

OPINION 8

A NEW  
WORLD ORDER

WORLD 11

INDONESIA'S MERAPI VOLCANO SPEWS  
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LUCKNOW, FRIDAY JANUARY 8, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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12 VIVACITY

# Trump concedes defeat after Capitol siege

Supporters storm Capitol building in insurrection bid, clash with cops, 4 killed; after US Congress certifies Joe Biden-Kamala Harris' victory, Trump says there will be an orderly transition on Jan 20

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In an unprecedented assault on democracy in the US, thousands of supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building here and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victory of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the election.

The Electoral College votes of Biden and Harris were finally approved early on Thursday after both the Senate and the House of Representatives rejected all objections raised by the Republicans to the votes in the States of Pennsylvania and Arizona.

In the presidential election held on November 3, Biden and Harris received 306 electoral votes, while President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence got 232. The counting of Vermont's three electoral votes put Biden and Harris over the 270-threshold needed to win the presidency.

In a statement released just after the certification was finalised, Trump at long last acknowledged his election loss. He said that even though he disagrees with the outcome,



Violent protesters, loyal to President Donald Trump, storm the Capitol on Wednesday

AP

"there will be an orderly transition on January 20th."

"I have always said we would continue our ... Fight to ensure that only legal votes

were counted. While this represents the end of the greatest first term in presidential history, it's only the beginning of our fight to Make America

Great Again!"

The 78-year-old Democratic leader and his 56-year-old Indian-origin deputy will be inaugurated on January

20, it was announced after the constitutional process was finally completed by a joint session of Congress.

In the violence on

## Modi joins world leaders in decrying storming of Capitol

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday joined the world leaders in condemning the violence let loose by the US President Donald Trump's supporters and tweeted, "Orderly and peaceful transfer of power must continue. The democratic process cannot be allowed to be subverted through unlawful protests."

P4

## Spate of resignations in US after violence

**Washington:** US Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger, first lady Melania Trump's chief of staff Stephanie Grisham and White House Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Matthews have resigned following the violence at the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump. **P11**

Wednesday, four people died, including one woman who was shot by a police officer, amid protests and rioting on Capitol Hill that resulted in dozens of



US Capitol Police with guns drawn stand near a barricaded door as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the US Capitol on Wednesday

AP

demonstrators being arrested, police said.

Metropolitan Police Department Chief Robert Contee called the rioting by pro-Trump demonstrators "shameful" during a news conference.

One woman was shot and killed by Capitol Police during the rioting. Police said three other people — a woman and two men — died after apparently suffering "separate medical emergencies" near the Capitol grounds.

The joint session of Congress, which is normally a ceremonial step, was halted for several hours when sup-

porters of Trump breached the Capitol. Proceedings resumed and continued through the night after the building was cleared. Vice President Pence brought the Senate session back into order and proceeded with the verification process.

"The announcement of the state of the vote by the President of the Senate shall be deemed a sufficient declaration of the persons elected President and Vice President of the United States, each for the term beginning on the 20th day of January 2021..." Pence said following the count of all of the state's Electoral College votes.

*Continued on Page 11*

## Covid-hit GDP to contract by record 7.7%, reports NSO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's GDP is estimated to contract by a record 7.7 per cent during 2020-21 as the Covid-19 pandemic severely hit the key manufacturing and services segments, as per Government projections released on Thursday.

Amid overall decline in economic activities, some respite was provided by the agriculture sector and utility services like power and gas supply, which have been projected to post positive growth during the current fiscal ending March 2021.

"Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices (2011-12) in the year 2020-21 is likely to attain a level of ₹134.40 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2019-20 of ₹145.66 lakh crore..."

"The growth in real GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at -7.7 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 4.2 per cent in 2019-20," said the first advanced estimates of nation-

al income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

The contraction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), however, would not be as steep as projected by certain international agencies like the IMF and World Bank.

NSO also estimates the Real Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices at ₹123.39 lakh crore in 2020-21, as against Rs 133.01 lakh crore in 2019-20, showing a contraction of 7.2 per cent. GVA does not factor in net taxes.

GVA in the key manufacturing sector is likely to see a contraction of 9.4 per cent during 2020-21 as compared to a flat growth of 0.03 per cent in the year ago period.

"Mining and quarrying," and "trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting" GVAs are likely to contract by 12.4 per cent and 21.4 per cent, respectively, said the first advanced estimates of the NSO.

*Continued on Page 11*

## Farmers display determination in tractor rallies

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of farmers on Thursday hit the road at Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and Rewasan borders of Delhi, taking out tractor rallies to escalate agitation against the new farm laws.

The farmers said their march on Thursday is just a rehearsal for their proposed January 26 tractor parade during which they will attempt to move into the national Capital from different parts of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

The tractor march started from four different points — Singhu to Tikri Border, Tikri to Kundli, Ghazipur to Palwal and Rewasan to Palwal. As the march started from all borders, the protest sites wore a deserted look.

From Ghazipur border, Rakesh Tikait, the spokesperson of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) lead the rally in which there were around 500 tractors, some cars and bike. With Punjabi songs and slogans, farmers on tractors started their rallies around 11 am.

Meanwhile, the crowd thinned at the Singhu Border, the main protest site, but life continued as usual.

Langars kept dishing out



Farmers shout slogans as they take out a tractor rally in a protest against new farm laws at Western Peripheral Expressway in Kundli, Sonapat, on Thursday

Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

meals, and medical camps distributed medicines to all those who stayed back, particularly the elderly and the women.

Logs for bonfire have been brought in huge quantities to keep people warm in the chilling temperature.

Meanwhile, the KMP expressway was dotted with tractors and farmers the whole day. Several protesters lined on the route to provide fellow farmers with all kinds of supplies, including peanuts, tea, and newspapers.

Joginder Singh Ugrahan,

president of Bharati Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan), whose union is one of the largest farmer organisations in Punjab, claimed farmers participated in the march with over 3,500 tractors and trolleys. He said they will not accept anything less than the repeal of the three farm laws.

Yogendra Yadav on Thursday claimed people are still joining the protest in a large number and it will be intensified in coming days.

"Today's tractor rally was just a trailer for the

Government. Around 5,000 tractors were there today in the tractor march. If the Government does not repeal these laws till January 26, we will enter Delhi on our tractors," said Yadav.

"Women are also joining the protest and they have also come forward to hold one day hunger strike against the Centre's new farm laws. On Thursday, 11 women whose husband died during the protest sat on one day hunger strike," said Yadav.

"We are the sons of soil. If the laws are passed, we will starve to death. This rally is our way of telling the Government that we will not give up unless it gives in to our demands," said Jaspal Singh Deol from Punjab's Chamkaur Sahib.

The eighth round of talks between protesting unions and the Central Government is scheduled to be held on Friday.

Following the tractor rally call, the Delhi, Gurugram and Uttar Pradesh (UP) police tightened its security along the borders. The police also diverted routes and closed the KMP expressway for commuters for a few hours which led to traffic jams at several places.

Braving severe cold and sporadic rain, the farmers have been camping at Delhi borders.

## Apex court fears about protesters' exposure to Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed concern over large gatherings of farmers protesting against the new farm laws at Delhi borders and drew a parallel with Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz.

The top court was hearing a plea seeking various reliefs including CBI probe into the matter related to assembly of people at Anand Vihar Bus Terminal and the Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz in the national Capital after the nationwide lockdown was announced last year to contain the pandemic.

"The same problem is going to arise in farmers' agitation. I do not know if farmers are protected from Covid. So, the same problem is going to arise. It is not that everything is over," said Chief Justice SA Bobde, heading a Bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The court asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, whether protesting farmers are protected from Covid-19. Mehta replied, "certainly not".

Mehta said he will file a report within two weeks on what has been done and what needs to be done.

The plea, filed by lawyer Supriya Pandita, alleged that the Delhi Police had failed to control the congregation of people and the Nizamuddin Markaz chief Maulana Saad was still evading arrest.

Advocate Om Prakash Parihar, appearing for the petitioner, said no statement has been made by the Centre about the whereabouts of Saad.

The SC told Parihar, "Why are you interested in one person? We are on the issue of Covid. Why do you want controversy? We are interested that Covid guidelines should be there".

The SC issued notice in the matter after which Mehta said he will file a report.

*Continued on Page 11*

## CAPSULE

### BUDAUN VICTIM SHOULD NOT HAVE GONE OUT: NCW

**Budaun (UP):** The brutal gangrape and murder of a 50-year-old woman in Uttar Pradesh's Budaun district could have been avoided if the victim had not gone out in the evening, said a member of the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday while expressing her dissatisfaction with the police action in the case.

### MIGRANT WORKER, FAMILY FOUND DEAD

**Udhagamandalam:** A migrant tea estate Worker from Jharkhand, his wife and two children were found dead near Coonoor in Nilgiris district on Thursday, police said. It is suspected that Ashok Bhagat might have killed his wife and children before killing himself due to a family dispute, the police said. The incident came to light when neighbours noticed the front door of the house not opened till noon, they said.

## 25,800 volunteers enrol for Covaxin Ph-3 trials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**B**harat Biotech on Thursday announced "successful completion" of volunteer enrolment for Phase-3 clinical trials of its indigenously manufactured Covid-19 vaccine "Covaxin".

"Covaxin successfully completes Phase 3 clinical trials enrolment of 25,800 volunteers," informed Suchitra Ella, Joint Managing Director, Bharat Biotech International Limited.

"We sincerely express our gratitude to clinical trial sites, principle investigators & healthcare workers for their relentless support and trust in our public-private partnership vaccine discovery. My deep appreciation to all the volunteers for reposing trust and expressing pro vaccine public health volunteerism in the



phase-3 clinical trials of India's fully indigenous Covid-19 vaccine," she added.

The announcement came days after the Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer announced successful recruitment of 23,000 volunteers and continued progress towards achieving the goal of 26,000 participants for the phase 3 trial of its coronavirus vaccine candidate Covaxin in India.

*Continued on Page 11*

## Be poised to receive Covid shots shortly: Govt to States, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**A**nationwide vaccine dry run scheduled on Friday, the Centre asked the States and UTs to remain prepared to receive the first supply of Covid-19 vaccines shortly. 41 destinations across India have been finalised for the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines.

A battery of 1,70,000 vaccinators and 3,00,000 vaccination team members have been trained to administer the doses, once the date for mega vaccination drive is announced, which is likely to be any time soon.

The Centre has also drawn up a detailed draft for the air transportation of Covid-19

vaccines and their movement across different parts of the country. "For vaccine transportation across the country, a common draft has been made and shared with stakeholders. The transportation of vaccines is likely to begin by today or tomorrow," said sources in the Union Health Ministry.

Pune had been chosen as the central hub for Covid-19 vaccine distribution where passenger aircraft will be permitted to transport doses in the hold of the carrier. The Centre has formed mini-hubs across the country for the transportation of the vaccine and a total of 41 destinations (airports) have been finalised for their delivery, the sources said.

*Continued on Page 11*

## JEE Advance 75% eligibility criteria scrapped, to be held on July 3

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**U**nion Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Thursday announced the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced 2021 examination date and the eligibility criteria for admission into Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) on Thursday. The exam will be held on July 3 while the 75 per cent eligibility criteria will not be applicable this year.

"JEE-Advanced will be conducted by IIT Kharagpur on July 3. The relaxation in admission requirement of 75 per cent marks in Class 12 which was announced last year in view of Covid-19 pandemic will be offered this year as well," Nishank said.

*Continued on Page 11*

## Masood Azhar to go to jail for terror financing

**Lahore:** In a significant development, an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday issued an arrest warrant for banned Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar on the charges of terror financing.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Gujranwala issued the warrant during a hearing in a terror financing case instituted by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police against some members of the JeM.

"ATC Gujranwala judge Natasha Naseem Supra issued an arrest warrant for Masood Azhar and directed the CTD to arrest him and present him in the court. The CTD told the judge the JeM chief was involved in terror financing and selling jihadi literature," an official told PTI.

He said the ATC judge issued the arrest warrant for



Azhar on the request of a CTD inspector.

Azhar is believed to be hiding in a "safe place" in his native town — Bahawalpur.

Following the Palwama terror attack in February 2019 in India, Pakistan's Punjab province police had launched a crackdown on terrorism financing and in this connection arrested six activists of the JeM in Gujranwala, some 130kms from Lahore.

*Continued on Page 11*

# NCW team meets kin of gangrape, murder victim in Budaun

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A two-member team of the National Commission for Women on Thursday met the family of the 50-year-old woman, who was allegedly gangraped and murdered in Budaun. Interestingly, as the NCW team was at the house of the victim, the wife and daughter of one of the accused sought to meet the visiting delegation.

The NCW team also investigated the crime scene. The government and the state administration has already come in for sharp criticism from the opposition parties.

Chandramukhi Devi, one of the members of the Central team, told a news agency that she was not satisfied with the role of the police in the incident. If the police had shown swiftness in the case, they could have saved the victim,” she said after her visit to the spot.

Before paying a visit to the victim’s family, the team also had a meeting with the SSP and went through the details of the incident. The wife and daughter of the accused, Jashpal, demanded justice, claiming that he is innocent.

“My husband got a call that there was a patient and he went to do his job. He came to know about the case later,” Jashpal’s wife claimed. She alleged that he was being framed in the case.

According to police, the 50-year-old woman, who was an Anganwadi worker, was gangraped and murdered in Ughaiti area of Budaun district when she had gone to a temple on Sunday evening.

The post-mortem report confirmed rape and injuries in her private parts besides fracture in her legs. An FIR was registered against three accused, including a priest, at Ughaiti police station under sections 376 (d) and 302 of IPC. Two of the accused were arrested on Wednesday while the priest is still absconding. A cash reward of Rs 25,000 has already been announced on his arrest. The police station incharge was also suspended for the negligence as the family of the deceased had alleged police apathy.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed authorities to take stern action against the accused and directed the ADG, Bareilly Zone, to submit a report. He has also directed the UP Special Task Force to assist in the probe.

# Mahoba case takes a curious turn

Lawyer alleges illegal detention of IPS officer Patidar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Mahoba incident, in which an IPS officer Mani Lal Patidar is alleged to be absconding in connection with abetment to suicide case, has taken a curious turn. A cash reward of Rs 50,000 has been also announced for his arrest.

A lawyer has moved Supreme Court and knocked the doors of various government officials, claiming that the IPS officer is not absconding but was abducted as part of a deep-rooted conspiracy hatched by two senior officials of Police and Home departments. He alleged that Patidar was abducted and detained to ensure illegal mining without any obstruction.

He despatched a fax to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, UP Governor Anandiben Patel, chair-

man of National Human Rights Commission and others, including IAS and IPS associations, seeking their immediate intervention. He demanded that a case be registered in this connection and the probe be transferred to the CBI. He also demanded that the accused officers be placed under suspension pending enquiry. He also claimed to have handed over a complaint to the Commissioner of Police in Lucknow, demanding that a case be registered. However, no action has been taken in the matter.

Supreme Court lawyer Mukut Nath Verma, who is the legal representative of the accused IPS officer, claimed that to get the statement of Patidar recorded before the SIT, he sought relevant documents like FIR, post-mortem report and details of allegations regarding corruption against his client, but nothing has been provided to him, even as two senior officers in the government hatched a bigger conspiracy.

Verma mentioned in his letter that on November 27 last, when his

client was coming to meet him to discuss the case and to pay his fee, he was abducted at the behest of two government officials and instead of showing him as arrested, as Patidar was already shown ‘wanted’ in the Mahoba case, the two officers illegally detained him and took him to some secret hideout.

He alleged that despite his client being in illegal custody since November 27, a cash reward of Rs 25,000, which was later increased to Rs 50,000, was announced on his arrest. “Besides, they have also lodged a case under Section 174-A of IPC against my client with ulterior motives. Such elements worked in a well-planned manner to damage the morale of an honest IPS officer as part of a criminal conspiracy,” Verma alleged. He said he gave an application to Hazratganj police and to the Commissioner of Police (Lucknow) against the two government officials and others, but no action has been taken so far.

## CITYBRIEFS

### GLOBAL FORUM

Two students of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus II — Anahita Singh of class XI and Fatima Al Zahra Aman Aziz of class X — will represent the country at the ‘Youth Forum Switzerland - Global Changemakers Project’, to be organised from January 25 to 29. It is the first time that a school of India is being represented at this global forum and Anahita and Fatima are the first Indian students representing the country at this international forum. Earlier, it was usually the students

of Europe and America participating in this forum. These two have been selected by an international organisation named ‘Avasarshala’, which is sponsored by Niti Aayog. These students will be expressing their thoughts on sustainable development goals and will also get an opportunity to interact with several renowned global personalities.

### R-DAY CAMP

Seven NCC cadets from Lucknow University and associate colleges have been selected for National Republic Day

Camp-2021 under the Union Ministry of Defence. “It is one of the toughest NCC camps. A number of cadets from all over India undergo rigorous 48-day training in Delhi under the instructors from Union Ministry of Defence after completion of initial Republic Day training in their respective states. After the completion of the Republic Day ceremony and celebrations thereafter, which includes the interaction with the prime minister and president, all the cadets will be relieved on February 4.

## Nondescript place to become a religious tourism spot

Lucknow (PNS): The UP government has planned to develop a nondescript place in Prayagraj, where Lord Ram was said to have met Nishadraj, as a tourist centre by developing it as a place of social harmony. Nishadraj Park, being built at a cost of Rs15 crore in a 5,600 square meter area in Shringverpur (Prayagraj), will be a confluence of two cultures. It will make the place place a spot for religious tourism, a senior official said. Legend says that Nishadraj welcomed Lord Ram and Sita in Shringverpur while they were headed to a 14-year exile. Lord Ram had a night halt in a hut, where this park exists now. UP Project Corporation made a presentation before Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in this regard. It may be mentioned that Shringverpur, located on Lucknow-Prayagraj road on the banks of the Ganges, has been mentioned in the *Puranas*. It is believed that due to the sage Shringi’s *taposthali*, it was named Shringverpur.

Tulsidas’s Ramcharitmanas has a passionate description of the union of Kewat and Rama at Shringverpur. “This park will become a living testament to all these episodes. Equipped with all the necessary public amenities, this park will also have an ido lof Lord Ram embracing Nishadraj on a high platform, the official said



**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY** Notification No. 167/2020  
**CORRIGENDUM**  
It is notified for information of general public that previously published notification no. 167/2020 in 0511/05112 Chhapra-Varanasi City-Chhapra Special Train by mistake timing of **Ballia** and **Phephna Jn.** are as under:-  

0511/05112 (Chhapra-Varanasi City-Chhapra Special Train)				
Chhapra-Varanasi City	Varanasi City-Chhapra			
Arvl.	Dprt.	STATION	Arvl.	Dprt.
04:40	04:45	Ballia	22:05	22:10
04:59	05:01	Phephna Jn.	21:36	21:38

  
Arrival & Departure Timing at Rest Station are same.  
**CPRO-T-92** Chief Passenger Transportation Manager  
About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955  
**"Never travel on roof and foot boards"**



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31, Nehru Road, Lucknow Cantt.  
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**TENDER NOTICE**  
Online Tenders/Bids are invited from the reputed firms/agencies through the Government e-procurement portal <http://eprocure.gov.in> for the “Grant of advertisement rights on tree guards/plant stands, electric/ street light poles, unipoles, Bus/ Rain shelters and led wall screen in Cantt area Lucknow for the period of three years”. All the details are available on Government e-procurement portal <http://eprocure.gov.in>  
**No. LCBS/EM/Tender Notice/2020**  
**Office of the Cantonment Board**  
**Dated 07 Jan, 2020**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Lucknow Cantt**  
31, Nehru Road, Lucknow Cantt



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पत्रांक: 18/पीसीएलएम/महाबलजौन-7ई-टेण्डर दिनांक: 06.01.2021  
**शुद्धि-पत्र**  
एतद्वारा जनपद कुशीनगर में गण्डक नदी के दक्षिण तट पर स्थित ग्राम अमवाखास की बाढ़ एवं कटाव से बचाव हेतु ड्रेजिंग एवं बैनेलाइजेशन कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय की अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना- 14/UPPCL/GM-7/E-TENDER/2020-21 दिनांक 29.12.2020 आमंत्रित की गयी थी, जो दिनांक 07.01.2021 से दिनांक 13.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जानी थी, जिसकी टेक्निकल विड दिनांक 13.01.2021 को खोला जाना प्रस्तावित था। अपरिहार्य कारणों से उक्त निविदा वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> के पोर्टल पर दिनांक 11.01.2021 से दिनांक 16.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 16.01.2021 को अपराह्न 1:00 बजे तक सबमिट/जमा किया जा सकता है। टेक्निकल विड उसी दिन अपराह्न 2:00 बजे अग्रोहस्ताक्षरी के उपरोक्त कार्यालय में खोली जानी प्रस्तावित है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण एवं शर्तें इत्यादि कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट [www.upprojects.org](http://www.upprojects.org) पर देखी जा सकती है।  
**महाप्रबन्धक, जौन-7**



**DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (CENTRAL)-II**  
**ANDHA MUGHAL, PARTAP NAGAR (NEAR METRO STATION)**  
**DELHI - 110007**  
**"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"**  
**PRESS NIT No. 32(2020-21)**  

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fee (Rs.)	Date of release of Tender/Tender Id.	Last date/time of receipt of tender
1.	Improvement of water supply in Regarpura by P/L 200mm dia. water line at Ganga Mandir Marg from Tank Road to D.B. Gupta Road, Karol Bagh AC-23. (Re-invite)	34,13,373/-	68,300/-	500/-	Dt.06/01/2021 2021_DJB_198396_1	20/01/2021 Upto 3:00 PM

  
Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>.  
**ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)**  
**Advt No. J.S.V. 297/2020-21**  
**Sd/-**  
**(Priti Pant)**  
**EX. ENGINEER(Central)-II**



**सूचना**  
मेरे आवास का आवंटन पत्र वास्तव में कहीं खो गया है जिसका प्रयोग अक्षय होगा। मधु निवासी ई/2, 219 कडीए कालोनी, देहली सुजानपुर कानपुर-13

**सूचना**  
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि पहले मेरे नाम Khanum Zia Fatima Rashid Khan था, जो अब बदल कर Zia Fatima Khan हो गया है। मधिय में मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये। Zia Fatima Khan D/o Abdul Rashid Khan, 18H/37C/2/RC Karamat Ki Chauki, Kareli, Allahabad.

**सूचना**  
मेरे पुत्र का नाम बीना पालिती है अमन सिंह दर्ज है। अन्य कागजात में अमन सिंह का नाम शुभम सिंह है। अमन सिंह और शुभम सिंह एक ही व्यक्ति हैं। इस नाम का कोई अन्य नहीं है। अनन्द कुमार सिंह, ददरा, गु. रामपुर मीरहान, मिर्जापुर।

**NOTICE**  
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# Govt identifying, rescuing children forced into labour, begging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With a view to ensuring a better future for children living below poverty line, the Yogi Adityanath government has started identifying kids engaged in child labour and begging and their rehabilitation has been made a part of the Mission Shakti campaign. Besides, NGOs have been asked to adopt crossings where the number of child beggars is more. “The theme of January 2021 has been designed with special focus on children under the Mission Shakti campaign, and it is based on kids engaged in labour, begging and elimination of child trafficking. To improve the childhood of these poor kids and ensure protection and

respect to them, the department of Women and Child Development has started working extensively in all the UP districts, including Lucknow,” a senior official said. These underprivileged children are being admitted to primary schools and they are also being empowered financially. Officials are also preparing a list of ration card holders at district level.

“Teams of Labour department, Police, Women & Child Development and Health departments are identifying such children at the ground level,” said Sarvesh Kumar Pandey, who is the chief probation officer of Lucknow division. After identification, these children are being admitted to primary schools and provided primary kits

along with hygiene kits besides food items, he added. “In view of January’s theme of Mission Shakti, an action plan has been prepared and for providing benefits of the government schemes to these children, government-run and non-government institutions are being encouraged to adopt city crossings and blocks,” Pandey said. Fifty NGOs, including Childline and Bal Kalyan Samiti, have adopted 31 crossings in Lucknow. With the commencement of the adoption process, the children identified by the institutions are directly benefiting from the schemes, Pandey said. The campaign against kids forced into into labour and begging is being carried out at a large scale in the state.

# Woman sets father ablaze over objection to her affair

Lucknow (PNS): A woman allegedly set her father ablaze after he objected to her relationship with a local resident. The 55-year-old man was set afire in Wazirganj area of Budaun on Wednesday. He was admitted to a hospital where his condition was said to be critical.

There were reports that the woman was helped by other members of her family. The case came to light when an unidentified man contacted the police and informed them that a man had set himself on fire. The victim was identified as Mohammed Aamir, a resident of Hatra village in Wazirganj. He works as a marginal farmer and has two daughters and a son.

A team of police went to the spot and saw the man lying on the floor having suffered 50 per cent burn burns. The police rushed the man to the district hospital where he was battling for his life. His statement was recorded after preliminary treatment was administered to him.

“My daughter is having an affair with a local man and when I objected to it, she, with the help of my son and

wife and nephew, set me afire after pouring petrol on me. They all wanted to kill me,” Aamir alleged.

Additional SP (Rural) Siddharth Verma said they have not received any complaint in the matter and no case has been registered so far. “However, we are looking out for the accused,” he said.

Doctors monitoring Aamir’s condition said he is stable but needs constant medical attention. Meanwhile, in Firozabad, mutilated headless body of an unidentified woman was found lying in Ramnagar village of Shikohabad police station area on Thursday. The incident came to light when villagers going to their fields found the headless body. The deceased was said to be in his late 20’s.

On being informed, police said that apparently, the man was killed elsewhere and the body dumped there. SP Rajesh Kumar, who also visited the spot, claimed that they were trying to locate the head so that the victim could be identified. A case was registered and the body was sent for autopsy while further probe was underway.

**“Go to any village of Bundelkhand and you will find TB patients. They are dying because they are not getting food and are also missing out on the medicines that they are supposed to take regularly”**

significant disruption of this system. Patients have been unable to travel to clinics. “We have asked TB health workers not to compromise and conduct tests for both TB and Covid. The primary symptom of both the diseases is the same. In TB, the cough is accompanied by sputum while in case of Covid-19, it is dry cough. Otherwise, both the patients have fever. In case of Covid-19, the patients develop bodyache which they cannot hide,” Dr Suryakant pointed out.

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# Final vaccination trial to be held at 170 units

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The final dry run of Covid-19 vaccination on January 11 will be carried out at a total of 170 units or booths in Lucknow where the actual vaccination drive will take place. A senior health official said that an extensive micro-plan has been made for the massive exercise.

“The exercise will witness the participation of thousands of health workers, district administration officials and police personnel. The micro-plan has been finalised and we will act according to the plan,” he said.

KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri said although the number of Covid cases has been on the decline, that of severe patients is still high and the battle against Covid-19 is far from over.

“KGMU gets scores of patients from other hospitals in the city and other districts. Some patients are so serious that they die within two to three hours of reaching the hospital,” he pointed out.

He said he has issued clear-cut instructions that no patient should be denied admission to the hospital irrespective of their condition.

He said they are fully pre-



pared for the vaccination drive. “Once the vaccination drive begins, it will allay anxiety and apprehensions in the health-care workers and general public. In all three parameters (efficacy, immunity-boosting and safety), vaccines will help a great deal,” he added.

Meanwhile, incharge of ICU (1), SGPGI, Dr Zia Hashim said that in their new research for which they are currently doing the validation, they have developed a scoring system for Covid patients who are hospitalised.

“We categorise a patient by giving a score based on his or her condition and then follow the clinical procedures. It helps because we can begin the treatment knowing the condition of the patients. These are statistical models which help in the classification of patients,” he pointed out.

Dr Hashim said they had developed this scoring system

for other diseases and now they have developed it for Covid-19 as well. He added that this kind of system is also followed in hospitals of other countries. He said though the cases are coming down, there is no dearth of severe patients.

“Our ICUs are still full and we are getting patients from other districts too. These patients are not in a good condition because of complications. Most of these patients are on ventilators and their number is more than it used to be earlier,” he said.

Dr Hashim said that the ICUs have patients aged above 60 years. “Older patients with multiple diseases are more and even with the commencement of the vaccination drive, the ICUs are likely to remain full,” he said.

