

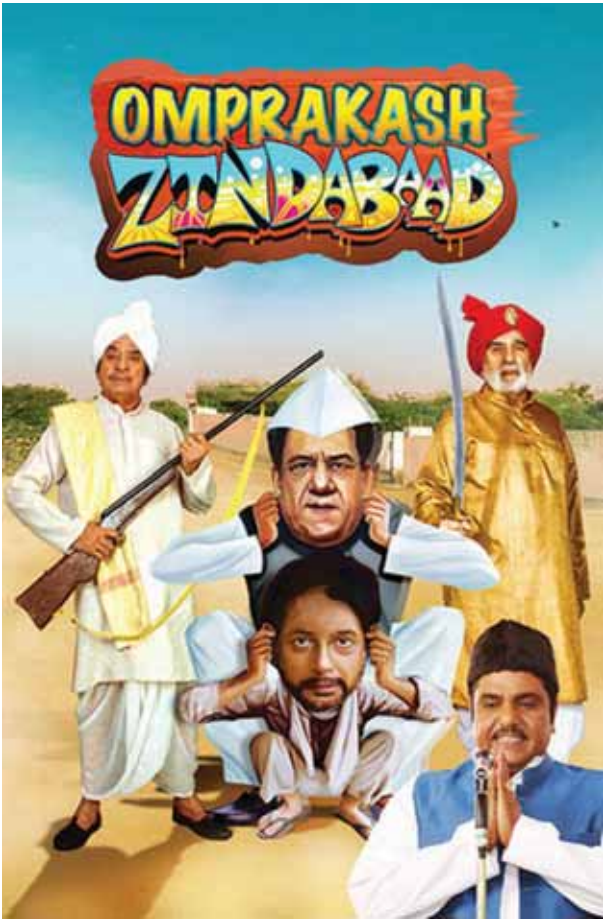
on the settlement day resulting in a fall in the settlement price. The case pertains to 2007.

It also observed that Mukesh Ambani being the Chairman & Managing Director of RIL, was responsible for its day-to-day affairs and thereby, liable for the "manipulative trading" done by RIL.

The order noted that Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd and Mumbai SEZ Ltd have allegedly aided and abetted RIL by providing funds to one of the agents appointed by RIL, who in turn provided funds to other 11 agents for making the margin payments for the short positions in RPL November Futures.

HOME THEATRE

Gives out a hard hitting message



OMPRAKASH ZINDABAD
Voot Select
***ing: Om Puri, Jagdeep, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Zakir Hussain**
Rated: 5.5/10

It is not very often that we see movies that make us sit up and think long after the credits have stopped rolling. *Omprakash Zindabad* directed by Ranjeet Gupta may not be your average film that has *masala* or an item number. But it does have a hard hitting message to deliver. A message how the common man with

small dreams gets taken in by the outwardly materialistic world and falls for it hook, line and sinker with no means for a reprieve.

The story is straight forward. A village man thinks that getting a bike will get him the leg up in life. For this he is willing to put his wife up for the worst kind of crime that can be done against a woman — to be gang-raped and paraded naked in the village — so that he can get the compensation that the Government gives to such survivors. All for the sake of a bike and become the town's hero.

This satirical take on the situation and how the system is manipulated by those in power has its moments that makes one laugh at the greed and the lengths they would go to for money and the next, it leaves one with a feeling of disgust and sadness that people would rape, a heinous crime, for their own personal gains and scam the poor in the name of the Government compensation.

This is Om Puri and Jagdeep's last movie. It is unfortunate that this film was released four years after the former's death. But it was good to see Jagdeep, who died in July 2020, and that he had not lost the spark in his eyes even though he was 81. One just wished that Gupta could have better utilised their talent. The same goes for Kulbhushan Kharbanda whose talent is wasted here.

— Shalini Saksena

Fresh take on leftovers



BEST LEFTOVERS EVER!
Netflix
Rated: 6/10

What if one were to tell you that one could make Mexican dishes remade into gnocchi, dumplings and much more. What if one were to ask to use healthy leftovers like marinated veggies and pork tenderloin and turn it into cozy comfort food? Or one turned festive meal leftovers of glazed ham, apple pie and green bean casserole — into a fancy sandwich?

Well, the latest reality show is sure to have all the answers for all those cooks out there who love to cook up a storm in the kitchen from leftovers. While the dishes may not be something that one would find in Indian homes, the fact of the matter is that instead of reheating the food and eating the same thing the next day, one can whip up an entirely new dish by adding a few extra ingredients that are already in our kitchens to wow the family members with your culinary skills. All it takes is a bit of thought and viola — one has an entirely new dish on the table for the family to feast on.

It is a competition with three chefs/cooks who are judged on the basis of their creativity, technique and the number of leftovers used to remake an entirely new dish. The winner takes cash worth \$10,000! Next time, there are some leftovers in the refrigerator, take inspiration from this show and delight your family and friends.

— Shalini Saksena

Look out for

Broken but Beautiful Season 3

Cast: Sidharth Shukla, and Sonia Rathee

One of the most successful OTT franchises, *Broken But Beautiful* was loved by one and all and still ranks high on the rating chart. The beautiful original music of the franchise is still the top chart numbers amongst the fans. The first two seasons showcased a tender love story of individuals (portrayed by Vikrant Massey and Harleen Sethi) who meet in the most unexpected of circumstances and soon become a support system for one another. And now, with the new *jodi* — Sidharth Shukla, and Sonia Rathee — roped in for season 3, fans can't wait to know more about the story of Agastya and Rumi!

Apharan 2

Cast: Arunoday Singh, Nidhi Singh, Saanand Verma, Sukhamni Sadana, Aditya Lal, Varun Badola

After the resounding success of Season 1, ALT Balaji's *Apharan — Sab ka Katega* is renewed for the second season. Packed with a gripping narrative, unimaginable twists, thrilling storyline, and electrifying situational background score, *Apharan* is a 70's style *masala* entertainer at its very best. The cast and crew of the show is currently shooting in Uttarakhand for the second instalment of the show. Going by the excitement on set, it certainly seems that Arunoday Singh and Nidhi Singh, who played the part of Rudra Srivastava and Ranjana Srivastava respectively, are the most excited. With shooting going on in full swing, the duo is performing to the best of their abilities as they look to make the second season all the more bigger and better than season 1.

Dev DD Season 2

Cast: Asheema Vardaan, Sanjay Suri and Nauheed Cyrusi,

Dev DD is set to make things get wilder than your imagination. This modern-day version of Devdas is full of drama, heartbreak and romantic twists in the life of lead protagonist Devika. Starring Asheema Vardaan in the lead along with, Sanjay Suri and Nauheed Cyrusi, it's time to be hooked to the screen one more time as the saga of love, lust, betrayal and everything in between mesmerize each one of us.

Puncch Beat Season 2

After the resounding success of Season 1, ALT Balaji's *PuncchBeat* is renewed for the second season. Featuring Harshita Gaur, Priyank Sharma, Siddharth Sharma, and Khushi Joshi in lead roles, *PuncchBeat* is a teen drama series that showcases the story of four students from one of the most prestigious schools in India. Starting as strangers, one sees how the lives of this quarter get intertwined leading to them becoming best buddies. This youth-based show is packed with a whole lot of fun, Masti, drama and you guessed it, pranks. Always ready to outdo each other, we see these kids have a blast enjoying every moment of their lives.

Crashh

Cast: Zain Iman, Rohan Mehra, Aditi Sharma
Crashh depicts the story of four siblings, who are torn apart by a fateful accident in early 2000. What happens when the four siblings meet again? Watch on to know the story of Kabir, Kajol, Jashn, and Gia!

Bang Baang

Cast: Faisal Sheikh (Mr Faisu) and Ruhii Singh
Bang Baang — Sound of Crimes is set to be a visual spectacle for quintessential action cinema lovers and will leave the viewers glued to their seats. The original web-series involves mystery,

suspense, dhamakedaar action, and loads of youth drama amidst deep-lying secrets that unravel one by one.

The Married Woman

Cast: Ridhi Dogra, Monica Dogra, Imaad Shah, Ayesha Raza Mishra, Rahul Vohra, Suhaas Ahuja, Divya Seth Shah

The Married Woman is a love story, based on Manju Kapur's famous book *A Married Woman*, that began during the times of unrest in the country revolves around two beautiful souls — Aastha & Peepli, who love rose beyond religious, gender, and societal conditions to find each other.

7 Kadam (Eros Now Original)

Cast: Amit sadih, Rohit Roy
In a clash of ideologies, soccer coach Aurobindo's son Ravi, the star striker, joins a rival team, to uplift his family's status.

Udan Patolas (Eros Now Original)

Cast: Aastha Ssidana, Sukhamni Sadana
Apoorva Arora, Poppy Jabbar

Four small town girls try to hilariously fit in the big city. They are barely unlucky in love but their sisterhood is unbreakable.

Aisa Waisa Pyaar (Eros Now Original)

Cast: Ahsaas Channa, Prit Kamani, Adah Sharma, Saqib Saleem, Nidhi Singh, Sheeba Chaddha, Rajit Kapu
From a millennial couple to an 80+ couple celebrating their 60th anniversary... from stories featuring man's best friend to someone differently abled. 4 unusual love stories spanning 4 different ages, stages of relationships, backdrops, and characters. Told in a contemporary style of Modern Love, come fall in love again, it is time for #Pyaar! Four-part love anthology where each story takes you through love story of a different generation.

CHEERS TO NEW YEAR



While 2020 may have been a pretty rough one for a lot of people, it was quite a productive year for me. I happened to get my first ever short film rolling and it got a great response from the audience, friends and family. I happened to get some time in hand to devote to my health and fitness which I have been wanting to do for a while now. I also bagged my role in the show *Teri Meri Ik Jindri* this year and in 2021 I just hope the audience showers all their blessings and love towards the show. I would be ending this year and making a fresh start to 2021 at Tirupati Balaji and with God's blessings I pray that the new year brings an abundance of opportunities and happiness for each and every person who has dealt with a rough phase.

— Adhvik Mahajan who plays Joginder in Zee TV's Teri Meri Ik Jindri



New Year to me is more about spending time with the family, eating good food and watching some amazing movies! This year has been quite a ride for everyone, and I hope the new year brings in joy and health and happiness in everyone's lives. Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year!

— Mugdha Chapekar who plays Prachi in Zee TV's Kunkum Bhagya



I wish 2021 brings a lot of happiness and prosperity for everyone around. 2020 has been a tough year I hope 2021 will make everyone forget the hardships of 2020 and give a new way of living to everyone. This year I will be staying at

home and celebrating the last day of the year with my loved ones so that the next year of my life starts with people who matters the most to me. Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year.

— Madirakshi who plays Paravati in Sony Entertainment Televisions Vighnaharta Ganesh



This year has taught us so many things. I always believed more in planning the future but the past few months made me understand the importance of living in the moment and enjoying it. Hence, I have stopped worrying about upcoming problems and instead started enjoying the present moment more. This definitely doesn't mean spending every penny you have earned, without any planning. While we didn't have much work in terms of shoots, this year, it still feels like a very tiring year, mentally. Hence, I want to travel a lot in 2021, to relax and be recharged. The past year has also taught us how much we need our friends and family, especially at such low times. So, I will make sure I catch up with them more often this year. My New Year resolution is to concentrate on my fitness as I will try to hit the gym everyday. I have also wanted to learn playing the Guitar for a long time and hope to accomplish that this year.

— Paras Arora who plays Dr Pramod in Sony SAB's Kaatelaal & Sons

This year taught me to be calm and also to save money. The most important thing that I learnt is to love yourself more than anything or anyone else because your happiness matters the most. So, I have started loving myself a little more. With the new year arriving, I have decided to be disciplined in life — wake up early, work out, have fun and be more passionate about my work. Since I live away from my parents, I will make sure I spend as much time with my family as possible because I miss that home love and care here in Mumbai. I plan to enter 2021 by traveling to Goa with my brothers as I love travelling with them. For the same, I have applied for a few days off from the shooting of Maddam Sir, way in advance and I am very excited.

— Yukti Kapoor who plays Karishma Singh in Sony SAB's Maddam Sir
I have always believed in beginning



the New Year with a fresh mind and a lot of optimism. There is no better way to begin the year with a little detour from my routine life, I will be travelling for two days to visit my extended family in my hometown Panipat. While my mother and my brother reside with me in Mumbai, I haven't had a chance to meet my dad since the lockdown reopened or connect with my cousins and other relatives. Every occasion and festival celebrated with them has till date been a memorable one and nothing excites me more than to start a new chapter amidst the presence of my family. I am very excited for this trip and I look forward to having the happiness and fun as I did during the lockdown.

— Kanika Mann who plays Guddan in Zee TV's Guddan Tumse Na Ho Payega



2020 has honestly been a year of mixed feelings for me. While the whole pandemic affected a lot of people, it was also the year when my first show went off air. Looking at the struggles of many other I kept myself together believing that my struggles are not that big, and I would make it through. And I did! Despite it all, this year also got me a role in a beautiful show like Apna Time Bhi Aayega. Rani is a very different character and she brings out the little innocent yet strong-willed child within me. While I had my fair share of struggles, this is the best thing that has happened this year and I am eagerly looking forward to 2021. While I don't really make any resolutions, I do wish to continue working hard and entertaining my audiences. I hope it's a better year for everyone and we can finally be free of COVID.