As far as treatment is concerned, he said they are no longer giving the patients higher pulse steroids because they there are patients with multiple infections. “If these patients are given higher levels of steroids, then the bacterial infection will spread more,” he added.

Dr Hashim pointed out that former Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi, who has been shifted from ICU to a private room, is on oxygen support.

## 147 more test positive for coronavirus



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 147 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Thursday while 167 patients recovered, taking the number of recoveries to 75,944. Lucknow's death toll stands at 1,124 deaths while there are 2,396 active cases in the district.

The fresh cases included 15 from Rae Bareilly road, 13 from Gomitnagar, 12 from Indiranagar, and 10 from Chowk. There were four deaths in Lucknow and one of the deceased belonged to Lucknow while three others from Ayodhya, Prayagraj and Siddharthnagar.

Across the state, 815 persons tested positive, including 39 in Kanpur, 28 in Ghaziabad, 16 in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 63 in Varanasi, and 49 in Meerut, taking the UP case tally to 5,90,844. There were 11 deaths in the state.

# Day after gang war, police find two bikes with blood stains

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the sensational murder of Mau's former block pramukh Ajeet Singh in Vibhuti Khand, police recovered two unclaimed bikes parked at Kamta bus stand in Chinhat on Thursday morning.

DCP (East) Sanjeev Suman confirmed the recovery of the bikes and said blood stains were found on the vehicles. “It appears that the bikes were used by the assailants who suffered injuries in the exchange of fire,” he said.

He added that the police were waiting for the autopsy report and teams were close to arresting the shooters. “A case of murder has been registered in this connection,” he said.

While the police were tightlipped about the autopsy report, sources said that Ajeet was shot about a dozen times. “There were 12 wounds on Ajeet's body and all were caused by bullets,” one source said.

The sources said the police alerted their informers to get details of people receiving treatment at private hospitals. “All the shooters were firing at the deceased and his aide. One of them was firing shots from two handguns. Ajeet's aide Mohar Singh returned fire and a bullet hit one of the attackers who fled the scene. The injured attacker will be getting himself treated at some private hospital,” one source said, adding that the police had their eyes fixed around private hospitals in the city.

The sources said the police were sending the bikes recovered from Kamta bus stand for



a forensic examination. “Singh's SUV had a secretariat pass pasted on the windshield. The police are investigating how he got the pass,” they said. The case was registered against Ajeet's arch-rival Dhruv Singh aka Kuntu Singh and Akhand Singh for criminal conspiracy, while a case of murder against shooter Kanhaiya Vishwakarma aka Girdhari aka Doctor of Varanasi and three unidentified miscreants for murder. The case was registered on the complaint of Ajeet's aide Mohar Singh of Mohammedabad in Mau district. Mohar had suffered injuries in his leg. In his complaint, Mohar stated that he, along with Ajeet, was staying at a flat in Rapti Apartment in

Gomti Nagar Extension.

He said he and Ajeet purchased some items at Kathauta crossing in Vibhuti Khand police station area and were going to sit in the SUV which was parked on the other side of the road when they were attacked around 8 pm.

“I identified Kanhaiya who, along with three other aides, was firing at us. By the time we could react, Singh had succumbed to bullet injuries,” Mohar said. He added that Kuntu Singh was threatening them not to appear as witness in the MLA Sarvesh Singh murder case, in which Ajeet was an eyewitness. The case is sub judice in Azamgarh and Ajeet had to give his statement next week.

It surfaced that Ajeet and

Kuntu were friends-turned-foes after Kuntu decided to get MLA Sarvesh Singh eliminated and Ajeet withdrew himself. Ajeet later appeared as a witness in the MLA murder case and it irked Kuntu. Mohar alleged that Kanhaiya executed the plan on being asked by Kuntu and Akhand.

The rivalry between Ajeet, who was close to mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and Kuntu, is an open secret in Mau and almost every resident is aware of it. Ajeet, who was a former block pramukh, had political ambitions. “Panchayat elections are round the corner and the rivalry is on the rise. It is possible that some political rival of Ajeet wanted to get him eliminated,” one source said.

## Farmer killed in road mishap

Lucknow (PNS): A farmer was killed in a road mishap while another died after he was hit by a train in separate incidents in Gosainganj on Thursday. In another incident in Mohanlalganj, a man died after he fell down from a heap of grain sacks. A 45-year-old man, Bharat Yadav of Loni Katra in Barabanki, was hit by a speeding loader at Birwa crossing around 11:30 am. Bharat suffered grievous injuries and was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead. The errant driver fled the scene abandoning the vehicle on the spot. The loader was impounded by the police.

Meanwhile, a 20-year-old boy, identified as Neeraj of Nagram, died after being hit by a train near Gangaganj Railway crossing (near Chandraul railway station) on Thursday. It surfaced that Neeraj had gone to see a relative and was returning home when he met the mishap.

In another incident, Shivraj Lodhi (65) of Udvat Kheda locality suffered head injuries after he fell down from a heap of grain sacks and died later.

# Bird flu alert in state a double whammy for poultry farmers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The bird flu alert sounded in the state is a double whammy for poultry farmers. President of Poultry Farmers' Association Nawab Ali Akbar said when the farmers were just recovering from the coronavirus setback, the bird flu scare has added to their woes.

He said there has been a very slight impact on the sales of eggs and chicken, but prices have not got down in the retail market although the poultry farmers have faced a slight decrease in prices.

“Sales have not been impacted that much because there has been no case in UP. However, more than the retail market, it's the poultry farmers who are impacted by these developments,” Akbar said.

However, he said these farmers could have faced more problems but since the gap between the supply and demand was huge, the decrease in the wholesale market and the impact was less.



“Poultry farmers had made a 40 per cent recovery after the coronavirus setback, and hence the demand and supply ratio is still not the same as it existed. If the supply had been high, the farmers would have suffered more,” he added.

He said that in view of coronavirus pandemic, there was an unnecessary panic created which hit the poultry farmers' business hard in Uttar Pradesh.

“It was an unnecessary created because chicken or any other meat is cooked at very high temperature in our coun-

try and it kills all the viruses. The only thing that is required to be done is to eat chicken and eggs cooked well,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lucknow zoo authorities are also alert. The zoo director said that as far as the diet of the inmates is concerned, they are only given boiled eggs. “We do not give chicken to the animals. It is only given when an inmate is sick that chicken soup is served,” he said.

Directions have been issued that if any bird is found dead, it should be reported to authorities concerned.

# Suggestions sought for centenary year celebrations



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Zoological Garden has asked for suggestions from people for the centenary year celebrations. Director RK Singh said they would go through the suggestions to make a list of the programmes to be organised and whose photo should be placed on the postal ticket. Singh said suggestions could be mailed or sent by post.

He said the complex was established in the 18th century by Nawab Nasiruddin Haider, the then Nawab of Awadh, as a mango orchard.

“At that time, it was known as Banarasi Bagh. Even today, in the colloquial language, locals call it Banarasi Bagh. As the evening of Awadh used to be famous, a baradari was built which is still situated in the middle of the zoo with all its grandeur. It has also been seen in many films,” he said.

Singh said that after the Nawabs, it remained a favourite place of the British.

“From 1921 to 1926, as many as 26 buildings were

constructed. At that time, the cost of those constructions was Rs 2,08,800. The main gate was constructed in 1936 and it was named 'Sir Ludovic Porter Gate'. A committee was formed for its management and the then commissioner of Lucknow was its chairman. Sheikh Maqbool Hussain was made the first secretary of this committee,” Singh said.

He said that in 1950, in place of the above-named committee, an advisory committee was formed under the Public Health department and the director of Medicine and Health was made its administrator. “In 1966, the administrative control was given to the Forest department and the advisory was reorganised and the principal secretary (forest) and chief wildlife guardian was made the administrator of this advisory. In the year 2001, the zoo was renamed 'Prince of Wales Zoological Gardens Trust' to Lucknow Zoological Garden. In the year 2015, it was again renamed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Zoological Garden,” Singh recalled.

# ‘Need to build post-harvest assets and infrastructure’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The CII, along with the department of Agriculture, on Thursday hosted an interactive session on Agri-infrastructure fund. Addressing the session, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said that 30-35% of farm produce is wasted owing to lack of facilities to store, process, pack and transport it timely.

Therefore, he said there is a need to build post-harvest assets and infrastructure to minimise this wastage. The minister said that at the state level, the progress would be personally monitored by the chief secretary in close co-ordination with the banks. He further elaborated that FPOs, start-ups and agri-service providers can benefit from the scheme and set up facilities for grading, cleaning, processing etc which would enable growers to penetrate consumer mar-

kets efficiently. “Less wastage will also boost exports,” he said.

He pointed out that despite being a low-cost rice manufacturer, India is not able to export as much as other leading rice exporting countries. He invited the industry to invest and reap the benefits of this scheme and stated that the state is looking at more than Rs 10,000 crore worth of investments against this fund in the next five years.

Speaking at the session, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture, Devesh Chaturvedi pointed out that post-harvest infrastructure is crucial, especially for horticulture produce, wherein there exists a gap of 80-90% as per requirement.

“Hence, there is a need to develop more ripening chambers, cold-storages, sorting-grading units as well as godowns,” he said.

He said that of the Rs one

lakh crore assigned for this fund, the state has been allocated Rs 12,831 crore. He also urged the Central government to increase the unit cost of the scheme to make it more attractive for investors. He added that the work on an FPO dashboard is underway and should be launched in two to three weeks.

Addressing the industry representatives, director of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare KR Meena said that MoUs have been signed with 21 private and public banks to facilitate funds disbursement against the scheme. About the salient features of the agri-infrastructure fund, he said that effective financing should be available at around 5%. He elaborated that interest subvention and credit guarantee should be available for seven years. Also, convergence with other schemes of the Central government would also be allowed, he added.

# Mercury likely to dip from today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even as Lucknowites are enjoying a warm January, with maximum temperature almost reaching 30 degrees, the weather conditions are expected to change from Friday and the minimum temperature is likely to dip.

MeT director JP Gupta said the cold north-westerly winds would bring about chilly weather conditions in the state capital. On Thursday, Lucknow

recorded the maximum temperature at 25.9 degree Celsius, which was 4.6 degrees above normal. The minimum temperature at 14.4 degree Celsius was 6.6 notches above normal. In the state, most of the districts recorded minimum temperatures in the range of 12-14 degrees. The forecast for Lucknow is shallow to moderate fog in the morning and mainly clear sky thereafter.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expect-

ed to be around 25 degree Celsius and 12 degree Celsius respectively. The weather is likely to be dry over eastern UP while rains and thunderstorm are likely at isolated places over west UP. Shallow to moderate fog is likely at isolated places over the state in the morning. There is a warning of dense fog at isolated places over eastern UP in the morning and thunderstorm accompanied by lightning at isolated places over western UP.

## SGPGI makes changes in OPD timings

Lucknow (PNS): SGPGI has made certain changes in the OPD timings. The OPD will run from Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 4 pm and on Saturday from 9:30 am to noon.

She said 20 new and 40 old patients would be attended to at the OPD. “The patients will be seen only after they have secured Covid TruNat report. “RT-PCR and the TruNat tests are done only till 1 pm and the patients and their attendants who have not got their Covid tests done should go to the screening counter to get themselves tested. If they get their report, they can be seen by the doctors in the OPD between 1 pm and 4 pm,” the spokesperson said.

FORM No. - 5  
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW**  
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow - 226007  
(Jurisdiction-Part of U.P. and Utranchal)  
**SUMMONS FOR FILLING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION**  

<b>O.A. No. 609/2020</b> (Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debt due to the Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)	<b>Date: 04.01.2021</b>
<b>BANK OF INDIA, (Sarojini Nagar Branch, Lucknow)</b>	<b>...APPLICANT</b>
<b>MR. DILEEP KUMAR RUHELA To,</b>	<b>VERSUS</b>
<b>MR. DILEEP KUMAR RUHELA son of Late Narendra Kumar Ruhela Gauri behind Hera Lal Girls Degree College, Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow.</b>	<b>...DEFENDANTS</b>
<b>DEFENDANTS</b> In the above noted application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on <b>20.05.2021 at 10:30 A.M.</b> failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.	
<b>REGISTRAR Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow</b>	

**RE-TENDER NOTICE**  
No.SSA/CW/KGBV-VI to X/254/2020/ 3847  
The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following work from registered contractors [Class-I (A, B & C)] under A. P.W.D.(Building) Assam, having experience of similar nature of work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 07/01/2021(04:30 PM) to 27/01/2021(2:00 PM) The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in  
Dated - 06/01/2021

Name of Work	Package No	Place	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
CONSTRUCTION OF KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (CLASS VI TO X) (ACADEMIC BLOCK ASSAM TYPE WITH RCC HOSTEL BUILDING (G+2) (KGBV-TYPE-II), SSA, ASSAM	1T	SAIKHUWA, TINSUKIA	Rs.1,91,28,900.00 [Per site]	12 (twelve months)	Rs.3,82,578.00 (for General) Rs.1,91,289.00 (for reserved Category) [PER SITE]	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs.5000.00

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

# 60 passengers came from UK: CMO 2 more Covid deaths in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the instructions of Central and state governments, the Health department is constantly monitoring the people who have come to the district from Britain, informed Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh, adding that since the outbreak of the new corona strain in Britain (November 23), a total of 60 passengers have arrived so far from the UK which included 22 arrived here between November 23 and December 8 and 38 passengers since December 9. Dr Singh said that currently, the Health department is monitoring all 37 passengers residing in Varanasi. District Surveillance Officer and ACMO Dr SS Kanaujia said that out of 38 passengers who came since December 9, 13 were residents of other states and they are staying at their home places while the other 25 passengers, one is a resident of Mirzapur, whose report has been found positive and he has been admitted to Sir Sunderlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU).

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 48 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Thursday, increasing the total number to 21,517. The day also saw two more deaths, increasing the toll to 368. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 25 and 23 of them have been recovered from home isolation, while two from the hospitals, increasing the number to 17,771 and 2,933 respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 20,704, leaving 445 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.22 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.71 per cent.

In the first report of the day, 38 positive patients were found out of 2,738 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,37,198 and the results of 3,450 are await-

Along with this, RTPCR investigation of 19 persons who came in contact with him has also been conducted, in which the investigation report of 18 persons is negative and the report of one person is yet to come.

The 24 passengers are residents of Varanasi who are under the supervision of the

Health department at their places of residence.

All these passengers have been tested for RTPCR, all of them have been tested negative, said Dr Kanaujia, adding that on the other hand, from November 23 to December 8, 4 out of 22 passengers from abroad have gone back to London and five are staying in

ed. Out of them, 5,15,691 were negative, while 21,507 were positive. The total number of samples collected was 5,63,591. Earlier, a male aged 75 from Buddha Colony succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sunderlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of two new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,657 including 178 red zones. There are 2,479 green zones with five new ones.

Meanwhile, mass / group corona antigen tests continued and all the 275 tests were found negative at SSPG Hospital Kabirchaura apart from 49 at CHC Shivpur, 272 at LBS Hospital Ramnagar and 185 at SSH BHU. However, two out of 82 were detected positive at Vivekanand Hospital, Bhelupur. Along with this, samples of 110 from SSPG, 30 from Vivekanand, 200 from LBS Hospital and 72 from SSH BHU have been sent for RTPCR investigation.

another districts or states while the remaining 13 passengers are from Varanasi. At present, all 37 passengers residing in Varanasi are being followed up by phone daily and they have been told that if they show any symptoms in any of them, immediately inform them on the toll free number 1077.

## Complete Godowlia parking by March: DC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Deepak Agrawal has instructed the officers concerned to complete the work of Godowlia Parking site by March by increasing the number of labourers and the work of Rudraksha, a convention centre being built with the support of Japanese government in Nagar Nigam premises, by next month. Reviewing the progress made in various ongoing projects worth over ₹50 lakh here on Wednesday, he asked the officers to complete all the projects on time, maintaining quality, especially focusing on building and bridge construction, adding that no laxity in the direction would be tolerated.

According to him, under the LPG gas pipeline project, infrastructure has been completed to provide gas through pipes to 15,000 houses in the district. He directed the officers to set up camps and register the houses where gas would be supplied. He said that the supply should be given priority to the VDA, electricity, PWD and administrative colonies apart



DC Deepak Agrawal reviewing progress of projects in Varanasi on Wednesday

Pioneer

from making the connection of gas pipeline compulsory in all under-construction new colonies. He instructed the Power department to remove irregular electric boxes between Godowlia and Maidagin and fix them in uniform so the area gives a heritage shape.

According to him, the roads constructed by the PWD would be checked through a third party in view to maintain

their quality. Expressing his deep dissatisfaction over the slow pace of road construction between Cantt station and Parao, he directed the officers concerned to expedite its pace and asking them that if there is any illegal encroachment on the road sides and government property, then the same should be removed by taking the help of administration and police. He stressed the need for

making joint teams of PWD, Nagar Nigam, district administration and the police in view to remove all illegal encroachments. He asked the officers to ensure the completion of the work with quality within the stipulated time, otherwise, action will be taken against the guilty officers. Municipal Commissioner Gaurang Rathi and many others were present in the meeting.

## UGC chief stresses on holistic education

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chairman of University Grants Commission (UGC) Prof DP Singh stressed on holistic education, focusing on character and nation-building. Keeping in mind India's glorious past, the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 had been approved by the Cabinet under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, which is now ready for its implementation. 'Many committees and expert groups are actively engaged for its an early implementation in the country,' he said while delivering the first lecture under the series organised by Malviya Moolya Anusheelan Kendra on the occasion of birth

anniversary of BHU's founder Bharat Ratna Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya as per Hindi Calendar through web link here on Wednesday.

According to him, all the great personalities like Mahamana, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr S Radhakrishnan, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and others had advocated for a holistic education in view to promote character and nation-building. He said that in NEP, Mahamana's educational thinking is reflected and appealed to the people to read Mahamana, learn about him and bring his ideals and principles into their life. 'BHU is not just an institution but it is the mother of all institutions,' he said, adding that BHU is a unique example of Mahamana's vision and his educational phi-

losophy, which is called 'Sarvavidya ki Rajdhani'.

Presiding over the programme, Vice-Chancellor Prof Rakesh Bhatnagar said that Mahamana had chosen education as a medium for nation-building as he believed that education is a light that removes the darkness of poverty, hunger and illiteracy. Executive Council Member Prof Anand Mohan requested that a course on Mahamana's ideas should be started so that students across the country get an opportunity to study more about Mahamana. Malviya centre coordinator Prof Asha Ram Tripathi proposed the vote of thanks. In the function at VC Lodge, members of EC Prof Bachha Singh and Prof Adhya Prasad Pandey, registrar Neeraj Tripathi, Prof

AK Singh, Dr Usha Tripathi and many others were also present.

Meanwhile, various programmes were also organised on the occasion of Malviya Jayanti.

At Shri Vishwanath temple on the campus, the programme started with Rudrabhishek which was performed by the V-C Prof Rakesh Bhatnagar amidst chanting of Vedic mantras. Rector Prof VK Shukla, honorary temple manager Prof Chandramouli Upadhyay, Chief Proctor Prof Anand Chaudhary and many others were also present. Apart from this, the Purnahuti of week-long Shrimad Bhagwat Parayana was held at Malviya Bhavan in presence of V-C and other senior university officers.

# Nandi flays opposition for doing politics on vaccine 49 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Not only the country but the whole world is struggling with COVID-19 as well. To get rid of this, everyone is engaged in different types of practice. Trials of several vaccines are going on simultaneously.

The special thing is that two vaccines have been approved in the country too while many more vaccines are under trial. This has become possible after the hard work of doctors and scientists. Unfortunately, the opposition is also doing politics on this. These views were expressed by the Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi'.

On arrival at Prayagraj, the Cabinet Minister said that SP leader Akhilesh Yadav made a statement that he would not get the BJP vaccine. He has called for a boycott from other people as well. Such a negative trend is fatal for the country,

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

On Wednesday, the second day of launching the COVID-19 testing drive in the Magh Mela area, mobile teams confirmed corona infection in ten police personnel deployed at the Mela Police Line. While 49 others have also been found to be corona positive in the district in the last 24 hours. During the treatment, two infected people died.

According to CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai, a Covid testing of 6374 people was conducted in the district on Wednesday. So far 28630 infec-

tions have been confirmed in the district with 49 newly infected people. With the death of two patients, the number of people who lost their lives from Corona has increased to 382.

Nodal officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai said that on Wednesday, the newly infected S-I Wireless posted in Magh Mela Police Line, seven constables, one head constable, one constable of CRPF, one cook, one S-I posted in Meja police station, one home guard posted in Sarai Mumrej police station, a guard posted at Pratapur BDO office and a guard deployed at Agriculture Institute of Naimit tested Covid and among others.

Former BJYM president

Narasimha said that politics is its place; public interest is its place. Misdirecting or misleading the society in its interest also comes under the category of crime.

The same thing is being done about the peasant movement and now negative politics is also happening on the Covid vaccine.

## Keep basic essential things away from politics: Keshari Devi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Basic essential things like health, education and security should be kept away from politics. This subject is for the benefit and welfare of all. Doing politics with it is playing with the public interest. This was said by the MP Keshari Devi Patel during a programme held here in Prayagraj here on Thursday.

Taking a dig at the opposition, she said that SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is calling for

the boycott of the people by calling the Covid vaccine a BJP vaccine. This is unfortunate. This is a confusing move for the general public. After all, the whole world is fighting COVID-19. In this case, efforts are being made to cure and eliminate this deadly disease. Scientists and doctors are working hard day and night. A few select people are doing politics without understanding its seriousness. People are also spreading confusion about the vaccine. It is a sym-

bol of negative politics.

After the new agricultural law, politics has also started on the Covid vaccine. Confusion is being spread among people. The whole world is becoming aware, then the politicians of the opposition in the country are taking people in the opposite direction. This truth has to be understood by the general public. This was said by the Cabinet Minister Siddharth Nath Singh. During his stay in Prayagraj, he said that the

people themselves feel good and bad. This is the reason why for the second time, the public won Narendra Modi more strongly and formed a government.

BJP governments are also being formed continuously in different states. Even in Kashmir, Hyderabad, BJP candidates are winning. It simply means that the general public has accepted the BJP. People believe that BJP is working in public interest with body and soul, he pointed out.

## Miscreants loot jewellery from bullion shop

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The graph of crime in Pratapgarh district of UP has increased manifolds in the past few months. On Thursday morning, some masked miscreants armed with pistols barged into the shop of a bullion trader in the Chowk area of the city. They then took away jewellery worth ₹ 80 lakh from him after putting the countrymade pistol on the shopkeeper's temple

It is said that three miscre-

ants had entered the shop. While the two stood outside starting the bike at some distance. After the incident, the miscreants escaped waving pistols. The news of broad daylight robbery spread sensation in the area. The police reached the spot on getting the information.

During the scanning of CCTV footage, three masked miscreants are seen committing the crime inside the shop. Police cordoned off in search of miscreants. Vehicle checking

drive is being launched across the district in search of miscreants.

Suresh Soni's bullion shop is located in Shyam Bihari Gali Mohalla adjacent to Chowk area in the city.

On Thursday, at half past eight in the morning, a miscreant robbed him at gunpoint while two miscreants stood outside, starting the bike. Three masked miscreants entered inside and took away the jewellery at pistol point. Jewellery worth ₹80 lakh was robbed of

the shopkeeper. On receiving information about the incident, the police reached the shop and conducted an investigation.

Checking of vehicles has been started in the entire district on the information of the control room. CO City Abhay Pandey said that on the information of the robbery in the shop, checking of vehicles was started in the entire district. However, the culprits could not be traced till filing of the report.

## HC seeks explanation from DM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court has sought explanation from the District Magistrate of Prayagraj Bhanu Chandra Goswami in a contempt of court case related to gun license.

One Kamlesh Kumar Patel of Beniganj had moved the High Court requesting directions to the District Magistrate Prayagraj for issuing fire arm license in view of threat to his life from the associates of Atique Ahmed. Kamlesh had received threats to his life from the members of the Atique gang. On his plea the High Court had directed the District Magistrate to dispose the case of Kamlesh firearm license within four months.

When nothing was done in four months Kamlesh moved a

contempt petition, and Justice Sunit Kumar issued a notice to the District Magistrate after hearing the parties, and asked him to submit his reply/observations within two weeks. The Additional Advocate General received the notice on behalf of the District Magistrate.

The court was informed by the lawyer of Kamlesh that a close associate of Atique Ahmed, Tota languishing in Agra Jail, had threatened Kamlesh from the jail itself. Earlier on a plea of Ram Sakhi, wife of Kamlesh, the High Court had allowed security for the family on government expenditure. Kamlesh pleaded that he had to move around in connection with several cases and land deals, so he badly needed a pistol license for his safety.

The court will hear this

case on January 22, 2021.

**HC REJECTS PLEA OF VIJAY MISHRA:** The Allahabad High Court has rejected the plea of mafia-touted-politician Vijay Mishra, MLA of shifting him from the Agra Jail to Naini or Bhadohi Jail. This order was passed by a division bench comprising Justice Bachchu Lal and Justice Subhash Chandra Sharma.

Vijay Mishra had pleaded in his petition that there was no proper arrangement of his treatment in Agra Jail. He had also pleaded that Agra Jail was also badly affected by the Covid pandemic and owing to long distance the family members find it difficult to visit him in the Agra Jail. A good number of cases against him could not be heard in Bhadohi and Prayagraj owing to distance from Agra.

The state government made it clear that there was no pandemic in Agra Jail, and there was proper arrangement for the treatment of the inmates. Vijay Mishra has been allowed to talk to family members on phone, and there was no need to take him to Prayagraj and Bhadohi for hearing of cases in this era of hearing through video conferencing.

The court opted not to interfere and rejected the plea of Vijay Mishra of shifting him from Agra to Naini or Bhadohi Jail.

Over 70 criminal cases are pending against Vijay Mishra including those related to fraud in property dealing, murder, rape and so on. He had been arrested in August last year and since then he has been languishing in Agra Jail.

## NCR achieves best freight loading of 1.6 MT during Dec

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

North Central Railway has achieved the ever best freight loading of 1.6 Million Tonnes during December 2020 which is 49.5 per cent more than December 2019 and 10.7 per cent over the target of 1.5 MT. On cumulative basis originating freight loading achieved till December 20 is 11.82 MT as against 11.20 MT in the corresponding period of last financial year. With this performance North Central Railway is among top five zonal railways having registered loading of more than five per cent over last financial year despite ongoing COVID-19 condition in the

country.

Besides loading mobility of trains has also improved substantially and average speed of freight train achieved in December 20 was 44.9 KMPH as against 22.32 KMPH in December 19 which is improvement of more than 100 per cent. On cumulative basis average speed in current financial year has been 44.77 KMPH against 24.25 KMPH in the corresponding period of last financial year which is an improvement of 84.6 per cent.

Sustained marketing efforts by BDUs help NCR acquiring new traffic stream of millet from Morena in Jhansi division and 42 BCN wagons were

loaded on December 26, 2020 for Nishantpura Bhopal.

**MAGH MELA SLOWLY TAKING SHAPE:** The annual Magh Mela on the Sangam ghat is slowly taking shape. The tents of the seers and saints have started coming up. The pandals of all government offices have already been decorated. Recently, bhoomi puja was performed to set up a pandal of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

In order to put a VHP pandal in Sector 1 of the parade, Principal of Ved Vidyalyaya, Acharya Pankaj Sharma and Dikshant Pandey performed the bhoomi puja. During this, organisation secretary of

Eastern UP, Ambareesh, organisation secretary of Kanshi Province Mukesh was the chief yajmaan. Organisation secretary of Eastern UP said that this time there will be no big event from the organisation. All traditional activities will be conducted. Efforts will be made not to gather crowds. All the rules related to COVID-19 will be followed for those coming to the pandal. There will also be meetings on the construction of the Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya in the VHP pandal in Mela area. Prayagraj is the headquarter for Kashi province. Office-bearers and workers coming from outside will gather here.



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar inspecting the site of the airport terminal along with AF and district officials on Thursday

Pioneer

## DC inspects progress of new airport terminal at Chakeri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar, while inspecting the progress of the new airport terminal at Chakeri on Thursday directed officials concerned to complete all the works in time and also to ensure that the new terminal building was ready by June 2021 as planned. He said the new airport terminal was one of the most important joint project of the Centre and state government and was very much needed by the people of Kanpur.

He said special monitoring of the project was being carried out jointly by the Central and state governments so as to ensure it was completed timely.

He said 25 per cent of the work had been completed but the Aircraft Taxi Area, ameni-

ties holding area like power, sewage, road, generator back up etc was still being constructed. He was informed that 150 vehicles (4 wheelers) parking area was under construction and will be completed by March 2021.

He expressed hope that looking into the present pace of works and commitment by RNN(Construction Agency) and KESCo, the civil and electrical works will also be completed by May 2021. He said once this was done then the report will be sent to DGCA for clearance and NOC. He said once the NOC was received in June or July, the commissioning and starting of the airport can be planned in August or September 2021.

The DC said three aircraft (Airbus A 321) can be parked in the taxi area at one go. He said the work for taxi area and

the connectivity to the runway was under construction and will be completed by March 2021. He said the project of new four lane road connectivity to the Prayagraj Highway from new terminal was under study at the government level and chief engineer PWD was also personally pursuing the case. He said hopefully the project of 4 lane road of 2.7 km length will be sanctioned by February 2021 and then it will take four to six months for the completion of the road.

The DC was informed that the airport terminal had storm water drainage problem and the water logging was one the current major issues. The DC said the Kanpur Nagar Nigam had been directed to construct a culvert at the entry point and also digging out drain of around 2.8 km. He added that the culvert work will be com-

pleted by March-end and digging of drain will be over by May 2021.

Shekhar said the additional land of 900 metre X 1000 metre as required by Air Force to set up 'night landing facilities' was being worked upon by Air Force and the district administration and the details will be made available in the next 15 days.

Air Commodore Bala Murali informed told DC that if they got the land and budget clearance in time the night landing facilities will be ready by June 2021.

Others who took part in the inspection were DM, VC KDA, AOC Air Force, Municipal Commissioner, ED Construction Airport Authority, Director Airport Chakeri, CE PWD, SE PWD, CE KESCO, PD RNN and several other officials.

## 2nd phase of Covid vaccination trial run from January 11

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr AK Mishra, on Thursday informed that the second phase of COVID-19 vaccination trial run will take off from January 11. He said it would be at 100 session sites and there shall be 67 vaccination centres in the entire district. He said each booth will have 100 health workers and efforts will be made to ensure that the whole exercise was carried out with full preparations and proper care.

He said for the second phase around 1000 health workers have been selected and special training was being imparted to them. He said for the trial run a total of 500 vaccinators will be deployed. He said it had been made mandatory that without registration there shall be no vaccination and for common person registration website, portal and app will soon be introduced so that people can get themselves registered for the vaccination. He said for registration one need to possess one of these-driving licence, Aadhar card, voter ID, pan card, passport, job card, pension papers, MNREGA card, health insurance smart card and even the verification done by elected representatives.

He said people who were above the age of 50 will be vaccinated in the third phase especially who were suffering from cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney and liver diseases etc. He said for this category there shall be a website and portal for registration. He said people who were unable to get themselves registered can submit their details at the Health department from where the official and worker will be nominated. He said people will get an sms on their mobile phones informing them about the name of the vaccination centre, date and time the vaccination will be done. He said it was important to understand that after the first dose of vaccine the second dose was mandatory and the details of the second vaccination will also be sent on the mobile phone. He said QR code will be sent to the particular number as well.

## 35 more test positive in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said 35 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 32,492 on Thursday evening.

The CMO said 6 COVID-19 patients were discharged. He said no COVID-19 death was reported in the city during the past 24 hours.

Dr Mishra said 402 active cases were undergoing treatment in the city at present. He said 3777 samples were taken in the city on Thursday for testing.

## Vitul Dubey nabbed

KANPUR (PNS): Wanted accused of Bikru carnage Vitul Dubey, carrying a cash reward of ₹ 50,000 on him, was arrested from Sajeti under the Ghatampur police station on Thursday. He was absconding for the past six months. Last week, the cash reward of ₹ 25,000 announced on him was increased to ₹50,000. His father Atul Dubey and cousin Amar Dubey have already been killed in police encounter. It may be recalled that on July 2, 2020 night, historysheeter Vikas Dubey and his accomplices had killed eight policemen, including the then Bilhaur Circle Officer Devendra Misra during their raid in Bikru village of Chaubepur. Thereafter, police had killed six accused, including the key accused Vikas Dubey, in encounter while 36 others were sent to jail.

## Durg-Nautanwa spl to run from Jan 13

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers will run the 08201 Durg-Nautanwa bi-weekly special train every Wednesday and Friday from January 13 until further order and 08202 Nautanwa-Durg bi-weekly special train from January 15 until further order every Friday and Sunday. All coaches in these trains will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

**08201 DURG-NAUTANWA SPL:** The 08201 Durg-Nautanwa bi-weekly special train will from January 13 until further order every Wednesday and Friday depart from Durg at 20.10 hrs, from Raipur at 20.55 hrs, from Bhatpara 21.50 hrs, Uslapur at 23.05 hrs, the second day Pendra Road at 00.32 hrs, Anuppur at 01.20 hrs, Shahdol at 02.10 hrs, Birsinghpur at 02.44 hrs, Umaria at 03.12 hrs, Katni at 05.00 hrs, Satna at 07.00 hrs, Manikpur at 08.25 hrs, Prayagraj Chheoki at 10.10 hrs, Vindhyachal at 10.57 hrs, Mirzapur at 11.15 hrs, Chunar at 11.47 hrs, Varanasi Junction at 14.10 hrs, Mau at 16.05 hrs, Belthara Road at 16.41 hrs, Bhatni at 17.21 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 17.44 hrs, Gorakhpur at 20.10 hrs, Anandnagar at 21.15 hrs and will arrive at Nautanwa at 22.00 hrs. During the return journey, the 08202 Nautanwa-Durg bi-weekly special train will from January 15 until further order every Friday and Sunday depart from Nautanwa at 11.35 hrs, Anandnagar at 12.20 hrs, Gorakhpur at 13.40 hrs, Deoria Sadar at 14.38 hrs, Bhatni at 15.01 hrs, Belthara Road at 15.36 hrs, Mau at 16.20 hrs, Varanasi at 18.55 hrs, Chunar at 20.05 hrs, Mirzapur at 20.30 hrs, Vindhyachal at 20.47 hrs, Prayagraj Chheoki at 21.55 hrs, the second day from Manikpur to 00.20 hrs, Satna at 01.40 hrs, Katni at 03.35 hrs, Umaria at 04.58 hrs, Birsinghpur at 05.22 hrs, Shahdol at 06.10 hrs, Anuppur at 06.55 hrs, Pendra Road at 07.22 hrs, Uslapur at 09.45

07.45 hrs, Uslapur at 09.45 hrs, Bhatpara at 10.31 hrs, Raipur at 12.00 hrs and reach Durg at 13.00 hrs. A total of 20 coaches, including two of generator-cum-luggage vehicle, three of general second class, seven of sleeper class, six of air-conditioned third, one of air-conditioned first-cum-second class and one of AC second.

**08206 NAUTANWA-DURG SPECIAL:** The railway administration for the convenience of passengers will run 08205 Durg-Nautanwa (via Ayodhya) weekly special train from January 14 to 28 every Thursday and 08206 Nautanwa-Durga (via Ayodhya) weekly special train from January 16 to 30 every Saturday. The 08205 Durg-Nautanwa (via Ayodhya) weekly special will from January 14 to 28 every Thursday depart from Durg at 20.10 hrs, from Bhilai Power House at 20.21 hrs, from Raipur at 20.55 hrs, Tilda at 21.28 hrs, from Bhatpara at 21.50 hrs, from Uslapur at 23.05 hrs, from Pendra Road on the second day at 00.32 hrs, Anuppur at 01.20 hrs, Amlai at 01.33 hrs, Shahdol at 02.10 hrs, Umaria at 03.12 hrs, Katni at 05.00 hrs, Satna at 07.00 hrs, Manikpur at 08.15 hrs, Prayagraj at 11.00 hrs, Pratapgarh at 12.20 hrs, Sultanpur at 13.35 hrs, Faizabad at 15.35 hrs, Ayodhya at 16.00 hrs, Katra at 16.27 hrs, Mankapur at 17.12 hrs, Basti at 18.03 hrs, Gorakhpur at 20.10 hrs, Anandnagar at 21.15 hrs will arrive at Nautanwa at 22.00 hrs. During the return journey, 08206 Nautanwa-Durg (Via Ayodhya) weekly special will from January 16 to 30 every Saturday depart from Nautanwa at 08.50 hrs, Anandnagar at 09.32 hrs, Gorakhpur at 11.05 hrs, Basti at 12.10 hrs, Mankapur at 13.10 hrs, Katra at 14.05 hrs, Ayodhya at 14.40 hrs, Faizabad at 15.12 hrs, Sultanpur at 16.50 hrs, Pratapgarh at 18.00 hrs, Prayagraj at 20.25 hrs, Manikpur at 22.50 hrs, Satna on second day at 00.15 hrs, Katni at 02.30 hrs, Umaria at 04.07 hrs, Shahdol at 05.35 hrs, Amlai at 06.05 hrs, Anuppur at 06.35 hrs, Pendra Road at 07.22 hrs, Uslapur at 09.45

hrs, Bhatpara at 10.31 hrs, Tilda at 10.53 hrs, Raipur at 12.00 hrs, Bhilai Power House at 12.33 hrs and arrive at Durg at 13.00 hrs. A total of 23 coaches, including two of SLRD, three of general second class, 13 of sleeper class, three of AC third and two of AC second will be attached.

**HONoured:** Under the auspices of the Rajbhasha department of North Eastern Railway (NER), a prize distribution ceremony was organised in the auditorium of Mechanical department here on Wednesday during which Chief Rajbhasha Officer and Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME), Arvind Kumar Pandey was the chief guest. On the occasion Pandey honoured and encouraged the successful contestants of the Zonal Railway Hindi Essay, Debate and Noting and Drafting Competition organised in November last year by awarding them. The contestants who have secured first place in these competitions get an opportunity to participate in the competitions to be held at the all-India Railway level. Deputy Chief Rajbhasha Officer On Singh, Rajbhasha Officer/ Headquarters, Mohammad Arshad Mirza along with prize recipients and employees of Department of Rajbhasha were present during the function.

**GIRL FOUND:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF), NER, makes constant efforts to protect passengers and provide them better travel facilities. Reports said that the RPF post, Aishbagh, while patrolling at Aishbagh railway station found a 19-year-old girl from platform No 3 in unclaimed condition. After questioning, the girl was handed over to Asha Jyoti Kendra, Lucknow. Likewise the RPF Post, Badaun, platform no. On 03, caught one person with 14 illegal e-tickets. Action was taken under the Railway Act and a case was registered in this connection. On the other hand, the Railway Protection Force post, Deoria Sadar, caught one person with 134 illegal e-tickets. Action was taken under the Railway Act and a case was registered in this connection.

## SP inspects police station

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Singh conducted a surprise inspection of Katra Kotwali police station on Wednesday.

During the inspection the SP visited the Women's Helpdesk, store room, lock up, barracks, office, records, computer room, kitchen, mess, armoury, lavatory etc. He directed the station house officer (SHO) Ramesh Yadav to ensure the sanitation on the campus on priority. In view of Covid-19 the SP made it clear that no laxity should be done in following social distancing guidelines. On the occasion the SP said that people visiting the police station should be treated in a friendly way and women with respect. Giving tips for effective policing the SP directed the SHO to keep a close watch on the activities of hardcore criminals. He further said that information about active criminals should be kept updated. The area police should keep a close watch on inactive criminals too, he added. Emphasising over beat system the SP directed the SHO to remain updated with each activity of the area whether those were related to legal trade or illegal business.



SP Ajay Kumar Singh inspecting Katra Kotwali police station on Wednesday

ness. On the occasion the directed the SHO to tighten the noose around top 10 criminals, historysheeters etc. He said that regular patrolling in the area, including by foot, on two-wheelers and four-wheelers were the main ways to control crime. He directed the police station staff to create an atmosphere for instilling fear among criminals and fearlessness among common people.

**WARNED:** District Magistrate incharge Avinash Singh has warned the working agencies to complete the work within the deadline and with quality otherwise remain prepared for facing the music. While reviewing works of cost above ₹50 lakh in the meeting hall at Collectorate on Wednesday, he was apprised by



DM incharge Avinash Singh holding a meeting at collectorate on Wednesday

the working agencies that out of 103 works 12 had been completed. He directed the officials concerned to carry out tests of quality of the work in the laboratory of PWD and submit reports signed by the working agency to statistics officer. On the occasion he directed the working agencies to contact the DM personally in case project was under pendency due to paucity of fund and get it without inordinate delay for completing the work.

## Kafil hogs limelight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

During the T20 Inter-departmental Cricket Tournament going on under the joint aegis of the Manoranjan Institute and Divisional Sports Association in the Mini Stadium of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) a match between Commercial and Stores departments was played on Wednesday. Batting first the team of Department of Stores could score only 65 runs, in which Deepak contributed the maximum 13. For the Commercial department Durgesh, Deepak and Meena took two wickets each. In reply, the team of Commercial department scored 67 runs losing two wickets in 11 overs and won the match by eight wickets. Amit contributed 15 and Man of the Match Kafil Ahmed contributed 33 runs. Pramod took one wicket for Stores department. These inter-departmental T20 matches are being played between the teams of Varanasi division's Personnel, Commercial, Operations, Stores, Accounts, Mechanical, Electrical, Signal and Engineering departments besides Railway Protection Force (RPF). After the final match of the tournament, the winner and runner-up teams will be given the trophies by the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM).



## DLSA secy inspects district jail

KANPUR (PNS): The Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, Aishwarya Pratap Singh carried out an inspection of the district jail on Thursday where he took a feedback on the existing condition of the jail, kitchen, hospital and all different barracks inside the jail precincts. He also inquired about the facilities being provided to the inmates and the arrangements made to protect the inmates from COVID-19. The awareness camp was held under the directives of the State Legal Service Authority and President of the DLSA, RP Singh. Addressing the camp AP Singh said the inmates need to be aware of their Fundamental Rights and added that the pregnant

inmates also need to know their rights and the children who had been lodged with their mothers in the jail. He informed them about their rights in simple terms and immediately nominated a panel of advocates for two inmates and they were made to interact with them as well. He added that the Indian Constitution under Article 21 and 22 protected and safeguarded the rights of convicts, undertrials and offenders. He said it also focused on present day situation of the women offenders in the jails and suggested to improve their position. He said in case of pregnant prisoners, the provisions of the National Model Prison Manual must be followed strictly to make

arrangements for temporary release for delivery of children in a hospital outside the prison. He said suspension of sentence may be considered in the case of casual offenders and information about a woman's pregnant status should also be made to the court that had ordered the detention, so as to enable the court to grant bail. He said besides pregnant and lactating women should be provided with special diet as per the manual. Prominent others who visited were Jail Superintendent, jailor, panel lawyers and several jail visitors.

**CONG MEN TAKE OUT PROCESSION:** Hundreds of Congressmen carrying party flags, posters and banner marched on the streets on

Thursday to celebrate the 136th Foundation Day of Congress. The slogan shouting rallyists chanted slogans in support of the farmers agitation and warned that adamant Centre to accede to the demands of the farmers or they would be forced to intensify their agitation. Addressing the rally the state vice-president and MLA Sohail Ansari said the sacrifices made by the Nehru family were unparalleled and there was no comparison to it. He said Congress had built India from the scratch after it was freed from the British clutches and the present state of India was on account of the efforts and sacrifices made by the Congress leaders especially the Nehru, Gandhi family.

# J&K LG announces ₹28,400-crore Industrial Developmental Scheme

PNS ■ JAMMU

Much awaited Industrial Developmental Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir, aimed at generating employment in both manufacturing and service sectors, was made public by the Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday.

The scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 28,400 crore upto the year 2037 was earlier approved by the Union government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday.

The proposed scheme is likely to attract unprecedented investment and give direct and indirect employment to about 4.5 lakh persons. Additionally, because of the working capital interest subvention, the scheme is likely to give indirect support to about 35,000 persons.

Sharing details of the scheme, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, in a press confer-



ence, claimed the main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment beyond government jobs in both manufacturing and service sectors which directly leads to the socio-economic development of the region. The Lt Governor also expressed gratitude towards the Prime Minister for approving the New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu & Kashmir.

Briefing media persons here at Jammu Convention centre, Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha claimed the New Industrial

Development Scheme for J&K will give a boost to domestic manufacturing in the region & help J&K in becoming AatmaNirbhar."The Scheme will encourage new investment, substantial expansion and also nurture the existing industries in J&K", he maintained.

The Lt Governor, while giving out the details of the scheme, emphasized that it will be ensured that the implementation of the new scheme shall be done in a manner which is friendly and hassle free to the investors. It will be ensured

that entrepreneurs from within J&K and outside find a smooth and progressive ecosystem for their business plans, he added.

Further, the Lt Governor emphasized that "With our transparent policies, investments in developing infrastructure, market oriented policy environment and skilled human capital, we aspire to become a growth pillar for India in the current decade".

"Earlier schemes offered a plethora of incentives. However, the overall financial outflow was much lesser than the new scheme. Whereas, the earlier schemes have provided about Rs 1120 crores in all these years, this scheme shall provide an outlay of Rs 28,400 crores", Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha said.

He further said that Government and Industry will work closely to achieve the vision of the holistic and balanced development of Jammu and Kashmir. He also thanked the business associations and all who contributed through their valuable suggestions.

## KERALA RAIL LINE PROJECT

# Thousands likely to lose houses on proposed route

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala Government's decision on Wednesday to meet half the project cost of Rs 2,815 crore in the construction of Angamali- Erumeli Sabari Rail Route has stirred up a hornet's nest in the region through which the track is to be laid. Thousands of residents staying along the route of the proposed track would lose their dwelling places and fertile farms once the Indian Railways resume the land acquiring process. What is disturbing the Railway authorities in Kerala is that the majority of the people who would be displaced because of the project belong to the minority communities.

The Pinarayi Vijayan-led Kerala Government on Wednesday had declared that it would meet half the cost of Rs 2,815 crore required for the 111 km long railway line from Angamali to Erumeli to facilitate pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Sabarimala.

The legendary Dr E Sreedharan, India's Metro Man, sounded caution about the Sabari Rail project. The Kerala Government has suddenly raked up this project only to get political gains for the

next election. This railway line will be of no use to Kerala or to the Sabarimala pilgrims. On the other hand, it will dislocate many people and cause severe environmental damage to the green, beautiful hill ranges," Dr Sreedharan told The Pioneer on Thursday.

He said that automatic signalling can be introduced on the Trivandrum-Mangalore section and the line capacity increased to run many commuted trains at half the cost meant for the project. "This will reduce the road congestion and road accidents," said Dr Sreedharan.

He said the lop-sided policies of the Kerala Government has resulted in the stagnation of growth in the State. "A more urgent railway link is the extension of Trissur-Guruvayoor line to Thirunavaya, (a project sanctioned about 14 years back) which will reduce the running time of trains between Ernakulam and Kozhikode by at least one hour and the severe congestion at Shornur junction too will be avoided," he said.

There is widespread complaint against the Centre and Indian Railways for using high handed measures like

threats and coercion to acquire land for the seven kilometre stretch which has been built as part of the project. "This is a move to displace the population belonging to the minority communities from places like Perumbavoor, Kothamangalam up to Erumeli. The question where we would go from the places where we have been living for decades remains unanswered. The Kerala Government had expressed its helplessness in acquiring land for the construction of National Highway in North Kerala and the Centre was forced to shelve its plan to build a six-lane track," said P M Basheer, former councillor of Perumbavoor Municipal Council.

Though the decision to part finance the project has been taken by the Pinarayi Vijayan Government, legal experts are of the view that land acquisition process would not be easy. "The Modi Government itself has amended the land acquisition laws and the Railways would find the process tough. The question is whether it is worthwhile for Governments of India and Kerala to squander public money on a white elephant," said a Kerala High Court lawyer.

# Didi allays ‘outsider’ businessmen’s fears

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an apparent bid to send the right message to non-Bengali businessmen amid "insider-outsider" debate ahead of the Assembly elections Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said her Government would continue to support them flourish in the State.

Aware that her repeated branding of the north and western Indian BJP politicians as "outsiders" could alienate the non-Bengali industrialists who have their ancestry in Bengal Banerjee said the industrialists who were originally from other States but had made Bengal their base would get all kinds of support from her Government. A whole lot of indus-

trialists from Bengal like the Neotaias, Goenkas, Agarwals, Budhias, Dalmias, Khaitans, Sonis and Sodhis belong to Marwari, Gujarati and Punjabi communities. "She told us that we are as Bengalis as those who say it as their mother language and hence we too are the parts and parcel of this State," businessman who attended the meeting said adding the Chief Minister asked the business community to stay united and work for the development of Bengal.

Reminding how Bengal had developed a mechanism towards ensuring ease of doing business and how the forthcoming projects like Tajpur sea port, Deocha Pachmi coal block and the newly found natural gas reserve in North 24 Parganas

would help trade and commerce in days to come the Chief Minister said how her Government had worked hard to construct a number of leather and industrial parks in the State besides developing the information technology sector.

"The Chief Minister had already indulged in divisive politics. First she tried to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims through her minority appeasement politics and when it boomeranged pitching the majority community against her now she has raising insider-outsider issue trying to segregate Bengalis from non-Bengalis so as to divide the BJP votes ... But this may have repercussions in industrial investment because most investors in Eastern India are

not locals but they come from the western or northern part of the country ... this is the reason why she might have tried to fine-tune her rhetoric today," said BN Chakrabarty a political expert.

Banerjee had been under constant attack from the fellow politicians for repeatedly trying to play 'soft communal' card in a bid to garner votes by dividing the communities, castes and linguistics groups.

In fact Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar too had on Tuesday attacked her policy of raising insider-outsider issue. "Today it hurts me to know how the citizens of the country are being called outsiders in an open and politically conscious State like Bengal," Dhankhar himself hails

from Rajasthan. About 75 representatives from industry attended the meeting West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) Chairman Rajiva Sinha said adding the government wanted to know from them what more could be done for ease of doing business. "WBIDC will provide single window facility through Silpa Sathi office (physical) and Silpa Sathi portal to all sectors - large, MSME, textile, agro-processing, information technology -- from next week," Sinha said.

Meanwhile, the State BJP is all set to receive party national president JP Nadda who will visit Bengal on Saturday. Nadda would hold his first meeting at Katwa in Burdwan district.

## Bihar: School shut after principal tests Covid positive

Patna: A Government high school in Bihar's Gaya district has suspended all its classes for an indefinite period as a precautionary measure after the headmaster of the institution tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Thursday.

The Gaya district administration on Wednesday announced the closure of the school, situated in Saraiya village. The state government on December 4 reopened all the government and private schools after a nine-month-long hiatus, in the wake of the

Covid-19 pandemic.

Gaya's District Education Officer (DEA), M. Khan said: "The principal wrote to us complaining of fever, a few days back and also cited that he was having respiratory issues. He had also undergone the necessary tests." IANS

**Office of The Superintending Engineer, Kanpur Circle, P.W.D., Kanpur**  
 No. 6846C/131C-KV/2020  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
 Dated : 29.12.2020  
 The Superintending Engineer, Kanpur Circle, P.W.D., Kanpur on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids from the eligible and approved Contractors (Class 'A') registered with UP PWD Building works :-

Sl. No.	District	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of Bid Document (Rs.)	Time of Completion (with rainy season)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Kanpur Dehat	Construction of P.W.D., Office Building for 3 Divisions in Bara Kanpur Dehat	429.00	23.45	2500.00+ 450.00 (GST) = 2950.00	24 Months

Bid document/Tender details is available on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> From 16.01.2021 to 25.01.2021 (upto 12:00 Noon) which may be uploaded from website. Filled Bid documents submitted/uploaded online on the above website on dated 25.01.2021 (upto 12.00 Noon). Technical bid will be opened on 27.01.2021 at 12.30 p.m.  
 All terms & Conditions are available on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>.  
 (Prakash Chandra) Executive Engineer Provincial Division, PWD, Kanpur Dehat.  
 (Jai Singh) Superintending Engineer Kanpur Circle, PWD Kanpur  
 U.P.: 158552, Date : 06.01.2021, विज्ञापन वेबसाइट [www.up.gov.nic.in](http://www.up.gov.nic.in) पर उपलब्ध है।

**Office-Chairman and Administrator, Greater Sharda Sahayak Command Area Development Authority/Project, 23 C Gokhale Marg, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh**  
 Letter-333/AGR/SNP-III/E-tender/2020-21 dated 05.01.2021  
**Notice Inviting e-Tender (NIT)**  
 The tender is invited in the Financial Year 2020-21 for On-Farm Development works under scheme Command Area Development and Water management (CADWM) for the work relating to the construction of R.C.C. Lined Channel, Unlined channel, R.C.C. Water controlling structures, field drain works. The bid is invited from Government registered firms/ companies from 09-01-2021 at 05:00 p.m. upto 31-01-2021 at 5:00 p.m. Which will be opened online at the head office- Chairman and Administrator, Greater Sharda Sahayak Command Area Development Authority/ Project, 23C, Gokhale Marg, Lucknow on 01-02-2021 at 12:00 p.m. in the presence of the Tenderers. If the office is closed due to any reason the tender will be opened the next working day at the same time.  
 Tender is invited for On Farm Development works (CADWM) in 8 districts of Uttar Pradesh in 8 packages/ lots:

Lot No.	District	CCA (in ha.)	R.C.C. Lined Channel (in mtrs)	Unlined Channel (in mtrs)	Water Control ing Struct ures (in no.)	Estimated Amount With GST (Rs. In crores)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs. In crores)	Cost of Tender Form Including 18% GST (in Rs.)	Time period to comp lete work
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Gonda	30785	2154915	243886	4276	77.12	1.5424	11800	
2	Balrampur	23264	1494095	203027	6141	58.28	1.1656	11800	
3	Baharich	18557	1387832	157097	3641	46.49	0.9298	11800	
4	Basti	16564	1146850	125910	3525	41.49	0.8298	11800	
5	Sant Kabir Nagar	15129	1054416	115358	3953	37.90	0.7580	11800	12 months
6	Siddharth nagar	13757	1096442	102421	2713	34.46	0.6892	11800	
7	Gorakhpur	4551	283735	45163	973	11.40	0.2280	11800	
8	Shrawasti	3046	52077	7012	143	7.63	0.1526	11800	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125653</b>	<b>8670162</b>	<b>999874</b>	<b>25365</b>	<b>314.77</b>	<b>6.2954</b>		

Tenderer can apply for either one lot or multiple lots by filling and uploading respective BOQ and pay tender form fee and EMD accordingly.  
 This tender notice is available at Uttar Pradesh Government Website of information department <http://information.up.nic.in>, website of e-tender <http://etender.up.nic.in>, and website of Greater Sharda Sahayak Command Area Development Authority/ Project <http://shardaiiurp.org>.  
 In case of any queries, the tenderer can communicate through e-mail [saryu3cpa@gmail.com](mailto:saryu3cpa@gmail.com).  
 UP: 158567 Dt. 6.1.21  
 Greater Sharda Sahayak Command Area Development Authority/Project, Lucknow.  
 Deputy Director

# Andhra Pradesh intermediate board to implement 1:40 teacher-student ratio

**Amaravati:** The Board of Intermediate Education (BIE), the regulator of the crucial two-year intermediate course in Andhra Pradesh, will implement a teacher-student ratio of 1:40 from the next academic year, 2021-22, an official said on Thursday.

However, for the current 2020-21 academic year, obeying the Andhra High Court ruling, BIE will allow a maximum number of 88 students per classroom.

"Yes, definitely we will reduce it to 40. Whatever studies the High Court has directed us to do, we will conduct them," BIE secretary V. Ramakrishna told IANS.

The BIE envisioned restricting the number of students in a classroom to 40, adhering to international standards of the teacher-student ratio, considering the endless number of students corporate colleges were cramming into classrooms.

However, the court allowed 88 students per classroom for this academic year.

Ramakrishna himself is clueless about who recommended this 88 ratio earlier, which was existing as a government order even before the court recommended it.