— Megha Ray who plays Rani in Zee TV's Apna Time Bhi Aayega

‘Tough to play two contrasting roles’

ABHISHEK NIGAM, who plays a superhero in SAB TV's new show Hero —Gayab Mode On, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his character, how he got into acting and his first day of shoot

■ What is your role in the show?

I play a superhero. I play two characters and both are different from each other. One, Veer, he is a compassionate person, fun-loving and responsible. While is a do-gooder but he is not the kind of person people can take advantage of. He is the one who finds the magical ring. The other is the super hero who takes on the true image of what Veer is all about — he is naughty. The ring is evil and brings out the bad in the wearer. But since Veer is such a good person, the ring doesn't overpower him.

■ How did you come on board the project?

I got a call for an audition. I was very hopeful and gave the auditions. Unfortunately, I didn't get that part. A few months later, I got a call for another audition. When I went to sign the contract, that is when I came to know it was a lead.

■ How tough was it to bring out the contrast in the two roles you play?

It was a bit tough but I love challenges and that's the reason why I took it up. The roles excited me and I was looking for a project like this. I am grateful I got it. I identify with my character of a superhero; Veer is too good and nobody is that perfect.

■ Your brother is also an actor, do you think there will be comparisons?

I don't think so. Our work is totally different and we are different people. Our approach to acting is not the same either. The genre we are working on is different as well. Siddharth (who plays Aladdin) and I have always done things that are not the same. I am hoping that people too get to see different things.

■ How did you get into acting?

I came to Mumbai in 2014 and pursuing law. At the same time, I started giving auditions. But things never move or happen the way you want them to. Whatever acting that I know, I have learnt while giving auditions. I used to get called for a lot of mythological shows. Slowly, I made contacts and started getting work. That is how I got a role in Panipat.

■ What made you turn to TV

Siddharth and my work is totally different and we are different people. Our approach to acting is not the same either. The genre we are working on is different as well

then after doing a film?

At the stage where I am today, it doesn't matter whether it is TV or films. If we see screens are getting smaller — from 70 mm to laptops to tablets to mobiles today. People see content that you are part of and how big it is. ■ You are the elder brother. Was it tough to wait for the right role while your brother already had a show as a lead?

I never felt that he had more than I had. I was not desperate to get a break in the industry. I was doing my own thing back then. I was doing



law and even directing that kept me busy. There were other small ventures that I was part of. I played tennis at the State level. My brother and I have never competed with each other, we have been a support system to one another.

■ What are these ventures?

Over the years, I learnt directing and did two music videos under my own label. So that is something that I do. Also, while shooting for Panipat, I learnt more about directing. When you are in the industry, you tend to pick up tips.

■ What do your parents think — both sons in acting?

My mother has always been supportive. She told us that whatever we did we needed to give it our best.

■ You did a show — Chandra Nandini — with Siddharth. How was it to work with him?

We had a lot of fun. The only problem that I faced was how people would confuse my name with his. Working with him was great. When we work professionally, I treat him as a serious person since he has been in the industry for a longer time.

■ Most super hero shows in India are not as good as one gets to see in Hollywood. Will there be comparisons?

There will be comparisons whatever we make. Even if we make a love story people will say Hollywood made it like this. But our industry has given some great super heroes like *Shaktiman* and *Balveer*. What matters is how we approach the project. It is not correct to what we are doing on TV with a *Marvel* project. In fact, it is wrong to compare a film with a TV show due to scalability.



BIG ONSCREEN HOPES

2021 has big-ticket movies in the kitty. While it is still unclear whether it will be a theatrical or an OTT release, the movies are a sureshot dose of entertainment. From Radhe in Bollywood to the likes of superhero movies in Hollywood, the New Year looks promising for the entertainment industry. SUNDAY PIONEER lists the fare

WE TOO

GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI

Director – Sanjay Leela Bhansali
Producers – Bhansali Productions & Pen India Limited
Cast – Alia Bhatt

ATRANGI RE

Director – Aanand L Rai
Producers – Colour Yellow Productions, T-Series Films, Cape Of Good Films
Cast – Akshay Kumar, Dhanush, and Sara Ali Khan

RAKSHABANDHAN

Director – Aanand L Rai
Producers – Colour Yellow Productions & Cape of Good Films
Cast – Akshay Kumar

JERSEY

Director – Gowtham Tinnauri
Producers – Aman Gill, Dil Raju, Gowtham Tinnauri
Cast – Shahid Kapoor, Mrunal Thakur

SALAAR

Director – Prashanth Neel
Producers – Hombale Films
Cast – Prabhas

HASEEN DILLRUBA

Director – Vinil Mathews
Producers – Colour Yellow Productions, Eros International & T-Series Films
Cast – Taapsee Pannu, Vikrant Massey, Harshvardhan Rane

HUNGAMA 2

Director – Priyadarshan
Producers – Venus Records and Tapes LLP
Cast – Paresh Rawal, Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Meezaan, Pranitha Subhash

BLIND

Director – Shome Makhija
Producers – Sujoy Ghosh, Avishek Ghosh, Manisha W., Pinkesh Nahar, Sachin Nahar, Hyunwoo Thomas Kim
Cast – Sonam Kapoor Ahuja

INDIA LOCKDOWN

Director – Madhur Bhandarkar

KUN FAYA KUN

Director – Kushan Nandy
Cast – Harshvardhan Rane, Sanjeeda Shaikh

BIG DHAMAKA



RADHE: YOUR MOST WANTED Bhai

Cast: Salman Khan, Megha Akash, Disha Patani, Jackie Shroff, Randeep Hooda
Director: Prabhu Deva



BRAHMASTRA

Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Mouni Roy, Divyenndu, Dimple Kapadia, Prateik Babbar
Director: Ayan Mukerji



BELL BOTTOM

Cast: Vani Kapoor, Huma Qureshi, Akshay Kumar, Lara Dutta
Director: Ranjit Tiwari



SOORYAVANSHI

Cast: Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif, Ajay Devgan, Ranveer Singh, Jackie Shroff, Jaaved Jaaferi, Arushi Sharma
Director: Rohit Shetty



LAAL SINGH CHADDHA

Cast: Aamir Khan, Vijay Sethupati, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Mona Singh, Sharman Joshi
Director: Advait Chandan



SHAMSHERA

Cast: Ranbir Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Vaani Kapoor, Ronit Roy, Iravati Harshe
Director: Karan Malhotra



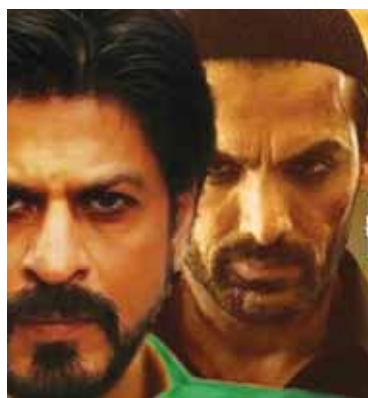
DOSTANA 2

Cast: Jhanvi Kapoor, Laksh Lawani, Kartik Aaryan, Asha Bhatt, Abhishek Banerjee, Abhay Deol
Director: Collin D'Cunha



'83

Cast: Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Saqib Saleem, Ammy Virk, Harrry Sandhu, Jiiva, Amrita Puri
Director: Kabir Khan



Pathan

Cast: Shah Rukh Khan
Director: Siddharth Anand

FRESH FACES ON SCREEN

ANMOL DHILLON

Film: Tuesdays and Fridays
Director: Taranveer Singh
Producer: Bhansali Productions



RINZING DENZONGPA

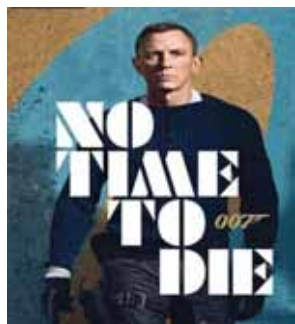
Film: Squad
Director: Nimesh Sahay
Producer: Nimesh Sahay, Brajesh Sahaya



PRANITHA SUBHASH

Film: Hungama 2
Director: Priyadarshan
Producer: Venus Records and Tapes LLP
Film: Bhuj – The Pride Of India
Director: Abhishek Dudhaiya
Producer: T Series and Select Media Holdings LLP

FROM THE HOLLYWOOD PACK



NO TIME TO DIE

Director: Cary Joji Fukunaga
Releasing: Early 2021
A spy film and the twenty-fifth instalment in the James Bond film series produced by Eon Productions. The film features Daniel Craig in his fifth and final outing as the fictional British MI6 agent James Bond.



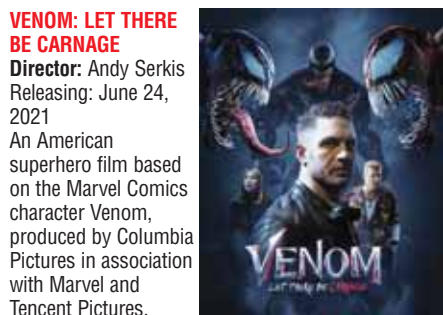
BLACK WIDOW

Director: Cate Shortland
Releasing: April 29, 2021
An American superhero film based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name. Produced by Marvel Studios and distributed by Walt Disney, it is intended to be the 24th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.



FAST & FURIOUS 9

Director: Justin Lin
Releasing: May 28, 2021
In the film, Dominic Toretto and his crew join forces to battle the most skilled assassin and high-performance driver they've ever encountered — his forsaken brother.



VENOM: LET THERE BE CARNAGE

Director: Andy Serkis
Releasing: June 24, 2021
An American superhero film based on the Marvel Comics character Venom, produced by Columbia Pictures in association with Marvel and Tencent Pictures.



TOP GUN: MAVERICK

Director: Joseph Kosinski
Releasing: July 2, 2021
An American action drama film, sequel to 1986's Top Gun.



JUNGLE CRUISE

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra
Releasing: July 22, 2021
An American adventure film directed by Jaume Collet-Serra from a story by Glenn Ficarra & John Requa and a screenplay written by Michael Green, Ficarra and Requa, based on Walt Disney's theme park attraction of the same name.



THE SUICIDE SQUAD

Director: James Gunn
Releasing: August 4, 2021
The further adventures of Harley Quinn, Rick Flag and their team of assembled supervillains.



THE KING'S MAN

Director: Matthew Vaughn
Releasing: 2021
Period spy action comedy film.



MORBIUS

Director: Daniel Espinosa
Releasing: March 19, 2021
An American superhero film based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name, produced by Columbia Pictures in association with Marvel.



DUNE

Director: Denis Villeneuve
Releasing: December 18, 2020
A science fiction film in which Paul Atreides leads nomadic tribes in a battle to control the desert planet Arrakis.

5 Indian players sent in isolation

BCCI set to back Rohit, Pant, Gill, Saini, Shaw; investigation launced

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

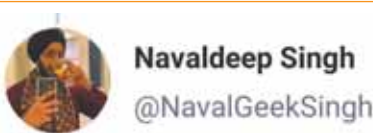
Five India Test players, including vice-captain Rohit Sharma, opener Shubman Gill and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, have been placed in isolation and an investigation launched into a possible breach of the COVID-19 bio-security protocol by them, Cricket Australia said on Saturday.

This was after a fan put out a video of the players sitting inside an indoor restaurant on Twitter on Friday. He claimed to have been seated close to them and also talked about getting a hug from Pant after he paid for the players' meal. He later retracted the claim about the hug after it raised serious questions on a breach of protocol.

The BCCI brass had initially ruled out any investigation after reports of a possible breach first appeared in the media here, but Cricket Australia's late statement said a joint probe is on.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Cricket Australia (CA) were today alerted to a video post on social media that purported to show Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw and Navdeep Saini eating at an indoor venue in Melbourne on New Year's Day," CA said in a statement.

It has been learnt that the Indian Cricket board will back its players as the general consensus is that there hasn't been any deliberate breach. There is a feeling that Indian team might



When they got know that i have paid the bill.. Rohit sharma said bhaji pese lelo yaar acha nai lagta.. i said no sir its on me. Pant hugged me and said photo tabhi hogi jab pese loge wapis. I said no bro not happening. Finally sabane photo khichwai :) mja aa gya yaar #blessed



Clarification - Pant never hugged me it was all said in excitement we maintained social distance all thru:) Apologies for miscommunication @BCCI @CricketAus @dailytelegraph

just come together like 2007-08 'Monkey Gate' controversy when Andrew Symonds had claimed that Harbhajan Singh had abused him racially.

As per protocol, players are allowed to eat out in outdoor settings, following social distancing norms.

"The BCCI and CA are investigating the matter and seeking to determine whether the outing constitutes a breach of bio-security protocols."

The isolation protocols were put in place after consulting with medical teams.

"...On the advice of the Australian and Indian medical teams, the aforementioned players have been placed in isolation as a precaution.

"This will include separating the group of players from the broader Indian and Australian squads when travelling and at the training venue," CA further stated.

It is understood that as per bio-security protocols provided by Cricket Australia, players are not just barred from indoor restaurants but they are also not supposed to avail any public transport. They are, however, allowed a walk around the cities where they are playing.

Cricket Australia's statement doesn't specify any time-frame for the investigation but it has been learnt that the Indian team is not amused by the turn of events.

India and Australia are engaged in a four-Test series right now and the third match is due to start on January 7 in Sydney.

"The players were standing outside the restaurant and due to

drizzle, they had gotten inside. If this is a way of trying to unsettle the team before the third Test, it's a bad ploy by Cricket Australia," a senior BCCI official told PTI.

Rohit had recently completed 14 days of hard quarantine in Sydney and started training in Melbourne only a couple of days back.

The players will be permitted to train in accordance with the protocols that have been put in place.

Asked if Cricket Australia could disallow the three players (Rohit, Pant and Gill) from taking part in the next Test, the official said: "Firstly, they are allowed to train. Secondly, I don't think it will come to that as then there could be adverse implications."

Earlier, a senior Indian cricket board official told PTI that the visiting contingent is "well aware" of the COVID-19 protocols and had not violated any of them.

"No, there has been no breach in bio-security protocols. Everyone associated with the Indian team is well aware of the protocols," the senior BCCI official had said in the morning.

"We can only term it as a malicious spin by a section of Australian media and this has started after their humiliating defeat," he added. India crushed Australia by eight wickets in the second Test in Melbourne, making an incredible comeback days after the debacle in the four-match series opener in Adelaide.

The bio-security bubbles have been put in place to ensure that the players are not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that has gripped the world for months now,

Rohit is new Test vice-captain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior opener Rohit Sharma was appointed the vice-captain of the Indian Test team for the first time in his career, replacing Cheteshwar Pujara, who was entrusted with the responsibility for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

After regular captain Virat Kohli went on paternity leave after the first Test in Adelaide, Pujara was named Ajinkya Rahane's deputy for the second match. However, it is learnt that the team management was always clear that once Rohit is fit and able to join the squad, he will be Rahane's deputy.

"There was never an iota of doubt about who will be India's vice-captain once Virat takes a break and Ajinkya is elevated. It was always going to be Rohit and Pujara was just a stop-gap arrangement till

the former joined the squad," a senior official privy to the development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Rohit has been India's long-time white ball vice-captain, so it was only imperative that in Virat's absence, he will be a part of the team's leadership group," the official added.

It is still not clear whether Rohit will prefer opening the innings alongside Shubman Gill, with Mayank Agarwal being dropped from the playing eleven due to his prolonged bad patch, or bat in the middle-order in place of Hanuma Vihari, who looks like a certain casualty in terms of team combination.

with parts of Australia reporting fresh outbreaks in recent times.

This had also put the future of the third Test in Sydney in doubt before CA clarified that it would not

be shifted to Melbourne.

The match will begin on January 7 and the two teams will arrive in Sydney a couple of days before the scheduled start.

Natarajan replaces Umesh in Test side

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Tamil Nadu's yorker sensation Thangarasu Natarajan on Friday replaced injured pacer Umesh Yadav in the Indian Test team for the remaining two games against Australia, continuing his remarkable rise in international cricket.

Earlier, Shardul Thakur had replaced an injured Mohammed Shami in the squad before the second Test.

"Umesh Yadav sustained a strain in his left calf muscle on Day 3 of the second Border-Gavaskar Test in



Melbourne...The fast bowler will not recover completely ahead of the remaining two Test matches and has been ruled out of the series," BCCI Secretary Jay Shah stated in a media release.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named T Natarajan as Yadav's replacement. Ahead of the Boxing Day Test, Shardul Thakur was added to the Test squad as Mohd. Shami's replacement after the senior fast bowler suffered a hairline fracture in his right forearm," the release added.

Both Shami and Umesh Yadav will head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for further rehabilitation of their injuries.

The 29-year-old Natarajan had started off as a net bowler during the series and then subsequently made it to the T20 and ODI squads. He snared eight wickets (two ODI and six T20) during his four limited-overs appearances in national colours.

He has played 20 first-class games for Tamil Nadu and will now be in contention for a slot in traditional format.

Earlier, fit-again top batsman Rohit Sharma completed his quarantine and joined the team in Melbourne.

The series is locked 1-1 right now with the third Test starting in Sydney from January 7.

Ind players rush to take part in club events

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading India players, including Jemimah Rodrigues, Veda Krishnamurthy and Deepti Sharma, will be taking part in a club T20 tournament in Bengaluru from Monday even as uncertainty continues over the team's next international assignment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Team has not played since the T20 World Cup in March and there is no clarity over its next fixture with the Australia tour, scheduled to be held later this month, postponed to 2022. There is also no final word yet on the women's domestic season.

The tournament, comprising four teams, will run from January 4-12 and has been organised to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Falcon Sports Club. The other India players participating in the tournament include Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Punam Raut, Radha Yadav, Vanitha V R, Nuzhat Parveen, Anuja Patil.

Warner is big inclusion for us: Labuschagne

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian batsman Marnus Labuschagne is looking forward to the return of David Warner for the third Test against India in Sydney as he feels the hosts will benefit not just from his batting but also the "terrific energy" he will bring to the field.

Warner, who missed out a major chunk of the India assignment due to a groin injury, was brought back into the squad for the last two Tests with the series locked at 1-1. The third Test begins January 7.

"He's a big inclusion for us if he does come back in," Labuschagne



told reporters in an online interaction. "He's someone with over 7000 Test runs and averaging near-on 50, he's a superb player.

"He's in that top calibre of player and his energy around the group and in the field will be terrific. It will be great to have him," he added.

In the absence of Warner, Australia's batting has failed miserably in the first two matches.

Only Matthew Wade (27.75), Labuschagne (32.25) and captain Tim Paine (43.50) are averaging more than 23 for the series.

There had been a lot of uncertainty around the venue of the Sydney Test after a fresh COVID-

19 outbreak in the northern beaches in the city.

However, Cricket Australia has decided to retain the Sydney Cricket Ground as the venue of the Pink Test.

Labuschagne, who notched up his highest Test score of 215 against New Zealand at the SCG last January, said it will be "hard work" putting runs on the board with two world-class bowling attacks.

"It's a beautiful venue to bat at and it has been, at times, quite batting-friendly," Labuschagne said.

"But with two world-class bowling attacks it's always hard work, it doesn't matter what the wicket's like," he added.

Bumrah has mastered the art of deceiving batsmen: Akhtar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jasprit Bumrah is the "smartest fast bowler" in contemporary cricket who has learnt the art of deceiving rival batsmen in air, something that was the secret of success for Pakistani greats, said Shoaib Akhtar.

One of the fastest bowlers to have ever played the game, Akhtar is enamoured by Bumrah's skill-sets and his ability to outwit a batsman in a mere "five seconds" from an ungainly run-up which isn't exactly a critic's delight.

"He (Bumrah) is probably India's first fast bowler, who checks the wind speed and wind direction rather than how much grass has been left on the track. This

thing used to be the art of Pakistanis, we used to know how you could play with the wind," Akhtar said on YouTube channel *"Sports Today"*.

He then cited example of how the two Ws and him used to read the wind speeds during their heydays.

"We used to actually (do that), me, Wasim bhai and Waqar bhai, we used to note the wind speed and direction, look the wind is blowing from that corridor, okay I might get reverse from that end," he said.

"We knew mechanics and aero dynamics of fast bowling, how much swing and at what time of the day. This is my assumption that Bumrah knows these sort of things

which I hardly think other fast bowlers know these sort of things," Akhtar added.

For Akhtar, post Mohammed Asif and Muhammed Aamir, Bumrah is the "smartest operator" in terms of intelligence.

With his seven-step run-up, Bumrah terrorises the batsman in a matter of five seconds. "In Bumrah's world, in those five seconds, he only visualises the batsman and thinks about his art of taking wickets.

"He is a great character. He will be the most unusual but great fast bowler if fitness permits. If his back remains okay, he will play for a long time."

Akhtar loves the manner in which Bumrah has proved people wrong.

"He has proved people wrong time and again. The more people were critical of his ungainly action, he just told them, look boss this is what I can do with this action."

Rizwan confident despite Babar's absence

PTI ■ KARACHI

Stand-in captain SMuhammad Rizwan is confident of his team's good chance of winning the second Test in Christchurch despite regular skipper Babar Azam being once again ruled out as he hasn't yet recovered from his injury.

Babar was again ruled out of the second test on Saturday although he had had a nets session on Friday.

"Babar is still not confident 100 percent that he is fit for the test match and I know he will never take a chance unless he is completely sure he has full match fitness," Rizwan said on the eve of the match.

Babar, who sustained a thumb fracture last month in Queenstown during a throw-down, will return home without having played a single match in New Zealand.

In his absence in the



first test, Pakistan put up a gallant fight but lost the game in the final session with just four overs to go in the match.

"Babar's absence is a big blow as he is a key player but the series is still not over for us and we can still win this test

and level the series if we play well and to our strength," Rizwan who got fighting half centuries in both innings in the first test said.

The Pakistan team was unable to train prop-

erly on Saturday due to rain in Christchurch.

Rizwan said that after winning the last match of the T20 series, Pakistan had gained some momentum and they carried it into the Test series.

"We fought hard in the first test and the players are pretty confident about doing well here as well," he said.

"The last match of a tour is always very important and we want to end the tour on a win-

ning note," he added.

Rizwan confirmed the team management was thinking about some changes in the side but said this would be decided later on.

The PCB said Babar had a full-fledge training session yesterday but felt slight pain in his thumb, following which, the team management has opted against taking any risk.

"With a home series coming up against South Africa, we didn't want to take a risk with Babar," a team official said.

Team Doctor Dr Sohail Saleem: "We have seen improvement in Babar Azam's injury but he is yet to fully recover. He is our captain and the most important batsman in the lineup, so we do not want to take any risk."

"The medical team is constantly reviewing his injury and we are hopeful he will be available for the home series against South Africa."

Ganguly suffers mild heart attack



PTI ■ KOLKATA

BCCI president and former India skipper Sourav Ganguly Saturday suffered a "mild" heart attack and is undergoing "primary angioplasty" at a city hospital, doctors said.

The 48-year-old cricket icon is stable.

"He had an acute myocardial infarction (MI) but is stable now. He is stable haemodynamically and has received loading doses of dual anti platelets and statin.

"Mr Ganguly is undergoing primary angioplasty now. We are yet to decide on how many stent insertion is required for Mr Ganguly," a doctor at Woodlands Hospital said.

A myocardial infarction (MI), commonly known as a heart attack, occurs when blood flow decreases or stops to a part of the heart, causing damage to the heart muscle.

According to an earlier account attributed to a doctor at the same hospital, he had suffered a cardiac arrest. A sudden cardiac arrest is when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly.

A heart attack is a circulation problem and sudden cardiac arrest is caused due to an "electrical" issue.

Primary angioplasty, also called percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), is a procedure which treats blockages within the coronary arteries and improves blood flow to the heart.

SINGLES

MAJUMDAR TO LEAD BENGAL

KOLKATA: Veteran batsman Anustup Majumdar was named Bengal captain for the upcoming Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, replacing Abhimanyu Easwaran. Shreevats Goswami will be Majumdar's deputy in the squad that also has Mohammed Shami's younger brother, seam bowling all-rounder Mohammed Kaif. Majumdar was rewarded with the captaincy for his stupendous show in the last season where he literally singlehandedly carried Bengal to the final. The Cricket Association of Bengal however said the 36-year-old Majumdar was appointed "only" for the domestic T20 tournament to free Easwaran of the 'captaincy burden'.

KRUNAL, HOODA IN BARODA SQUAD

VADODARA: All-rounders Krunal Pandya and Deepak Hooda have been named in the 22-member Baroda squad for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy National T20 Championships, starting January 10. The Baroda Cricket Association announced the squad on its website. Apart from the pair, seasoned opener Kedar Devdhar and right-handed batsman Vishnu Solanki have also been included in the squad. The bowling attack is led by left-arm pacer Lukman Meriwala and comprises 30-year-old slow left-arm orthodox bowler Bhargav Bhatt alongside relatively new faces.The association also named Prabhakar Baigond as its head coach after Dav Whatmore, who was initially appointed, was not able to take up the assignment.

ARJUN PICKED IN MUMBAI'S SENIOR SQUAD

KOLKATA: Young left-arm pacer Arjun Tendulkar, who is the son of the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, was on Saturday picked in Mumbai's senior team for the first time, featuring in an extended 22-member squad for the upcoming Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. This was confirmed by the Mumbai team's chief selector Salil Ankola on Saturday. Apart from Arjun, another pacer, Krutik Hanagavadi, was also added to a 22-member squad. "Earlier the BCCI had asked to select 20 players. But later they said that 22 players can be selected in the squad, accordingly the two players were added to the squad," an MCA official stated. This is the first time that 21-year-old Arjun has been included in Mumbai's senior squad. He has been playing age-group tournaments for Mumbai and also has been part of the team, which plays invitational tournaments.