The state government has chosen not to challenge the High Court ruling in the Supreme Court as students and parents are eager to start the academic year after the time they lost due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We cannot make the students keep on waiting. Already the academic year is almost over, they are putting a lot of pressure on us to open colleges. Even the managements want colleges to be opened, they have admitted students and collected fees," observed Ramakrishna. In normal times, intermediate examinations get over by February end. To make up for the lost time, the BIE will extend the current academic year till April and has also slashed some syllabus for the first and second year intermediate courses, in synch with the CBSE.

Syllabus reduction was coordinated with the CBSE so as not to put the state students at a disadvantage when they appear for national competitive examinations such as IIT, AIIMS and others. Ramakrishna, a 2009 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer

has also clipped the wings of several corporate colleges over conducting their own admission tests.

"The admissions should be made based on the SSC (Xth standard) pass or equivalency obtained in the qualifying examination. They should not conduct any test for admission. All the principals are instructed to take measures to provide full security to girl students and also follow the instructions issued for prevention of suicide deaths strictly," observed the BIE secretary.

Likewise, intermediate colleges have also been restricted from admitting students in the second year who have completed their first year in Telangana intermediate colleges.

"The curriculum of the syllabus is different in both the states. If any student is interested to study in Andhra, they should take admission into first year only," he said.

Similarly, college principals have been instructed to take the BIE's permission before admitting students who studied in the Xth standard from other boards. "We are doing this to root out students coming for intermediate admissions who completed their school education from some fake boards," said Ramakrishna.

However, there would be no issue for students coming from recognized boards such as ICSE or CBSE.

For transparency, during the period of admissions lasting from January 7 to 17, the board has ordered all the college managements to prominently display the number of class sections the BIE has permitted in each and every individual college. Every college must also display the number of seats filled up in each section and the number of seats still available for admission on a daily basis. If any college wishes to increase its number of classroom sections, it has to take permission from the BIE, a move aimed at cracking down on profiteering colleges which have crammed students into classrooms without even proper infrastructure.

Asbestos sheds as classrooms, premises nansing fire safety certificates, mind numbing advertising blitz, admission hunting, compelling teaching staff to market colleges, overcrowded classrooms and other transgressions will hopefully be a thing of the past.

IANS

# 3.04 cr new connections provided under National Jal Jeevan Mission: Minister

**New Delhi:** MOS Rattan Lal Kataria reviewed the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission, a flagship programme of the Government. A presentation was made about the progress of the Mission by Additional Secretary, Department of Drinking water and sanitation Bharat Lal.

Kataria informed that since Independence till August 2019, a total of 3.23 crore rural households (out of total 18.93 crore rural households) had tap water connections, but in a short span of 1 year alone, 3.04 crore new connections have already been provided to rural households under this mission. Jal Jeevan mission has set an ambitious yet achievable target of

giving piped water connections to each and every rural household with an approach ensuring - 'No one is left out'.

He informed that Goa is the first state to provide 100% piped connection and so far 27 Districts, 458 blocks, 33,516 Gram Panchayats, 66,210 villages have been declared to have achieved 'HarGharJal'.Recently, Kurukshetra became the 27th District in India and 3rd in Haryana to have achieved this target.

He credited the success primarily to the people of these villages, Gram Panchayats, PaaniSamitis, public health authorities and other stakeholders.

States of Telangana,

Gujarat, Haryana, UT of Puducherry are close to achieving 100% coverage. States which have made good progress in terms of increasing the coverage are - Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand,Manipur, Mizoram, UT of Andaman and Nicobar.

For the Road Map ahead, 2 states ( Bihar, Telangana )and 2 UTs ( Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar ) are expected to achieve 100% coverage in the year 2021. The Ministry is working to leverage Information Technology to provide latest and relevant information about the progress of this scheme in public domain through web portal and mobile apps.

PNS

**कार्यालय कार्यपालन यंत्री लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकीय विभाग खण्ड सिंगरौली ( म.प्र. )**  
 नि.आ.सू.क्रं. 71 से 75/व.ले.लि./का.बं./लो.स्वा.या./खण्ड/सिंगरौली/2021 दिनांक 06.01.2021  
 पता- विजय बंधु पेट्रोल पम्प के पास, ई-मेल [seephedsin@gmail.com](mailto:seephedsin@gmail.com)  
**निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**  
 निम्न कार्यो हेतु निविदा का ऑनलाईन वेबसाईट <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर आमंत्रित की गई है। ऑनलाईन निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि 18.01.2021 सायं 17.30 बजे तथा निविदा खुलने की तिथि 19.01.2021 सायं 17.30 बजे है। निविदा में संशोधन की स्थिति में वेबसाईट पर ही संशोधन देखा जा सकेगा। विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना व अन्य जानकारी उक्त वेबसाईट पर देखी जा सकती है।  
**Name of Work:-** Construction and Execution of Retrofitting 05 Nos Piped Water Supply Scheme under Jal Jeevan Mission at Distt. Singrauly based on Tube Well including of electric submersible Motor Pump, cost of all material & labour with successful testing and Commissioning and thereafter Successful trial run 90 days.

S. No.	NIT No.	Tender ID	Block	Village	PAC (Rs. In Lakhs)	E-EMD in Rs.	Cost of Tender in Rs.	No. of Calls
1	71	2020_PHED_122473_1	Chitrangi	Chitrangi, Karthua	117.75	117750	12500.00	1st
2	72	2020_PHED_122483_1	Chitrangi	Aigurh, Bagaiya	113.15	113150	12500.00	1st
3	73	2020_PHED_122486_1	Deosar	Umarhar, Jiyawan, Sahuar	158.29	158290	12500.00	1st
4	74	2020_PHED_122491_1	Deosar	Barka, Niwas	95.12	95120	10000.00	1st
5	75	2020_PHED_122495_1	Deosar	Barahwa Tola, Khekhada	103.27	103270	12500.00	1st

कार्यपालन यंत्री लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड सिंगरौली ( म.प्र. )  
**G-17518/21 जव तक कोरोना की दवाई नहीं, तब तक डिलाई नहीं।**

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ**  
 E-Tender No.: PRYJ-Sig-409-2020-21 Sr. Divl. Sig. & Telecomm. Engineer North Central Railway, Aligarh  
 Date: 02.01.2021  
**E- Tender Notice**  
 Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite **E-Tender** on prescribed form for the following works upto 12:00 hrs. on 27.01.2021. The details of the Tender is as under:-

S. N.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx. Cost of Work (Rs.)	Earnest Money(Rs.)	Completion Period	Date of Closing/ Opening of Tender
1.	PRYJ-Sig-409-2020-21	Signaling work in connection with CTR / TTR / TRR Works in section of Aligarh to Harduaganj & Tundla to Ghaziabad Section of PRYJ Division.	₹ 29170121.54	₹ 295900/-	12 Months	27.01.2021

**(2) Availability of Tender form:** Tender forms shall be available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender. **(3) Earnest Money to be Deposited:** The prescribed amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above must be deposited along with the tender form Online through Internet Banking or Online Payment gateway only. The Tenderer(s) should note that in any case, the Earnest Money in any other form than specified above shall not be acceptable. Tenders without earnest money shall be summarily rejected. **(4) Time, Date & Place of Opening of Tender:** Tender will be opened through E-Tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj on or after pre determined date **at 12:30 hours.** In case tender opening date happens to be holiday, Tenders will be opened on the next working day. **(5) Validity of offer:** 45 days from the date of opening. **(6) Right of Railway to deal with Tender:** Railway administration reserves the rights to postpone/modify or to cancel the tender without assigning any reasons.

f North central railway www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @ CPRONCR

# PNB SCAM

## Nirav Modi's sister Purvi, her husband turn approver



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PNB Bank fraud mastermind Nirav Modi's sister Purvi Modi, alias Purvi Mehta, and her husband Maiank Mehta have turned approver in the case and also agreed to assist the authorities in realising and repatriating various assets in India and abroad worth ₹579 crore to the Government of India. These assets are in Purvi Modi's name or in the names of companies owned by her.

"They filed an application before the Special (PMLA) Court, Mumbai for allowing them to seek pardon under Section 306 and 307 of Criminal Procedure Code and undertook to make true and full disclosure of the circumstances and events without concealing any evidence and provide complete documents. Purvi Modi has also agreed to assist in realising and repatriating various assets in India and abroad totaling to ₹579 crore to the Government of India," the ED said in a statement.

These assets include one residential flat in (Breach Candy) Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai worth ₹19.5 crores, two flats in Central Park South, New York, NY in the name of a Trust worth US\$ 4,995,000 (Equivalent to ₹36.52 crore),



one unit at Central Park South, New York, NY in the name of a Trust worth US\$ 25,000,000 (Equivalent to ₹182.82 crores) and a Bank Account in Switzerland in the name of Purvi Deepak Modi with a balance of CHF 20,201,500.00 (Equivalent to ₹168.08 crores) and another bank account in Switzerland whose beneficial owner is Purvi Modi and it has a balance of CHF 13,009,200.00 (equivalent to ₹108.23 crore). Other assets are a flat at Marylebone Road, London, NW15PL, UK. Worth GBP 6,250,000 (equivalent to 62.1 crores), a bank account in Syndicate Bank, Nariman Point, Mumbai in the name of Purvi Modi with a balance of ₹1.96 crores.

Prosecution Complaints (chargesheets) were filed by ED before the Special PMLA Court against Purvi Modi, Maiank Mehta and others in the Nirav Modi Bank Fraud case, the ED said.

"Investigation under PMLA revealed that Purvi Modi has more than a dozen bank accounts and has ownership of various companies/Trusts abroad. Vide their statements and their submis-

sions before the Adjudicating Authority, Purvi Modi and Maiank Mehta have categorically stated that all the companies, properties and accounts mentioned in the Prosecution Complaints (Except Pavillion Point Corporation) belongs to Nirav Modi. She gave her willingness to offer all cooperation to repatriate the assets to India," it said.

Both of the accused stated that the funds channelised through their accounts were belonging to Nirav Modi and on Nirav Modi's insistence, it said.

The Special Court has allowed for grant of pardon under Sections 306 and 307 of Cr.P.C., on condition of making full and true disclosure and further allowed that the accused shall be marked as approver in this case. The court further directed that 'the applicant-accused shall appear before the Court by returning to India, for which purpose the complainant-prosecution shall facilitate the approach of accused at earliest, and shall take suitable steps accordingly. Further investigation in the case is in progress, it added.

## NIA conducts searches in J&K, Punjab in narco-terror case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday conducted searches at six locations, five in Jammu district and one in Tarn-Taran district of Punjab, in connection with investigation of a narco-terror module related to seizure of about 61 kg heroin along with arms and ammunitions on September 20 last year at the international border at Arnia, Jammu.

The searches were conducted at the residences of six accused persons— Jasraj Singh, Sham Lal, Bishan Dass, Ajeet Kumar, Gurbaksh Singh and Gurpratap Singh.

"These accused persons were arrested for hatching a criminal conspiracy for carrying out anti-national and unlawful activities, and to help the terrorist organisations by collecting funds and channelizing the proceeds of drugs for furthering the activities of such terrorist organisations like Babbar Khalsa International (BKI)," the NIA said in a statement.

Gurpratap Singh of Tarn-Taran district of Punjab is the kingpin of this module. In the second week of September, 2020, Gurpratap Singh had received 10 kg heroin from Pakistan-based handlers through his associates. The consignment in the case was also intended to be received



### Gurpratap Singh of Tarn-Taran district of Punjab is the kingpin of this module

by Gurpratap Singh to fund the activities of BKI in Punjab, it said.

During the searches conducted on Thursday, digital devices and other incriminating documents having financial details and accounts numbers have been seized for further scrutiny and analysis, it added.

Originally registered as case FIR No. 65/2020 on September 20, 2020 at Police Station Arnia, Jammu under various Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder and waging war against the nation and provisions of the Arms Act in connection with unprovoked firing at a police patrolling party from Pakistan side to provide cover for the smuggling activity. Sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were added subsequently during investigation. The case was re-registered by NIA on November 26 and taken up for investigation.

## Court sentences ISIS terrorist to 7-year rigorous imprisonment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA Special Court here on Thursday sentenced an accused and ISIS terrorist Shajahan VK of Kannur, Kerala to seven years rigorous imprisonment (RI) and fine of ₹73,000 for the offences under section Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery, criminal breach of trust and provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The ISIS-Kannur Case was initially registered by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police as FIR No. 44/2017 dated September 5, 2017 under various IPC Sections and provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Passport Act.

Shajahan was arrested on July 1, 2017 at IGI Airport here on deportation by the Turkish authorities. Another accused Mohd. Mustafa was arrested from Chennai, on July 12, 2017. Subsequently, the NIA took over investigation of the case on September 5, 2017.

"Shajahan Velluva Kandy is a member of proscribed international terrorist organisation ISIS. He had associated himself with ISIS with the intention to further its activities. In October, 2016, he along with his family had gone to Turkey via Malaysia with an intention to go to Syria to fight on behalf of ISIS," the NIA said in a statement.

However, while crossing the Turkey-Syria border, he along with his family were

apprehended by the Turkish authorities and deported back to India on February 1, 2017. In his desperation to serve the cause of ISIS, he procured an Indian passport again on the basis of forged documents and in April 2017, he travelled to Turkey via Thailand and was apprehended again while attempting to cross to Syria. Thereafter, he was again deported to India on July 1, 2017 and was arrested, the agency said.

After investigation, the NIA had filed a charge sheet on December 23, 2017 against two accused persons-- Shajahan Velluva Kandy and Mohd. Mustafa.

While Shahjahan has been convicted, trial against the other accused person is continuing, it added.

## Continued spike in infection in 4 States might negate overall gains in Covid fight

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With just four States—Maharashtra, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal—accounting more than half of the total cases in the country, the Centre is fearing that the continued rise in infection there might negate the results gained in other parts of the country where cases are on decline.

The Centre has asked the States to take corrective steps to contain the infection.

About 28.61 per cent cases are in Kerala, followed by 22.79 per cent in Maharashtra, 3.99 per cent in Chhattisgarh and 3.89 per cent in West Bengal.

"These states have been advised by the Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan to maintain strict vigil and to take steps to keep a check on the rising cases, especially in view of the new coronavirus strain observed in certain countries, which has also been reported in a few States in India," said a senior official from the Ministry.

In a letter to them, Bhushan drew the attention of the states to their low and declining testing rates and warned that any laxity at this

## Private investigators form global alliance to check circulation of fake vaccines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India gears up for a massive Covid vaccination drive, private investigators have formed an international alliance to check circulation of fake vaccines. An initiative of Delhi-based Association of Private Detectives and Investigators (APDI), the Global Alliance Against Fake Vaccine (GAFV) has been formed

comprising professional investigators from 16 countries, while more are likely to join this international campaign initiated from India. APDI has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering help in the government's plans to deal with the fake COVID vaccine issue. The organisation has also written a similar letter to Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.

crucial junction may squander the results of collective actions in containing the transmission.

He advised them to analyse the surge at the district and sub-district levels to understand the reasons for this rise and aggressively implement the 'Test-Track-Treat' strategy.

The health authorities in the states have also been advised to proactively promote

wearing of mask and other Covid appropriate behaviours even while the vaccination drive is about to begin.

In this regard, a high-level central team led by Dr SK Singh, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), has been rushed to Kerala to review the public health interventions in management of Covid-19 in the State.

## Cong slams Modi Govt for record petrol price hike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday attacked the Centre after the petrol price breached the all-time high in 73 years. While Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday hit out at the Modi Government on a range of issues including the fuel price rise, Rahul Gandhi took a swipe questioning the development agenda of the ruling regime. Both the leaders besides the party in a statement criticised the Government also for the ongoing farmers' protest.

"I demand the Government to keep the prices of petrol and diesel to that of the UPA era and give relief to the people and roll back all the three farm laws. In independent India, the country is at crossroads as

farmers are on the Delhi borders for their genuine demands while the unbridled, insensitive government is breaking the backbone of the farmers and middle class," Sonia said in a statement.

Sonia, who has been attacking the Modi government occasionally as against daily criticism by her son Rahul, mentioned in her statement that due to covid, all around the economy is already in shambles while the Modi government is putting money into their coffers.

Sonia alleged that despite less cost of crude in the international market the benefit should go to the consumers but the government is profiteering on it.

"In the last six years, the government collected 19,00,000 crore as excise duty



from the people. Not only this, the rising costs of the domestic LPG has also disturbed the home budget," she said.

Rahul took to Twitter and wrote: "There has been a 'Superb development' in the prices of petrol and diesel. The Modi government is looting the public by charging heavy tax on fuel. This is the reason why the government is not willing to implement GST on petrol-diesel."

Congress slammed the

government and wrote: "Suit-Boot-Loot Sarkar has proved itself once again with another 'historic' milestone: petrol prices are now at an all-time high!"

"Cause looting money from the common man to fill the pockets of middlemen and crony-capitalists is why the BJP came to power," the party said in its Petrolotool campaign.

The cost of crude is around 51 dollars which means petrol should be around Rs 23 a litre but the prices are more than double which is highest in 73 years.

After the raise on Thursday, the petrol price in Delhi increased by 23 paise a litre, the second successive day of fuel price rise, to Rs 84.20 a litre from Rs 83.97 on the previous day. This is the high-

est level of retail price of petrol in the national Capital after October 4, 2018 when its price had risen to Rs 84 a litre.

In other metros, though the price of petrol has not yet breached the all-time high levels, it has reached very close to that level and may cross it this week if fuel price increases further in coming days.

In Mumbai, petrol price increased to ₹90.83 a litre on Thursday just 51 paise short of all-time high level of ₹91.34 reached on October 4, 2018. In Chennai, the petrol price currently is ₹86.96 a litre, a shade lower than historic high level of ₹87.33 a litre.

Similarly, petrol price also reached very close to record level of ₹85.80 a litre in Kolkata increasing to ₹85.68 a litre on Thursday.

## Over 50 docs, PETA sound Covid alert on Jallikattu

**Chennai:** Over 50 doctors and people for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India appealed to the Tamil Nadu G overnment to immediately withdraw the permission for the annual bull taming event -- 'Jallikattu'.

Jallikattu is typically celebrated in the southern state of Tamil Nadu as part of the Pongal celebrations, on the Mattu Pongal day, which occurs annually during this month.

Over 50 doctors have signed a letter to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi Palaniswami and Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar urging them to immediately withdraw the permission, which the doctors warn poses a grave risk to the general public because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The appeal is in response to the Tamil Nadu government's recent order allowing the conduct of Jallikattu events with hundreds of people present, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has also asked the state government to stop Jallikattu events.

The letter signed by 50 doctors, states, "To prevent the rapid spread of Covid-19 and to protect public health, as well as to ease the pressure on the healthcare professionals, non-essential activities such as Jallikattu events, which lead to unnecessary gatherings of people, must not be allowed."

The letter also states, "Since the Tamil Nadu government legalised Jallikattu in 2017, at least 22 bulls and 57 humans have reportedly died, while 3,632 humans were injured in events organised throughout the state."

They also warn that even more human deaths will likely occur because of Covid-19 if Jallikattu events are allowed to be organised in the state.

PETA India Research Associate Dr. Ankita Pandey further cautions that more people are expected to die this year, not

only because of Jallikattu itself but also because of Covid-19. "If Jallikattu events are not stopped, if huge crowds gather to torment bulls, society will be tormented, too," she urges the TN government.

The healthcare professionals also forewarn that the measures of Covid-19 -- negative certificates for participants and thermal screening of spectators as pre-conditions for allowing Jallikattu are not enough to stop the spread of the virus.

And their letter further says, during the incubation period, a contagious person may be tested too early and produce a false-negative result and not everyone with Covid-19 develops or sustains a fever.

This event is associated with strength and courage and honours the bull owners. However, it is undoubtedly cruel to animals. In 2014, Jallikattu was banned by the Supreme Court.

But the ban on Jallikattu, considered an important authentic tradition and inalienable part of rural society's culture, had spurred widespread protests in Tamil Nadu. After several years of continuous protests, in 2017 the Tamil Nadu government passed the Jallikattu Bill bringing into effect the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, 2017, thereby allowing the conduct of Jallikattu.

As early as 2010 itself, an investigation led by the Animal Welfare Board of India concluded that "Jallikattu is inherently cruel to animals". Animal welfare organisations such as the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) and PETA India have protested against the practice since then.

However, pro-Jallikattu activists countering the animal activists argue that Jallikattu had been known to be practiced during the Tamil classical period (400-100 BC) and inalienable part of the rural Tamil society's culture. **IANIS**

## Apex court issues notice to Rajasthan Assembly Speaker on pleas against merger of BSP MLAs with Congress

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday sought responses from Rajasthan Assembly Speaker and others on two separate pleas against the merger of all six BSP MLAs into the ruling Congress legislature party in the State.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and BJP MLA Madan Dilawar have filed separate appeals against an order of the Rajasthan High Court which asked the Speaker to decide within three months a disqualification petition against all



the six BSP MLAs 'merging' with the ruling Congress party.

A bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer and K M Joseph, in the proceedings conducted through video conferencing, also issued notices to

Assembly secretary and all the six MLAs who defected and merged with the Congress.

The merger was a boost to Ashok Gehlot-led State Government as the tally of the Congress increased to over 100 in the house of 200 MLAs.

## Telangana logs 379 new Covid cases

**Hyderabad:** Telangana reported 379 new Covid-19 cases and three deaths during the last 24 hours, health officials said on Thursday. The fresh cases pushed the state's tally to 2,88,789 while the death toll rose to 1,559. According to director of public health and family welfare, the fatality rate remained 0.53 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent.

While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to Covid, 55.04 per cent had comorbidities. A total of 305 people recovered from the virus, during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative number of recoveries to 2,82,177. The recovery rate stands at 97.73 per cent against the national average of 96.4 per cent. The number of active cases in the state was 5,053 including 2,776 who are in home

or institutional isolation. For the sixth consecutive day, Greater Hyderabad recorded less than 100 new Covid cases. The state capital logged 71 new cases during the last 24 hours. Medchal Malkajgiri district recorded the second highest number at 37 followed by Rangareddy (36), Karimnagar (19) and Warangal Urban (14). A total of 41,246 Covid tests were conducted across the state during the last 24 hours. While government-run laboratories conducted 36,723 tests, the remaining 4,523 samples were tested in private labs. There are 19 government-run laboratories, 56 private laboratories and 1076 Rapid Antigen test centres in the state. Samples tested per million population ratio rose further to 1,91,983. **IANIS**

## India's improved air quality may prevent 7% of pregnancy losses in South Asian regions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Meeting India's air quality targets across south Asia may prevent 7 per cent of pregnancy losses in the region, according to a study published in the Lancet journal.

The modelling study suggested that pregnant women in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, who are exposed to poor air quality, may be at higher risk of stillbirths and miscarriages. It said that an estimated 349,681 pregnancy losses per year in south Asia were associated with exposure to PM2.5 concentrations that exceeded India's air quality standard (more than 40 ig/m or micrograms per cubic meter air), accounting for 7 per cent of annual pregnancy loss in the region from 2000-2016.

In the study, the researchers included 34,197 women who had lost a preg-

nancy, including 27,480 miscarriages and 6,717 stillbirths, which were compared to live-birth controls.

Of the pregnancy loss cases, 77 per cent were from India, 12 per cent from Pakistan, and 11 per cent from Bangladesh.

Pregnancy loss associated with air pollution was more common in the northern plains region in India and Pakistan.

Previous studies have suggested a link between air pollution and pregnancy loss in other regions, but this is the first study, published in Lancet Planetary Health, to quantify the burden in south Asia.

South Asia has the highest burden of pregnancy loss globally and is one of the most PM2.5 polluted regions in the world.

"Our findings suggest that poor air quality could be responsible for a considerable

burden of pregnancy loss in the region, providing further justification for urgent action to tackle dangerous levels of pollution," said lead study author Dr Tao Xue from Peking University in China.

To carry out their analysis, the authors combined data from household surveys on health from 1998-2016 (from women who reported at least one pregnancy loss and one or more livebirths) and estimated exposure to PM2.5 during pregnancy through combining satellite with atmospheric modelling outputs.

The researchers, however noted several limitations of their study. In the surveys, they were not able to distinguish between natural pregnancy loss and abortions and there was under-reporting of pregnancy losses because of stigma or ignoring very early pregnancy losses.

## American shame

The violence at the US Capitol by Trump's supporters is a stunning rebuke of American exceptionalism



**E**lectoral and political violence before and after elections is not a surprise in India and many other parts of the world. But the incidents that took place at the US Capitol in Washington DC — where the US Houses of Congress sit and meet, and were sitting to certify the results of the presidential election that took place in the US in November — are shameful since America has for the past two centuries been seen as a promoter and, more recently, a protector of democracy across the world. Egged on by the sitting US President, Donald Trump, the loser of the election, his supporters gave

a shameful display of themselves and the US to the rest of the world. Not just Trump, many of those who owe their political careers to him encouraged the supporters and, while they expressed their shock and dismay at the end result, this was nothing short of an attempted coup. Part of the fault lies in the convoluted American election system where different States are given the Electoral College votes based on the weightages decided decades ago. Trump, who won the election in 2016 on this very basis despite losing the popular vote, claims that in several States his votes were "lost" or "extra votes" were found by his Democratic opponents, and the US State of Georgia has been in his crosshairs because he lost the election there by a narrow margin. Trump, who has made a career out of being a "winner", is bitter with his loss in Georgia and some other States, particularly in Arizona and Pennsylvania, and his claims of fraud have stoked his core supporters, who are almost always racist white vigilante organisations who believe in the conspiracy theories that formed the core of the militias that marched into Washington.

The US needs to move to a simpler and easier presidential election system where the person, a man or woman, who wins the plurality of the votes wins. Trump lost to Biden by over seven million votes, that is 4.4 per cent of the ballots cast. While not a landslide, it is a comprehensive victory margin in any book. Trump does not like losing, but he also lost the plurality of votes in 2016. The rest of the democratic world, which largely follows the first-past-the-post system that has its own flaws, cannot understand how a voter in the sparsely populated agrarian state of Wyoming has his or her vote count as almost double that of a voter in the most populated State of California. The US electoral system is broken and it needs to be fixed urgently, particularly as the country faces off against a rival across the Pacific Ocean once again. A rival that exports autocracy; a rival that exports tyranny. If the world is to trust the US to stand up to China, if India is to trust the US to stand up to China, we need the US to fix its electoral flaws. Fixing the deep divisions in American society, however, is something that might take much longer. The US is clearly a deeply divided nation, much like many other democracies, including ours. Fixing these problems will require exceptional leadership and a multi-partisan approach. As Joseph Robinette Biden Junior becomes the 46th President of the US on January 20, he has an incredibly difficult task in the shape of uniting his country, in front of him.

## Another rape in UP

Inaction is worse than delayed action and busts holes in CM Yogi Adityanath's claims of deterrent activity



**S**oon after the brutal Hathras gang rape, which was nothing but a manifestation of caste vengeance, Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had sought to overturn his State's dismal reputation on crimes against women as a political power tool. He had publicly warned that "those harming mothers and daughters would get such punishment that it would set an example for the future". Sadly, the only example that UP continues to set is in its series of rape-murders, political protectionism of the perpetrators, tardy and lax police investigation and a societal acceptance of excesses as unfortunate and unavoidable. It continues to legitimise the offenders by administrative inaction. What else explains the bestiality in Badaun with-

in months of Hathras? What explains the lack of outrage over the death of an *aangan-wadi* worker who went to a temple and where a *mahant* and his henchmen subjected her to indignity and torture like the 2012 Nirbhaya case, brutalising her with iron rods? What sense does it make to protect the honour of women by waging a war against inter-faith marriages when the authorities can't guarantee their basic safety from men they would rather not touch, given their political stock and sensitivities? Predictably, there has been the tokenism of justice being dispensed by the suspension of an SHO and arrest of two of the three accused. But that doesn't quite make up for the police lapse in registering a missing person's complaint despite the woman's family running from pillar to post to be heard. That predictability of punishing the police *post facto* is worse than a cover-up. And a similar laxity in the Badaun case shows why no lessons have been learnt from the rape and murder of a Dalit girl in Hathras. When nobody questions the police or even holds it to account for forcibly cremating the girl's body, denying her parents and family that right and dignity, and ostensibly wishing away the taint on her upper caste rapists, then what does one expect? When the police, as an unabashed tool of State power, seemingly condones the crime by not following the rule of law and processes as it is mandated to do, when it abandons the victimised; there is legal sanction of a lopsided thinking that emboldens and encourages offenders.