ENG SQUAD CLEARS COVID-19 TEST

LONDON: England's Sri Lanka-bound cricket contingent has tested negative for COVID-19 and will be leaving for the island nation on Saturday for a two-match Test series, starting on January 14. England players and support staff had undergone COVID-19 testing on December 30. They will fly to Sri Lanka as per schedule on Saturday. On arrival, the contingent will spend 10 days in a bio-secure bubble in Hambantota, according to a report in 'Sky Sports'. England is scheduled to play two Test matches against Sri Lanka in Galle from January 14-18 and January 22-26. The series was postponed in March last year midway through the visitors' warm-up game in Colombo due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is part of the ongoing World Test Championship. This will be England's second touring assignment since the COVID-19 pandemic threw schedules haywire. .

DALE STEYN 'UNAVAILABLE' FOR IPL THIS YEAR

JOHANNESBURG: South African pace legend Dale Steyn on Saturday made himself 'unavailable' for this year's Indian Premier League (IPL) but ruled out an imminent retirement from competitive cricket. Steyn, 37, played for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the latest edition of the IPL. The pacer said he wants to take time off from the game. "Just a short message to let everyone know that I've made myself unavailable for RCB at this year's IPL, I'm also not planning on playing for another team, just taking some time off during that period," Steyn tweeted. One of the world's greatest fast bowlers, Steyn also made it clear that he is not calling it quits anytime soon, despite playing international cricket for the past 16 years. The bowler, though, had retired from Test cricket in 2019 as South Africa's highest wicket-taker in the format. "I will be playing in other leagues, nicely spaced out to give myself a opportunity to do something I've been excited about as well as continue to play the game I love so much. "NO, I'm NOT retired," he stressed.

Agencies



SON-SATIONAL

Korean forward scores his 100th goal for Spurs in 3-0 win over Leeds

AFP ■ LONDON

South Korea forward Son Heung-min scored his 100th Tottenham goal in a 3-0 win over Leeds that hauled his team back into the Premier League title race on Saturday.

Son grabbed the second goal for Jose Mourinho's side after Harry Kane's penalty had opened the scoring at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Reaching his century of Tottenham goals was a landmark moment for Son, who is the 18th

player to score 100 in all competitions for the north London club and the first from outside the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Since arriving from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015, the 28-year-old has established himself as one of Tottenham's key players and maintaining his fine form will be key to their hopes of pushing for the title.

Toby Alderweireld scored Tottenham's third goal as they climbed to third place.

The only frustration for Mourinho was a stoppage-time red card for Matt Doherty after the

Republic of Ireland right-back received a second booking.

Having ended their disappointing run of four league games without a win, Tottenham moved within four points of leaders Liverpool, who play Southampton on Monday.

The victory was especially welcome after Tottenham were forced to criticise Erik Lamela, Sergio Reguilon and Giovani Lo Celso after the trio were pictured breaching coronavirus rules by attending a large Christmas party.

The Spurs stars' behaviour came just days after Mourinho was criti-

cal of the Premier League for calling off their match against Fulham due to an outbreak of the virus among the Cottagers' squad.

Lamela was not named in the squad on Saturday, while Reguilon was on the bench and Lo Celso was out injured.

Leeds made a vibrant start and Ezgjan Alioski shot into the side-netting after a flowing move prised open the Tottenham defence.

Moments later, Jack Harrison's cutback was blocked by Matt Doherty and Mateusz Klich fired the loose ball over from close range.

Patrick Bamford should have done better than head Raphinha's cross over from six yards out.

But Tottenham finally steadied their nerves and took the lead in the 29th minute.

Steven Bergwijn got behind Alioski and went to ground after contact on the edge of



the Leeds area.

VAR decided the offence had taken place just inside the box and Kane stepped up to dispatch the penalty for his 17th goal of the season.

Kane wasted a chance to double Tottenham's advantage when he slashed wide from a good position.

Bergwijn fared no better after Ben Davies picked him out with just Leeds keeper Illan Meslier to beat.

Leeds nearly equalised when Harrison's curler from the edge of the area flashed over.

Yet Son ensured his teammates' misses wouldn't be costly as he increased the lead with his 15th goal of the season in the 43rd minute.

Once again, it was Kane who linked up with his attacking partner to deadly effect as his perfectly-weighted cross picked out Son, who guided a clinical finish past Meslier from 10 yards.

It was the 13th time Kane and Son had combined for a goal this term, equalling the Premier League record set by Alan Shearer and Chris Sutton for Blackburn in 1994-95.

Tottenham put the result beyond doubt in the 50th minute.

Meslier has been the guilty party on several occasions when Leeds have conceded this season.

The French keeper was caught out again when Alderweireld headed Son's corner through his weak attempted save as the ball trickled just over the line.

With just seconds left, Doherty was dismissed after catching Pablo Hernandez with a late tackle.



Pochettino takes PSG hot-seat

AFP ■ PARIS

Mauricio Pochettino was officially named the new coach of French champions Paris Saint-Germain on Saturday following the sacking of Thomas Tuchel.

PSG announced on its website that former Tottenham manager Pochettino had signed a contract until June 30, 2022 with an option for an additional year.

The 48-year-old Argentine was the only name in the frame to take over at the club where he played from 2001 to 2003 after PSG abruptly ended Tuchel's involvement on December 24, reportedly for comments viewed as critical of the Qatari owners.

"This club has always held a special place in my heart. I have wonderful memories, especially of the unique atmosphere of the Parc des Princes," Pochettino said in the PSG statement.

"I return to the club today with a lot of ambition and humility, and am eager to work with some of the world's most talented players," Pochettino said, adding he would do his utmost "to give our team the combative and attacking playing identity that Parisian fans

have always loved."

His priority will be to sate the Qatari-backed club's quest for Champions League glory.

Tuchel, who oversaw the club's first ever Champions League final appearance last season, guided Neymar and company into the knock-out stages this season before being axed.

Pochettino's first major test will be the Champions League last-16 away leg at Barcelona next month.

Pochettino will take charge of his first match next Saturday at Saint-Etienne as Ligue 1 resumes after the winter break with PSG one point off the leaders in third.

Then, on February 16, he will be plotting the downfall of his compatriot Lionel Messi's Barcelona at the Camp Nou, with the return leg on March 6.

Like Tuchel, Pochettino was sacked after leading Spurs to their first ever appearance in a Champions League final, against Liverpool in 2019.

Although he has yet to win any silverware the former PSG defender's stock is high in managerial circles.

Messi ready for Huesca match

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi is fighting fit after his festive break and overcoming an ankle injury, and he's expected to be involved in Barcelona's trip to bottom-placed Huesca on Sunday.

"Messi is in good shape, he trained on December 30 and 31, even when his teammates had days off, and he's not feeling any discomfort anymore," Koeman said Saturday, according to Reuters.

"He's ready, he's feeling happy and very determined, and that's very important for us." Messi flew back from Argentina on Tuesday and was immediately in attendance at the Camp Nou when Barcelona drew 1-1 with Eibar.

The 33-year-old has scored seven and assisted once in 14 La Liga appearances, and he's added four goals and three assists in four Champions League outings. His contract in Catalonia expires at the end of the season.



Coutinho out for 3 months



AFP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona midfielder Philippe Coutinho has undergone left knee surgery and will be sidelined for "around three months," the club revealed on Saturday.

The 28-year-old Brazilian required the operation to mend a torn meniscus after he limped off the pitch late in Tuesday's home draw with Eibar.

That 1-1 stalemate left Ronald Koeman's side in sixth in La Liga, 10 points behind leaders Atletico Madrid.

Coutinho, who joined Barcelona three years ago from Liverpool but was loaned to Bayern Munich last season, joins Koeman's list of long-term absentees which includes Ansu Fati and Gerard Pique, both also sidelined with knee injuries.

Rangers beat Celtic in Old Firm

AFP ■ GLASGOW

Rangers took a giant step towards ending a decade-long wait for the Scottish Premiership title after victory over 10-man Celtic moved them a staggering 19 points ahead of their rivals.

Steven Gerrard's side made it three derby wins on the spin thanks to Callum McGregor's own goal after Nir Bitton was sent off for the Hoops for a challenge on Alfredo Morelos.

It leaves Neil Lennon's men, who still have three games in hand, with a mountain to climb in their quest for an historic 10th consecutive league title. Celtic had dominated until referee Bobby Madden showed Bitton a straight red card just after the hour but were denied by the outstanding Allan McGregor and later made to pay by the only goal of the game.

The victory maintained Rangers' perfect home record

in the league with 11 wins as Celtic suffered their first away domestic defeat in more than a year.

It was an emotional day at Ibrox as both sides paid tribute to the 66 Rangers fans who lost their lives on the 50th anniversary of the Ibrox Disaster.

Once the action got under way it was the visitors who started on the front foot and the pick of McGregor's saves was a stunning fingertip save to touch a Leigh Griffiths shot onto the post.

But it was Rangers who grabbed a huge three points with the only goal of the game coming when James Tavernier's corner was deflected in off Celtic skipper McGregor after Joe Aribo knocked it onto him.

ORDINARY

Celtic boss Neil Lennon has labelled Rangers 'ordinary' despite his side losing 1-0 in the Old Firm derby.



Lennon is under pressure with his Celtic side struggling to live with the pace being set by Rangers.

The former Leicester midfielder believes Rangers

which changed the course of the game.

"I believe Allan McGregor got man of the match so that sums up our performance today, we didn't have the luck."

"Rangers have had their luck over the piece, you get that here and there, but I'm not going to criticise the players for that performance."

"They were outstanding today and we made them look very ordinary today."

"We were by far superior and just needed the finishing touch really. We thought it would come the longer the game goes on, they would tire."

"They get a huge break with the goal and with the sending off."

Meanwhile, Rangers boss Gerrard also accepted his side were not good enough, especially in the first half.

He explained: "It's another big three points, it's another clean sheet and I'm really proud of the team."



■ **What is your role in Coolie No 1?**
I play Anjali, Sara's sister. Our father, played by Paresw Rawal, is looking for the richest of the

Talktime SHIKHA TALSANIA

She always manages to charm the audience with her acting skills and she did the same in Coolie No 1 which recently released on Amazon Prime Video. The actor shares with Musba Hashmi what attracted her to play Anjali, fun memories from the sets and how she always says no to a one dimensional role

rich husbands for us. Then we go on a trip with Raju and then the entertainment follows. You will have to watch the film to know the rest of it.

■ **What attracted you towards the role?**
The fact that she was in the *Coolie No 1* and David Dhawan's universe and also that she dances on *Husnn Hai Suhaana*, one of my favourite songs.

■ **Any memories from the sets?**

I remember with *Husnn Hai Suhaana*, Varun kept changing the steps because we wanted to make it more fun and also because the song is so fantastic. I was nervous for the first 15 minutes and then I got into the nerve and gave my suggestions as well. It was a lot of fun shooting for that song,

it is like a dream come true moment for me.

Also, to get the chance to share the screen with people I have admired my whole life like Paresw Rawal, Johnny Lever, Jaaved Jaaferi and Rajpal sir was epic. The final work with David Sir, who has collaborated with my father so many times, was just fantastic.

■ **An advice given by your father that helped you on the way?**

Yes, he has always been there to give me great advice, both of my parents have. He has always been supportive. He has always told me to have fun, keep your head down, keep working, make good friends while you are at it, don't take yourself too seriously and stay grounded. This is the blanket advice that he has always given me. For this film, he just told me to have fun and that's exactly what I did.

■ **Has there been a role that you turned down?**

I have always said no to a one

My father has always told me to have fun, keep your head down, keep working, make good friends while you are at it, don't take yourself too seriously and stay grounded. This is the blanket advice that he has always given me

dimensional character that was offered to me in the past quite a few times. It was of a fat girl and that's all that there was to the character. She is either hungry or horny. These characters just don't excite me as an actor and there's a lot more to me than just being a fat girl. This industry, by the way, has always been kind to me and I have been able to find opportunities that challenge me as an actor.

■ **What has been your take away from the industry in all these years?**

There are some great people around. Make the most of your time when you are on the sets of films, have fun, just observe people, take notes since there is so much to learn every second when you are here in the industry.

■ **What's there in the pipeline?**

All my attention is directed towards *Coolie No 1*. Also, there is some amazing work coming up. I am going back on stage and once the official announcements are made, I will let everyone know about it.

Ringling in new trends

The New Year has brought with it loads of hopes and optimism for a better future. SUNDAY PIONEER lists the trends in the different sectors that will rule the year

Get inked in style



Realism tattoo: Realism tattoos are characterized by maximizing the life-like quality of anything we see in the world- monuments, animals, flowers etc . It can also be categorized as a "3D" tattoo with accurate representations of real-life imagery.

A realism tattoo done by an inexperienced artist or someone who hasn't trained in that particular style can be a disaster. But if done right, it will surely blow your mind. India's first Award-winning, internationally experienced artist, Lokesh Verma, Founder of Devil'z Tattoo is best known for his coloured realism and portraits style of tattooing that is mastered by only a few people across the world!

Sternum tattoos: Also known as chest or underboob tattoo, Sternum tattoo is considered among one of the best chest tattoo for women because it looks great aesthetically and gives a feminine feel.

Soundwave/talking tattoos: A new, revolutionary way

to immortalise voices or your favourite tune through body art is the futuristic, latest invention in the world of tattooing.