So a Chief Minister, who has been thriving on casteist and communal politics just like his predecessors, only ends up mimicking an administrative drill routinised by successive regimes: A drill that privileges their casteist constituencies at the expense of others and mocks all claims of ushering in a rule of law. Hence the repetitive excesses on Dalits, women and minorities continue to spiral in UP, making it the worst State in the country for anybody vulnerable. As it is, the Centre had confirmed in the Lok Sabha in 2019 that UP accounted for 43 per cent of the total cases registered for harassment against minorities and Dalits. It also tops the rape chart and, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, reported the most cases of violence against women in 2019. The best that the UP Police has done, and continues to do, is to impose Section 144 to can every trouble, debate and dissent, like it did by stopping the Opposition leaders from reaching Hathras to meet the girl's family and booking journalists who were on a fact-finding mission, accusing them of intending to foment unrest. UP's non-action has many precedents, the most recent being the Unnao rape case in which a girl was gang-raped in June 2017 but her rapist, BJP legislator Kuldeep Singh Sengar, was convicted only in December 2019. Or, take the recent encounter killing of underworld don Vikas Dubey that snuffed out all information we could have had on the politico-criminal nexus in the State. Sadly, the UP Police, which at one time had been a professional force, now seems co-opted by the executive. Despite all the recommendations on police reforms and the Supreme Court's directive to set up a police complaint authority at the State and district levels, compliance is a far cry.

# opinion 08

## A new world order

As the agony of COVID-19 abates, it's time for the Govt to invest in kids by focusing on the emerging strategies for educational transformation



J.S. RAJPUT

**N**ever before have global education systems undergone such stressful times as were unleashed on these — and the entire humanity, in fact — by the COVID-19 pandemic. The children suffered unprecedented restrictions owing to lockdown and home confinement for extended durations; away from their classrooms, friends, classmates and teachers. There is considerable evidence of emotional, mental and neurological impact on children, among others. Learning has also suffered much.

Mobiles, online learning and contact with friends for the lucky few did bring some solace but these experiences had their own limitations and inadequacies. Suffering was common to all, and caring was experienced from all sides. In these tough times, positive vibes and tender, humane aspects were prominently evident all around. That was, and remains, the biggest ray of hope. The pandemic is not yet over but confidence has been regained. Vaccines are available; and human ingenuity shall overcome all adversity, no matter how major a deterrent and of what magnitude the odds are. In the spirit of "We shall overcome", things shall be put back on rails and start moving ahead maybe with even greater vigour, confidence and assurance. The world's population in the aftermath of the Coronavirus affliction would require new knowledge and new skill sets and, hence, all countries shall strive to transform their education systems in the face of the emerging post-COVID world.

The world will no longer be the same to which all of us have been accustomed for generations. This is the time for individuals, families, communities, countries and international organisations to envision the measure and magnitude of the transition, be part of it and ensure that the rhythm of civilisational advancement is sustained. Just when the number of Corona positive cases had started indicating a downward trend, media reports about the detection of a new and more dangerous strain in the UK have practically numbed the world. Suddenly, the hope of the impending relief with the arrival of the anti-COVID vaccines has given way to disturbing apprehensions and uncertainty.

A long battle ahead against the invisible, albeit life-threatening, adversary appears inevitable. It would need people of the highest talent, commitment, dedication



and spirit of service, and it would need institutions of higher education and research to get ready at the optimum level of their efficiency to serve a global cause. There would be no institution of higher learning that could afford to ignore it in the totality of its functioning.

The ray of hope, one would like to emphasise, lies in the fact that human ingenuity would finally win over No calamity, violence, war or any pandemic could ever dampen the human spirit to confront it, to explore the man-nature relationship and persistently unearth deeper secrets of nature. This eternal human quest — symbolised by learning, re-learning and unlearning — shall continue with renewed vigour in the years ahead. It would be sustained by the dynamic education policies that would be subjected to serious transformations imposed by the pandemic.

India came out with a much-delayed new education policy that underwent finalisation in the thick of the Coronavirus crisis; thus enhancing its relevance and readiness for a pragmatic, quick and sustained response. The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) presents a lofty transformational vision and strategically indicates how to move ahead. One could scrutinise it for the inclusion of experiences and its potential to comprehend the emerging aspirations and expectations of people. These shall have to be achieved by the education system through enhanced levels of quality, dynamic skill acquisition, appropriate personality development, character building, innovations and research, and everything else that is part of the

man-making education.

Going ahead, the NEP-2020 shall be continuously assessed in its epistemological strength on the premise that Swami Vivekananda had put before India more than 125 years ago: "We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." This, he taught us, is the *summum bonum* of education, an education that aims at developing the an individual's personality. He firmly deprecated the practice of education that drives into the minds "of the learner a mass of information in which he may develop no interest". The individuality of every child is to be comprehended and respected as a living and growing up entity with innate capacities and potentialities, which are to be drawn out.

When the "Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century" was presented under the title "Learning: The Treasure Within", it accepted the philosophical base that Indian thinkers have propounded since the ancient times. There are no limits to learning and growing up. These elements need to be integral ingredients in the implementation of the NEP-2020.

The Indian education system suffered as it ignored the much-needed transition in strategy at the time of Independence and opted for the convenience of continuing with the transplanted system. In spite of commendable expansion in access and participation, India's youth had to wade through the dilution of quality, inadequacy of personality development, lack of self-confidence,

disturbing levels of inadequacy of entrepreneurial spirit and the spirit of caring and sharing. The gap between the learner attainment and the level required/expected has become worrisome.

On the positive side, India learnt from its lapses and the NEP-2020 responds to the challenges as it opens its first chapter with the words: "Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice, equality, scientific advancement, national integration and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximising our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country and for the world." The youth of India have the added responsibility of acquiring the highest levels of competence, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills in the global context and requirement. Our global presence would be a great opportunity to put India at the high pedestal on the world's stage. India's youth abroad should be responsible ambassadors of its culture, history and heritage.

India needs to uplift its institutions to the level of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi and suchlike. The NEP-2020 acknowledges it and inspires India's youth to march ahead on the path of excellence. It recalls the contributions made by the luminaries in the fields of math-

ematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical sciences, engineering, architecture, ship-building, navigation and many others. The traditional Indian education system produced scholars, researchers, scientists and philosophers of the highest calibre; whose contributions were indeed astounding for their times, and continue to serve humanity even at this juncture. Can anyone in the modern civilised world ignore the contributions of Aryabhata, Varahmihir, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Patanjali, Panini, Maitreyi, Gargi, Thiruvalluvur and Gautama et al? Their contributions and exemplary dedication and devotion were worthy of *acharyas*.

The NEP-2020 has prepared the necessary outline and strategy for the same. The challenge of implementation is facing the nation and the extent of success at another milestone would really make a difference. The prime acceptors of the challenges that would unfold at the implementation stage would be teacher educators, teachers and teacher education institutions. They would determine the quality of the persons coming out of the schools and universities.

The NEP-2020 takes a comprehensive view on the role of teachers: "The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly reshape the upcoming generations of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and the brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity and autonomy while also instilling in the system basic quality control and accountability."

The effective implementation of the NEP-2020 would be possible only through a transformed work culture that respects the learner, his sensitivities, aspirations and expectations. This can be achieved only with the teachers who are lifelong learners and personally convinced of their role as the builders of "New India". Only they would be able to transform the learning environment, in which every child who enters the system is well looked after, her/his talent and interests are nourished and nurtured and s/he is prepared to enter the world of employment fully equipped professionally, mentally and spiritually.

(The author works in education and social cohesion. The views expressed are personal.)

## SOUND BITE

When the beginning of the year is good, the coming days will be much better. The inaugurations are important because India has achieved all this during the pandemic.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

This is not a protest, it's insurrection. I borders on sedition. I'm calling Donald Trump to go on national TV now to fulfill his oath and defend the Constitution.



US President-elect Joe Biden

During the last few days of his (Irrfan Khan's) schedule, he would say: "Dada, can't we go on shooting like this? I am feeling like a free bird; I don't want this moment to stop."



Filmmaker Shoojit Sircar

I am absolutely fine now. I thank all the doctors and nurses at the hospital for the treatment and care. I'm fine. I have come back to life.



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Be wary of bird flu

Sir — The ongoing spread of the bird flu across India is a matter of great concern. With the possibility of the communicable virus always being present in animals and birds, the Government should ensure complete safety of its citizens, especially for vegetarians, by instructing restaurants and food parlours to use separate kitchenware to cook and serve vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes.

Such a step will also mean respecting the religious sentiments of people whose faith does not allow for the killing of animals for food. All restaurants, especially those where non-vegetarian food is served, must declare at prominent places and on menu cards that separate cookware was used for preparing and serving vegetarian and non-vegetarian food.

Taking a leaf from people in the West, who have adopted vegetarianism after realising its benefits from a number of medical studies, there should be a move in India as well to propagate vegetarianism. Already, even several starred and budget hotels are discovering that exclusive vegetarian restaurants are gaining popularity.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal  
Delhi

### Democracy went downhill in Capitol Hill siege

**I**t is with a sense of pride that I say India would never have seen the kind of violence which took place around Capitol Hill in the United States (US) early on Thursday. However, it is certainly a worrying sign when the Head of a State refuses to honourably accept the people's verdict through the ballot and, instead, tries to incite them against respecting the democratic norms for his own ulterior motives of continuing in the seat of power.

But this message should be seen in a wider perspective rather than limiting it to the unfortunate and one-off incident in Washington. It should come as a warning signal to several countries across the globe, including India, where an individual leader is promoted as someone bigger than the country s/he rules and those who speak against it are hounded and declared anti-nationals.

The voters should see the Head of the State as someone who is elected to serve the people and not to rule them by creating a larger-than-life aura and persona of personality cult. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rightly said that there is no place for violence during the transfer of power in a democratically elected Government, he would do better to remember that he



himself had heaped praises on several occasions on the outgoing US President Donald Trump, who has left a black mark on a vibrant democracy.

Trump exhorting his supporters to lay siege to Capitol Hill and the resulting violence, which claimed at least one life, has left the entire world in a state of shock and it is really doubtful if the world would in future look at the US as the model of a vibrant democracy.

N Nagarajan  
Secunderabad

### Realise PSBs' potential

Sir — The full potential of the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) is not being realised because the officers, fearing that they could be pulled up in the name of fixing responsibility, are shying away from taking clear-cut decisions.

It would help clear a lot of confusion if the Government

clearly spelt out the powers of each officer and gave them the assurance that no personal accountability would be fixed for the decisions taken by them as long as these are according to the powers vested in their position.

Sometimes, business calls may go wrong and a banker cannot be the master of the business models of all his clients. The invest-

tigation for accountability should be carried out only if the delegated authority is breached, there is suspicion of *mala fide* or negligence. The joint decisions of the consortium of banks should generally not be probed and no inquiry should be conducted after an officer is relieved from service.

M Raghuraman  
Mumbai

### Leaders should lead

Sir — Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan recently joined a select group of politicians in the country who have refused to take the Coronavirus vaccine, saying that the priority groups should be vaccinated first.

Despite his claim that he would await his rightful turn rather than getting the jab right away, it does seem more plausible that he is biding time only to see and judge the efficacy of the vaccine once it is rolled out amid reports of the possibility of indeterminate side-effects. The fact is that such pronouncements by politicians don't inspire confidence about the anti-COVID vaccine among the people.

As the Chief Minister, Chouhan should volunteer to be among the very first to get vaccinated to inspire confidence among the State's people, especially after the Drugs Controller General of India has stamped its approval on two Coronavirus vaccines.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

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

FIRST COLUMN

## Ties for free data flow must

A world crawling out of global devastation needs multicountry data alliances to find solutions to current and future pandemics and cybersecurity



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The new decade brings with it unresolved issues of the past and risks and opportunities in the days to come. Did you know that China is the world's largest storehouse of cross-border data while also being the single-largest exporter of what is being termed as the most precious resource or commodity on the planet? If data is the gold reserve of the new decade, it is time to understand the complexities around data silos and a regulated Earth. The pandemic-ravaged year and a "sheltered at home" humanity saw some key rulings and policy documents on data regulations, pinned across strategic geographies, which possibly hold the key to a new world order. In October 2020, China came up with a Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) draft to provide a structured privacy and data governance regime. This draft, besides stating the obvious about protecting the privacy of Chinese citizens while providing for technological innovation and growth, has significant insights on China's outlook towards the global digital economy. It raises key points related to national security *vis-a-vis* the world economy, banning of overseas data controllers and processors, and using Chinese companies or investments as economic attaches to international sovereigns, thereby threatening them with reciprocal actions in case of adverse decisions or threats. The PIPL has borrowed heavily from the European Union (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and has provisions which give Beijing digital policing reach beyond its physical boundaries. It also allows China to strictly control data flows from its territory, with possible sanctions and bans against blacklisted entities. The PIPL does not have the provision for an independent data protection authority, with the Cyberspace Administration of China being the enforcer and policymaker on data regulations. Meanwhile, along similar timelines a European top court ruling has junked the provisions of the Privacy Shield, a legal framework which guided data flows between the US and EU countries. The landmark ruling will have substantial ramifications for thousands of companies currently sharing millions of dollars worth of data with the US. Meanwhile, the EU has also released a first set of measures under the Data Governance Act to "foster the availability of data for use by increasing trust in data intermediaries and by strengthening data-sharing mechanisms." This Act has ambiguous guidelines and references on international data transfers, access requests from third countries and provisions to control non-personal data. All of these have edges to cut through the existing fabric of global trade and cooperation.

India introduced a Bill in Parliament for protecting the data privacy of its citizens in 2019, called the Personal Data Protection Bill. Its provisions are still being deliberated by lawmakers. Meanwhile, in the last week of 2020, it also came up with a second draft on the regulation of non-personal data which, according to the committee which prepared the draft, will lead to "India becoming the first country to put in place a simple, comprehensive framework for non-personal data." The underlying principle is to generate economic value through processing and use of data. When we look at the big picture we find some key phrases such as "data sovereignty", "economic value of data", "data protectionism" and "data diplomacy" emerging as commonalities among all regional regulations. It would be naïve to assume that each region in its respective bubble, can derive and create significant value out of the evergreen commodity called data, unless it is helped by real world multinational company investments. The beauty of a digital market economy is that it is both a receiver and a generator of the commodity. Any data regulation applicable for a country/geography will find resonance only if it is interoperable with comparative policies in other economically strategic regions. Let us add another dimension of the emerging technology-led promise of greater well-being in the form of 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud computing, and cyberspace becomes a complex multilayered chessboard. Every player has equal opportunity and risk, with every new move.

To stay in the game, one needs to build alliances or corridors of faith with other players. For instance, the incoming Biden Administration in the US can take the lead in building mutually beneficial tunnels of free data flows between like-minded countries. It may be significant to mention here that China will increasingly use this tactic in its Belt and Road Initiative partner countries, cushioned by large State funded investments and sponsored companies. What is interesting is that each player is learning from the other, while sharpening the next move. Make no mistake that growing concerns/regulations on data flows have a significant impact on the power cords of a "Digi global world order" running on innovations in fintech and technology-aided healthcare, while looking at collective issues of tackling pandemics, climate change and sustainable living. A world crawling out of global devastation needs multicountry data alliances to find solutions to current and future pandemics. It needs to collectively find regulatory principles for AI and emerging technology, including ensuring a safe cyberspace. Any damage to the fragile ecosystem will lead to additional layers of regulatory complexities, which will not benefit anyone.

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*

WE CANNOT TAKE THE BJP'S VACCINE. THE INOCULATION PROGRAMME UNDER THE BJP-LED REGIME CANNOT BE TRUSTED.  
—SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT  
AKHILESH YADAV

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



WE CAN'T EVEN CALL HIM A MISLED YOUTH. WHEN HE NEVER LISTENED TO HIS UNCLE OR FATHER, WHY WOULD HE LISTEN TO THE COUNTRY?  
—MADHYA PRADESH HOME MINISTER  
NAROTTAM MISHRA

# A doubtful future

Will the overambitious Xi be able to steer China through its present crisis or would he cause the CCP's demise? It will all depend on how he reacts to global isolation and discord within the party



ANIL GUPTA

In an unprecedented move, China recently removed the military from the Government's control and expanded the powers of its Central Military Commission (CMC), headed by Xi Jinping. The CMC will now be able to mobilise military and civilian resources in defence of national interest, both at home and abroad. The new Defence Law has removed policy and decision-making from the State Council (the Cabinet), thus consolidating power in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Xi. It is aimed at strengthening the military leadership under Xi, providing it with the legal grounds to respond to the challenges of accelerating confrontations in which China is embroiled with its neighbours and the US. It empowers Xi to deal firmly with situations that could harm the communist regime at home and abroad. The CMC will now be responsible for the formulation of the National Defence Policy removing it from the purview of the State Council.

Has Xi realised that his move to take on India, that was aimed at sending a strategic message, has backfired? Coupled with this, many other decisions taken by Xi in 2020 are haunting him. There is increased dissension and threat to the regime, spurring a debate on the fallout of these follies on the future of Xi and the CCP. It being a single-party State, the CCP is synonymous with China.

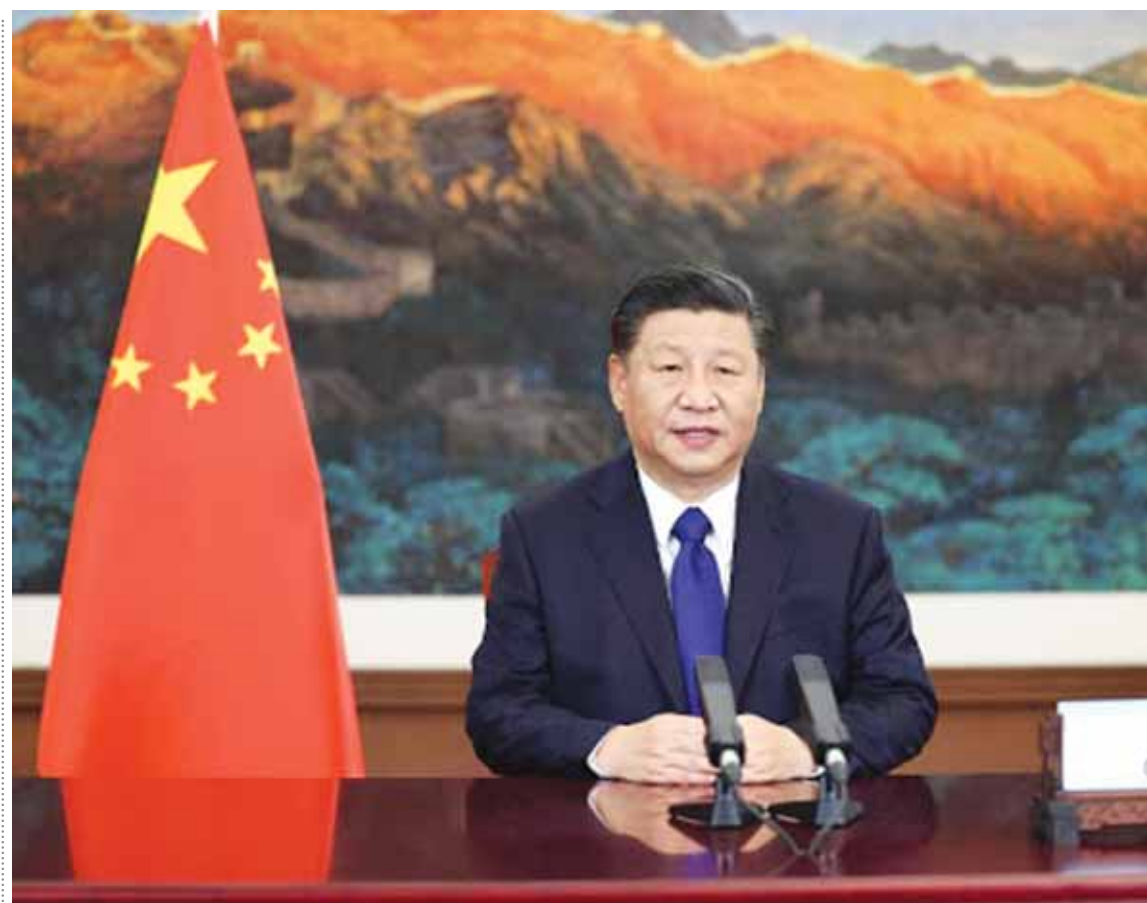
Empirically speaking, no totalitarian party so far has ruled for more than 74 years. The CCP has already entered the 72nd year. It relies on three "Ps" to maintain its iron grip on China. Personnel control, Propaganda and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In his effort to consolidate the rule of the CCP and its ideology, Xi has assumed firm control of the three "Ps", sidelining the "collective leadership" propounded by his predecessors and thus becoming a virtual dictator.

In the process, is the CCP yielding control to Xi and being undermined? In the absence of collective leadership Xi is surrounded by a coterie which, instead of giving rational advice, generally accedes to the Paramount Leader's thinking? In his urge to become the most powerful Chinese leader and be equated with Chairman Mao Zedong, he has taken a few decisions which are proving counterproductive, leading to dissension within and against the party. The latter is fuelled more by external forces determined to overthrow the communist regime by taking advantage of growing economic disparity and growth of two distinct classes in China. Plus, the expansionist ideology of the CCP followed aggressively by Xi is a major bone of contention at the global level.

When the communists under Mao seized control of mainland China in 1949, it aggressively distanced itself from its feudal past. However, under Xi there has been a concerted attempt to merge the past with the present. In order to combat the dissent against the CCP, he has projected the party as the inheritor of the great Chinese empire of the past. Despite being born with a "Red spoon", Xi was not parachuted to the top and had to work his way up. His family background and the subsequent struggle to rise to power has made him ambitious, adamant and a committed communist.

Xi took over the reins of the party in 2012 when it was in a disarray. In the process of consolidating his position and hold over the party, he brought an end to the "collective leadership" system and became all powerful by grabbing all the three powerful posts in China, including a resolution passed for abolishing the President's term limit, enabling him to rule indefinitely. This act has not gone down

Xi's REPRESSIVE POLICIES IN TIBET, XINJIANG AND HONG KONG AS WELL AS EXCESSIVE CURBS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM, ISSUES LIKE ECOLOGICAL DEGRADATION AND THE WIDENING WEALTH DISPARITIES AT HOME, A PROTRACTED TRADE WAR WITH THE US AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS HAVE POSED SERIOUS CHALLENGES FOR THE PARTY AND XI, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND GLOBALLY



well with young and aspiring leaders within the CCP who see a dark future for themselves and no chance of rising to the top. Like all authoritarian leaders Xi, too, has a fair number of dissidents and domestic opponents.

During his consolidation of power, among other things, he has relied a lot on emphasis on ideology and nationalism. To fulfil his ambition he announced a roadmap, that is often referred to as the 'China Dream'. The underlying idea behind the China Dream is to restore the former Middle Kingdom's glory and regain Chinese supremacy through expansionism. It is also aimed at minimising internal dissension through national unity. Xi's ambition is to make China not only stronger but assertive and the world's number one power by 2050.

China, under Xi, has witnessed substantial growth, thus seeking a greater leadership role in world affairs. At the same time his repressive policies in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong as well as excessive curbs on academic freedom, issues like ecological degradation and the widening wealth disparities at home, a protracted trade war with the US and aggressive behaviour with its neighbours have posed serious challenges for the party and Xi, both domestically and globally.

The policy of forced population transfers is also proving counterproductive due to fewer livelihood opportunities in the new habitats, causing widespread dissatisfaction. The income disparity between the rural and urban population also poses a serious threat. His attempts to introduce a legal framework in China has drawn flak from the hardliners within the party who consider the CCP to be above any law.

After the outbreak of COVID-19, for which many nations blame China, Xi has been mired in controversies due to various decisions taken by him that have led to the weakening of China globally and the CCP domestically. To combat the glob-

al anger against China, Xi embarked on an aggressive policy to silence his critics and dissenters at home. In the process, he committed the Himalayan blunder of employing the PLA to "teach" India, its potential competitor, "a lesson."

By doing so, he wanted to convey a strategic message but the resolute response of India thwarted all his hopes and put him on the back foot, severely denting his image at home and abroad. His simultaneous aggressive moves in the South China Sea (SCS), the East China Sea (ECS), Hong Kong and Taiwan, too, drew stiff resistance. There was a global outcry to halt the expansionist designs of the CCP turning it into a battle of ideologies: Communism versus democracy; authoritarian versus the Free World. The "Wolf Warrior diplomacy" and the "Three Warfares" strategy of Xi not only proved counterproductive but led to complete Chinese isolation and increased abhorrence for the CCP.

His adventurism in the seas and on the borders with India resulted in a unified alliance by the West and by nations in the neighbourhood against China. The QUAD is fast turning into a military alliance from just a formal grouping. Japan is strengthening its armed forces. Australia has become more belligerent *vis-a-vis* China. India has signed pacts to augment defence and economic engagement with Vietnam and Japan; both victims of Chinese aggression. Taiwan is determined to face the mainland hegemony and not to succumb to its threats. Taiwan's determination is buoyed by increased support from the US. The UK, US and France have begun aggressive patrolling of the SCS. All eyes are now on US President-elect Joe Biden and his China policy, which is expected to be tougher and more damaging than his predecessor Donald Trump's. But for a handful of friends in Turkey and Pakistan, China under Xi faces total global isolation.

Even at home, things do not appear

to be better due to growing unemployment, loss of business, relocation of global companies, the fallout of control over Hong Kong, disruption and realignment of global supply chains, food shortage, growing income disparities, cruelties of the PLA and suppression of dissent with an iron hand. These are all adding to the woes of Xi.

The implementation of the recently-introduced Civil Code, an effort to introduce the Rule of Law, would be another litmus test of Xi's hold over the CCP. There is bound to be conflict of interest in its successful implementation and maintenance of the supremacy of the CCP. Growing demands for reforms and resistance by the ethnic communities of the autonomous regions to forced "Sinofication" is a tinderbox that may lead to the demise of the CPC and China's balkanisation as and when it explodes.

China is at a unique point in history. The CCP has presided over the country for more than seven decades and is close to the shelf life of contemporary totalitarian parties.

Will the all-powerful and overambitious Xi be able to steer China through its present crisis or would he cause the demise of the CCP? It will, to a large extent depend on how he reacts to China's global isolation and growing dissension within the party.

Former professor Cai Xia, who has been recently expelled from the elite Central Party School, has criticised Xi and said that under his regime the CCP is not a force for the progress of China. She said there was widespread opposition within the party but few dared to speak out as they were afraid of political retaliation in the form of internal party discipline and corruption charges. The China watchers are keeping their fingers crossed.

*(The writer is a Jammu-based veteran, columnist, security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Democracy returns to J&K through the grassroots

After the DDC elections, there is hope that fresh polls for the Legislative Assembly would be conducted soon in a transparent and peaceful environment



DURGESH TRIPATHI

The Indian Parliament took a historic decision through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. These Acts gave the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) a constitutional status in India. According to the Annual Report (2019-20) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, there are more than 2.76 lakh panchayats in the country spearheading the cause of democracy. The number of women representatives elected to these institutions is a whopping 13.79 lakh. It is the largest number of elected women representatives in the world.

Both the amendment Acts provide

reservation for women to make them an important stakeholder in the process of decision-making at the ground level. The PRIs and ULBs are doing significant work across the country. The ongoing pandemic has shown that these are effective institutions, especially for the delivery of public services till the last mile.

Similar bodies, called the District Development Councils (DDCs), have been functioning in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The recent DDC elections signalled the resumption of democratic processes in the newly-formed Union Territory (UT).

The DDCs are contributing to the strengthening of grassroots democracy in the region. These institutions are working towards the cherished ideals of the Constitution. J&K has been under the scanner of various countries and international organisations since the abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A of the Constitution. But the DDC elections were a testimony to the commitment of the nation to the peace, prosperity and progress of J&K. It also reflects the eagerness of the Central

Government to involve and engage the people of J&K in the decision-making process. The Union Government is ready to pass the baton to the people of the UT so that they can provide a direction to the development process.

The Central Government's decision to appoint former Union Minister Manoj Sinha as its representative in the UT is owing to his ability to reach out to people and address their genuine grievances. His long political career and administrative acumen came in handy to restart political activities in J&K.