Here's how it works: Record an audio clip between 5 to 30 seconds of your loved ones and send it to the guys at Devil'z Tattoo through Whatsapp or email. They will create a soundwave of that audio clip and ink it on your skin permanently which you can playback by scanning it with your mobile phone whenever you want to hear their precious voice.

Armband tattoos: Armband tattoos are for people who want very bold tattoos. While armband tattoos are popular among men, it has also gained a lot of female attention nowadays. Armbands are usually like a bracelet usually done on arms as the name itself suggests. They can be of different types — solid black or with a theme like tribal, mandala, polynesian, nature-related or space-related. An armband tattoo can look very cool and aesthetically pleasing without taking up too much space on the forearm or bicep.

Portrait tattoos: Mostly rendered in a realistic style that portrays a head shot of a person. Portrait tattoos are usually for tattoo lovers who want to memorialise an important figure or person. They typically represent something or someone extremely meaningful — could be of a loved one who recently passed away, a newly born baby, a pet or a favourite musician.

Minimal tattoos: "Less is more" is the word on the street. Too much makeup, too many accessories, loud clothing, etc. will be sure to lose just about anyone's attention. People simply don't have any clue where to look first. The same applies to tattoos. Often, it's the dainty tattoos that have a huge influence on your style. Want to convey across a powerful message in a subtle way? Then small tattoos characterized with clean lines are the way to go!

Miniscule tattoos are one kind of tattoos that are super discreet, incredibly detailed, pretty and aren't likely to date. That is why the millennials, especially women still haven't grown tired of the tiny trend.

Decorate dreams



2020 has surely been the year of mostly staying indoors. While we were all left in our abode craving for comfort in every possible aspect, we ended up creating and reimagining the space around us in the most innovative and multifunctional manner. At some point, we turned our living space into a multipurpose office room and at other hand, our bedrooms were no less of a canvas.

Where we all have unprecedentedly turned ourselves into a decor expert, there are a few inculcated experiments that have earned the title of trends and shall stay with us in the new year too.

■ **Multi-purpose furniture**
A definite uptick and fascination with multi-purpose furniture pieces is already visible, and the trend is set to get bigger in the coming year. Moreover, products

which can shapeshift — have different forms and sizes when in use and when not in use — are a hot favourite amongst urban dwellers as they seamlessly fit into compact houses and are a novel design trend, says Pritika Singh, Founder, Mohh, a contemporary furnishing brand.

■ **Minimalism**

Less is more is what we have learnt in 2020, creating a minimalist bedroom look has surfaced as a new trend especially when people are enjoying their work as well as new learnings in their bedrooms. Minimalism is all about following a style inspiration and theme while aging the declutter game. Thus, 2021 will see a mixture of mood and preference. A subtle theme lover would definitely go for dark hues, textured, printed organic fabrics and while on the other side, the year will also witness bedrooms turned into an art using geometric and abstract prints, comments Rajiv Merchant, President Retail, Indo Count Industries Ltd

■ **Light furniture and opulent elements**

A wave towards lighter furniture — in weight and finish is also gaining traction as the younger audience is moving away from the traditional darker, heavier furniture which tends to look bulky and are looking for modular furniture with light finishes, particularly white, distressed whites etc. adds Pritika Singh, Founder Mohh. Lastly, we may also see more opulent elements such as wicker, inlay, gold and silver finishes make way into modern designs as it neatly ties together the old-time aesthetic sensibility with the need for modern designs as India's growing urban population, largely millennials, become the country's biggest consumer segment.

■ **Growing and showing off greens**

Spending more time indoors has let people turn their abode into a lush green place following the minimal trick. Thus, 2021 will see the range of innovative indoor planters, adds Pritika Singh, Founder, Mohh.



'I don't want to be labeled as party song singer'

AASTHA GILL recently released her latest track Crazy lady. The singer-songwriter speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about what the song is about and how from a journalist she went on to being a singer

■ **What is your latest song about?**

The song is about my own life experiences. It is important to be a bit crazy to make it big in life. I have been a crazy person when it comes to making decisions and breaking barriers. In this sense, it is important to be crazy and hence the title of the song as well.

■ **From a Bachelor's in Journalism, how did you end up a singer?**

It was a crazy decision on my part. One day I got a call from Raftaar *bhai* when I was working in advertising; a profession that I had decided to pursue. He asked me to reach the studio to dub my first Bollywood song. I took a leap of faith and left everything behind, didn't look back and got into singing.

■ **Your father is a musician. What made you pursue journalism then?**

I had seen my dad struggle as a musician. I had seen so many others in his field waiting for the correct opportunity. I, therefore, wanted a stable job. This was my outlook when I would talk about my career graph. I loved advertising; I had learnt graphic designing and getting into creatives. But I suppose destiny had something else in mind. When I got this opportunity to sing, I don't know what happened. I just grabbed the opportunity. I couldn't say no to it.

■ **Did you train in music?**

Yes, partially. I wanted to learn and follow music for myself. Hence learn piano till Class IV; I have learnt classical music and western as well. But this was on and off all through growing up.

■ **How did you end up collaborating with Sony Music India?**

I have been with them for the last six years; that is when I signed up with them. All my big projects have been on it; it is like family to me.

■ **The year 2020 was tough for almost all artists. Was it the same for you?**

Yes, it has been tough. We are used to travelling and going out and being out there in the world. It has been a draining — emotionally and financially. Most of our income is based on the live shows that we do. Doing these is still not back on track. But I tried and made use of this time to my advantage and reinvented myself; I started penning down songs and tried my hand at production too.

■ **How did you get your first break?**

The first was *Dhup Chik* for *Fugly*. Like I said, I got a call from Raftaar *bhai*. I was not sure if it was a Bollywood song. I was just an ordinary person doing my advertising job. I knew it is not easy to get a break into Bollywood. But this song just came my way. While the first break was easy, the struggle started after this. I left my job and it was a fresh start. I was clueless where to go and what to do. It was hard work to get my single debut released. *DJ Wale Babu* happened due to Badshah *bhai*. He was introduced to me by Raftaar *bhai*. *Abhi Toh Party*, I dubbed and started travelling with Badshah *bhaiyya*. The struggle was to do better. We tried cracking the benchmark and couldn't find anything. Then *Buzz* happened and it launched me as a solo pop singer.

■ **Is this the reason behind Crazy Lady — to be at the top all the time?**

I would not say I am at the top. I have still many miles to go before I am anywhere near the top. But yes, I am proud of this song because I have penned the song as well with Charan and Kanika.

■ **What kind of music do you like to listen to?**

I listen to all kinds of music — Punjabi, Hindi, Hip-hop, Blues, English and Bollywood. It completely depends on my mood. I draw my inspiration from whether people will be able to relate to the song we pen down.

■ **What next?**

I have a few collaborations that I am working on. I have a release lined-up. My next step is to explore genres and not be labeled as a party song singer.

A new year means new resolutions and a new outlook towards life, specifically your love life. And what better way to jumpstart your dating experiences than on the first Sunday of the year, popularly known as 'Dating Sunday'. This particular day is known to have the highest number of singletons looking for love or a fresh start in their love-lives! And 2021 will not be any different. Going by tradition, in 2020, OkCupid witnessed over 13 million new conversations during the first week of January around the world. The positive mood

It's a dating Sunday

continued through the month with over 54 million conversations during the entire month of January. This year, the international dating app is predicting upwards of 15 million new conversations on and around Dating Sunday.

To make 2021 your year of love, OkCupid has shared the following simple tips to up your dating, particularly if you're looking for a meaningful relationship. So, get

online and get dating!

Update, Update, Update!

An estimated one in three dating app users don't update their dating app profile once they put it up - but if you add a new photo or a new story, most dating apps treat you like a new person and the algorithm kicks into gear, showing you to more people. People who complete their OkCupid profile get 200% more matches

Upload a variety of photos (more than just selfies!)

Share photos that show what makes you, you, whether about working in your make-shift office space at home or a recent hobby that you've taken up. Here's the secret — you want to make it easy for that other person out there to reach out about the photo. Photos that include animals are 3x more likely to get attention.

Show don't tell

Instead of describing yourself with a long list of adjectives, talk about the things you love and enjoy doing. If you love dogs; show a picture with you and Fido in the park; if you're an adrenaline junkie, mention the time you went skydiving; if you're funny describe the time you made everyone laugh with your maid of honor toast. OkCupid's essays are a perfect place to show potential matches with these aspects of yourself.

Send a meaningful message to initiate conversation

While it is true that women are 2.5x more likely to get a response than men if they initiate the conversation. Men shouldn't lose heart. Look at a prospective match's profile and comment on something specific that you like. Keep it around 140 characters and please don't say "hey." Try to engage on a specific photo or question, such as "Pizza is the best food out there."

And yes, saying "hey" in a first message is almost equivalent to saying nothing, this greeting has an 92% chance of being completely ignored.

2020 has been a year of cancelled trips and missed experiences. The New Year is here and we can't wait to talk about what is on the horizon. 2020 has been a year like no other and while much has been said about the adversity, positive news around the vaccine rollout has also uplifted spirits helping all see a glimmer of hope.

The pandemic has been a shape-shifting event when it comes to consumer behaviour and preferences. Sifting the travel search and booking data on MakeMyTrip over the last nine months, here are the definitive trends that will shape how Indians are going to travel, come 2021.

Revenge travel on bucket list: Revenge is a dish best served cold and after having been left out in the cold for almost one full year — expect travellers hit the road with a vengeance. Travel is on top of mind as people look at making a fresh start. Searches on our platform related to travel destinations and activities reaffirm that travel may have slowed down but travel planning has been on in full swing for travel dates as far out as fall of next year. People are going to spend time and effort planning their excursions for future travel in 2021 relying on platforms that provide treasure trove of information and booking choices.

Travel fresh and contactless

Rise of slow, immersive travel: The one thing that this year has taught us is to slow down and somewhat appreciate an unhurried life. So be it a workation, staycation or a weekend getaway, travellers are gravitating towards fuller and richer immersive travel experiences that allow them to connect, explore and unwind. More and more people will prefer travel that balances their itinerary with a languid pace affording them the time to explore more while eliminating the stress of rushing around many places to tick the boxes.

More takers for premium stays & non-hotels: Safety and hygiene have emerged as the new comfort and luxury in travel. The traditional in-stay checklist has now made way for questions like — does the stay ensure adequate social distancing, is there a private kitchen, can I have an extra room for help or support staff and so on. Post-COVID, travellers are looking for more control over their stay — leading many to opt for higher category hotels, premium homestays, independent villas and non-hotels that promise comfort of a vacation while meeting addi-



tional requirements. So, if in 2019, one in every two Indian traveller was thinking of booking an alternative accommodation property (results from the survey conducted by MakeMyTrip's

Consumer Insights team in October 2019), come 2021 more Indians than ever will be booking villas, homestays, vacation rentals and non-hotels for their travel.

Weekend getaways to become the new weekend goals: Urban Indians were just warming up to the idea of weekend breaks in recent years but the pandemic seems to have flipped the switch for good. More and more Indians have tasted the fun of quick getaways during the pandemic induced travel restrictions and this travel habit is all set to become the norm. On MakeMyTrip we have seen a 70 per cent recovery in the short-haul leisure travel segment.

Contactless travel a reality: Post the pandemic, the travel and hospitality industry has made significant efforts to boost confidence among travellers by making services contactless as far as possible.

From contactless check-in at airports and hotels; to ordering food and beverages and concierge services at hotels online, contactless offerings are becoming a norm more than an exception. In parallel, travellers are also warming up to the idea of using contactless services and also building appreciation for the tech-rich experiences that promise travel safety, upfront.



I think it's a mistake when women cover their emotions to look tough. I say let's own who we are and use it as a strength
— Gal Gadot

the pioneer agenda

#BeTheBetterGuy
A Road Safety Initiative



FROM THE INSIDE

2

Tips to lead a successful life

Mindful decisions and action are the keys to a successful life. We list 10 things to give up in order to declutter your mind



4

Be ready to brave challenges

Pandemic apart, the country appears to be headed for challenging times in this year on other counts as well



NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI, the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, spoke to *Agenda* on a wide range of issues concerning his ministries and laid out the roadmap for developmental and economic recovery after COVID-19

BACK IN THE FAST LANE

In India, over 1,50,000 people died on the roads in 2019. While the number was less in 2020, owing largely to the Coronavirus pandemic, what, in your view, are the main reasons for such a high number of road deaths? Would you say that with the Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, the situation has improved of late? Are people driving better?

It is indeed a matter of grave concern for the country. It is true that a lot many people die in India due to road accidents. In my view, there are four reasons for such high road deaths:

The first is poor road engineering — primarily wrong designs. We have identified these as “black spots”. So far, we have been able to fix nearly 1,200-1,250 black spots. There is still a list of about 3,000 black spots on the National Highways waiting to be fixed, and to improve those, we have made two policies/plans. A plan of ₹7,000 crore has been approved by Asian Development Bank and another ₹7,000 crore has been granted by the World Bank.

In this, the Indian Government will contribute 50 per cent. All of this money would be used to fix the black spots or the accident spots. For the new roads, care has been taken to incorporate the best road engineering, one that includes a lot of preventive measures. Underpasses, bridges and signals have been designed keeping in account multiple cross-sections of roads. We have studied this issue a lot and very carefully and improved upon it.