Even the political parties which were the stakeholders in the election process vouch for the credibility of the DDC polls. These political parties belong to a spectrum of ideologies, from the BJP to the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration. Despite security concerns, all the political parties were provided a fair chance to campaign, interact and engage with their voter base. Although, the Gupkar Alliance won big and bagged 110 out of the total 280 seats, the BJP remained the single-largest party with 75 seats.

This was contrary to all expectations. The elections saw a 51 per cent voter turnout which was overwhelming considering the harsh weather conditions in the UT at this time of the year, juxtaposed with the pandemic scare as well. It showed that the citizens were also willing and enthusiastic about participating in the electoral process. Such a high voter turnout also helped to break the stereotypes associated with the various political actors involved.

While the world worried about the human rights and basic civil liberties of the people of J&K, India took the constitutional way of returning democracy to the people who have suffered long enough for a multitude of reasons. Many scholars and independent observers have vouched for the credibility of these polls and compared them to the 1977 elections when the ruling Janata Party lost all but two seats of Eidgah and Handwara to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's National Conference.

Irrespective of the electoral scores and the bickering that is taking place now with charges of horse-trading fly-

ing thick and fast among various parties, the successful conduct of the elections and the results are a victory of the rule of law and deep democratic roots of the country. The polls buried questions regarding the restoration of democratic institutions and processes.

The security forces along with the administrative mechanism need to be lauded for conducting the democratic exercise in the most transparent manner in such a tense atmosphere. The rise in the number of Independent candidates showcases the open-mindedness of the voters and the start of a new trend in the politics of the UT. A whopping 50 seats were garnered by independent candidates in the elections. Conducting free and fair polls in J&K under the shadow of terror is a humongous task. Even a tiny mistake could have cast a black shadow over the whole exercise.

A part of the credit for this crucial exercise should be given to the present Lieutenant-Governor of J&K. This political initiative is an integral part of the three-point agenda set by

him when he assumed the position. The agenda focuses on prosperity in the region, industrialisation, employment creation and eradication of anti-India activities.

These elections indicate a fresh hope in politics which will go a long way in building a sense of trust and faith between the people and the authorities. These elections settled the apprehensions and doubts in the minds of those who believed that the political system would remain in suspension perpetually. It also broadened the scope for smaller parties to participate in the polls, as parties like the BSP — which have a relatively limited base — also managed to win one seat. Smaller parties like Apni Party won 12 seats whereas the CPI (M) also bagged five. The participation and the voter turnout also nullified the narrative created by separatist forces in J&K.

It is said that "well begun is half done." After the DDC elections there is hope that fresh polls for the Legislative Assembly would be conducted soon in a transparent and peaceful environment. Such polls

would be a chance for all stakeholders in the political system to showcase their resilience and restore complete normalcy in J&K. It was an administratively sound decision to first test the waters in the UT by conducting the DDC elections and then go for more large-scale elections for the Legislative Assembly.

Peace and normalcy are a prerequisite for development anywhere in the world. The peaceful conduct of elections will also encourage investors from India and abroad to view J&K from a fresh perspective and could open newer growth prospects.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal." I believe that polls are one such means to chase the cherished goal of peace in J&K and these recent elections will certainly show the way forward.

*(The writer is founding faculty member of University School of Mass Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)*

# GDP estimates show V-shape recovery: Min

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The finance ministry on Thursday said the GDP estimates suggest a continued resurgence in economic activity in second half of the current fiscal and point at post-lockdown sustained V-shaped recovery.

The ministry was commenting on the first advanced estimates (AE) of the national income released by the National Statistical Office on Thursday, which projected 7.7 per cent contraction in GDP for the current fiscal year.

“The AE of 2020-21 reflect continued resurgence in economic activity in Q3 and Q4 – which would enable the Indian economy to end the year with a contraction of 7.7 per cent,” it said in a statement.

The continuous quarter-

on-quarter growth endorses the strength of economic fundamentals of the country to sustain a post-lockdown V-shaped recovery, it added.

It further said the movement of various high frequency indicators in recent months, points towards broad based nature of resurgence of economic activity.

“The relatively more manageable pandemic situation in the country as compared to advanced nations has further added momentum to the economic recovery,” the ministry added.

On the demand side, it said real GDP in 2020-21 has been supported by an estimated increase in Government Consumption Expenditure by 5.8 per cent.

On the supply side, agriculture is estimated to register

a growth of 3.4 per cent against 4 per cent as per the provisional estimate of 2019-20.

In the manufacturing sector, electricity sector is estimated to register a growth of 2.7 per cent, the data showed.

The pandemic and associated public health measures have adversely affected the contact-sensitive services sector where trade, hotels, transport and communication are estimated to contract by 21.4 per cent in 2020-21.

The ministry further said as two vaccines get emergency use approval in India, the government is undertaking preparations of a mass mega vaccination drive. However, while the impending vaccination is drawing closer, continued observation of “covid-appropriate” behaviour, caution and surveillance is crucial.

## Jeep launches 2021 Compass, announces ‘Made In India’ Wrangler and Grand Cherokee

Italian-American carmaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) today unveiled the 2021 variant of their successful Jeep Compass Sports Utility Vehicle. Featuring several improvements, particularly to the interiors including a new 10.25 inch touchscreen infotainment panel and fully digital instrument cluster. The car will also have much improved touch-and-feel with a better arrangement of switches and dials, as well as improved safety features like six airbags and the top-end models will also come with a panoramic sunroof. Speaking to The Pioneer, Partha Dutta, President and Managing Director, Jeep India however did not comment on the merger that FCA is undertaking with French carmaker Peugeot-Citroen and the impact that would have in India but he reiterated FCA’s commitment to India with an additional \$250 million of funding as well as



announcing that the Ranjangaon plant will soon be producing ‘Made In India’ Jeep Wrangler, the iconic offroader, as well as the large Grand Cherokee. Jeep India will also be producing a three-row seven-seat SUV in the coming two years as well.

**Skoda names new SUV ‘Kushaq’**

Czech car brand Skoda, which is now leading the operations of Germany’s largest carmaker Volkswagen Group in India today announced that their Vision-IN concept car has been named ‘Kushaq’ which they said was derived from the Sanskrit for ‘King’. This product and its sibling, the Volkswagen Taigun are based on the new MQB-0 platform

## AUTO CORNER

and are a vital part of the group’s plans to finally conquer the Indian market after years of mediocrity. The car is expected to be launched in the April-May timeframe.

**MG introduces 2021 version of the Hector**

Chinese carmaker Shanghai Automotive Industrial Corporation (SAIC) through its brand MG launched the 2021 version of their best-selling Hector SUV. The Hector will now be available in three separate 5, 6 and 7 seat versions.

The five-seat car will start at 12.89 lakhs, the seven-seat at Rs 13.34 lakhs and the six-seat model with Captain seats in a second row will start from Rs 15.99 lakhs.

The car will also feature improved voice commands which will recognise more ‘Hinglish’ terms according to the carmaker.

## Union AMC aims to double assets base to ₹10,000 crore

**New Delhi:**Union Asset Management Company (AMC) on Thursday said it is looking beyond top 30 cities to double its asset base to Rs 10,000 crore within a year.

Union AMC’s plan also comes against the backdrop of the amalgamation of Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank with Union Bank of India, which is the co-sponsor of the fund house along with Japan’s Dai-ichi Life Holdings.The amalgamated entity now has more arsenals in terms of branches, manpower and number of customers, among others, Union AMC said in a statement.In addition, the fund house is looking to drive the business through mutual fund distributors rather than depending only on the bank branches to sell the financial product. **PTI**

# Sensex jumps over 250 points in early trade

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Equity benchmark Sensex jumped over 250 points in early trade on Thursday, tracking gains in index majors Reliance Industries, HDFC and ICICI Bank amid positive trend in global equities.

The 30-share BSE index was trading 270.69 points or 0.56 per cent higher at 48,444.75, and the broader NSE Nifty rose 80.95 points or 0.57 per cent to 14,227.20.

PowerGrid was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 2 per cent, followed

by SBI, IndusInd Bank, L&T, Axis Bank, ONGC and Bajaj Finance. On the other hand, Titan, TCS, HUL and Infosys were among the laggards.

In the previous session, Sensex ended 263.72 points or 0.54 per cent lower at 48,174.06, and Nifty fell 53.25 points or

0.38 per cent to 14,146.25.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net sellers in the capital market as they offloaded shares worth Rs 483.64 crore on a net basis on Wednesday, according to provisional exch According to Binod Modi Head-Strategy at Reliance

Securities, domestic equities look to be firm at the moment. Notably, FPIs turned net sellers after a considerable gap, which suggests profit-bookings or sector rotation given sharp returns generated by select sectors like IT, pharma and metals.

US equities witnessed

sharp recovery mainly on increased prospects of higher fiscal stimulus and capital expenditures towards infrastructure developments as Democrats’ control in both houses of Congress will help Biden to push his agendas, said Modi.

## Gold plunges ₹714, silver ₹386

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Gold in the national capital plunged ₹714 to ₹50,335 per 10 gram on Thursday, reflecting a decline in global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.In the previous trade, the precious metal had

closed at ₹51,049 per 10 gram. Silver also dipped by ₹386 to ₹69,708 per kilogram from ₹70,094 per kilogram in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,916 per ounce, and silver was flat at USD 27.07 per ounce.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	14253.75	14256.25	14123.10	14137.35	-8.90	
TATASTEEL	693.00	731.50	691.70	719.90	36.10	
HINDALCO	261.45	275.40	261.00	271.50	12.45	
BHARTIARTL	532.00	554.5	527.10	544.15	18.85	
ADANIPORTS	500.10	520.90	499.50	513.45	16.65	
INDUSINDBK	935.00	961.65	931.10	952.40	30.05	
AXISBANK	659.00	676.50	659.00	670.10	15.85	
UPL	476.00	486.50	474.45	483.00	10.60	
BAJAJFINSV	8820.00	9069.00	8812.00	8970.05	183.70	
IT	1330.00	1346.80	1325.00	1341.00	27.00	
BPLCL	391.00	395.00	387.60	392.85	5.55	
ONGC	98.00	99.05	97.10	98.00	1.05	
M&M	743.00	755.00	740.10	744.00	7.90	
COALINDIA	136.50	137.50	135.50	136.50	1.40	
SBIN	289.00	291.80	287.00	288.00	2.95	
BAJFINANCE	5065.00	5131.55	5021.30	5077.55	47.25	
SHREECEM	24715.00	25200.00	24569.85	25025.00	200.65	
GRASIM	990.00	1004.65	977.20	991.95	7.35	
JSWSTEEL	404.00	413.10	403.15	404.25	2.75	
TATAMOTORS	197.00	200.35	195.10	196.50	1.10	
HDFC	830.00	830.45	818.00	829.40	4.60	
BRITANNIA	3560.00	3567.95	3546.55	3558.20	14.50	
SBILIFE	916.00	916.50	904.25	915.00	4.70	
IOC	96.50	96.45	93.80	95.40	0.40	
WIPRO	412.25	413.00	403.85	407.50	1.10	
POWERGRID	198.00	201.80	195.50	196.60	0.45	
EICHERMOT	2660.00	2715.65	2660.75	2651.00	5.65	
TECHM	1005.50	1010.00	998.60	996.80	-0.35	
DRREDDY	530.00	532.00	523.00	528.25	-3.05	
RELIANCE	1920.50	1945.00	1905.15	1912.80	-1.45	
TCS	3075.00	3080.85	3002.25	3048.65	-2.85	
GAIL	135.45	135.80	132.30	133.70	-0.30	
HDFCBANK	1432.50	1432.60	1412.55	1416.90	-3.65	
ASIANPAINT	2801.00	2831.85	2781.50	2791.00	-14.35	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3500.00	3507.35	3428.25	3444.00	-18.70	
SUNPHARMA	606.00	608.00	598.00	601.60	-3.70	
MARUTI	7676.00	7704.40	7552.10	7576.85	-51.75	
ULTRACEMCO	5475.00	5517.70	5385.00	5405.20	-43.15	
ICICIBANK	552.50	554.70	539.75	542.25	-4.45	
NTPC	98.10	98.90	96.85	97.05	-0.85	
KOTAKBANK	1984.00	1984.00	1947.50	1953.55	-16.85	
HEROMOTOCO	3004.00	3114.75	3034.00	3055.00	-28.55	
ITC	206.10	207.60	202.10	203.25	-2.15	
INFY	1296.00	1297.65	1255.50	1266.50	-15.60	
HCLTECH	988.00	998.20	959.40	963.90	-14.30	
DIVISLAB	3890.00	3904.00	3791.00	3809.90	-69.95	
TITAN	1570.00	1570.00	1535.00	1544.00	-28.60	
HINDUNILVR	2432.00	2432.70	2365.00	2373.00	-44.30	
HDFCLIFE	720.00	723.80	702.50	705.55	-13.50	
NESTLEIND	18599.00	18615.00	18050.10	18137.00	-378.25	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	3407.45	3418.75	33826.30	33899.35	133.85	
HINDZINC	281.00	338.40	280.00	315.40	40.30	
PEL	1441.00	1515.15	1425.15	1500.80	85.35	
MCDOWELL-N	589.00	620.00	584.00	615.70	29.55	
BOSCHLTD	13422.00	13999.00	13300.00	13853.50	550.60	
NMDC	126.00	128.70	125.10	128.30	5.05	
HAVELLS	955.80	977.95	946.00	971.30	25.40	
UBL	1229.95	1256.00	1213.15	1252.00	30.95	
LUPIN	1015.00	1029.70	993.15	1023.50	22.90	
BANDHANBNK	406.55	409.10	401.40	404.75	8.75	
ACC	1691.25	1720.00	1683.20	1710.00	35.55	
PETRONET	259.00	263.60	257.00	260.80	4.70	
INDIGO	1739.00	1779.00	1731.50	1758.85	26.35	
INDUSTOWER	264.40	275.00	261.00	265.15	3.80	
DLF	244.90	249.30	242.60	244.35	3.30	
BERGEPAINT	788.90	797.90	782.20	792.50	9.50	
PNB	35.80	36.00	35.35	35.60	0.40	
HINDPETRO	222.00	224.00	220.50	223.15	2.20	
BANKBARODA	66.50	67.00	65.75	66.15	0.65	
GICRE	140.15	142.80	140.15	141.10	1.25	
AMBUJACEM	265.00	267.10	261.20	263.35	2.25	
BAIHJALDNG	3129.90	3140.00	3114.90	3133.75	25.00	
ALKEM	2999.00	3020.00	2982.50	3007.70	23.20	
NAUKRI	5359.00	5419.95	5235.15	5300.00	40.20	
SIDCARE	1623.00	1664.95	1623.75	1630.70	12.15	
MOTHERSUMI	168.00	171.15	166.05	167.45	1.05	
SBICARD	985.20	1002.05	956.35	973.00	4.00	
PFCL	120.00	121.10	118.70	119.00	0.25	
CADILAHC	484.50	485.95	478.55	482.50	0.90	
DABUR	537.40	539.30	533.40	535.00	0.90	
PGHIL	11290.00	11350.00	11202.90	11251.00	14.50	
ADANITRANS	457.00	462.30	451.60	454.00	-0.25	
MARICO	420.50	423.35	417.00	418.20	-0.45	
DMART	2971.70	3008.00	2880.00	2910.00	-4.95	
MUTHOOTFIN	1284.00	1294.00	1272.00	1275.45	-5.45	
IGL	546.65	549.65	537.85	540.00	2.40	
CONCOR	438.15	442.00	429.30	432.05	-1.90	
TATACONSUM	609.70	610.30	598.55	601.95	-3.00	
COLPAL	1601.35	1615.00	1587.30	1588.50	-9.10	
ABBOTINDIA	1564.30	1570.00	1546.00	1546.00	-90.95	
ICICIPRULI	512.95	517.50	506.00	507.35	-3.05	
TORNTPHARM	297.00	281.00	265.70	277.00	-20.70	
BIOCEN	461.50	461.10	453.85	455.40	-4.35	
AUROPHARMA	970.70	977.55	954.50	959.90	-9.35	
HDFCAMC	3119.75	3122.90	3028.20	3060.00	-39.80	
OFSS	3398.25	3403.00	3310.00	3321.00	-43.95	
PIDILITIND	1798.00	1819.10	1760.00	1771.00	-24.40	
GODREJCPCL	752.00	753.15	731.25	732.70	-12.00	
ITI	398.05	4029.00	3870.00	3885.00	-71.90	
ICICIGI	1618.80	1629.90	1561.00	1574.00	-37.70	
ADANIGREEN	1113.70	1114.00	1051.90	1051.90	-35.35	

## BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
IDPC	38.70	45.70	38.50	43.00
ASIANPAINT	2802.00	2831.40	2782.25	2791.35
HDFC	2666.00	2709.00	2647.00	2661.60
MOTHERSUMI	167.80	170.10	166.05	167.55
IDEA	11.96	12.35	11.86	11.97
BHARTIARTL	531.55	554.40	527.15	545.30
TATASTEEL	691.60	731.35	691.60	722.75
RELIANCE	1921.90	1945.20	1905.65	1911.00
TATAMOTORS	197.00	200.35	195.45	196.70
INDUSINDBK	930.20	961.20	930.20	952.05
SBIN	289.30	291.80	287.00	287.75
IDFCFIRSTB	43.45	47.55	42.35	45.80
ITC	205.80	207.55	202.15	202.75
BAJFINANCE	5063.00	5129.50	5022.00	5082.80
VEDL	181.50	187.35	181.45	185.50
IBULHSGFIN	223.45	238.50	222.95	234.10
AXISBANK	660.00	676.50	659.75	670.75
TCS	3075.00	3079.80	3001.00	3033.60
BANDHANBNK	405.50	410.85	403.00	405.60
ICICIBANK	551.50	554.15	539.70	541.00
TRANSFRANS	1195.00	1316.85	1195.00	1305.96
HINDUNILVR	1298.00	1298.00	1266.00	1261.91
PRL	2443.24	2443.80	2356.00	2369.50
RELIANCE	1430.00	1515.00	1425.25	1496.26
RBLBANK	267.00	273.00	263.15	269.40
SBICARD	982.80	1001.50	956.80	976.10
ADANIANT	499.00	523.90	494.00	518.00
BINDRALEO	261.00	275.00	261.00	272.67
BEL	81.55	91.70	81.20	89.73
BHARATFORGP	153.40	135.00	131.35	131.70
LUPIN	534.80	603.00	553.40	598.96
INDUSTALSTEL	1025.00	1029.35	993.60	1028.03
ASHOKLEY	287.20	304.50	287.15	298.02
PNB	107.40	111.75	106.80	111.00
FEDERALBNK	35.75	36.00	35.30	35.45
ADANIPORTS	74.50	76.50	73.25	75.65
SAZIL	499.00	520.95	499.00	513.65
SUNLON	8.23	8.32	8.10	8.30
LT	76.85	79.25	76.85	78.00
JBFLFOOD	1324.00	1346.95	1324.00	1338.85
SUNTV	1276.10	2887.10	1276.10	2862.40
TRIDENT	48.80	52.10	48.75	51.75
IOC	16.50	16.57	14.51	14.92
WIPRO	95.00	99.45	93.80	94.53
TVMOTOR	410.00	412.90	404.00	406.75
ONGC	492.00	506.00	490.55	499.90
HDFCBANK	97.80	99.10	97.05	97.90
DUPL	1429.00	1432.00	1413.00	1416.60
MARUTI	476.00	486.15	472.20	482.13
TATAPOWER	7661.15	7700.70	7553.35	7666.75
IGL	83.10	83.60	81.50	81.83
IGLHSGFIN	414.00	444.10	412.00	434.93
POLYCAP	1183.00	1300.00	1183.00	1279.90
SSSTEEL	410.00	412.95	402.70	404.00
KOTAKBANK	985.70	1985.00	1947.25	1953.00
POWERGRID	197.00	201.75	195.45	196.25
BPLCL	390.00	394.90	387.60	392.99
DMF	245.40	249.20	242.70	245.40
BANK	741.00	755.00	741.00	744.50
AMBAJUCEAM	265.25	267.05	261.20	262.80
INFOTECH	987.25	987.25	985.00	987.25
PVR	1410.00	1450.00	1408.00	1433.60
DEEPAKNI	1033.75	1072.00	1036.35	1059.80
BAJAJFINSV	228.10	222.60	218.20	219.00
RAJESH	8820.00	9068.15	8820.00	8987.55
ITD	39.90	40.15	39.05	39.30
GODREJ	1575.00	1575.00	1535.60	1542.40
LT&TH	1515.00	1527.00	1439.40	1515.00
SUNPHARMA	104.00	106.10	102.15	104.20
BANKBARODA	60.00	60.00	59.80	60.180
GAIL	66.20	69.00	65.75	66.10
APOLLOTYRE	135.90	135.90	132.40	133.40
ADANIGREEN	1181.00	194.30	185.00	190.50
HINDUSTOWER	111.15	114.00	105.125	1063.50
HINDZINC	263.00	274.95	254.15	266.40
COALINDIA	280.90	328.00	280.45	308.43
NOXCELIS	136.00	137.45	135.30	136.50
INDIANRUB	331.00	332.00	274.00	326.65
MD&MN	189.05	198.30	189.05	195.15
RAJN	14848.00	15967.80	14842.80	15732.10
ULTRACEMCO	5450.30	5516.00	5423.50	5540.00
HINDCOPPER	62.55	68.20	62.55	66.00
NMDC	126.80	125.65	125.50	128.00
NANUKRI	5439.50	5439.95	5230.00	5311.15
IRCTC	1497.00	1510.00	1480.20	1489.05
DREDDY	5300.00	5349.10	5254.25	5270.80
INDIAMART	7239.00	7600.95	7209.45	7426.83
INDIGO	1737.00	1778.35	1736.00	1761.91
ESCORTS	1684.10	1720.45	1684.00	1704.93
DEMART	304.00	329.45	304.00	317.45
CPIA	1380.00	3008.00	2884.10	2918.00
TATACHEM	496.50	505.20	493.30	498.60
RVNL	29.00	29.65	28.40	29.00
HAVELLS	957.90	976.80	946.00	971.65
MOTILALOFS	603.00	650.50	591.60	643.10
NTPL	94.80	98.50	96.85	97.05
BOMDYEING	80.50	85.30	80.05	82.75
MAAHLIFE	388.00	399.00	376.00	379.65
CHOLAFIN	437.10	444.10	428.85	431.40
HEG	942.70	980.50	915.50	968.40
BETANIDIN	1670.25	1674.00	1613.35	1649.20
PATRONET	256.70	263.50	256.70	259.83
ADARPHARMA	976.40	977.40	954.75	957.30
RAMCOCEM	810.00	835.30	807.70	831.83
APOLLOHOSP	2515.00	2564.65	2500.10	2511.45
NATIONALUMAL	47.70	48.80	47.70	48.40

# US democracy under unprecedented assault: Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden has said that the democracy in America was under an “unprecedented assault” as thousands of supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the US Capitol in an unprecedented breach of security resulting in temporary suspension of the US Congress’ counting and certification of presidential election results.

“At this hour, our democracy is under an unprecedented assault. An assault on the Capitol itself. An assault on the people’s representatives, on the police officers sworn to protect them, and the public servants who work at the heart of our Republic. An assault on the rule of law. An assault on the most sacred of American undertak-



President-elect Joe Biden speaks at The Queen theater in Wilmington, Del. on Wednesday

AP

ings: The doing of the people’s business,” Biden said on Wednesday.

In a nationally televised address, Biden said that the scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect the true America.

certifying the Electoral College votes.

Vice-President Mike Pence and lawmakers were evacuated to safe locations. Both the House and Senate and the entire Capitol were placed under a lockdown.

Calling on the mob to pull back and allow the work of democracy to go forward, Biden said that the words of a President matter, no matter how good or bad that president is.

“At their best, the words of a president can inspire. At their worst, they can incite,” he said, calling on President Trump to go on national television, now, to fulfill his oath and defend the Constitution and demand an end to this siege.

“To storm the Capitol, to smash windows, to occupy offices, and to threaten the safety of duly elected officials is not protest. It is insurrection. The world is watching - and like so many other Americans, I am shocked and saddened that our nation, so long a beacon of light, hope, and democracy has come to such a dark moment,” Biden said.

“Through war and strife, America has endured much. And we will endure here and prevail now. The work of the moment and the work of the next four years must be the restoration of democracy and the recovery of respect for the rule of law, and the renewal of a politics that’s about solving problems — not stoking the flames of hate and chaos,” he said.

## Twitter suspends Trump’s account amid violence

Washington: In an unprecedented step, Twitter suspended the account of President Donald Trump for 12 hours Wednesday after he repeatedly posted false accusations about the election after his supporters stormed the Capitol following a Trump rally.

Twitter said that future violations by Trump would result in a permanent suspension. AP

## Facebook, YouTube remove Trump’s video

Washington: Facebook and YouTube have removed a video of President Donald Trump in which he repeated unfounded claims that the election was stolen from him after his supporters stormed the US Capitol.

In the video, Trump also said that he loved his supporters. “I know your pain. I know you’re hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us. It was a landslide election, and everyone knows it—especially the other side. But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. We have to have law and order,” Trump said in his video that lasted for less than a minute.

He posted the video after thousands of his supporters stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in multiple injuries and interrupting a constitutional process to affirm Joe Biden’s victory in the November presidential election. AP

## US deputy NSA, Melania’s chief of staff, White House deputy press secy resign

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US Deputy National Security Adviser Matt Pottinger, first lady Melania Trump’s chief of staff Stephanie Grisham and White House Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Matthews have resigned following the violence at the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump.

Grisham, who previously served as the White House press secretary before making way for current White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany in April, was the first to submit her resignation on Wednesday.

“It has been an honour to serve the country in the White House,” Grisham said in a statement posted on Twitter. “I am very proud to have

been a part of Mrs Trump’s mission to help children everywhere and proud of the many accomplishments of this administration,” Grisham said. She is the first senior White House staffer to resign.

Matthews also tendered her resignation. “As someone who worked in the halls of Congress, I was deeply disturbed by what I saw today,” she said.

“I will be stepping down from my role, effective immediately. Our nation needs a peaceful transfer of power,” Matthews said.

Trump’s deputy national security advisor Pottinger also resigned, officials said.

According to ABC News, White House social secretary Rickie Niceta also submitted her resignation in reaction to

## Four living ex-Presidents deride US Capitol breach by Trump supporters

Washington: Slamming President Donald Trump for inciting violence at the US Capitol, all four living former US Presidents — Barack Obama, George W Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter — have condemned the actions of pro-Trump rioters and underlined the need for a peaceful transfer of power.

The statement of Obama and three former presidents came hours after thousands of pro-Trump rioters on Wednesday stormed the US Capitol, interrupting a joint session of Congress where lawmakers were set to certify President-elect Joe Biden’s win.

“History will rightly remember today’s violence at the Capitol, incited by a sitting president who has continued to baselessly lie about the out-

come of a lawful election, as a moment of great dishonour and shame for our nation. But we’d be kidding ourselves if we treated it as a total surprise,” Obama said in a lengthy statement.

For two months now, a political party and its accompanying media ecosystem has too often been unwilling to tell their followers the truth — that this was not a particularly close election and that President-elect Biden will be inaugurated on January 20, he said.

“Their fantasy narrative has spiralled further and further from reality, and it builds upon years of sown resentments. Now we’re seeing the consequences, whipped up into a violent crescendo,” Obama said. PTI

## US lawmakers seek immediate removal of Trump after Capitol violence

Washington: Several US lawmakers have demanded immediate removal of President Donald Trump from office, alleging that he incited his supporters who stormed the Capitol in an unprecedented incident that has dented the democracy of America.

Thousands of pro-Trump rioters on Wednesday stormed the US Capitol, interrupting a joint session of Congress where lawmakers were set to certify President-elect Joe Biden’s win. PTI

## UN chief, UNGA president express concern over violence in Washington

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Top United Nations leadership expressed sadness and concern over the violence in Washington DC by pro-Trump demonstrators who stormed the US Capitol as lawmakers gathered to certify the presidential election results.

“The Secretary-General is saddened by the events at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C.” on Wednesday, Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said in a note to correspondents.

## Biden picks Indian-American Vanita Gupta as associate attorney general

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday nominated Indian-American Vanita Gupta to be the associate attorney general and roped in Judge Merrick Garland for the position of attorney general.

He also announced the nominations of Lisa Monaco as deputy attorney general and Kristen Clarke for assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division.

“Our first-rate nominees to lead the Justice Department are eminently qualified, embody

character and judgment that is beyond reproach, and have devoted their careers to serving the American people with honor and integrity,” Biden said.

“They will restore the independence of the Department so it serves the interests of the people not a presidency, rebuild public trust in the rule of law, and work tirelessly to ensure a more fair and equitable justice system,” he said.

Gupta, 46, is currently serving as President and CEO of the Leadership Conference

on Civil and Human Rights. If confirmed by the US Senate, Gupta would be the highest ranking Indian-American in the Department of Justice.

They are among the “most accomplished” legal minds in our country who also reflect the best of America’s full range of talents and background, Biden said. “I am honored they accepted this call to serve at such a critical time in our nation’s history,” he said.

A former acting assistant attorney general and one of the best-known and most respected civil rights attorneys in

## Biden to name Judge Merrick Garland as attorney general

America, Gupta would be the first woman of colour to serve in this role.

She has spent her career fighting successfully for greater equity in our justice system and advancing the rights and dignity of every American, Biden’s transition said.

Gupta served as acting assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division — the chief civil rights prosecutor for the United States. She is a successful consensus builder on tough issues, with years of experience on managing complex settlements and advocacy

## Pakistan court adjourns, no ruling on freeing Pearl’s killer

Islamabad: Pakistan’s Supreme Court adjourned on Thursday without deciding whether to free the man convicted and later acquitted of the 2002 murder of a American journalist Daniel Pearl.

The key suspect in Pearl’s slaying, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, remains in custody while his lawyer has petitioned the top court to free him in keeping with another court’s ruling last month that ordered his release. Pearl’s family and the Pakistani Government have appealed the acquittal to the Supreme Court, which resumed its hearing this week. A decision is expected before the end of the month.

Sheikh’s lawyer, Mehmood A Sheikh, has been trying to get his client, who has been on death row for 18 years, freed since his acquittal. The lawyer and Sheikh are not related.

Washington has opposed Sheikh’s release and Pakistan’s federal and provincial governments have throw up successive legal challenges to avoid freeing him. Meanwhile, the southern Sindh Provincial government is facing contempt charges for refusing to free Sheikh. The regional court hearing those charges will resume on January 13.

Sheikh was acquitted in early 2020 by the Sindh High Court in the brutal beheading of Pearl, who was lured to his death while investigating links between Pakistani-based militants and Richard C. Reid, dubbed the “Shoe Bomber” after trying to blow up a flight from Paris to Miami with explosives hidden in his shoes.

Pearl, 38, was working for the Wall Street Journal when he was kidnapped on January 23, 2002. AP

## Kim vows to bolster North Korea’s military at party meeting

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea leader Kim Jong Un vowed to strengthen the country’s military defences in a speech at a major ruling party meeting that provides insights into his priorities amid growing economic challenges and a US presidential transition.

Kim made clear his “will to reliably protect the security of the country and people and the peaceful environment of the socialist construction by placing the state defense capabilities on a much higher level, and put forth goals for realising it” the Korean Central News Agency said. The state media report Thursday on Kim’s

speech to the Workers Party congress the previous day didn’t elaborate. North Korea has previously underscored its need for nuclear weapons and missiles as a deterrent and a pre-emptive strike capability to cope with what it describes as American hostility. Cheong Seong-Chang, a fellow at the Wilson Centers Asia Programme, said Kims speech likely contained “sensitive contents” that can provoke the United States and South Korea. Kim halted his country’s nuclear and long-range missile tests before engaging in high-stakes summitry with President Donald Trump in 2018. But with his advancing arsenal on the negotiating table, their diplomacy

## Indonesia’s Merapi volcano spews hot clouds, 500 evacuated

AP ■ JAKARTA

Indonesia’s Mount Merapi volcano spewed avalanches of hot clouds on Thursday morning as more than 500 residents were evacuated from its fertile slopes.

Fog was covering the volcano at the time, so the distance the pyroclastic clouds spread was not visually observed. The amplitude record and seismic recording data from Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Centre estimated the hot clouds spread less than 1 kilometre (0.6 miles) from the crater.

Local authorities on Thursday evacuated more than 500 people living on the mountain in Magelang district on Java Island.



Mount Merapi spews volcanic steam from its crater seen from Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia on Thursday

AP

“Until now, the potential danger is not more than 5 kilometres (3 miles),” chief of Yogyakarta’s Volcanology and

Geological Mitigation Centre, Hanik Humaida, said in a statement.

## Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine expands to General Practice services in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

Supplies of the Oxford University vaccine produced by AstraZeneca began expanding to General Practice (GP) led services in the UK from Thursday to make it easier to protect care home residents and other vulnerable people against Covid-19, the British Government said.

As part of a phased rollout since the jabs received regulatory approval last month, the vaccine has been trialled at selected hospitals in the country for surveillance purposes before being sent out to hundreds of community-based local vaccination services.

## TRUMP CONCEDES DEFEAT AFTER CAPITOL SIEGE

Earlier on Wednesday, thousands of angry supporters of Trump swarmed over the US Capitol, forcing lawmakers to evacuate their chambers and delaying by several hours a normally routine procedure clearing the way for Biden and Harris to be sworn in as president and vice president.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced after hours of chaos around the white-columned edifice that police had secured the building.

“Today, a shameful assault was made on our democracy,” Pelosi said. “It was anointed at the highest level of government. It cannot, however, deter us from our responsibility to validate the election of Joe Biden,” she said.

Amidst the violence Biden said he was shocked and sad to see the US has “come to such a dark moment”.

“At this hour, our democracy is under unprecedented assault. Unlike anything we’ve seen in modern times. An assault on the citadel of liberty, the Capitol itself. An assault on the people’s representatives and the Capitol Hill police, sworn to protect them. And the public servants who work at the heart of our Republic...,” he said in an address to the nation.

“Let me be very clear. The scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect a true America. Do not represent who we are. What we’re seeing are a small number of extremists dedicated to lawlessness. This is not dissent. It’s disorder. It’s chaos. It borders on sedition. And it must end now,” Biden said.

“I call on President Trump to go on national television now to fulfill his oath and defend the Constitution by demand-

ing an end to this siege,” he said.

Harris also demanded an end to the assault on the US Capitol by the supporters of Trump.

“I join President-elect Joe Biden in calling for the assault on the Capitol and our nation’s public servants to end, and as he said, “allow the work of democracy to go forward,” Harris said in a tweet.

Trump has refused to concede the election. He alleges that there was a massive voters’ fraud and electoral malpractice. Election officials have denied the allegations.

All four living former US presidents -- Barack Obama, George W Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter -- condemned the actions of the pro-Trump rioters who forced an evacuation of the House and Senate chambers of the US Capitol and underlined the need for a peaceful transfer of power.

Meanwhile, in an unprecedented move, Twitter and Facebook suspended Trump’s accounts after he continued to push conspiracy theories about the election.

Twitter suspended Trump’s account for 12 hours and also blocked three of his tweets including a video of his address to his supporters.

Facebook said it would be blocking the president’s account from posting for 24 hours due to two policy violations. PTI

## APEC COURT FEARS ABOUT PROTESTERS’ EXPOSURE TO COVID

The Centre had on June 5 last year told the top court that probe into the assembly of people at Anand Vihar Bus Terminal in east Delhi during the nationwide lockdown and the Tablighi Jamaat event is

being conducted on a day-to-day basis by the Delhi Police and there was no need for CBI investigation.

Ahead of the Centre-farmer talks on January 8, the farmers on Thursday held a “tractor march” along the borders of the national Capital amid tight security. The farmers called it a “rehearsal” for January 26 and warned the Central Government that they will further intensify their stir if the farm laws are not revoked and assurance on minimum support price (MSP) is given.

## COVID-HIT GDP TO CONTRACT BY RECORD 7.7%, REPORTS NSO

The construction sector too is projected to contract by 12.6 per cent, “public administration, defence and other services” by 3.7 per cent, and “financial, real estate, and professional services” by 0.8 per cent, as per the data.

On the other hand, ‘agriculture, forestry and fishing’ sector has been projected to grow at 3.4 per cent during the fiscal. The sector had posted a growth of 4 per cent in 2019-20.

Similarly, ‘electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services’ is likely to post a growth of 2.7 per cent during the year ending March 2021. This compares with 4.1 per cent expansion during 2019-20.

The economy contracted by a massive 23.9 per cent in the first quarter and 7.5 per cent in the second quarter on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government has been stressing that economic activities are picking up post gradual unlocking of the economy and stimulus packages, and the country would witness a V-shaped growth.

The country’s monetary authority,

the RBI, had said the second half of the fiscal is expected to show some positive growth. RBI has forecasted real GDP growth at (-) 7.5 per cent in 2020-21, which is an improvement over its previous projection of 9.5 per cent contraction. The World Bank in its latest Global Economic Prospects estimated India’s economy to contract by 9.6 per cent in the fiscal year 2020-21, reflecting a sharp drop in household spending and private investment. The growth is expected to recover to 5.4 per cent in 2021, it said.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India’s economy is projected to contract by 10.3 per cent this year and likely to bounce back with an impressive expansion of 8.8 per cent next year.

## JEE ADVANCE 75% ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SCRAPPED, TO BE HELD ON JULY 3

The exam will be conducted by IIT Kharagpur.

For admissions to IITs, apart from qualifying the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced, the candidates are required to secure either minimum 75 per cent marks in Class 12 board exams or rank among the top 20 percentile in their qualifying examinations.

The JEE Advanced 2021 would be attempted by those who had qualified the JEE Mains last year but could not appear for the next exams due to the coronavirus pandemic. As a one-time exception, the National Testing Agency (NTA) has allowed the latter BTEch candidates to directly appear for JEE Advanced 2021.

Ahead of Pokhriyal’s announcement,

candidates have been requesting to scrap 75 per cent criteria for JEE Mains, grant multiple attempts for JEE Advanced 2021.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main 2021 will be conducted four times this year, as per the suggestions of many students and parents.

The first attempt of the exam will be from February 23 to 26. The last date to register online is January 16. Candidates will now have a choice to attempt only 75 questions out of the 90 questions present in the paper.

## 25,800 VOLUNTEERS ENROL FOR COVAXIN PH-3 TRIALS

In a statement, Bharat Biotech said that the Phase III human clinical trials of Covaxin began in mid-November. It is also the largest phase III efficacy trial ever conducted for any vaccine in the country.

On January 3, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

The phase one and two clinical trials on 375 and 380 participants respectively revealed very low adverse events, ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava said, adding, “It showed neutralising antibody responses equivalent to human convalescent serum, strong antibody responses to all structural proteins... three months after vaccination.”

Industry experts and some Opposition leaders have expressed concern over the absence of Phase 3 trial data on Covaxin. The critics have cautioned that “sidestepping” processes and giving “premature”

clearance could risk lives and fuel vaccine hesitancy in India.

## BE POISED TO RECEIVE COVID SHOTS SHORTLY: GOVT TO STATES, UTS

For North India, Delhi and Karnal will be the mini-hubs. While Kolkata and Guwahati have been chosen as mini-hubs for the eastern part of the country and Chennai and Hyderabad are the designated points for the southern region.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Thursday in a meeting with the Health Ministers of all States and Union territories (UTs) said that coronavirus vaccines -- Covishield and Covaxin -- are on the verge of being available in the country. “Our efforts are to ensure seamless last-mile delivery of the vaccine,” he added.

He urged the States to be prepared and stop any misinformation campaigns.

“In a massive country-wide exercise, another mock drill on Covid-19 vaccine administration to be conducted in all States & UTs on January 8, 2021. Around 1.7 lakh vaccinators & 3 lakh vaccination team members trained in vaccine administration,” the Minister tweeted.

## MASOOD AZHAR TO GO TO JAIL FOR TERROR FINANCING

The CTD said its teams raided the whereabouts of the JeM’s “safe house” and arrested its members -- Muhammad Afzal, Muhammad Amir, Allah Ditta, Muhammad Ifitkhar, Muhammad Ajmal and Muhammad Bilal Makki -- and recovered lakhs of rupees from their possession.

## Trend Slazer

### Kangana shares her life mantra

Actor **KANGANA RANAUT** shared her life mantra, which is never compromise on your health, stay away from unhealthy habits and pessimistic people.

She shared it on Twitter with a motivational workout video, where she is seen doing pilates.

“Early morning fitness routine. Remember one thing in life *jo fit hai woh hit hai*. Never compromise on your health, stay away from unhealthy habits and pessimistic people. Stay in the company of great beings if you don’t find them physically find their books or teachings,” she wrote along with the video.



‘On the last few days of his schedule (*Piku*), he (*Irrfan Khan*) would say, “dada can’t we

go on shooting like this. I am feeling like a free bird, I don’t want this moment to stop. Please aap kuch bhi kara lo mujhse (you make me do anything). I can’t explain this feeling. Can’t we just go on and on?” I really miss him.’

—Shoojit Sircar

Actor **VIDYUT JAMMWAL** has

performed stunts on screen, and has served as an inspiration to many fitness enthusiasts.

He has now posted a video using the *urumi*, a sword with a flexible and whip-like blade that originated in modernday Kerala, which he calls the deadliest weapon in the world.

“This video is very special to me because I got the opportunity to bring forward *Urumi*, the deadliest weapon in the world. I request everyone to avoid trying this at home without proper training,” Vidyut said.



### Being virtuous can get boring: James

Actor **JAMES MARSDEN** feels being virtuous might not always be the sexiest option and can get boring at times, but he likes to celebrate the good through his roles and the stories.

That is what he is trying to do in his latest show *The Stand*, which is based on Stephen King’s bestselling novel of the same name. He plays the role of ordinary guy Stu Redman, who gets caught in an apocalyptic pandemic.

“We love our anti heroes right now. I think *Batman Begins* began the whole thing. All of a sudden Superman is not that interesting and Batman is the hero, but not without a dark side,” Marsden said while talking about his decision to play the good guy in the age of anti-heroes.



# A TOOL, NOT A THREAT

Artificial intelligence and machine learning industry are growing rapidly and unlocking new avenues for enterprises aiming to bring vital changes in the ecosystem. Here are top AI-ML trends to look out for in 2021

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have been the hottest buzzwords in the decade that has gone by. According to a study, 77 per cent of the devices that we use in our day-to-day lives are now powered by AI and ML. From platforms like Netflix and Facebook to products like Amazon’s Alexa and Google Home, AI has become the core of nearly every product and service that we come across.

In 2020, the enterprise world has also added to the capabilities of AI assistants as they help build strong customer relationships and smooth business operations. No wonder Conversational AI has become a fascination of global business leaders and SMEs alike.

AI-ML industry is growing rapidly and unlocking new avenues for enterprises aiming to bring vital changes in the ecosystem. According to a Gartner study, around 37 per cent of all companies reviewed were found utilising some type of ML in their business. It is anticipated that around 80 per cent of modern advances will be based around AI and ML by 2022. The Global Artificial Intelligence Hardware Market was valued at approximately USD 9.8 billion in 2019 and is pegged to grow with a healthy CAGR of more than 37.5 per cent over the forecast period 2020-2027.

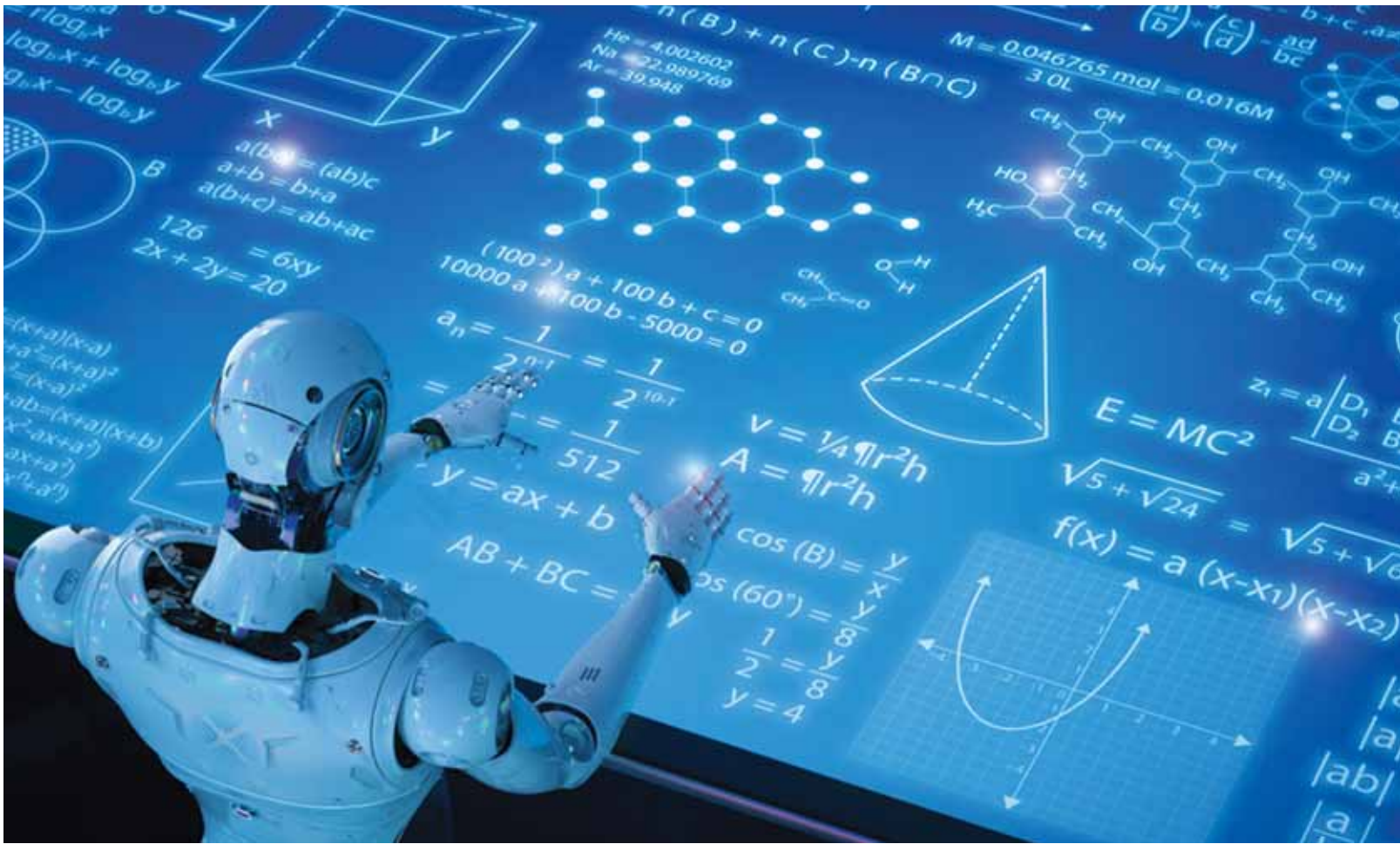
So as we begin a promising decade in the new normal, it becomes important to know about the trends of AI-ML that might follow.

#### ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION + AI = HYPER-AUTOMATION

Hyper-automation was identified by Gartner as one of the best technology trends to be used in an organisation for automation. The pandemic has stepped up the adoption of the concept in which all the company’s operations should be automated including legacy business processes. AI and ML are the significant drivers of hyper-automation. If Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Machine Learning (ML), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) work in harmony to automate complex business processes, then hyper-automation is a means for real digital transformation.

#### POWER OF MACHINE LEARNING (ML) + INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT)

Kevin Ashton is considered as the father of IOT, which comprises a smart infrastructure connected via the internet to the cloud. The Internet of Things became a rapidly emerging segment in the last decade. Economic analyst Transforma Insights has forecasted that the worldwide IoT market will comprise 24.1 billion devices by 2030, producing \$1.5 trillion in income. Arthur Samuel is



the inventor of Machine Learning who defined this term in 1959. The utilisation of Machine Learning is progressively interlaced with IoT. Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning, for instance, are now being used to make IoT devices and services smarter and more secure.

#### AUGMENTED REALITY IN CHATBOTS

Artificial Intelligence together with Augmented Reality (AR) is considered one of the main enablers of the Internet of Senses (IoS), a megatrend from 2021 toward 2030. AR is quite a unique technology which actually takes customer engagement to virtual reality. Innovation in this regard is the app for the users where chatbot leverages augmented reality to facilitate the purchase decision, prompting customers with relevant recommendations. For example, if you want to see how a particular shoe would fit you, you can use AR technology or use AR to determine the correct size for your shoes by clicking and uploading a picture



of your feet.

#### REINFORCEMENT LEARNING

Reinforcement Learning is the area of ML that can be used by companies in the future for deep learning, thereby improving the effectiveness of gathered

data. An ideal illustration of reinforcement learning is a chatbot that addresses simple user queries like greetings, order booking and consultation calls and through reinforcement learning builds and improves on these interactions giving it the ability to address more complex

user queries such as product demos etc.

#### BUSINESS FORECASTING AND ANALYSIS

This technology is strategised by experts to screen a set of data over a period of time which then is examined and utilised for making smart decisions. With the changing strategies, the ML networks can give conjectures with accuracy as high as 95 per cent. Companies will soon start fusing recurrent neural networks for high fidelity forecasting.

#### INCREASED ADOPTION OF HYPER PERSONALISED AND CONTEXTUAL COMMUNICATION

We have all heard of the saying that “content is king.” But 2021 will bring in a change where we hear “context is king.”

With the adoption of AI and ML tools and methods, we will see brands and organisations increasingly adopt a more personalised and context driven approach to communication.

(The writer, Maaz Ansari, is the co-founder and CEO of ORI.)

## Wrapped in Satya’s vision

Fashion designer **SATYA PAUL** breathed his last in Coimbatore yesterday. As condolences on social media pour in, TEAM VIVA recalls how he launched his iconic label years ago, which continues to revamp the Indian saree with a new twist every now and then

Satya Paul’s legacy isn’t easy to beat. His stores in Delhi’s high-end markets and corners are full of crowds even today. The mere fact that his popularity is still as seasoned years after his first collection was launched is a testament of his class-apart design sensibility and a vivid colour palette. The maestro was the first designer to launch a saree boutique in India — L’Affaire — in 1980. He later launched the label, Satya Paul, in 1986, which is known for Indian prints.

As the world learnt the news of Paul’s demise in Coimbatore yesterday, through his son Puneet Nanda’s post, social media was flooded with condolences from the fashion industry and aspiring enthusiasts who looked up to the designer as a role model. Nanda posted on Facebook, “Most people are not aware that more than as a designer or an entrepreneur, he has been steadfastly a seeker. In the ‘70s, his inner journey had started with going to listen to talks with J Krishnamurti. Later, he took sannyas from Osho. After Osho left in 1990, though he wasn’t seeking another Master, he discovered Sadhguru in 2007. He immediately started enjoying the path of yoga and eventually moved here (Isha Yoga Centre, Coimbatore) in 2015. He has been a doorway for hundreds of people towards spirituality and all the Masters he was so blessed to have been with. He couldn’t have had a sweeter life or passage... at the feet of the Master. We are sad only a bit, mostly rejoicing in him, his life and now his passing with such a blessing.”

Sadhguru took to Twitter to pay Paul a tribute. He wrote, “#SatyaPaul, a shining example of what it means to live with immeasurable passion and unrelenting involvement. The distinct vision you brought to the Indian #FashionIndustry is a beautiful tribute to this. A privilege to have had you amongst us. Condolences & Blessings.”

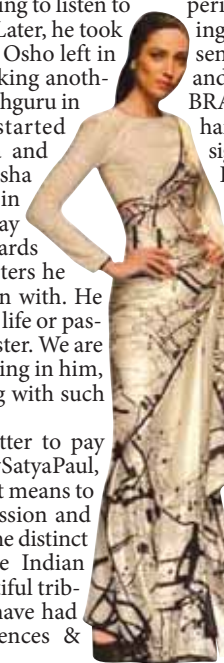


Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar said, “Sad to hear the demise of the most influenced fashion designers #SatyaPaul sir. His immense contribution in the fashion industry will be always remembered, My heart-felt condolences to @puneetnanda and the family. #OmShanti.”

Designer Masaba Gupta, with whom Satya Paul had collaborated with for a brief period, urged to educate fashion designing aspirants about Paul’s strategies and sensibilities. She took to her Instagram and wrote, “A true example of an actual BRAND, homegrown. Put in corporate hands at the right time and one with a signature that will stand the test of time. Fashion schools — Please introduce young Indian design aspirants to this brand in schools and various other homegrown brands. We can be inspired by the story of Chanel, etc., but we must learn what happened on our soil first.”

Actor-director Lakshmi Manchu tweeted, “He was one of my favourite saree designers. So fun and yet effortless. RIP Satya Paul ji. You filled our lives with your fabrics, colours and designs.”

Another maestro with an eye for detail may have left the world mourning, but the world will always remember him as the one who revamped and reinvented the Indian saree in a myriad of ways, keeping its tradition and culture alive.



## 2020 taught families to stay together: Sood

Actor and humanitarian **Sonu Sood** says that 2020 has been a tough year, and was like a reality check for us. Sood, who authored the book *I Am No Messiah*, says that it taught us to put others before us and to keep out families closer to us than ever.

“2020 has been a tough year. But I am happy and I feel blessed that I got the chance to help so many people. The year was like a reality check for us. It taught us to put others before us and to keep out families closer to us than ever. It gave me the opportunity to interact with so many people. I feel like we are one big happy family now. Going ahead, I hope we continue to be kind and compassionate beings. I wouldn’t like to look at it like that. While I’m happy to have the support and love of so many people from all around the country, I don’t see it as a pressure on me. I will keep doing what I’ve been doing with the same vigour. My parents have always told me that with success and privilege comes responsibility. I am always going to remember their words. The love that I have received has only motivated me to keep working hard and being there for people to the best of my ability,” Sonu said.

In his memoir, *I Am No Messiah*, Sonu combines the extraordinary experiences of his journey from Moga to Mumbai. Honest, inspirational and heart-warming, this is the story of Sonu Sood and of the people whose lives he continues to transform. Sonu’s memoir, co-written with veteran journalist and author Meena K Iyer, which was released recently is being well received

by readers from across India. A number of people whose life Sonu has touched, NGOs and various institutions are coming on board to support the book.

During the nationwide lockdown, imposed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, when a wave of poverty-stricken migrants set out on foot to make their arduous journey back home, the value of *seva*, service to mankind, instilled in him by his parents, spurred Sonu Sood into action. From taking to the streets and reaching out to the stranded, to setting up a dedicated team and making arrangements for national and international transport, Sonu managed to help thousands of helpless and needy workers. Thus, began his *Ghar Bhejo* programme, carried out like a humanitarian mission. Chartered flights, buses and trains were sanitized and paid for. Distress calls from all over the world were answered. Soon, the movement snowballed into a campaign for providing jobs, medical facilities and educational aid to workers.

Sonu said, “While 2020 has been a challenging year in many ways, it has offered me an opportunity to reach out to millions of people and connect with them directly. During the course of this journey, I have learnt and gained a lot from them. I have shared my experiences in my memoirs *I Am No Messiah*, and it is heartening to see the support the book is receiving not just from book readers but various organisations and institutes who truly believe in our efforts to help people during these difficult times.”





Arguably 2020 has seen the biggest shift in food trends; not only were families forced to cook more and together at home, but many turned to cultivating vegetable gardens for fresh produce. Sales of seeds skyrocketed around the world. People found a new respect and understanding for the process of ‘farm to table’.

Experimentation in the home kitchen also thrived. As most people had more time, cooking became a family affair and was more enjoyable. Some products were harder to access so one had to be inventive. There was less waste, and one became more conscious of what we were eating.

But going forward, as we enter a brand new year, celebrity chef Sarah Todd believes we will see an increase in plant-based food and sustainable eating. “I believe there has been a paradigm shift in eating habits. The last 12 months have instilled a new mindset that will continue in 2021. We will think before we spend, meaning home cooking will continue. Farmers approach to marketing has matured and customers are now more aware of what is available,” she said.

Adding, “Restaurants and cafes have been the hardest hit during the pandemic which affects farmers, workers and proprietors. People are making a conscious effort to support them by eating out when they can. This will increase as confidence grows.”