Two, after a road accident, immediate medical help is required. On this front, we have tried to provide medical vans immediately and saved several lives. Now we are trying to build helipads on road-sides (based on suggestions that this would expedite the help extended to the injured), so they can be shifted quickly to the hospitals and more lives can be saved. Emergency services certainly is the second most important aspect for us.

The third “issue” (if I may call it that) is that of education (or lack of it). It is important that proper education be imparted on the rules of the road. For this, beginning with the primary classes, we are trying to inculcate a sense of discipline and respect for the rules of the road in the younger generation.

Earlier, such messages were put across to people by way of inculcating fear of the law rather than respect for it. We have in the recent past roped in Bollywood celebrities such as Shah Rukh Khan and Akshay Kumar, to share the message of road safety and importance of following road rules. These campaigns were carried out on big platforms in order to widen their outreach and create more awareness among the masses.

The fourth aspect is enforcement. As you might be aware, for the first time, we studied the vehicle rules of seven-eight countries across the globe (with the help of the World Bank) and came up with a modern Act (which has since been ratified by Parliament). Owing to this, rigorous implementation of the laws and rules is being carried out, and we have incorporated an intelligent traffic system for road safety. For example, if a car crosses a red signal, the camera will immediately capture a photo and the fine slip would be sent directly to your house.

So while we are consistently working on all four aspects, I must share that much more is being thought of and planned at the Government level to make the roads safer for our public. We all are very sensitive to this issue.

The number of fatalities in the age group of 18-35 is more than 60 per cent. By way of such accidents, we lose

Agenda Series

1

A direct and candid conversation with the changemakers and nation builders of India

“SO FAR, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIX NEARLY 1,200-1,250 BLACK SPOTS. THERE IS STILL A LIST OF ABOUT 3,000 BLACK SPOTS ON THE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS WAITING TO BE FIXED, AND TO IMPROVE THOSE, WE HAVE MADE TWO POLICIES/PLANS. A PLAN OF ₹7,000 CRORE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND ANOTHER ₹7,000 CRORE HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE WORLD BANK”

about three per cent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). And this is no small number. With help from the World Bank, Tamil Nadu's incumbent Government has done commendable work in this area and reduced the number of accidents and casualties by 25 per cent. However, one thing stands true: Due to Covid-19, the on-road traffic was light and, naturally, the number of accidents has reduced to a large extent.

Despite the current scenario, sincere attempts have been made in this direction by the Tamil Nadu and other State Governments in which the National Highways, state highways, district roads and city highways are under the scanner. We have started working on various projects at different levels to increase awareness. Recently, a road safety council was also set up. We are working on this very seriously.

We had set our sights on reducing accidents and deaths by 50 per cent in the next 30 years. I made this declaration in Stockholm, asserting India's commitment to make our roads safer and accident-free. We will definitely reduce accidents and deaths by 50 per cent before 2024. This is my belief. We and all other stakeholders are working very seriously and speedily to achieve this end.

Also, due to the new Act, the control over rule violators has increased. The punishments have become more severe, the amount of fines has increased and automobile engineering has also seen a lot of improvement. I have asked the automobile manufacturers to put in airbags even in economy models. Overall, I feel that the results in the forthcoming years will be good and we are sensitive towards this issue.

One of the best things to have happened is the help given to the Government by the media, both electronic and print, in spreading awareness and putting out the importance of this issue in the public domain. It has received good response, too.

Sir, you just spoke on need for better road safely education. Due to the pandemic, shared mobility services like Uber and Ola have been hit and various new drivers and aggregators have emerged. How do you plan to educate these people? Even in schools, do you think driving training should be given and included in the syllabus? How do you get the new drivers to follow it?

There is a shortage of about 22 lakh drivers in our country. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has also made some plans and policies, but there still remains a vast shortage of drivers. I have decided that I will not allow driverless cars to enter India because our country is poor and driving provides a source of employment.

While on this issue, let me tell you that our plans were stayed by the Tamil Nadu High Court so we couldn't go ahead. There are about 100-150 driving schools in our country, whereas we need about 2,000 driving schools. These driving schools have to come up primarily not in big cities like Mumbai, Delhi or Pune but in tribal/backward areas where the socially and economically backward people live; places which are poor and aspiring districts, where there is no employment...

I am happy to announce that we now have a new plan. In this plan, there is provision for driving training schools. During my tenure, I aim to open at least 1,000 driving training schools across the country. We have already prepared a scheme for this. We will not only back every such school, we would also help set up new institutes, which would also provide the fitness and pollution certificates. To achieve that certain machines are also being procured. This is being done to lower the pollution levels on the one hand and to generate new employment even in the private sector, on the other. This is the attempt we are making and now the new rules will hasten the process.

FROM PAGE 1

BACK IN THE FAST LANE

The last question about road safety is that recently there was a lot of controversy about the Global NCAP test in which various popular cars failed but India's own manufactures — Mahindra and Tata — performed very well. As Bharat NCAP is set to start from this year, do you think the cars will now become safer and would you want to say anything about the Global NCAP results?

Here, I'd like to share that India's public transport system definitely needs to be strengthened. In our country, more than 18 crore vehicles have been registered. Given the growing number of cars owned per family, parking issues are increasingly growing, especially in the big cities.

So, we are trying to encourage people to switch to public transport by offering great connectivity (for instance, from Mumbai to Pune and Mumbai to Nashik). We also plan to introduce double-decker AC buses, with economy class at the lower level and executive class at the upper. Just as in flights, food and beverages will be provided on board and these buses will run on bio-fuel.

In some of the hill regions, besides ropeways and cable cars, funicular railways are being planned. These take less time to build and cause much less pollution. We are also making the E-highways electric. The Mumbai-Delhi highway is being built at a cost of ₹1 lakh crore and 30-40 per cent work has already been accomplished. This highway will be completed in about two years and people will be able to travel from one metro to the other in about 12 hours. A pilot project for this is in the works.

We are trying to introduce various innovative technologies. For instance, for the very first time in our country, we have initiated a project in Nagpur which has received approval from railways, the Maharashtra Government and the Urban Affairs Ministry. It is called Broad Gauge Metro. As against ₹350 crore per km that is being spent to build a Metro line, the Broad Gauge Metro would cost only ₹5 crore per km to build. We have made use of the existing broad gauge and made an eight-boxed Broad Gauge Metro which will run from Gondia to Nagpur, Nagpur to Amravati, Amravati to Narkhed and from Narkhed to Nagpur, then from Nagpur to Chandrapur to Ramtek.

This entire 850-900 km broad gauge line is being used to replace the standard gauge with eight-boxed broad gauge double-decker in which passengers can sit on both the upper and lower levels. It will have an AC first class chair car and a second class chair car. In addition, there will be one box for milk, fruits and vegetables and one box for restaurants. It will work just like an airline. This Broad Gauge Metro will travel at the speed of about 160km/hr as compared to our passenger car which has the speed of about 40km/hr and express which goes at 60km/hr.

To put it in straightforward terms, this Broad Gauge Metro will replace passenger cars on Delhi to Chandigarh and Delhi to Jaipur route and the travellers would be able to book a seat for themselves just as they do for airlines. This would fetch the Government good revenue and cut down on our losses, and people would be able to travel more comfortably. The dis-

ance of 250 km would be covered in two hours straight.

The Metro will stop at every station for about a minute and then quickly gain speed. This technology is also in place and we have worked a lot on it. Basically, public transport on electricity is much more beneficial for people from the perspectives of pollution, ticket cost and safety.

I would also like to share that recently, we made a *jalmarg* on River Ganga — from Varanasi to Haldia and from Prayagraj to Varanasi. And now we have given a proposal to the World Bank for a similar project on River Yamuna from Delhi to Mathura, Mathura to Agra, Agra to Etawah and from Etawah to Prayagraj. So if we go on water, decidedly public transport and waterways are the cheapest.

Here, I must share that I have fulfilled my promise as the Transport Minister to make airplanes land on water. An amphibious aircraft service has been launched in Gujarat which touches down both on water and land. The day is not far when such amphibious aircraft will start operating widely in our country.

Not just cars, scooters and buses, but new innovations have been devised comprising electric buses, trolley buses, double-decker buses, public transport running on electricity, Broad Gauge Metro, amphibious planes and suchlike to bring about a transport revolution. I am working hard with my team to bring about all the changes in the transport sector. Hundred new airports are being currently constructed; naturally dams will become water ports and rivers will be used to build a new network which will reduce accidents, pollution and expenditure while being sustainable and comfortable.

You have recently announced highway projects specific to the Northeast. Can you tell us a bit more about that connect in the remote areas?

In the Northeast, we are currently working on projects worth about ₹1 lakh crore. We are building six bridges on the Brahmaputra river and, in many places of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura, we have put in a lot of work to create good road network. India is changing and so is the Northeast. Even in Jammu & Kashmir, we are building tunnels at a cost of ₹11,000 crore. Work on Zoji La has started and the road to Mansarovar is almost 85 per cent complete.

There have been some issues regarding the Char Dham project following the Supreme Court verdict which I feel will be resolved soon. In the Northeast, we are making a number of bridges on the Brahmaputra river and several roads are coming up in the backward areas.

I am greatly inspired by a quote by American President John F Kennedy which states: "American roads are not good because America is rich, but America is rich because American roads are good." Roads bring prosperity and now Arunachal, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, all have good roads.

To move on to MSMEs, now that Aatmanirbhar Bharat being our big slogan, what plans or policies have been made to benefit the MSMEs in bringing in and conducting businesses?



The idea of *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* is that India must be turned into a happy, prosperous, strong and No. 1 global economy, and to do this we have to reduce our imports and increase our exports. We have to upgrade our technologies and our primary aim should be to prepare and produce in India whatever things we import today. Without compromising on the quality, we have to reduce the production costs, power costs, labour costs and logistic costs. These factors make for the basis of our work in sector.

The best example for this is that our automobile sector is in talks for electric cars, electric buses, electric two-wheelers, electric trucks, so slowly ethanol, methanol, biodiesel, bio CNG, electric, hydrogen fuels are coming into India and, through these, a major change is underway in the MSME sector.

I believe that in the future, we will definitely become a large exporting economy. The sector currently contributes 30 per cent to our GDP but we will soon increase that to about 40 per cent. Our country's total export owing to MSMEs is 48 per cent and we plan to increase that to 60 per cent. We have created 11 crore jobs in the past five years and we are attempting to create 5 crore new jobs.

Our village industry has a turnover of ₹80,000 crore and, in two years, we aim to increase it to ₹5 lakh

“OUR VILLAGE INDUSTRY HAS A TURNOVER OF ₹80,000 CRORE AND, IN TWO YEARS, WE AIM TO INCREASE IT TO ₹5 LAKH CRORE. FOR THIS, WE HAVE IDENTIFIED SECTORS, TOOL ROOMS, TECHNOLOGY CENTRES, NEW INNOVATIONS FOR SKILLED WORKERS AND DESIGNS. I BELIEVE THAT IN THE COMING TIMES, THIS SECTOR WILL BECOME THE BACKBONE OF DEVELOPMENT



crore. For this we have identified sectors, tool rooms, technology centres, new innovations for skilled workers and designs. I believe that in the coming times, this sector will become the backbone of development and economy. And our attempts, including the packages handed out by the Prime Minister, will be used. I feel that positive results will be seen in the next two years.

In the interim, our GDP had fallen for a while but there has been a significant rise in this quarter and slowly there will be a rise in every quarter. Currently, due to Covid-19, we are in a lot of trouble, even our economy has faced a lot of challenges but soon we will defeat the virus and will be a developing economy going forward.

You have been talking about FDI which has also been affected by the pandemic. So is there a plan or policy in place to fix this?

On a large scale, we are trying to take MSMEs towards the stock market. We have done funding of ₹20,000 crore and the MSMEs which have a good turnover, which file income tax returns and have a good track record, besides maintaining a good bank and GST record, we will rate them and when they go to the capital market, they will be awarded with 15 per cent by the Indian Government. That is our policy and work has already started on this front.

In our country, insurance economy, pension economy and share economy is fairly lagging in comparison to the world, so if we go into stock market, it will really benefit the MSMEs. Besides, if the various MSMEs, which are earning profits and exporting material, go into the capital market, public money will definitely be involved. A very good aspect in all of it is that, now when we deposit money in the banks we get low interest, but we will slowly ask people to invest in MSME shares so that the share value increases along with the return value. With all these attempts, I am hopeful that a positive impact will be seen within a year.

A bit about the FASTag system that comes into place soon...

Till now, the FASTag system is about 75 per cent complete and from February 15, 2021, FASTag would be mandatory for all. Everyone would have to go through FASTag only, so there will be seamless traffic. In time, you won't even see toll booths, there will only be cameras which will scan your vehicle details when you enter. A photo will be clicked at the point of exit and that amount of toll will be deducted from your bank account. This entire system would be seamless and will be operative in the country in about two-three years. Soon, there will be no need to stop at the toll plazas.

There is a similar system in place in Portugal...that there is no stoppage, there is only a card reader, no need to pay so through this, will the efficiency also increase on the highways?

Our toll income has been ₹24,000 crore as of now. In spite of Covid-19 travel restrictions and other hiccups, our estimate is that it will go up to ₹34,000 crore. ₹10,000 crore would increase owing to the reduction in thefts and when this system will be 100 per cent operative in the next five years, the NH toll income will be more than ₹1 lakh crore. So this is a major positive change due to the digitised system; all thefts and loopholes will be eliminated and there will be a lot of benefits.

You spoke of intelligent traffic system among other things... What do you think would really improve through better technology, traffic behaviour and management?

Technology has the power to impact a lot of lives. What we do need to do is change people's mindset and behaviour. There has to be fear as well as respect towards the law and the law must be followed. For this, education not just in schools but also public education, is very important in which the road safety council would include NGOs, educational institutes, universities, newspaper organizations and the media.

With the help of all these, public campaigns will be launched to make people aware of both technology and changing people's mindset and behavior. Even students and children — basically all future citizens — are also being educated in this aspect. When all the stakeholders make positive attempts, only then will we get positive, foreign-like results.

Interview by Kushan Mitra & Navneet Mendiratta

10 THINGS TO GIVE UP FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIFE

Mindful decisions & action are the keys to a successful life, says SAMRIDH SETH, as he offers tips to declutter your mind

Procrastination is a trait that has been learnt by us due to technological advancements over the years. But in our pursuit for a stable, promising and illustrious life, moving ahead after shedding this quality is the only way out. Mindful decisions and action are the keys to a successful life. However, it is easier said than done. Certain challenges come in our way, of which some are dependent on the external factors while others are a part of our lifestyle. Using corrective measures to check certain practices that we follow would certainly help us lead a life that helps us be at peace. Listing 10 things that would certainly help you lead your life with much more clarity.

- **Day Dreaming:** Dream big and work big. But that excludes day dreaming. This process is both time consuming and emotionally draining. All you do with daydreaming is lose out on time that you could have spent working on your dream
- **Planning:** It is good to think ahead and be organised but to just keep



planning what is to be done can be time-consuming. Rather, focus on action.

- **Waiting for the right time:** There is never the right time and every time is right. Get up and start working on what you have in mind. Be it simple reading or a new project, just start working on it and things will start falling in place.
- **Dwelling in the past:** No point crying over spilt milk. Be here and now! The more time and energy you give to the past, the less you'll have to propel you into the future.
- **Final Destination:** It's the journey that matters more than the destination. There is always room for improving, learning, excelling as you go along!
- **Perfection:** Perfection is mere illusion. Give what you are doing your best ability, and then release it out into the world and see what happens. Perfection is a myth, it's only excellence what one can achieve.
- **Doubt:** Doubt and fear of failure only put you through self-criticism

and impact your growth adversely. Don't be afraid of the world out there, embrace it, it is your world too!

- **Overthinking:** It only creates anxiety in the mind. The mind starts exploring all the worst-case scenarios and builds up the adrenaline response (fight, flight or freeze) which we take as anxiety.
- **Comfort Zone:** Do not hesitate to explore something out of the box. Make the uncomfortable zone your comfort zone. You will come back richer in experience and wiser.
- **Blame game:** It is far easier to pin the blame on others than own up to one's faults. Own the mistake, understand where you went wrong and then learn and improve. Never commit the same mistake and don't hold others responsible for your wrong doing. Don't be afraid of failure. Take failure as the stepping stone for success.

The writer is the author of Past Dwellers

World is indebted to anti-terror hero Gen Soleimani

The year 2020 had just begun. While people were engaged in the New Year's celebrations, on January 3, the sad news of the assassination of Major General Qasem Soleimani, the great commander of anti-terrorism forces, shocked the world. US President Donald Trump's admission of this act of terror added to the global bewilderment.

Now, ahead of the first anniversary of the dastardly assassination of martyr General Soleimani and Arabaen or Chehellom (40 days following martyrdom) of martyr Professor Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, people in Iran and around the world are holding commemoration ceremonies to pay tribute to these late Iranian icons.

Respected both by friends and foes as a major military tactician, General Soleimani was the world's most talented military figure in the field of counter-terrorism.

For many people worldwide, General Qasem Soleimani was an anti-terror hero, who played a key role in defeating Daesh (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria. However, US President Donald Trump ordered his assassination in an air strike during his official visit to Baghdad and while being received by the Iraqi authorities at the International Baghdad Airport. This cowardly terror act was the biggest gift from the US to takfiri terrorism and its supporters.

General Soleimani had played a major role in defending the region against Daesh's terror campaign. As foreign-backed takfiri outfits raised their heads in 2014, the late commander emerged as a key strategist and ingenious commander leading Iranian military advisers assisting Syrian and Iraqi troops in battles against terrorists.

He assisted the Baghdad Government in operations to retake the strategic oil-rich city of Tikrit from Daesh in 2015. General Soleimani was on the front line of anti-terrorism operations, from Iraq's

Mosul to Syria's Aleppo. The General also took personal command of the battle against takfiri militants in the Syrian city of Bukamal, located in Dayr al-Zawr Province, in November 2017.

Finally, in November 2017, he declared the end of Daesh's territorial rule in a letter addressed to the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The late General's anti-terror drive was also beneficial for India's national interests. His efforts were key to the rescue of Indian nationals, including a group of 11 Indian nurses, trapped by Daesh in Iraq. In fact, from General Soleimani's point of view, terrorism recognises no religion or specific country and it may take victims from all corners of the world, irrespective of their religion, faith or nationality. For this great man, delivering relief and rescue to all people of the world by fighting against terrorism and extending support to victims of terror was a basic principle.

Martyr Soleimani had a humble and kind face in his encounter and interactions not only with military officers but also with the common people and that is why he was so popular with the people of region and many memorial functions were spontaneously erected to observe his martyrdom after his sudden demise. Inside Iran, in his farewell funeral, millions of people in different cities poured to the streets to attend this ceremony.

Martyr Professor Mohsen Fakhrizadeh had also an outstanding role in different peaceful scientific projects in Iran, the most recent example of which is the development of the first indigenous Covid-19 test kit and vaccine, which is a great contribution to Iran's national efforts in curbing the Covid-19 pandemic and production of its vaccine at a time when Iran is under the inhumane, unjust and unilaterally imposed sanctions by the United States.



The remains of a vehicle hit by missiles outside the Baghdad airport. The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps, Maj Gen Qasem Soleimani (inset) was killed in the attack AP/File photo

These dastardly acts are committed against Iran which itself has so far been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism in order to establish and contribute to peace and stability in the region and the world and such acts are a flagrant violation of international rules and humanitarian principles. The US' criminal move to target General Soleimani has once again proved to the people of the world who is really backing the

terrorists and that the US definition of terrorism is defined by its self-interests and is rooted on double standards.

It goes without saying that had it not been for martyr Soleimani's valuable efforts, Daesh would have spread its rule of terror throughout a wider part of the region. Curbing of Daesh also prevented the takfiri terrorists from causing terror in other parts of the world, including South Asia. By

giving a severe blow to the foundation of Daesh, more recruitments for this terrorist group from other countries were also prevented.

To honour the memory of martyr General Soleimani and pay tribute to all scarifying their lives for the peace and tranquility in the region and beyond, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposes the following: designation of January 3 as "World Counter-Terrorism Day" by the

international community and dedicating an annual International Martyr Soleimani Award to the heroes of fighting with terror.

Last but not least, it is hoped that 2021 may be a year of peace, tranquility, health, prosperity and development for the people of our region and the entire world.

(The writer is the Ambassador of Iran to India)

Had it not been for martyr Soleimani's valuable efforts, ISIS would have spread its rule of terror throughout a wider part of the region. The late General's anti-terror drive was also beneficial for India's national interests. His efforts were key to the rescue of Indian nationals, including a group of 11 Indian nurses, trapped by ISIS terrorists in Iraq



ALI CHEGENI

PERSPECTIVE

A new global Britain post-Brexit

The United Kingdom (UK) has finally left the European Union (EU). The latest Brexit withdrawal agreement is officially titled the "Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community". This historic treaty was concluded between the EU, the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) and the UK on January 24, 2020. The three main signatories of the agreement are: Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of the UK, and Charles Michael and Ursula von der Leyen for the EU and the Euratom respectively.

It's a divorce, a bitter one, after four and a half years of hard bargaining accompanied by high-level diplomatic and political negotiations since June 23, 2016. The UK officially left the trading bloc on January 31, 2020, despite the EU being the nearest and largest trading partner. What the UK claims is that decades of tension with the neighbouring EU member-nations has been resolved amicably with a deal. Johnson said, "Having taken back the control of our money, our borders, our laws and our waters by leaving the European Union by January 31, we now seize this moment to forge a fantastic relationship with our European neighbours, based on free trade and friendly cooperation". Further he reiterated that "at the heart of this bill is one of the biggest free trade agreements in the world". Now only time will tell whether the implementation of the deal has been fruitful, and what the UK could achieve from the dissociation from the trading bloc.

For Johnson, signing the agreement after the lawmakers from across the board gave their approval on the trade pact is a historic moment. It's a hard-fought 1,200 pages document which landed in



London after receiving the signature of EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels.

The lawmakers in the House of Commons voted 521-73 in favour of the agreement sealed between the UK and the EU a day before the Christmas eve.

However, the Europeans have lamented the departure of the UK from the EU. For them, this divorce will be too expensive and it might herald a doom for the country. It is bringing an end to the seamless trade and decades of partnership with the EU. But the vast majority of the MPs in the British Parliament voice that despite having all the odds ahead the post-Brexit, the current deal is much better than a chaotic rupture from the EU.

The EU claims it has respected the major red lines between both the signatories of the agreement. The EU has finally agreed the hard border

on the island of Ireland. Thus it has been able to preserve the four freedoms of its cherished "single market" which are free movement of goods, services, capital and people. The UK gets its zero tariffs, zero quota goods trade with the EU that finally prevents the European Court of Justice in settling any trade disputes. On fisheries, the EU has agreed to give up 25 per cent of its existing quotas in the UK waters for a transition period of five and a half years after which annual renegotiation will be initiated. However, the free movement of people will be hit the hardest ever.

How is Brexit affecting India's relations with the UK as well as the EU? En route to realise the vision of "Global Britain", the relationship between the UK and India is turning to be more complex. Considering the growing change in the traditional UK-India ties, then UK Prime Minister Theresa May had vis-

ited Delhi as early in November 2016. In 2016, the UK was the fifth largest export partner of India behind the US, the UAE, Hong Kong and China.

However, it accounted for only 3.3 per cent of total exports, valued at USD 8.66. Whereas India's exports to other European countries were almost 16 per cent in the year the Brexit referendum took place. And in the import zone, the UK is not a potential country for Indian goods. But the pragmatists say that much more than the formal export-import relations, overall bond between the two nations depends on investment from both the countries into each other and the level of shared innovation and research projects carried out by various entities in either of the nations.

By the end of the big deal signed between the EU and the UK, the bigger concern is whether it will end the special relationship between the two

The provisions relating to trade in the historic deal are almost entirely devoted to goods. This further implies that the agreement has hardly left any space for services which, in fact, consists of more than 80 per cent of Britain's economy. And interestingly, this is the fastest growing area of global exports.

The major concern is that the EU is yet to deliver an equivalence ruling for financial services regulation. Even if such regulation is declared, it can be withdrawn within a short span of 30 days notice period. The global and the European economic experts say that what is more urgently required is an EU data adequacy decision to allow free flow of data, which is there at the centre of cross-country or cross-border trade regimes across the globalised world.

Another sticky area which is missing in the deal is the mutual recognition of qualifications demanded for profes-

sional services in the EU member nations and the UK.

Besides, the new deal has nowhere mentioned anything related to foreign policy cooperation between the EU and the UK. It seems the current British Government has hardly paid any attention to building a more robust foreign policy dialogue with the EU in the near future. It has mentioned some provisions about domestic security but the experts feel that Britain will probably have not much leverage on its access to the EU security database and the Europol system of police like before. Once the deal is operationalised, the UK will lose its natural way of using the European Arrest Warrant (EAW). This arrest warrant is valid in all the member countries of the EU. Once such a warrant is issued, it demands other members to arrest and transfer a criminal or an offender to the issuing nation so that the detainee can be put on trial. Such a system of arrest helps fast-tracking the legal process and enhances mutual understanding and trust among the EU member countries. Now, of course, the UK will not have unhindered rights on this particular front.

Clearly, what comes into the immediate picture is the loss of free movement of the British citizens across the EU member nations. This deal will bring home some travel and work restrictions in the EU nations and the existing facilities in regard to health insurance and car insurance regime are likely to be over now.

Though some kinds of scientific and research collaborations will continue, what hits hard Britain is its immediate exclusion from the Galileo Satellite Positioning Network. Even the uncertainties hovering over the participation in the "Horizon Europe" research programme is bringing more disillusionment to the scientific fraternity of Britain. EU's next funding programme for research and innovation will

run from 2021 to 2027, covering a proposed budget of 100 billion Euros. The participation of the scientific community from Britain in this signature research project would have opened much more space for collaboration, innovation and trust building in future for an immediate help, on the event of any crisis situation.