Chef Vineet Manocha, Vice President Culinary, Lite Bite Foods feels the year 2020 brought dramatic changes in eating and living habits with “local being the new sustainable... More and more use of local resources, produce, ingredients and equipment and focus on seasonal produce,” he added. Manocha lists down a few trends to look out for in 2021:

**Healthy all the way:** Health food is totally in and immunity boosting foods

# RAISE A GLASS AND CHEER!

Eat and drink to your heart’s content as experts share a few wine and dessert trends for 2021

are trending. The focus will be on choosing the ingredients carefully and eating well in the age of dieting. Wholesome nutritious food will be planned by us which is well balanced as per the principles of Ayurveda. Food also affects your mental health and in this age of pandemic anxiety, it’s very important that we eat calming, nutritional food.

**Heirloom and ancient ingredients:** There will be a lot of experimentation on Heirloom varieties like ragi, barley, millets, teff and spelt. More and more focus will be on lost ingredients and lost recipes. Home chefs are bringing in a lot of traction on ancient recipes. It’s not difficult in India to move back to sustainable heirloom ingredients as we just have to look back two generations. There is a lot of focus on reviving the old cooking methods, cookware, techniques and recipes. There is a growing appreciation for Ghee and cold-pressed seed oils which were used by our ancestors.

**Rise of neighbourhood Foodpreneurs:** With growing awareness and campaigns about “Support Local Businesses”, many trained chefs will turn entrepreneurs, providing personalised, customized food solutions to limited customer base. This is also supported by the demand for “food with a story”. Small menus, customised to needs, changing frequently to provide variety, local sustainability, daily subscrip-

tion of meal kits, unpretentious dark kitchens etc. will get a further boost this year.

**Upcycled food:** We are all aware of the threat of food security and rising population. The severity of food wastage is catching up as a trend with the chefs. There will be a growing trend to reduce food wastage as much as possible and develop recipes which can make peels delicious. The trend does not just revolve around Blissful food from waste but also cocktails and beverages using food waste, peels and ingredients like apple pulp, orange peels etc. Blissful recipes will be a big trend in 2021.

**WINE TRENDS**  
Sonal Holland, India’s only master of wine believes in the last quarter of 2020, we have finally seen some buoyancy and a pick-up in sales in the F&B industry. With sales only opening up again in end-August, the industry has been playing catch-up ever since, to try and make back the significant losses faced over the course of the year. Keeping this in mind, her forecast for the wine trends for 2021:

**A thirst for knowledge:** The pandemic was marked by a steep increase in online learning — webinars, Zoom meets, Instagram Lives and more helped people worldwide bide their time, with countless resources becoming available via which

people were able to learn new skills. The wine and beverage industry also saw a lot of knowledge being shared by global experts; I predict that both consumers and professionals in the trade will continue to consume education about beverages and wine, well into the New Year.

**A surge in specialist wine stores & online sales:** In 2021, I see more consumers seeking out modern wine specialist stores at which to make their purchases. These are typically posh shops located within large food retail formats, shopping malls or multi-theatre complexes. They offer a wider selection of both domestic and international wines; better-informed staff; and overall, a better experience for the consumer.

Another big trend that will continue into the New Year is the purchase of alcohol online. Ever since the Government has allowed online sales of alcohol, consumers have gravitated towards this highly convenient - and pandemic-proof - way of purchasing their favourite beverages. Given that the excise department has seen such a significant dip in revenue this year, I see no reason why the Government won’t continue to encourage online liquor sales into the New Year, and even longer.

**Wine, an affordable luxury:** In a year where the affluent haven’t had a chance to spend on themselves as much, through

international holidays or luxury purchases, a quick and convenient way to consume luxury is by spending on premium wines. Now more than ever, wine has become a luxury that the affluent can splurge on — I see premium wine purchases continuing through the New Year, with the wealthy even looking to trade up, and splurge more than usual on their wines and other luxury beverages.

**Wine in cans:** With the recent introduction of wine in cans by brands like Sula and Fratelli, the Indian consumer, who is younger and not as experienced in the world of wines, will have more opportunities to try and enjoy wines in 2021. Wine in cans is a more accessible and price-sensitive way for consumers to sample the beverage, and with their introduction, the hope is that a younger, newer audience will convert to drinking wine.

**Blush & rose wines:** In 2021, I predict that rose still wine from regions all across the world — like French Provence, Italy, Spain and so on, will continue to rise in popularity. Rose wines are incredibly versatile, offering the lightness and freshness of a white wine, but the body and fruit of a red wine. They also pair very well with vegetarian food. One variant in the rose category that will continue to enjoy popularity in the New Year is the blush-coloured styles of Moscato wines. It’s a medium-sweet wine and low in alcohol, thus allowing for easy drinking. It’s got great aromatics and is especially a hit among lady drinkers. As women continue to embrace wines in 2021, options like Moscato, which are perfumed, sherbet-like and not very expensive, will remain popular.

**DESSERT TRENDS**  
In the midst of so much uncertainty in 2020, treating took centre stage as it delivered our daily dose of ‘small happy’;

so as we step into 2021, what better way to celebrate than by looking forward to the delicious and tantalising treats that will emerge over the next twelve months. The Baileys Treat Report 2021 compiled by Baileys, with leading food futurologist Dr Morgaine Gaye present delicious trends for 2021.

**A drop of self-care:** Unsurprisingly, everyone has been indulging in a bit more self-care in 2020 and the self-care kick will continue. People will be indulging themselves in new botanical drinks that offer qualities like ‘calm’, ‘focus’, ‘glow’ and ‘rest’, and new fermented beverages like hop water; a non-alcoholic drink with a slight beer or ale taste, will be bigger than ever.

**Oat everything:** The humble porridge oats will go centre stage as oat-based milk chocolates, ice creams, cheeses, yoghurts, and even double cream are coming our way.

**I should cacao!** Cacao pulp, the bit you don’t see as it’s generally discarded when making chocolate, is a sweet and fruity flesh. You can also expect to see it as a flavourful alternative to coconut water, topped with eye catching edible flowers for the perfect non-alcoholic refresher.

**Japanese indulgence:** Japan is a haven for delicious, whimsical treats that will put a smile on your face, and we’ll be seeing a massive influx of Japanese inspired wonders including wobbly, fat, pillow-like pancakes and the Taiyaki fish, a soft waffle-like cones in the shape of a fish is stuffed to the gills with ice cream, sprinkles, sauces and wafers.

**Spread the love:** Savoury spreads are getting a makeover as they turn to treats. Add a touch of luxury to toast as Sloe Gin spreads and Champagne butters will make the humble piece of bread into a meal fit for royalty.

**How’s this for a glow-up?** - We’re talking completely edible algae that will find its way into our favourite cocktails, giving them an incredible other-worldly appearance that will be hard to ignore. Will someone pass us a Glowtini?

**As light as air:** On the coattails of the whipped Dalgona coffee, this treating trend is only growing popularity in 2021. Air will be whipped, injected and stuffed into everything from ice cream to candy floss, giving a light texture that leaves us craving more.

**Extra sweet(s):** They’ve been around for a few years, but in 2021, some classics get a gloriously adventurous treating makeover as the macaron and Danish pastry get whimsical. Introducing the Macaron Ice Cream Sandwich and the Nougat Crown, with all the muted tones and flavours getting set aside for over the top colour and tastes... already building up a sizeable following in Los Angeles.

Let’s hope in the New Year we can finally raise a glass and cheer while we focus on clean and mindful eating. —JANS

## R E C I P E S



### LAUKI AND KELE KI MALAIDAR KHEER

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Full fat milk: 800 gm
- Bottle gourd (grated): 400 gm
- Banana (grated): 2
- *Khoya*: 30 gm
- Almonds (sliced): 20 gm
- *Chironji*: 10 gm
- Cashew (crushed): 10 gm
- Brown sugar: 90 gm
- Cardamom powder: 1 tsp
- Ghee: 25 gm
- Saffron: 8/10 strands

#### METHOD

- Heat ghee in a pan. Fry cashews and almonds. Also, keep some aside for garnishing.
- When they turn slightly brown, add grated *lauki* and cook it for eight to 10 minutes on slow flame.
- Add milk when it starts boiling. Simmer the heat and let it cook on slow heat for 25 minutes more.
- Keep stirring in between.
- Now add sugar, *khoya* and cook it for another two to three minutes.
- Put cardamom powder and saffron for enhancing the taste.
- Let the *kheer* cool at at room temperature. Then add grated bananas and mix really well.
- Garnish with leftover almonds and cashews. Serve cold.

Courtesy: Michelin Plate Winner, chef Dayashankar Sharma.



### VEG BIRYANI

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Basmati rice: 3 cups
- Whole green cardamom (divided): 18
- Cloves (divided): 12
- Salt: 3 tsp
- Ghee: 4.5 tbsp + 1 tsp
- Red onion (thinly sliced): 6
- Broken cashews: 6 tbsp
- Potato (cubed): 3
- Cauliflower florets: 150 gm
- Carrot (diagonally cut): 3
- Green beans (diagonally cut): 20
- Mil: 30 ml
- Saffron strands
- Ginger and garlic paste: 2 tbsp
- Green chillies: 6
- Oil: 30 ml
- Cumin seeds: 2 tsp
- Cinnamon stick
- Bay leaf: 3
- Whole black peppercorns: 13
- Curd: 1 cup
- *Biryani masala*: 4.5 tsp

- Red chilli powder: 1.5 tsp
- Water: 1 cup
- Cilantro (chopped): 8 tsp
- Mint (chopped): 7 tsp
- Rose water or *kewra* water: 3 tsp
- *Garam masala*: 1 tsp

#### METHOD

- Soak the rice in three cups of water for 35 to 40 minutes. Drain the water later.
- Heat a pot full of water. Add one black cardamom, three green cardamom, four cloves and 3/4 teaspoon salt to it. Let it come to a boil.

- Put rice and stir with a spoon.
- Let it cook uncovered (don’t lower the heat) until it’s almost cooked. This takes around six to seven minutes.
- Remove the pan from heat and drain the rice in a colander. Add a teaspoon of ghee to the rice. Set aside.
- Heat 1.5 tablespoon of ghee in a pan on medium heat. Once hot, add one sliced onion and cook until they turn golden brown and caramelize. Remove on a plate.
- To the same pan, now add cashews and cook until golden brown. Remove and set aside.
- To the same pan, add potato and cook for two minutes until light brown. Remove on a plate.
- To the same pan, now add cauliflower, beans and carrots. Sauté for two to three minutes until veggies appear light brown. Remove them on a plate.
- Heat two tablespoons of milk in a pan. Once warm, add saffron strands (crush it before adding). Set it aside.
- Crush ginger, garlic and chilli using a mortar and pestle. Set aside.
- Heat 1.5 tablespoons of oil in a pan on medium heat. Add cumin seeds, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, peppercorns, remaining three cardamom and remaining two cloves.
- Stir and let the spices sizzle for a few seconds. Add the sliced onions and also add 1/4 teaspoon of salt.
- Cook for three to four minutes until onions turn light brown. Then add the crushed ginger, garlic and green chillies paste. Cook for two minutes until the raw smell goes away.
- Remove the pan from heat and whisk in the yogurt, whisking continuously until it’s all absorbed.
- Put the pan back on heat. Add all the veggies and toss to combine.
- Add the *biryani masala* and red chilli powder.
- Add 1/4 cup of water. Let it cook for around six to seven minutes until veggies are almost cooked but not overcooked. They should be firm to bite. Remove from heat.
- Now take a heavy bottom pan. First grease it with ghee.
- Then add a layer of rice (half of the

- rice). Top with half of fried onion, half of fried cashews and half of cilantro and mint. Add 1/2 teaspoon of rose water. Now place the veggies on top (all of it).
- Then add another layer of rice on top of the veggies. Then top it with remaining with fried onion, cashews, cilantro and mint.
- Add the prepared saffron milk and the remaining one teaspoon of rose water on top.
- Finally drizzle one teaspoon ghee on top. Sprinkle some *biryani masala*.
- Cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil. Then cover with a fitted lid.
- Heat a flat pan on medium heat. Once hot, reduce the flame to lowest. Place your *biryani* pot on top of the pan and let it cook for 25 to 30 minutes on lowest heat.
- Scoop out the biryani from the bottom of the pan so that each serving has both the veggies and the rice.
- Serve hot vegetable biryani with

- and onion. Scrape out the coconut flesh and put it in a grinder. Grind well to get a coconut flesh paste.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame and add *panch phoron* in it.
- Add the chopped green chillies, onions and garlic cloves.
- Now, take it out in a large bowl and add mustard paste, turmeric, salt and coconut flesh paste.
- In the mixture, add the raw prawns and mix everything well.
- Cut the bottom of the coconut shell evenly to make it stand properly inside the



### DAAB CHINGRI

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Prawns: 750 gm
- Onion
- *Panch phoron*: 1 tsp
- Green chillies: 4
- Turmeric
- Wheat dough: 20 gm
- Large tender coconut: 1
- Mustard paste: 3 tsp
- Garlic cloves: 3
- Mustard oil: 2 tbsp
- Salt as required

#### METHOD

- Chop garlic, green chillies

- pressure cooker.
- Put the prawn mixture in the shell and cover the top with wheat dough.
- Add some water in the pressure cooker and place the coconut shell inside it. (Note: The level of water should be about half the height of the coconut shell.)
- Put the cooker lid on and let it cook over medium flame until you hear three whistles.
- After removing it from the flame, let the dish be inside the cooker for 10 minutes more.
- Take it out and remove the wheat dough seal. Serve hot with steamed rice.

Courtesy: Swissotel Kolkata.

# WILL FINDS A WAY FOR OZ

Pucovski scores fifty in his maiden Test innings to put Aus in front before Labuschagne, Smith take charge



Marnus Labuschagne congratulates Will Pucovski on his maiden fifty in Test cricket

Cricket Australia/Twitter

PTI ■ SYDNEY

signs ominous for India and encouraging for Australia, the beleaguered Steve Smith looked dangerous and his understudy Marnus Labuschagne struck an unbeaten half-century as the hosts reached 166 for two on a rain-marred opening day of the third Test.

At stumps, Labuschagne was unbeaten on 67 and Smith, after his uncharacteristic run of low scores so far, seemed out of the woods with 31 confident runs, which included five authoritative boundaries. Labuschagne found the fence eight times.

This was after debutant Will Pucovski, riding on some luck, made 62 on debut to break the shackles for the under-five side.

Smith looked positive from the word go and was determined to not let the Indian bowlers dictate terms to him.

"It was good to get a couple of boundaries early. Marnus played well, hopefully we go along well tomorrow," he said at the end of day's play in which 55 overs were bowled owing to a four-hour rain disruption.

Having entered the match after registering scores of 1, 0 and 8 in his last three innings, Smith's first confident shot came against India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who was nicely driven through the

mid-on for his first boundary of the series.

His confidence up after dismissing Pucovski for his first Test wicket, debutant pacer Navdeep Saini got carried away and was guilty of bowling too full to Smith, who latched on to them with a couple of fours.

With Smith looking in fine fettle, the early signs were ominous for India and skipper Ajinkya Rahane brought back his nemesis Ravichandran Ashwin into the attack, but the Australian was equal to the task on this occasion.

A tossed up delivery was whipped off pads through mid-wicket and then Smith danced down the track to loft Ashwin on the outside for another boundary.

Meanwhile, Labuschagne was in his element after he had settled in and played a few pleasing drives on both sides of the wicket, having drawn confidence from the pull shot he played against Bumrah at the beginning of his innings.

The two added 60 runs for the third wicket after a 100-run association between Labuschagne and Pucovski, who was trapped in front of the wicket by Saini but not before starting his Test career with a solid knock. Pucovski also had luck on his side as wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant dropped the opener twice before tea.

Pucovski was on 54 and Marnus

It was a very nice batting wicket. I am very hopeful that with the amount of batting in the team now and what we have got to come, we can post a really good total and then with the world-class attack that we have put them (India) under the pump, hopefully dominate the game.

WILL PUCOVSKI

It is very a flat wicket. Our plan was to build pressure and not try too much as it is a very easy wicket for the batsman. Even the bouncers are not carrying as well it was in the earlier games. But Test cricket it is all about patience and we must keep that in mind.

MOHAMMED SIRAJ

Labuschagne on 34 at the tea break after four hours of play were lost due to rain.

In between three reprieves, Pucovski played some impressive shots and also looked solid in defence after Mohammed Siraj had sent back the returning David Warner early.

Introduced into the attack after 13 overs in India's first bowling change, senior off-spinner Ashwin tempted Pucovski into a drive and the batsman only managed an edge after losing his balance, but Pant failed

## Pant needs to work on keeping: Ponting

**Sydney:** Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting on Thursday slammed Rishabh Pant for his below-par wicket-keeping on the opening day of the third Test here, stating that the Indian youngster has dropped more catches than any other keeper in the world. That highlights he has got some work to do with his keeping," Ponting told *cricket.Com.Au*.

"The one's (dropped catches) today are two that should be taken, simple as that," he said. Ponting said that on a flat track, Pucovski could have caused more damage with a daddy hundred.



"It's probably lucky for Rishabh that Pucovski didn't go on and make a big hundred or a double hundred and looking at the wicket, it looks like an unbelievable surface," Ponting, who also happens to be Pant's head coach at Delhi Capitals, said.



## Dad's memory brought tears to my eyes: Siraj

**Sydney:** India pacer Mohammed Siraj has revealed that his late father's memory brought tears to his eyes while the national anthem was being played ahead of the third Test against Australia which began on Thursday at the SCG.

Video and images of Siraj fighting back tears went viral on social media before the start of the play.

Siraj had lost his father on November 20, about a week after the Indian team landed in Australia and were in quarantine ahead of the limited-overs series.

The pace bowler, who was part of the squad for the Tests that were to begin only on December 17, was given the option of returning home to attend the burial of his father but decided to stay back as the entire process of going back and returning would

have involved quarantine periods.

"During the national anthem, I just remembered my father. That is why I felt a bit emotional. Dad always wanted to see me play Test cricket. If he would have been alive, he would have seen me," said Siraj after the end of the first day's play.

Former India batsmen Wasim Jaffer and Mohammad Kaif both appreciated Siraj.

"Even if there's little or no crowd to cheer you on, no better motivation than playing for India. As a legend once said 'You don't play for the crowd, you play for the country,'" tweeted Jaffer.

"I just want certain people to remember this picture. He is *#SirajMohammed* and this is what the national anthem means to him," said Kaif.

IANIS

## BCCI formally writes to CA on relaxation of Brisbane hard quarantine

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Thursday wrote to Cricket Australia seeking relaxation in hard quarantine protocol of Brisbane for the fourth Test to go ahead, reminding the host board that the visitors are done with the strict isolation that was agreed upon at the beginning of the tour.

It is learnt that a top BCCI executive has written to CA head Earl Eddings citing to him the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two boards on the modalities of the tour

which never had any specification on two hard quarantines in separate cities. The Brisbane Test is due to start on January 15 and the quarantine rules will restrict the players to just their hotel rooms after day's play.

"The discussions are still on but today BCCI has formally sent a letter seeking relaxation of hard quarantine for its players if they are to have the match in Brisbane," a senior BCCI official told PTI.

"The MoU that was signed never mentioned about two hard quarantines. India have done one

hard quarantine in Sydney (practice and back to hotel room)," he added.

So what are the precise demands placed by the BCCI after addressing the grievances of its players and where exactly does Queensland health authorities stand at the moment?

"The BCCI's demand is simple. The players want to mingle with each other inside the hotel bio-bubble like they did in the IPL. They want to have their meals together inside the hotel and also have the team meetings together. That's not a big demand," he informed.

## Messi back to his best



Lionel Messi celebrates with Pedri after scoring

La Liga/Twitter

AFF ■ BILBAO

Ronald Koeman said Barcelona can still win La Liga after Lionel Messi scored twice on Wednesday

in a 3-2 win over Athletic Bilbao.

Messi's double helped Barca reduce the gap behind La Liga's leaders Atletico Madrid to seven points, even

if Atletico will be hard to catch, given they also have two games in hand.

Koeman admitted last week it would be "very difficult" to close the gap but was more optimistic after the victory at San Mames.

"There is always a chance," he said. "The season is very long and you can have ups and downs. It may be that one team that is doing very well will later find it difficult."

Barca trailed to an early Inaki Williams strike but responded with a slick attacking performance that had Messi at the heart of it.

It was his cross that led to Pedri's equaliser and then the Argentinian could have had a hat-trick, only for VAR and the woodwork to intervene.

But this was a vintage display from the 33-year-old, perhaps his best of the season so far, at a time when his future at Barcelona remains up in the air.

Only a late mistake took some of the shine off Messi's night, a poor pass allowing Iker Muniain to finish and make the result look closer than it was.

Bilbao had scored in the third minute and the 90th, each time exposing Barcelona's defensive frailties that remain unsolved.

Yet in between, Koeman's team were able to dictate the match and demonstrate why going forward they are still a force to be reckoned with.

"The team is growing, playing with more confidence," said Koeman. "Sometimes we look close to our best."



## Juve end Milan's unbeaten run

**Milan:** Federico Chiesa scored a brace as Juventus inflicted a first league defeat this season on Serie A leaders AC Milan, ending their 27-match unbeaten run with a 3-1 win on Wednesday.

Stefano Pioli's side maintained their one-point advantage over city rivals Inter who missed a chance to go top with a 2-1 loss at Samp.

AC Milan had been unbeaten since before the coronavirus lockdown last March, with a run of 12 matches without defeat to complete last season where they finished sixth, and 15 games this campaign.

But Chiesa, who joined from Fiorentina last October, bagged his first brace for the

champions, scoring on 18 and 62 minutes in the San Siro with McKennie getting a third with quarter of an hour to go.

"This defeat hurts," said Pioli. "If there is an opponent against whom we have suffered it is Juventus, who have won the Scudetto for nine years in a row. But understanding how bad you feel after a defeat will also help us grow."

The hosts, chasing their first Scudetto since 2011, had been hit hours before kick-off with the news that forward Ante Rebic and midfielder Rade Krunic had tested positive for Covid-19.

AFF

## I'm absolutely fine: Ganguly discharged from hospital

IANIS ■ KOLKATA

Former Indian skipper and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly was discharged from Kolkata's Woodlands Hospital on Thursday morning, following six days of hospitalisation.

"I am absolutely fine now. I thank all the doctors and nurses at the hospital for the treatment and care," Ganguly said after getting discharged from the hospital.

He, however, refused to answer any question from the media.

The 48-year-old had suffered a sudden blackout following mild chest pain during a workout session at his Behala residence on January 2. He was moved to the Woodlands Hospital that day itself where he underwent angioplasty.

Meanwhile, Ganguly's fans gathered in front of the hospital as well as in front of his Biren Roy Road residence at Behala this morning to catch a glimpse of their favourite cricketer.

"I'm keeping fine. I have come back to life," said Ganguly towards his followers after reaching his residence.



Earlier, noted cardiac surgeon Devi Shetty, who came to the West Bengal capital on Tuesday morning, had examined the BCCI chief and said the former batting great was stable and could be discharged.

"His heart today is as strong as it was when Sourav was 20 years old," Shetty told reporters. "Sourav can participate in a marathon, fly a plane, or even get back to cricket if he wants without this event being any setback."

According to hospital sources, Ganguly will have to follow a strict guideline for the next two weeks. Some medical tests will also be conducted upon him during that time.

## Jan 21 deadline for IPL player retention

Trading window closes Feb 4

**New Delhi:** The IPL's governing council has decided that the eight franchises will be allowed to submit the names of their retained players by January 21, league's chairman Brijesh Patel said on Thursday.

Patel and members of the IPL GC recently had a virtual meeting earlier this week where the planning and preparations of the next IPL was discussed at length.

"We will have the players' retention till January 21 and the trading window for the franchises closes on February 4," Patel, the former India Test batsman told PTI while informing that the date of the auction is yet to be finalised.

It is expected that the mini auction that is supposed to be held this year for the existing eight teams will be held in the second or third week of February. The eight IPL teams enjoy a players' purse of ₹85 crore and Patel said that there will be "no increase of purse" for the 2021 auction.

It is learnt that governing council has decided to wait for a month before finalising whether the IPL-14 will be held in India or not.

PTI

## Atletico out of Copa del Rey

**Madrid:** La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid crashed out of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday after suffering a shock second-round 1-0 defeat by third-division Cornella.

Cornella sit seventh in their Segunda B division, Spain's third tier, but deserved a historic win thanks to a volleyed finish by Adrian Jimenez in the seventh minute.

Atletico's task became tougher when 20-year-old Ricard Sanchez was sent off in the 63rd minute, while Saul Niguez had hit the crossbar in the first half.

Diego Simeone also left out some key players including Luis Suarez, Koke, Marcos Llorente and Yannick Carrasco, with Joao Felix taken off in the second half when they needed an equaliser.

But Atletico also struggled for fluency and chances



against a far less prestigious opponent. "We apologise to the fans," said Saul. "We are the ones to blame."

Atletico's defeat makes it consecutive seasons they have lost to a third-tier side in the cup after being knocked out by Cultural Leonesa 12 months ago.

"The cup is not giving us much satisfaction," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone.

AFF

## MAN CITY TO FACE SPURS IN FINAL

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City reached the League Cup final for fourth consecutive season as they inflicted more semi-final pain on Manchester United with a 2-0 win at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

John Stones and Fernandinho were the unlikely goalscorers for Pep Guardiola's men, who will face Jose Mourinho's Tottenham in the final at Wembley on April 25. Mourinho was United boss the last time they lifted a trophy in 2017 and the Red Devils wait for silverware under Solskjaer goes on as they lost a fourth semis in the past two seasons.

Any fears of a repeat of the goalless draw between the sides last month in the league were quickly dispelled as both had



goals ruled out inside the first five minutes.

Stones breathed a sigh of relief when his own goal was chalked off for offside by Rashford in the build-up before Ilkay Gundogan was also denied by the offside flag.

Zack Steffen was deputising for first-choice goalkeeper Ederson, who was one of City's absentees due to a coronavirus outbreak, and the

American produced an incredible save to deny Bruno his 16th goal of the season with a curling effort that was destined for the top corner.

City looked more like their old selves in a thrilling first-half performance and were inches away from the opener thanks to a stunning move that started deep inside their own half and ended with

De Bruyne smashing against the post from the edge of the area.

The deadlock was finally broken five minutes into the second half when Stones cushioned in Foden's free kick with his thigh for his first goal in three years.

Stones' poor form has seen him fall down the pecking order in recent seasons, but City have now kept nine clean sheets in the 11 games Stones has started this season as he has formed a formidable partnership with Ruben Dias.

City's issues this season have been at the other end and they again failed to make the most of their chances in the second half.

Cancelo's piledriver flew just over before Dean Henderson made fine saves to deny Sterling and Riyad Mahrez.

However, Henderson could only watch as Fernandinho volleyed into the bottom corner after United failed to clear a corner for his first goal in two years, seven minutes from time.

## LOCAL EVENTS

### MEGA TRENDS ENTER SEMIS

Mega Trends Club thrashed NDBG Club by nine wickets to enter the semi-finals of Ram Naresh Memorial Cricket Tournament at NDBG ground on Thursday. Batting first, NDBG scored 73 runs with Faizanul claiming seven-wicket-haul. In reply, Mega Trends achieved the target in 74 runs in 12.5 overs.

### BRIEF SCORES:

NDBG: 73 (Gurman 16, Akhilesh 13, Rajat 13; Faizanul 22/7) MTC: 74 (Anand 35, Abhishek 28; Gurman 26/1)

### APPPOINTED

UP Judo Association General Secretary Aesha Munawar has been appointed member of the Khelo India Talent Identification Zonal Committee for North Zone. This talent identification programme is being run by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

### MEDIA CRICKET

Lucknow Sports Journalists' Association is organising Media Cricket Tournament from January 27. The draw for the same will be drawn on January 21. Interested teams may contact organising secretary SM Arshad.

### SYI CLUB WIN

SYI Club defeated Lucknow Colts by 17 runs to enter the quarter-final of the 16th BBD 'C' Division League at Akhilesh Das Stadium on Thursday.

**BRIEF SCORES:** SYI: 232 (Abhishek 64, Saurabh 48, MD Ramaan 53; Kunal 35/3) LC: 215 (Amitabh 75, Abhishek 26, Kunal 26; Abhishek 26/3, Rudraveer 32/3).