Again, the British student community will also be dropped from the much-acclaimed student exchange programme, called Erasmus Programme (European Region Section Scheme for the Mobility of University Students). It is an EU-funded programme that organises student exchange across all the EU nations. Unlike the UK, Northern Island will have full access to the EU single market and to the Customs Union. Many experts opine that the customs and border checkpoints on the Irish Sea are going to become future bone of contention between Britain and Northern Ireland.

Are we all going to experience a "Global Britain"? Succinctly, Boris Johnson will find it too tough to craft a new role for Britain. It is better for him to sustain first as his country is badly affected by the Covid-19. Today Britain's economy is seriously paralysed. He must try bringing the country's economic powerhouse back on track. Besides, a pandemic, accompanied by a looming trade war between the US and China is disturbing the global power calculus. And it's going to continue.

"The destiny of this great country now resides firmly in our hands," Johnson said moments after the post-Brexit trade deal received the Royal Assent on December 31. It now depends on how the team Boris takes the UK forward. And as the UK started its long solitary journey on January 1, 2021, the future of the UK lies in the hands of the Britons.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

It now depends on how the team Boris takes the UK forward, without any hangover of the Brussels bureaucracy. And as the UK started its long solitary journey on January 1, 2021, the future of the UK lies in the hands of the Britons only



MAKHAN SAIKIA



IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS,
KINDNESS AND LIES ARE
WORTH A THOUSAND
TRUTHS
— GRAHAM GREENE



**YOUR
YEAR
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This year you have a good chance of recovery from a prolonged illness. Your will power and strength will be high. Keep yourself hydrated and practice deep breathing and meditation to stay relaxed. Your professional life will be on the go. You will enjoy a friendly atmosphere at work. You will be efficient at organising and managing your team with outstanding productivity. You will get recognition and promotion for your hard work. The business owners will also enjoy the fruits of their labour. On the relationship front, those in committed relationships will spend jovial days with your partner and may take your bond to a next level by tying the knot. Singles are likely to turn to the person of their dreams.

Lucky Colours Indigo, Pink, Yellow
Lucky Numbers 2, 6, 23
Lucky Days Sunday, Thursday, Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This year your mental health will be somewhat disturbed. You may face emotional hurdles which may lead to anxiety and depression. Your stress will eventually start reflecting on your physical self. You need to express your feelings and follow guided meditation sessions. Professionally, your work life will not be smooth this year. You may face challenges and hurdles in completing your tasks. Those planning to start a new venture may get stuck while choosing a proposal. You may face some financial troubles. On the relationship front, you may have some complexities. Arguments with partner are foreseen. Be patient while handling complex issues. For those who are married, your partner may be too demanding and will ask for more time and attention.

Lucky Colours Peach, Green, Orange
Lucky Numbers 14, 18, 26
Lucky Days Monday, Tuesday, Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This year the health doesn't look too good for you. You may suffer from seasonal allergies and flu. It is advised not to take any self-medication as this will worsen up the situation. Practice deep breathing and meditation to relax. On the professional front, life may bring some struggles and challenges in this year. Office politics may cause anxiety. It is advised to keep a positive attitude despite all likelihoods, as this will help you to deal with the unfavourable circumstances. On the personal front, you are likely to face disagreement and conflicts with your partner. Singles, this is not a good time to get into a relationship. Tense moments are indicated between married couples. A simple conversation can resolve major issues in your relationship.

Lucky Colours Yellow, Brown, Off White
Lucky Numbers 7, 12, 13
Lucky Days Monday, Wednesday, Saturday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This year the health may be delicate, especially for the females. Adopt a healthy lifestyle and follow exercise routines. Similarly, maintain emotional balance, as being over sensitive will disturb your peace of mind. On the career front, this year will be moderate for you. It is recommended that you do not make any hasty decisions and look into both positive as well as negative aspects of a thing. Your reasoning and analytical skills will bring fruitful results. Those who are planning to convert their hobbies into a profession, the time is favourable. Cash flow will be decent. On the relationship front, singles have some good news. This year will bring love and romance in your life. Those looking forward to getting married have a bright chance this new year.

Lucky Colours Orange, Purple, Sky Blue
Lucky Numbers 3, 6, 10
Lucky Days Tuesday, Thursday, Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Those with health issues will recover. Avoid oily and starchy food. Follow a balanced diet with lots of fresh fruits and vegetables and maintain your optimum weight. On the career front, this year will offer a learning face. You will put a lot of hard work and dedication into your work, which will bring you good results. You will get recognition and rewards for your best efforts. The businessmen will have a favourable year. You will be looking at expansion, besides pushing for new projects. The monetary aspect will be good. On the relationship front, those in a romantic relationship may have to put some efforts for the smooth running. Spend as much time with your partner and try to understand each others' needs and interest.

Lucky Colours Brown, Indigo, Green
Lucky Numbers 9, 12, 17
Lucky Days Friday, Saturday, Sunday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This year health will be a cause of concern. Women may face hormonal disturbances. Those with a history of PCOS must consult a professional for treatment. Listen to your body. On the professional front, life will be monotonous this year. You may feel tired and stuck in your current work profile. It is advised to look for a switch for better opportunities. Be active in making decisions else you will find yourself stressed, and work will be burdensome. Investing in a speculative business is not advised as some losses are indicated. On the relationship front, you will have a good time. You will be emotional and over-sensitive during this period. Singles, getting into a sincere relationship will take some time. It is best to wait, than be sorry.

Lucky Colours Pastel Color, Magenta, Brown
Lucky Numbers 8, 18, 20
Lucky Days Wednesday, Friday, Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This year the health will be on the weaker side due to troublesome situations in your personal and professional life. Stay emotionally strong to avoid any major health concern. Practising yoga and meditation will be helpful. On the professional front, life will be slow and monotonous this year. You are advised to focus on your existing tasks as change may not be good. You will face obstacles in drawing out your payments in the business. Planning a budget and avoiding unproductive expenditure will make you financially stable. On the personal front, keep your temper in check and try to understand the feelings of your partner. Anger will upset your loved ones. Trusting each other is the key to building a strong bond.

Lucky Colours Parrot Green, Silver, Grey
Lucky Numbers 13, 15, 18
Lucky Days Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This year those suffering from health issues are likely to recover well. Consider traditional doctors and medicines for your wellness. For better results, follow Ayurveda. You can also include yoga and meditation to your regime for holistic healing. This year things will be overwhelming on the career front. Those in government jobs will earn a good reputation. Promotion to a new department or higher authority is predicted. Businessmen will gain a good name in their respective industry. The cards predict that this year will be auspicious for gaining name and fame on the work front for the natives. On the relationship front, the year is favourable. This year is also good in terms of attaining relationship goals. You will build a harmonising bond with your partner and plan your future together.

Lucky Colours Red, Mauve, Golden
Lucky Numbers 7, 20, 22
Lucky Days Monday, Saturday, Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Your mental stress will be reflected in your body and may cause BP issues. Get a check-up done regularly. Do not take your health concerns casually. Meditate to relax your mind. On the career front, you may be unhappy with your office environment and hit a communication block. This will impact your work performance and cause stress. You may suffer unforeseen financial loss. You are advised not to make any new investment, whether in the form of assets or expansion of the property. On the personal front, the love life will also be affected due to your professional life. You will face conflicts with your partner. You are advised to take your relationship slow and keep your work-life stress away from your dear one.

Lucky Colours Green, Coral Blue, Indigo
Lucky Numbers 15, 23, 31
Lucky Days Tuesday, Thursday, Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This year recovery is on the cards. Those suffering from illness have a good chance to recover. You will be high in spirit and strength. This will motivate you to follow a good regime and lead a healthy lifestyle. Be cautious about what you eat, as you are likely to be prone to allergies. On the work front, you will get fruitful results. This year is good to bring success stories of your manifestation and goals. If planning to start a new venture or project, then time is auspicious for you. The card spread suggests that this year is for growth and abundance in terms of your professional life. On the relationship front, those in committed relationships will have a smooth year. You can also start something in a joint venture with your partner.

Lucky Colours Pink, Peach, White
Lucky Numbers 10, 11, 12
Lucky Days Monday, Tuesday, Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This year will be filled with vitality and positivity which will bring wellness. Take care of your eating habits; avoid oily and spicy foods. Putting some effort into your fitness routine which will help keep disease at bay. On the work front, this year will be good for the opportunist, as they will get several opportunities to acquire success. You will be full of enthusiasm and would be able to turn all the possibilities into fruitful results. The businessmen will get new projects and working professionals will get an environment to showcase their talents. The monetary gains from the endeavours will be good. On the personal front, relationship goals will be fulfilled. You will witness a time of great joy and happiness. Any conflicts of the past will be resolved in this year.

Lucky Colours Black, Gauge, Peach
Lucky Numbers 4, 11, 19
Lucky Days Thursday, Saturday, Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This year you would be in the pink of health. Those with a prolonged illness may move towards recovery. You may get affected with seasonal cold and flu. You are advised to keep your water intake high. On the work front, life will be good if you work hard towards it. The cards indicates that you should keep your fear and insecurities aside and look upwards, as success is assured. Trust your instincts. The finances will be stable, however, do not make an impulsive decision on money. On the personal front, your love life will be exciting. Your relationship with your loved one will grow stronger with time. Singles will have a great time as they will meet the person of their dreams. You will figure out different aspects of love in your relationship.

Lucky Colours Grey, Red, Turquoise
Lucky Numbers 9, 19, 30
Lucky Days Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

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ASTROTURF

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Be ready to brave challenges

I wish the valued readers a healthy and productive life ahead. This would be the obvious wish of all, given the devastating experience of the ongoing pandemic. It brought the usual run of life to almost a grinding halt for almost a year, with more than 79 million people affected and 1.7 million people dead. Thanks to improved medical facility, the damage could be contained at this level, unlike 1918-1920 pandemic, when 50 million people are said to have lost their lives. As already indicated in the opening issue of this column for 2020, line up of 7 planets on the Solar Eclipse axis on 26th December, 2019 hold the key to this happening. Amongst them, Saturn and Ketu, both carried killing instinct; expansive Jupiter multiplied it; and deadly Pluto made it a massive affair. Since no proven astrological indicators of pandemic was available, it could not be foreseen, but massive death was very much visualised. The big relief for India is that despite pandemic hitting USA and Europe hard, the curve seems to be flattening here. For, Saturn and Jupiter now passing through Capricorn sign, the one identified with India as a country, are progressively getting distanced from Pluto. By

January-end both Saturn and Jupiter will move more than 10 degrees away from killer Pluto, indicating downsizing of the pandemic effect. Yet, we can't afford to be complacent, given the cluster of 7 planets this time in Capricorn sign in the New Moon chart for 11th February, which is indicative of serious problems ahead. The effect of New Moon chart is ordinarily limited to a month. The point of relief, however, is that Pluto will be far behind other 6 planets. Coinciding with all these planetary developments is the development of vaccines, which should bring the pandemic under check. So, hopefully, the situation should be under control after March 2021. Pandemic apart, the country appears to be headed for challenging times ahead on other counts also. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Capricorn sign needs to be marked. The phenomenon termed as Great Mutation is usually indicative of major changes in terms of political and societal dynamics. This particular conjunction indicates intense societal churning, often leading to internal conflicts, rebellion, power struggles, public demonstrations, and economic recession. Jupiter and Saturn have been



together since 21st November 2020, which became exact on 21st December 2020. Both were then opposite natal Moon and Mercury in India's Independence chart. Moon the lord of 4th house in Independence chart signifies people in general, agriculture, land and estate and women in general. Saturn against Moon indicates people's discontent and distrust against government. All the more because in Independence chart progressed Saturn is bang on natal Sun. Saturn opposite Mercury implies fixated one track mind of the government as well as agitating people. Jupiter opposite Mercury may mean clash of perception. Also, policy flip flop may invite ire of the people in general. No wonder neither the agitating farmers nor the government seem to be budging. Youth agitation too is not ruled out. The intellectual circle will be at the receiving end. Trade and Commerce will not move as expected. Let us now look at other astrological pointers having related bearing on nation's course of life. The first to make note of is that progressed Mars is conjunct natal Saturn in Independence chart. It foretells serious security concerns within the country as also at the borders. There may be threat to the life of some of

our leaders also. In the New Year chart, Venus is conjunct Ketu in the 3rd house, also placed adverse to mischievous Neptune. It implies that the transport sector is not expected to come out of its mesh soon. Women's security will be a matter of concern. Nation's finance is not expected to be in good shape. The chart drawn at the time of solar ingress in Capricorn has a cluster of five planets — Sun, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter and Mercury — in Capricorn sign, all placed adverse to fiery Mars. That will further aggravate conflict. Also, there is possibility of terrorist strike, communal flare up, and financial trouble. There is a lunar eclipse due on 26th May 2021, which is happening in fixed sign. This read together with Saturn in the 4th house of eclipse chart, which is placed adverse to Uranus and Mars, is indicative of the possibility of Earth quake and cyclone causing lot of death. Benevolent Jupiter's presence in Capricorn, may however, minimise the damage. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Write to him at G-102, Bharat Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110 025 Tel: 91-11-49848475/9818037273 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com